First Impressions

Compiled Report Form

**Community Visited: Onaga Date(s) Visited: A- 11/4/17 (Saturday)**

**B- 10/26/17(Thursday)**

**C- 10/15/17 (Sunday)**

**Pre-visit web search: How easy was it to get information on the community you were visiting? Did it accurately reflect what you saw? Did you have difficulties obtaining information on the community through a web search?**

1. I found quite a bit information through the web. I never found any information about childcare. It did accurately reflect what I saw.
2. [www.cityofonaga.com](http://www.cityofonaga.com) - love the simplicity but won’t let me scroll all the way down.
3. I found their city website from google. Things that I noticed about the website was that if they have EMT’s it’s not listed on their website, the golf course is listed on their links but not under the parks & recreation tab. The website itself is not mobile friendly; I was not able to use the website at all on my phone. The city e-mail does not have a hyperlink so we can just click on the email address to send an email, you would have to copy and paste it. Inyan Retreat Center and City of Onaga Chamber of Commerce links on the website did not work. By going through Facebook, I was able to find Community Healthcare System, Football Alumni, October Fun Fest, City Pool, Studio B Dance, Weightlifting Club, Historical Society, and the Police Department pages.
4. **The “Five-Minute” Impression: After taking a five-minute drive through the community without stopping, the following reactions were noted. The following observations were noted when entering the community from major entrances (signs, streetscapes, buildings, etc.)**
   1. Beautiful big trees, very clean and well maintained town. The old historic buildings downtown were neat. The round barn and rodeo grounds were fun to see. The kids and I enjoyed driving around for an hour. There were welcome and “thanks for coming” signs.
   2. Seems like a nice town. I didn’t know what town it was until halfway through the business district. The side roads with housing look pretty run down. Impressive number of buildings and hospital. The sign that says, “Welcome to Onaga” is in the middle of town – thought that was odd.
   3. My first “Five-Minute” impression was turning on the third “exit” into Onaga, over the bypass. I was not sure what the first building/business was when I went by it. Later I found out that it was a liquor store and an eating establishment. It was nice to have a directory when we came to the stop sign. However, as soon as we turned right from the stop sign there were old buildings that looked like they were a hazard to the public. Downtown was very cute, and looked very uniform and put together. I noticed that there was a lot of construction, and remodeling of homes, and the hospital was very nice. Overall, my first five minute impression was that this was a very cute town that I could see myself living in. There were no other signs to get to other places besides the directory at the stop sign. We went to go see the community center and ended up driving right by it because we were looking for more signs.

2. **Downtown Business Area**

**Describe the buildings, signs, infrastructure, etc. Explain what type of businesses you observed and give a description of the variety and quality of merchandise displayed. Describe the customer service received when you entered those retail businesses. (Were you greeted? Did you have to ask for assistance?)**

1. Business area was lit, decorated and very clean. Since I arrived Saturday at 1:00, the only place open was the grocery store. They had great prices and friendly people. The sandwiches in the back were great! The selection was great, well- organized. We were greeted by friendly people at the store, everyone was pleasant.
2. Looks very clean; was impressed with the number of open businesses. All essential businesses – didn’t see any places to shop. Everyone was very helpful and nice.
3. Besides the first block, the buildings were well-kept, and had a fresh look on them. There were people setting up for a craft show so we were only able to drive downtown once before the street was closed off. I visited Onaga on a Sunday as I work full time.

**What public amenities were available (drinking fountains, benches, public restrooms, etc.) Comment on appealing landscaping and streetscaping. Did you have difficulty finding parking? Could you access multiple services from where you parked?**

1. Did not see many except at the fairgrounds. Landscaping was very well done everywhere. Had no trouble parking and could walk to multiple shops from one parking spot. Everything was very clean and painted.
2. Bathroom, sitting spots, trash, no Wi-Fi except maybe library, but none in restaurants.
3. N/A
4. **Other Retail Shopping Areas**

**Describe other retail shopping areas. Were the areas attractive and easy to access?**

1. The gift shop was easy to access. The windows looked like they had a lot of merchandise.
2. Nothing that was open. Looked like maybe an antique store. Many buildings with no signs to see what they are.
3. N/A

4. **Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas**

**Is there a defined area where manufacturing industries could easily locate/expand? If so, describe.**

1. There may be land by grocery store to locate/expand, not sure.
2. Empty buildings downtown.
3. It did not look like Onaga was an Industrial town. From what I observed is that they were more of a Health Care town.

5. **Health Care Services**

**Comment on the availability and apparent quality of hospitals and emergency medical services.**

1. From the outside the quality of the hospital, rehab and assisted living looked spectacular! Well maintained, clean and painted where necessary.
2. Nice hospital and looks to be a care home.
3. The hospital was located on the main drag through town. This was the only business that had signs to direct me on where to go. From the looks of the hospital it was just recently updated and would have everything that a rural community would need.

**Comment on the availability and condition of facilities for physicians, dentists, optometrists, public health and other healthcare providers.**

1. Condition of facilities was great!
2. Nice looking hospital.
3. I did not see any other dentists, optometrists along my visit.

**What long-term care services, assisted living or nursing facilities exist in the community?**

1. I located a long-term care and/or an assisted living. There was also a rehab center located within.
2. Think it was a nursing home by hospital.
3. Their nursing home was located on the back side of the hospital. I was a little disappointed in the looks of this compared to what the hospital looked like. I was expecting it to be recently updated also.

6. **Housing**

**Give a brief description of the existing mix of housing stock. Does the local market have housing that would appeal to all income wages? What challenges do you see in regards to finding acceptable housing? (Neighborhoods, size, properties for sale, etc.)**

1. There was a great mix of old and new, large and small houses. It looked like there was free land for building a new house. Not much junk setting around, everywhere was well kept.
2. Older houses, mostly lower to middle income houses – looks similar to Waterville. Lots of run-down houses and didn’t see any lots for sale.
3. There is a new building development for people that want to build; I would have liked to see the lot sizes bigger. There was a lot of remodeling which was very nice to see. I only saw one for sale sign on my visit. While there were a lot of nicer houses there were also areas of town that would meet the needs of the lower income families.

**What kind of rental properties did you observe for persons interested in building or simply living in the community prior to buying housing?**

1. I’m sure there is some rental. I did not see any for rent signs in yards.
2. None J-Bird Motel
3. There were not any for rent signs that I observed.

7. **Schools**

**Do the following schools appear to be adequate in size or do you see the use of temporary classrooms? Are the buildings and grounds well-maintained?**

1. According to online, there is PK-6 and 7-12.
2. Grade school, high school – looks nice, love that it’s combined. Yes, looks good. Love the fence.
3. Elementary through High School were located in the same area. The schools seem very up to date in the buildings and grounds. I drove to the back side of the school where the buses were parked, and the road could be improved. I would like to see more playground equipment for the elementary children.

**Were you able to find online information in the community that helped assess the quality of the educational system?**

1. Yes I was. It appears to be a good school.
2. No
3. N/A
4. **Childcare**

**Were you able to determine if childcare was affordable and available?**

1. I didn’t find any information on that online.
2. Didn’t see anything except youth building down town.
3. I was not able to find any.
4. **Faith/Religion**

**Comment on the number of denominations and the physical appearances of the churches represented in the community. Did you observe any evidence of church-sponsored community services?**

1. Two Baptist churches, 1 Lutheran, 1 Catholic – could not tell from outside sign. Every place was clean, painted and well-kept. No observation of church sponsored activities or community services.
2. Not really, saw a few churches.
3. I was able to find three or four churches. It looked like they were all well attended. I was doing my drive around 11:00 A.M.
4. **Civic**

**Tell about the variety of nonprofit organizations and clubs within the community.**

1. Observed a Lions Club Sign when entering town. By internet it looks like there is American Legion, Masons, Jaycees, young farmers, historical Society, PAT, VFW, looks like there is a lot to get involved in if one wanted to.
2. Didn’t see anything.
3. There was a community center that could be updated along with the car wash. There was a railroad museum that I found located in the middle of town with nothing but houses around.
4. **Public Infrastructure**

**Comment in general on the streets, street signage, sidewalks, parking, lighting, restrooms, landscaping, and streetscapes in areas other than downtown.**

1. The streets were in great shape and clean. Kind of small, but not much traffic to handle. Not much for public restroom that I saw, except fairgrounds. Everything was clean and well kept.
2. Looks run down.
3. The streets for the most part were on the narrow side. There were tall weeds growing in most of the drainage system, as the home owners did not weed eater them and neither did the city. It was hard to meet someone on the streets when someone else had parked on the side of the street. It would have been nice to see some curbing and gutter system throughout the town.

**Comment on city/town hall (How were you received? Was there information about the town available?)**

1. It was closed.
2. N/A
3. City Hall looks like an old gym or VA building. There were no signs off the main drag for City Hall.

**Police/fire protection:**

1. I didn’t see the fire department. The police department was at city hall.
2. N/A
3. I did not find any Police/Fire protection buildings.

**Library:**

1. Didn’t check it out.
2. Nice- Open later.
3. N/A

**City parks (walking tracks, ballparks, playgrounds, sportsplex)**

1. I may have missed the city park if there was one. The ballparks, rodeo arena, and livestock arena were well kept. It was nice to see rodeo grounds.
2. Nice! Pool is smallish.
3. They had a complex that had their City Park, city pool, and baseball fields but once again, there were no signs directing you where to go once you got past the directory at the stop sign.
4. **Recreation/Tourism**

**Is the community well known for any particular attraction or event? Do they have a community slogan that capitalizes on that asset?**

1. County fair – not sure.
2. Didn’t see anything.
3. Not that I am aware of.

**Did you see any indication of significant events taking place in the community that would be of interest to both visitors and residents?**

1. County fair – Centralia Lake not too far away. That would be a fun place to visit in the summer. I will be bringing family there!
2. No
3. There was a craft show going on when I visited.

**Elaborate on any significant natural or manmade features that have the potential of drawing people to the community.**

1. Round barn, deer/turkey hunting, possible business for outfitting if there isn’t any in area. Great farm and ranch land.
2. Nice park and ball field.
3. N/A

**Is there an obvious visitor’s center, chamber of commerce office, main street office, or other facility that serves the needs of visitors? Comment on the staff, facilities, signage, visibility, etc.**

1. Didn’t see any. I would assume start at city hall.
2. No
3. No

**Are there any restaurants, specialty shops or attractions that would bring you back to this community in the near future?**

1. County fair, if I farmed in the area I would haul grain to Onaga Coop. Very updated and can run many trucks through in a short amount of time.
2. Coffee shop
3. There are three eating establishments, but I would not eat at one of them just based on first impressions. My husband and I will be back to go golfing at their golf course.
4. **Wrap-up**

**What are the most positive things you observed about the community?**

1. Very clean and picked up.
2. Many businesses that seemed to be open in the district, 3 restaurants, nice hospital, pretty much has all the basics.
3. There are many newer looking houses, a very nice hospital, and a nice business district.

**What are the biggest obstacles/challenges facing this community?**

1. Not much for industry jobs.
2. Mostly older houses, no real retail place to go inside to shop.
3. The gutter/curb system. No signs directing people where to find things once you go past the directory. I think this would be very helpful since most of the attractions are off of the main drag.

**What will you remember most about this community six month from now (positive or negative)?**

1. The amount of big trees, rich farmland. It was a very clean and friendly town. Some type of industry could really make it take off.
2. I was impressed with the amount of open businesses downtown. I came at 5:00 pm and not a lot was open or going on. We ate at Cattleman’s and the food was okay and a good price. Our waitress was nice but it was pretty dirty, especially the bathroom.
3. This town showed a lot of growth with the remodeling, and new construction. It looks like their community is growing for the future.   
     
   Other Thoughts: I was hoping to see more sidewalks since they made a point to put that program on their website but I did not see any new sidewalks. I personally would have people enter the town through the second entrance instead of the third one. The coop looked very clean and very farmer friendly. There was still water in the city pool and it had changed colors, it was very disgusting. I would move the museum to the grassy area on the south side of Onaga by the railroad lights and small tracks when you first come to town.

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Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Stations and Cooperative Extension Service

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