First Impressions

Compiled Report Form

Community Visited: Smith Center Date(s) Visited:

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?

*Nice web site – expected a little more than what we found in Smith Center.*

1. 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.)

*Nice community – some overgrown areas that aren’t lived in but overall, I thought the town looked pleasant enough. Entrance to Smith Center coming from the east left a little to be desired. Run down building with Pheasants Forever sign, closed businesses with overgrown areas. Some things can’t be helped though…. Didn’t notice the tall Smith Center sign right away – drove by it several times. Love the sign – location not the best.*

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?)

*Great directional signs. Too bad the bed and breakfast sign was broken. The banners were welcoming. Several buildings were in need of some maintenance. There was a building on a corner being painted which shows that the downtown is cared about. We observed an appliance store, flooring, drug store, home décor/gift, and restaurant. There wasn’t a good deal of variety but the quality was great! Customer service was fabulous! We weren’t greeted at the drug store but they were incredibly busy at the 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?

*Didn’t see a drinking fountain – benches downtown were nice – not sure I’d sit on one with good clothes but I know people appreciate them – the hand rails were also nice to have. Didn’t notice a public restroom. Plants and flowers were nice to see – sidewalks could use some repair – downtown was clean looking – no weeds that I saw! Parking was great.*

1. Other Retail Shopping Areas

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

*The shopping that was available was nice – easy to get to. Disappointed that some stores were only open one day a week….*

4. Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas

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

*Maybe where Petersons used to be.*

5. Health Care Services

Comment on the availability and apparent quality of hospitals and emergency medical services. Comment on the availability and condition of facilities for physicians, dentists, optometrists, public health and other healthcare providers. What long-term care services, assisted living or nursing facilities exist in the community?

*Found the hospital – not sure I’d want to be treated there. It doesn’t look like it’s had any updates since it was built on the outside. Makes you wonder what updates are lacking on the inside. Noticed the Long Term Care at the hospital.*

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

*Notice 5 or so homes for sale…..there were a couple of decent homes for sale. Noticed apartment type places – assumed they were for elderly??*

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?

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

*The high school was very well maintained.*

1. Childcare

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

*Noticed a Child Care Center downtown…*

1. 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?

*Would not have trouble finding a place to worship in Smith Center!*

1. Civic

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

*On the signs on your way into town, I noticed the organizations that are available in almost every town.*

1. Public Infrastructure

Comment in general on the streets, street signage, sidewalks, parking, lighting, restrooms, landscaping, and streetscapes in areas other than downtown. Did you observe land-use planning?

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

Police/fire protection:

Library:

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

*Pool appeared to be nice and clean – ballparks and playgrounds were very well maintained.*

1. Recreation/Tourism

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

*No – we were told by a store employee that “There isn’t much going on in Smith Center.”*

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

*No*

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

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.

*Didn’t see a visitor’s center – chamber office wasn’t easy to see….*

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

*We had lunch at Paul’s – food was great – but wouldn’t travel to Smith Center just to eat there.*

1. Wrap-up

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

*Everyone we talked to was super nice and helpful.*

What are the biggest obstacles/challenges facing this community?

*The lack of shopping. The lack of nice homes to purchase. Smith Center has a great high school sporting reputation – not sure if you can capitalize on that or not.*

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

*Smith Center was a nice, clean little town.*

First Impressions was developed by the University of Wisconsin-Extension and adapted for use by K-State Research and Extension. Funds for this program have been made possible by a partnership with the Dane G. Hansen Foundation, Logan, KS.

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Stations and Cooperative Extension Service

K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension Works, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914 as amended. Kansas State University, County Extension Councils, Extension Districts, and the United State Department of Agriculture Cooperating, John D. Floros, Director.