

# First Impressions

Compiled Report Form



**Community Visited:** Wakefield

**Date(s) Visited:** a) 9-21-18 (Friday)  
b) 9-22-18 (Saturday)  
c) 9-29-18 (Saturday)  
d) 9-27-18 (Thursday)  
e) 10-19-18 (Friday)

**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?**

- a) Web showed information, re: organizations, schools, city departments, churches, events, utilities. Has a nice Facebook page. Did not see businesses listed.
- b) NA
- c) The website was simple, it listed the basic information. I think it could be updated and they should use more pictures. Their Facebook page is very good!
- d) NA
- e) NA

**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.)**

- a) Definitely a camping town with blocks and blocks of campers. Nice park and pool. Few businesses. Beautiful water from the east. Wakefield sign... pancake feed sign.
- b) We did not see an obvious welcome sign and thought to add more flags on the poles coming into town or update the old ones.
- c) I was impressed on how nice everything was. The streets were good, the parks were well maintained and the location is wonderful next to the lake. Both entrances on the highway were nice and clean. They have a nice sign on the west entrance. And a nice digital sign in the middle of town.
- d) Wakefield has a very neat general overall appearance on the first drive-through. Lawns are mowed. Properties generally are in good repair. Better signage would be helpful to direct visitors to the schools, City Hall, museums, businesses and the churches.
- e) I was very impressed with how nice and clean all of the homes and yards were. I was really surprised at the lack of businesses/business district. Entrances were marked with wooden signs. They looked rustic and I didn't see any lights so I'm not sure they would be visible at night.

## **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?)**

- a) Buildings for the most part, looked like they needed a fresh coat of paint. Liquor store, bar, bank, convenience store, Dollar General, restaurant, storage, laundry mat, beauty shop. Got gas at convenience store, was not busy at the time.
- b) Most buildings were very well kept. The restaurant coming into town looked like it could use some work such as the parking lot being cleaned up and the building being painted. The restaurant could also use some landscaping out front to make it seem more welcoming. "Two Sisters" Cute, little store with a variety of crafts and home collectables. It had a large variety of items. The ladies working in "Two Sisters" were very nice, helpful, and full of information. Visited "Two Sisters." Extremely kind and friendly. We were greeted as soon as we walked in the store. They told us lots of information about the town and its history and about their shop.
- c) Surprised, I have driven through numerous times over the years and assumed there was a downtown business area. Most of the businesses along the highway were old and most could use a facelift. I really like the painting on the Twin Valley building and the shower house at the park. Restaurant on west side appeared nice, tractor museum, motel appears old, liquor store, second hand/craft shop. I stopped at the Short Stop and everyone was very friendly. I was going to go to the second-hand store but it was closed.
- d) Wakefield has an interesting business history since lake construction influenced the town's layout. In some ways, it is difficult to define the business district. Starting on the western edge, there is a Dollar General and a restaurant. Down the way, we saw a gas station/convenience store, a laundromat, a real estate office, a small hotel, a car wash, another restaurant and at the lake's edge, a liquor store. We found the city clerk to be very helpful. She gave us great information and is a good ambassador for her community. We stopped at a convenience store. While employees were friendly, they were engaged in a conversation about work.
- e) There isn't a downtown area. There are a few businesses located right on the highway. The one shop that I found is only open a couple days a week. Short Stop gas station, Dollar General store, Sisters Store, bar and grill, laundromat, bank. The people I encountered in the businesses were very friendly and inviting.

**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?**

- a) Public restrooms with shower houses in park. Trash receptacles at the park.
- b) Very large campgrounds, several community parks, and bathrooms noted. Thoroughly impressed. Everything looked very well maintained. Cemetery could use work (needed to be mowed when we visited.) Also, house for sale on 8th Street needed major landscaping to look more presentable.
- c) Very nice shower house at the park. The parks are very well taken care of and I noticed small landscaping project at several intersections.
- d) For a community of its size, Wakefield has numerous green spaces that are well maintained. There is a very nice variety of playground equipment for children. We saw rest rooms at the pool park. Several trash receptacles were visible throughout the community. There is a library and a ball diamond. During our visit crews were installing new storm sewers. Curbs and streets generally were in good condition. Signage for parking would be an improvement at the schools and the school's athletic facilities. Signage also would help locate the schools and other facilities. Some of the vegetation at the museum could be trimmed or updated to give a more attractive first look at the museum. Larger banners on the main drive through town could be very attractive.
- e) I saw there were public restrooms at the park, I'm not sure if they are open in the winter time. I'm not sure if this question is applicable when there is no downtown.

### **3. Other Retail Shopping Areas**

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

- a. Very nice, new Dollar General.
- b. The areas were very easy to access. "Two Sisters" store was located right off the highway when you are driving through town.
- c. N/A
- d. There is limited retail in Wakefield. Having a Dollar General is very helpful to the community and would limit some driving for last-minute items. There currently isn't a grocery store.
- e. Just the few shops scattered along the highway frontage.

#### **4. Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas**

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

- a. Did not see.
- b. Limited area to expand on one side of town due to the lake, but still area on the opposite side of town to expand if the owner of land would be willing to sell farm land.
- c. N/A
- d. When we were there, we noticed a scheduled meeting about location of rock quarry. It appeared to be a topic of high community interest. The Coop is located on the west side of the city which is a location that limits noise and dust in the city limits. There is a farm store close to the coop
- e. I didn't notice any industrial park or commercial area.

#### **5. Health Care Services**

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

- a. Did not see.
- b. There was not any evidence of these services in the town.
- c. N/A
- d. We did not see any health care services. Many who live in Wakefield work in other places: Clay Center, Abilene or Junction City. There are some vacant storefronts that might make for a possible location for health services, but it is hard to know whether they would be economically viable.
- e. I didn't notice any hospital/clinic/medical services of any type.
- f.

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

- a. Did not see
- b. We were told the community mostly goes to Clay Center for these services.
- c. N/A
- d. N/A
- e. N/A

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

- a. Wakefield Rehab and Care
- b. We did not see any of these facilities in the town.
- c. Nursing Home appeared well maintained.
- d. There is a nursing home.
- e. Again, didn't see this.

**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.)**

- a. Housing appeared to have a wide variety of price range. Saw several houses for sale.
- b. Most of the houses would probably appeal to the middle class. However, there would be space to build houses if wanted.
- c. I was super impressed with how nice the homes were maintained and cared for. I only saw one that I thought needed taken down and less than five that weren't being taken care of or had too much debris in their yards. Several new houses on the west side and I saw several homes for sell.
- d. Housing was generally neat and well-kept. There is a variety of both older and newer homes. We did see some homes for sale; very few, if any, for rent signs. There was housing for different income levels. There was a relatively well-maintained trailer park. Because Wakefield is close to the lake, there were a number of spaces for camper hook-ups and those appeared to be well maintained.
- e. The houses were well maintained as well as the yards. It looked like there was a small amount of starter homes and a greater number of higher income type homes.

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

- a. Saw one house and possibly one business building for rent.
- b. We observed a couple of houses in the community to buy. Did not find a rental complex.
- c. I saw one sign for rent and two different apartment buildings which I thought was really good for the size of town.
- d. NA
- e. I didn't notice any apartments or rentals.

**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?**

- a. K-12. Appeared to be adequate in size and well-maintained.
- b. One high school present. School was very well maintained, but seems slightly limited on parking. Looked to be very nice school facilities.
- c. I believe the school is K-12. I do know if they used to use it for an extra gym for summer basketball. It is older but is maintained nicely
- d. School facilities for K-12 are located in Wakefield, which is part of USD 379. Buildings and grounds appeared to be maintained well.
- e. The school looked well maintained.

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

- a. Website does not address quality of the school system.
- b. We did not look for online information.
- c. Not that I could find.
- d. The city website provides a link to the USD 379 website, which was easy to navigate. Both information from USD 379 and the Kansas State Department of Education is available.
- e. Not really.

## 8. Childcare

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

- a. Wakefield Christian Preschool, Rosemary Day Care.
- b. We did not see any childcare services, but we were not specifically looking for childcare.
- c. Unknown
- d. At City Hall, we saw a sign on the bulletin board for day care.
- e. I didn't see any daycare facilities.

## 9. 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?**

- a. A couple nice churches: United Methodist, Baptist, Madura Congregational.
- b. Churches were in excellent condition. Very well kept and definitely in great locations in the town.
- c. Numerous churches and all appeared maintained.
- d. Churches are active in Wakefield. Generally, the buildings appear to be well-maintained. We saw a poster for a church pancake feed. Signage could direct visitors more easily to the churches.
- e. There were a few churches. They looked very well maintained.

## 10. Civic

**Tell about the variety of nonprofit organizations and clubs within the community. Did you observe any evidence of civic organization activity?**

- a. Scouts, 4-H, Lions Club, Kansas PRIDE. Organizational activity: Saw the Lions Pancake Feed, Streets marked for 10k, PRIDE. Seemed like many of the clubs came from the school. Definitely seems like a civically engaged community. We did not observe any civic activity while we were in town.
- b. The website listed numerous civic organizations. There was pancake feed that appeared well attended.
- c. The city website did provide a listing of several community organizations.
- d. NA
- e. Lyons club sign was at the entrance with the Wakefield sign. There were Signs for pancake feed

## **11. Public Infrastructure**

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

- a. Streets in need of repair.
- b. The streets and sidewalks seemed to be in pretty good condition. The parking lines being painted could really add to the visual aspect.
- c. All appear good and well maintained.
- d. Generally, streets are well maintained. We saw work on a storm sewer project. Lawns are mowed and there is a variety of playground equipment. Wakefield has a neat overall appearance.
- e. I didn't notice any signs directing to different areas.

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

- a. NA
- b. City hall was closed due to us visiting on a Saturday.
- c. Nice building, not open.
- d. City Hall is a little off the beaten path, so a sign or two directing people there, might be helpful. There is parking around the building. The city clerk was extremely helpful to us. She is a great ambassador for Wakefield. We noticed efforts to engage citizens in government. There was a white board to place an item on the City Council agenda. There was a white board that noted progress on city projects. That was a very effective visual. The council room had name plates for the members. The building was neat and welcoming.
- e. I did not visit the city/town hall

**Police/fire protection:**

- a. Fire Department, Did not see the police present.
- b. Small fire department
- c. The fire house is on Main Street and could be updated. I saw a patrol vehicle on west side of town at a home.
- d. We did see police vehicles. The fire department is a volunteer department.
- e. NA



**Library:**

- a. Has a library, but I did not go in.
- b. Library could use some landscaping.
- c. Very neat historical building.
- d. Wakefield does have a small library, but it was not open when we were there.
- e. Did not find a library.

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

- a. Nice city park, playgrounds, swimming pool.
- b. Several city parks throughout the town; seemed in good condition.
- c. Amazing, two very nice parks, nice playground equipment, a Frisbee golf course.
- d. As far as recreation facilities, there are many parks and playgrounds. This is wonderful for young families or grandparents hosting grandchildren. There is a ball park and a disc golf course.
- e. I noticed a disc golf course, swimming pool, ball diamond and of course the camping area.

**12. Recreation/Tourism**

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

- a. Camping.
- b. We were informed about the Sew Cozy Quilt Lodge that was a major attraction to older aged women. The lake is also a major attraction
- c. The lake for sure, very large RV area.
- d. Recreation is very important to Wakefield. When you are the gateway to one of the best reservoirs in Kansas, recreation is a big part of the identity of your city. The city clerk showed us some drafts for a new billboard for I-70 to promote Wakefield.
- e. THE LAKE! 😊 I didn't notice a slogan

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

- a. 10k, Lions Club Pancake Feed.
- b. No events were taking place when we visited.
- c. No
- d. There was information about a fireworks show on the website.
- e. Just the pancake feed

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

- a. Lake-Campgrounds.
- b. We noticed artwork on the side of several buildings in the parks. Looked very unique and added cool features to the community.
- c. RV park and lake
- d. Wakefield has several camping areas and some cabins. It has nice green space and parks. The disc golf course would be attractive for some. There is a museum.
- e. Lake, campground

**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.**

- a. NA
- b. We did not notice if there are other offices.
- c. None that I saw.
- d. A designated visitor's center might be something to think about. Perhaps, some of those tasks are done at the lake, but there are several things to promote in the area.
- e. No.

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

- a. Saw 1 restaurant, 1 bar.
- b. "Two Sisters" shop
- c. The lake
- d. The lake or activities at the school would be the things that would most likely bring us back to Wakefield.
- e. There is a restaurant on the hill. I'd also go back to shop at the Sisters store again.

**13. Wrap-up**

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

- a. Campgrounds and Lake.
- b. Overall, a very nice community. People were very friendly, and the community looked very nice.
- c. Perfect location next to the lake. How clean the town was and how there was obvious pride in the town due to all the well-maintained homes.
- d. Wakefield is a city that is generally well-maintained. It is neat. The parks and greenspace make it inviting.
- e. Very clean housing, beautiful murals on several different buildings.

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

- a. Street repair, campground clean up from recent flood.
- b. There is no grocery store. The lake is a great tourist attraction, but there are no jobs at the lake. Since there are no jobs, they might have trouble getting people to actually move to town.
- c. Lack of businesses.
- d. All small towns face challenges. For Wakefield, many residents live there, but work other places. That makes it difficult to maintain some services, such as a grocery store. Another challenge is how to capitalize on what the reservoir brings to the city and determining what possible services might help the summer guests as well as the permanent residents.
- e. Lack of businesses.

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

- a. Campgrounds and Lake.
- b. Positive: The friendly people, the lake as a popular visitor attraction,  
Negative: It is such a great town, there just isn't any place that welcomes visitors when first arriving into town (signs, flags, etc.).
- c. How beautiful the lake was in the morning and how I wished I had a boat!
- d. We found Wakefield to be a very neat community. The lake is beautiful.
- e. Just how clean and nice the houses look. It is obvious the community takes pride in their personal property.

**PowerPoint report is online at**

<http://www.ksre.k-state.edu/community/civic-engagement/first-impressions/index.html>

First Impressions was developed by the University of Wisconsin-Extension and adapted for use by K-State Research and Extension. Restructuring made possible through a partnership with the Dane G. Hansen Foundation.

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