

# First Impressions

## Team Report Form



Community Visited:

Coldwater

Date Visited: **5-9-2024 (3)**

1. 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?

- Coldwaterks.org provides interesting information about the size of its park near city limits. Very interesting to me as my husband and I are RVers. Utilities are easily identified under Dept & Services, same with Health care and housing. News tab had not been updated since 2021. Could provide a headline of a school activity followed with a link to their story. Minutes were up to date.
- The city has a nice home page that includes a basic summary of what's available in the community. The rest of the site has great pictures and information about sites of interest the town has to offer. The website makes me excited to see the town! Some suggestions I would make are: 1) have a current list of business that are in the town (include theater, museum, etc.) on city's website and at city hall – would be nice to see an up-to-date business directory page (the old website has a business directory page, but nothing actually shows up)– it would be nice to see them on a map, too 2) give hours and location of the city building and list of services it offers on website 3) post a map on the lake page of where to get lake passes (and hours)and where cabins and boat ramps are. It would be really nice to see pictures of the insides of the cabins as well as their layouts. If I was coming to stay overnight, they would be a possibility, but I would want to know what I was getting 4) Update city news on the website page 5) Post the date range the pool will be open 6) Give more information about the PD. Show more pictures and information (trucks, training, call #'s, etc.) about the FD (esp if they are needing volunteers!) 7) Post how much it is to play golf for only one day if someone just comes into town that day (plus where the golf course is, where to pay, rentals available, bathroom availability) 8) Post pictures of the inside of the library and activities to draw people to it.
- It is hard to tell from general web searches which businesses and attractions are currently open (vs closed for good – Kremee?, Lazy T?, Family Bowl?, The Finishing Touch?, Lucy's Place Bar and Grill?, etc.). Some of the business and attraction websites are VERY basic and not appealing (Dave's Pizza Oven, library website, etc.). They don't make me want to go to those places (restaurants, library, etc.). The town's website makes me definitely want to come to the town since it shows they have a lot to offer –

pool, lake, golf course, good schools, library, etc! However, the general web searches leave me wondering what is really there. (I looked at travelks.com, mapquest.com, us-business.info/directory/coldwater-ks, and at your local businesses' websites and Facebook pages (found with websearch – I don't ever look up things on Facebook.)

- I would also recommend removing the old Coldwater website (coldwaterks.com) if possible to avoid confusing people if they find it like I did.

## 2. The "Five-Minute" Impression: After taking a five-minute drive through the community without stopping, the following reactions were noted.

- Amazingly wide streets, more open businesses than expected. Attorneys, tax accounting, abstract work. Expected for a county seat and Coldwater, although small, delivers. Even a real Lumber Yard.
- Taking the drive around town left me feeling confused like the general web search for multiple reasons.
  - 1) There were numerous businesses where there was no obvious way to tell if they were open or closed (especially if closed for good).
  - 2) There were signs talking about the Eagles, but no Eagles in town – only Timberwolves (found out later what that meant).
  - 3) I didn't see signs showing how to get to the hospital that were easy to spot. I wasn't sure how to get to the lake and golf course until we saw the signs on the south side of town (thought I would see them as soon as I entered town from any direction since those places were so prominently advertised on the website).
- Much of the town is a mix of old and new, residential and commercial, well maintained and poorly maintained - all intermingled. Downtown and along 183 were typical for their type of areas with the normal showing of businesses. The downtown area is nice looking. The really wide streets throughout were appealing. Generally, it seemed the south and east sides of town were less maintained/more overgrown looking than the west and north sides. The outside appearance of the high school, hospital, clinic, pool, care home, and apartments (2 different ones) were all neat and well maintained. The lake was very pretty, water fairly clear and blue colored, camping/rec areas were mowed, bathrooms provided, storm shelters provided, and the cabins looked like they were in good condition (from the outside). The fairgrounds were small and reasonably well maintained. The courthouse appears to be in good condition and well maintained. Many commercial areas around town (esp. east of 183 and south of Main) seem chaotic with a lot of random stuff everywhere, taller grass, and the appearance that those lots/businesses haven't had anyone taking care of them in a while – they definitely hurt the town's appeal. In several residential areas of town, there were dilapidated residential structures (houses or garages) that had roofs falling in and/or paint falling off in large areas as well as lots with overgrown grass, junk(?) vehicles and random stuff

cluttering them that also hurt the town's appeal. 4-H obviously plays a part in the town based on signs and the fairground being maintained.

The following observations were noted when entering the community from major entrances (signs, streetscapes, buildings, etc.)

- Would have been helpful to have had signs indicating location of Hospital. We had to search many streets for it and the courthouse. Just a small sign, the blue ones with an H and an arrow off the main business streets. Locals know, but others do not.
- Signs pointing to the town's major attractions didn't stand out (even missed Dave's Pizza sign until we walked west down Main St – think that the sign's angle makes it really hard to see from 183). The downtown streetscape was nostalgic. Along 183 we saw the expected normal looking commercial areas that people use regularly (grocery store, car lot, coffee shop, COOP, gas station, etc.). Buildings along 183 were a mix of older looking (early 1900's) and newer looking buildings (possibly 20?- 40? year old buildings. All businesses appeared to have plenty of parking.

### 3. Downtown Business Area Describe the buildings, signs, infrastructure, etc.

- Sometimes hard to tell open businesses. Windows are tinted and I understand that, but more apparent OPEN signs would help. Loved the memorial benches in front of most open businesses. Wonderful way to honor others and provide a comfortable seat.
- The buildings have late 1800's/early 1900's architecture. Most appear to be in decent condition. Some businesses' signs were not obvious or were faded (when walking they were easier to read)– some were displayed prominently and were in good condition. Main St. was wide with LOTS of parking. There was a great variety of businesses located within walking distance of each other (city building, bank, post office, movie theater, library, restaurants, attorneys, accountant, pharmacy, gift store, etc.). Wow!! The downtown area looked like it was being used and is taken care of.

Explain what type of businesses you observed and give a description of the variety and quality of merchandise displayed.

- One bank, two hair salons, very nice drug store/gift shop. Wonderful bakery! Did not get to go in thrift shop, but it appeared to be clean and tidy through the windows.
- I observed the following types of businesses:
- 1) Restaurant – Ozzie Bakes – nice selection of desserts that were decorated and displayed in a way that made them look very appetizing. I had a meat pie and banana cheesecake croissant and both were delicious! There also was a nice, organized display

that had merchandise by other small businesses that was available for purchase. Based on recommendations, I purchased sand plum jelly and pickles.

- 2) Main Street Pharmacy/Gift Store – They had a nice selection of basic medical supplies and medicines. The gift store was great – there were really nice looking colorful lawn decorations, household items like towels, horse spatulas, etc., a lot of college (KSU, etc.) related gifts, graduation gifts, Christian gifts, a larger than expected selection of greeting cards, and more! Employees here were very helpful – they helped us contact people that could open the Chief Theater and the museum for us.

Describe the customer service received when you entered those retail businesses. (Were you greeted? Did you have to ask for assistance?)

- People were very friendly and helpful, even in the lumber yard they asked what we were looking for and showed us a few items and listed items they do have available. People were trying to help us gain access to the museum and the restored movie house. And they did! Very cooperative.
  - 1. Ozzie Bakes – very friendly greeting – did not have to ask for assistance – she was extremely helpful, positive, and wanted to help in any way she could! Super service!
  - 2. Main Street Pharmacy/Gift Store – we were greeted when we walked in. We did ask for assistance in finding out if it was possible to see the museum and theater. They contacted someone to open the theater and sent us to the accounting office (Johnita's) to ask about the museum. We really appreciated that!

What public amenities (drinking fountains, benches, public restrooms, trash receptacles and wi-fi, etc.) were available?

- The memorial benches previously mentioned were great in the downtown area. Trash cans were available at convenient distances on the main street.
- I love that there were benches in front of pretty much every business downtown! There were also trash receptacles if we needed them. I am not sure where public bathrooms are downtown. The only water fountain I noticed was at the library, but the amount of water that came out was not adequate enough to get a drink (which I did want at that time). The only place I noticed with public Wifi was the library.

Comment on landscaping and streetscaping. Did you have difficulty finding parking? Could you access multiple services from where you parked?

- Most homes were landscaped normally, very neatly kept. Some had junk issues, but only a few. Parking was not a problem and the downtown is easily walkable from store to store.

- The downtown streetscape was neat, open looking, and welcoming (didn't look dead like in some other towns). I didn't see a single place where I would have difficulty finding parking (unless I was pulling a livestock trailer that day and wanted to stop to eat – then it might be harder). I liked that there were benches for people to sit on - especially for restaurants without seating. The sidewalks are bad, though. Two out of the three of us that went together tripped on the sidewalk and almost fell. Most of it is unlevel and has parts that stick up and catch your feet as you walk.

#### 4. Other Retail Shopping Areas

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

- There is a great grocery store located on the highway from town toward the lake. Very adequately stocked for lake goers and locals alike and very helpful owner and his wife. They visited about the lake activities and golf tournaments.
- The retail shopping area along 183 feels more disorganized and less tidy looking than downtown. The businesses don't look as appealing to stop at until the south side of town (Venture Foods, Dollar Store, The Fridge, COOP on west side of 183). All businesses along 183 had easy access though.
- 1) grocery store – Venture Foods – The store was clean, well stocked, had cool little grocery carts, bulk canned foods, an amazing variety of things to purchase for a small town store, cool artistic blackboard aisle signs and really colorful, creative pictures/paintings on the walls. The three employees that we talked to were friendly, helpful, and two of them told us about the town. The prices were what I'd expect to pay in a small town. We were greeted when two employees came out of the back. We approached 2 different employees to ask questions and both gave us great information and were positive and friendly. The cashier also talked to us when we were leaving – he was also very outgoing. Overall, the employees of the store were all great and helpful!!
- 2) gas station – Snappy Stop – bathroom was clean, had toilet paper, paper towels and soap. The store was clean. There was a small area where people could sit/talk/etc. The cashier was friendly and helpful. The selection of food, drinks, fountain drinks, lottery tickets, etc. was what you find at most convenient stores. Prices seemed to be normal. We were not greeted when we entered, but when we talked to the cashier, he was friendly and answered questions we asked.
- 3) lumber yard – The lumber yard appeared to have a good selection of wood. It had rakes, shovels, hand tools, battery powered tools, paint, screws, nails, and about everything else you might need. They even now do carpet and windows (but are booked up for a little bit with the carpet). The salesman was knowledgeable and helpful. Prices seemed a little high, but it was great that those things were available locally! The salesman greeted us, talked to us, and volunteered information about things we were looking at – he was very helpful!

## 5. Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas

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

- Did not locate a centralized industrial park.
- No, not that I saw or heard about.

## 6. Health Care Services

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

- From the website we knew there was a Hospital but had quite a time finding it going up and down nearly all the streets until it was found.
- I feel the community is very lucky to have the small hospital and clinic! The people we talked to all said positive things about the clinic and the hospital. They feel there is an adequate number of doctors and nurses and the services they provided locally were of good quality. They did mention that if someone had something more serious (bad car wrecks, cancer, etc.), that they would go to a bigger hospital (wreck patients would be flown to bigger hospital by plane or helicopter). We were also told the fire department was really good! No one mentioned EMS and I didn't think to ask. The exterior of the hospital and clinic were very nice looking both in architecture and landscaping. I like that they are brick!

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

- Excellent facilities for the hospital and clinic. Did not observe any dental offices or optometrists.
- Coldwater is very lucky for its size to have places for the above to work! From the outside, the facilities for the hospital and clinic looked both looked nice.

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

- There was a nice assisted living facility. It was also located close to the hospital area. Very fortunate for a town this size to have such a facility.

- The Pioneer Lodge is the nursing home for the community. The building and grounds appear to be in good condition and well maintained. It has cute, colorful yard ornaments in front. We were told it offers assisted living on one wing. It is great that the community has a facility like this considering the size of the town! (Note: We weren't sure it was a nursing home because the name didn't say it was. It looked like a nursing home, but I have seen multiple nursing homes turned into apartments and the name didn't really help figure that out. When we asked someone, we were told that it was, indeed, a care home.)

## 7. 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.)

- Only a few houses on the market, and those would need work. A few mobile homes intermixed with stick-built housing. Did not observe a designated mobile home park. Some larger, very nice homes on various side streets. Sidewalks were hit and miss, which is usually the case in rural America.
- Much of the housing appears to be old (early 1900's). There were a few houses in town that looked like they might have been built around/after the 70's (a guess). The only new houses were out at the lake. The local market does not have housing that would appeal to all income wages. There weren't very many places for sale, but most were either cheap (being less than \$40,000, old, and fixer-uppers) or crazy expensive for what they are (\$250,000 and \$422,000 for houses that I don't think are worth that). There is hardly anything in the middle. The main challenge would either be trying to find house flippers to fix up the old houses so they look appealing, have utilities and appliances updated, and nice landscaping OR trying to find land (like you did at the lake) to add new more affordable houses to. It might be difficult to get flippers to take on the challenge, but I think they probably would have the best impact on the town. More of the houses in town (and their respective yards) would look nicer, still be in a reasonable price range, and overall help the town look more appealing.

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

- No visible "For Rent" signs. The post office staff indicated it took her six months to obtain a rental, then because of twist of chance, she did get a rental.
- None. One person told me there pretty much is a waiting list for rentals. She looked for a place to rent for 6 months before she found one and she only got it by luck when the person before her had circumstances change and he wasn't able to get the house.

## 8. Schools

What schools are present? (Head Start, Preschool, K-8, High School, Post-Secondary, etc.)

Do the schools appear to be adequate in size? Are the buildings and grounds well-maintained?

- In visiting with residents, we found K-8 attend in Protection, 12-15 miles away, and 9-12 attend in Coldwater. The high school seems large and in great condition.
- South Central High School
- Definitely – school size and parking lot size look great for the number of students
- The building is brick and looks well maintained. The grounds are also nice looking and well-maintained. The football field looks decent (didn't get a chance to see the bleachers up close, so I am not sure of the exact condition)

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

- Not really.
- I didn't find numbers for the high school(test based performance results) on the school's site (USD 300), but they listed quite a few student/team achievements. To see academic performance, I went to KSDE website, entered USD 300, and went to Performance Level Reports. It looks like the district performs better than the state average, but the high school doesn't.

## 9. Childcare

What childcare service are available? Is it affordable?

- No visible childcare services offered. Yes, locals know but others do not. It never hurts to be proud of the services you offer the community.
- I did not see any signs advertising childcare (did look), but I forgot to ask people about it.

## 10. Faith/Religion

Comment on the number of denominations and the physical appearances of the places of worship represented in the community. Did you observe any evidence of faith-based community services?



- There were several churches in the area. Did not see visible evidence of services offered. There was one church building that was apparently empty. But while walking we were greeted by the sounds of bells. That was amazing and beautiful to hear. I hope locals appreciate it as much as we did.
- I saw 4 denominations. The First Christian Church, Assembly of God, Holy Spirit, and United Methodist Church. The buildings were all maintained, the yards were neat, and their signs were easy to read. I did not see any evidence of their services (if you mean services they do for their community). I also saw a Presbyterian church, but it did not look used. It had shingles coming off, and the sign was almost completely unreadable.

## 11. Civic

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

- They need a Seniors Center, or if there is one it needs to be visible. Someone did mention there were meals on wheels available through the end of this month, May. Someone or group or church organization needs to pick this service up. And perhaps help Seniors become organized to form a group for activities, Dominoes, cards, or just covered-dish meals together once or twice a month.
- The only club that was obvious in the community based on signs and the fairground was 4-H. The people we asked said it was a good club. When asked about clubs (Lions, senior citizens, etc.), no one named any others besides 4-H. I was surprised that even though there was a nice park in honor of veterans, no one mentioned a VFW. It also would be nice if the town had a senior citizen's group (which we don't think it has based on answers from people).

Did you observe any evidence of civic organization activity?

- There weren't any signs for the Odd Fellows or Kiwanis or 4-H. Local groups that usually meet.
- No, I didn't.

## 12. Public Infrastructure

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

- The lake is well equipped with restrooms and even storm shelters for their campers. There were street signs on almost all corners and intersections in the residential area.
- Streets – paved streets were smooth, wide, did have dips (I assume for drainage), dirt streets were acceptable (not covered in washboards or potholes)
- Sidewalks – randomly placed – sometimes on one side of the street, sometimes on both sides of the street, sometimes none. Most of the sidewalks I saw throughout the town

are VERY uneven and many parts appear to be overgrown with grass. They do not appear to be maintained at all.

- Signs - Traffic signs throughout town were easy to see. Business signs along 183 were not always easy to read (angle of sign (Dave's Pizza), fading/condition of sign (coffee shop), or size of sign (also coffee shop and others). More signage/larger eye catching signage would be nice starting on the north side showing where the hospital, lake, and golf course are.
- Parking – adequate everywhere
- Lighting – some streetlights were seen but they were a block apart so I am not sure how much lighting they would provide
- Landscaping – yards were hit and miss – some had great landscaping with flowers, rocks, etc., some had plain maintained grass, and some were overgrown and/or full of stuff (some VERY BAD)
- Landscaping at the parks was pleasant and created a peaceful atmosphere (I can see why one person mentioned that she liked hanging out at the parks better than the lake.) It was also nice that there were places to sit at the parks that were shaded and that the structures were in good condition. (Note: There was trash caught in bushes at the war memorial park in numerous places).
- The area around the lake was pretty looking. The lake had a smooth road going around the lake and good roads going up to the different camping/swimming/boat loading areas. Signage was easily visible and in adequate numbers. Parking was easy (Thursday) but I don't know if it would be on a weekend. I didn't see water fountains (working hydrants instead). A good number of picnic tables are located around the lake. The bathrooms were clean and had updated sinks, shower heads, paper towel dispensers, and toilets and they were stocked with toilet paper and soap. I think it is wonderful that they post a number to call if there is a problem with a bathroom. The only problems that I saw (didn't go through every bathroom) were at section H. The skylight on the guys' side of the bathroom is cracked and would let in rain and the wall between the guys' and girls' side needs to be replaced – appears to be moldy – nasty looking. We were also not sure if the lights would come on at night since we didn't know how they worked. I really appreciated that 3 (that we saw) storm shelters were available in case of bad weather. Finally, on the west side there was a large shelter/structure that would be super for family, organizational, or any other types of gathering.
- The road to the golf course is a somewhat bumpy dirt road. I don't know if the golf course had any amenities. We saw where to pay (only obvious signage there) and we saw a house looking structure in average condition with covered area next to it (not really a country club look to it as the golf course's name implies). I didn't think it would have been appropriate to get out and just wander around to get more information since no one else was around.
- Parking around the courthouse is not exactly convenient if you were handicapped, but that is the case with many of the "square" style courthouse locations.

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

- She seemed a little nervous when the three of us first came in. Perhaps startled. But provided information and was helpful. The pamphlets on the information desk should be updated to provide the most accurate information – it's a pain but better than dated info.
- Unfortunately, this was the only place in town that I didn't feel welcomed. There was an almost "Who are you and what do you want" feeling. It felt awkward. We asked questions about clubs in town, what the town did for Christmas, what we should see, etc. and we didn't get enthusiastic answers and in some cases we got less information about the questions that we asked than we got from other people we met around town and at the lake. I thought she'd know as much or more about the town the average person we met (we asked the same questions to multiple people). I also thought she'd promote the town more. I honestly wouldn't want to go back there.
- While there, I picked up 2 flyers – one that said it was a pool fundraiser (thought about donating) and a "Coldwater Come to Play or Stay" flyer. The fundraiser for the pool says it is raising money to take care of things that weren't covered with the sales tax increase. After going past the pool, I think that the remodel, doors, and furniture have already been done. The deadline is Jan. 31, 2013 on the flyer. I am confused – are you still raising money or is the brochure one that should have been removed? The Coldwater brochure says you are "Known as the "eating out" town and has no less than 10 "sit-down" food vendors." It also says the population is 1060. We were told that there was virtually no sit-down place in town by a few town residents. I think the flyer is fairly outdated (although I know things constantly change).

Police/fire protection:

- From City Clerk's office, there is no current local law enforcement. It looks to be an adequate volunteer fire department. One local told us they are called upon often by area departments and also from departments in Oklahoma.
- I only learned a few things about these. 1) There is no police officer for the town (only sheriff patrols at times with them responding as needed 2) That the fire department was really good (based on an individual's opinion) – there was little information on the department's Facebook page, but some good pictures of training, etc.

Library:

- Very nice arrangement of shelves with prominent labeling to find the category you are interested in searching. Adorable children and toddlers area. Nice area in the back for larger chairs, relaxing and reading.

- The library is located in a nice brick building that is the size I would expect in a small town. The library director was friendly and immediately talked to us. She seemed frustrated about the number of people that come in. We gave her some ideas since our town's library visits have gone up by 350% over the last 3 years (over 3500 last year!). She mentioned wishing she could show some movies but was limited on space. I didn't think of this until later, but I think she should talk to the movie theater board to see if they could show the movies she wants (possibly paid for at least partially by the library budget?). She could even have a "Read the book - watch the movie!" activity(ties) for her patrons – both adult books and children's books with the movie shown at the theater. I think this activity could help both places.
- The layout of the library is in an organized fashion and I would have been able to find whatever I was looking for. The selection of books looked good and I liked that there were 4 computers available for use. The animal mural on the wall in the children's area was cool looking. The only thing I wish the inside of the library had different would be that the water fountain worked good enough to get a drink.
- I think better advertising could also help the library. The website is very basic and doesn't draw you in to read more (like the city's website). The last entry in their news is 2022. I would keep the website up (even though they have a good Facebook page). There are still a lot of people who do a web search to find organizations and their activities. Facebook pages don't always show up first (and some people don't do Facebook, like me).

City parks (walking tracks, ballparks, playgrounds, sports complex):

- Really enjoyed Memorial Heritage Park honoring soldiers and all service members. The pool and playground areas were modern and well maintained.
- All the parks were mowed and had pleasant, peaceful landscaping. The playground equipment appeared to be in good condition and an adequate number of different types were available to keep kids occupied for a while. I liked that there were also structures where people could go to be in the shade, eat, or get out of rain.

### 13. Recreation/Tourism

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

- They promote their lake facility and it is easily understood why. This attraction absolutely brings in camping from all over the area.
- From what I have read, from what people in Coldwater have said, and from what I saw, the lake is their well-known attraction. I do not know of any slogan that capitalizes on that.

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

- There was not any real mention or signage about local events other than golf tournaments.
- No. No one mentioned anything to me and I didn't see any signs promoting any upcoming events.

Elaborate on any significant natural or manmade features that have the potential of drawing people to the community. (Public art, museums, lakes, campgrounds, regional heritage locations).

- The golf course is impressive and although small, well kept. A larger club house would be expected for groups of more than fifty. The individual who let us in the Museum shared the course was 100 years old. That is amazing that 100 years ago people in Western Kansas had time to golf. Good for them! Also, the museum was nice and was well organized.
- I think the town has 4 features – and possibly more that I didn't experience - that are (or could be) great draws!
- 1) The lake is definitely a draw since it allows watersports, is in a pretty area, has bathrooms, picnic tables, storm shelters, etc. and the water is cleaner looking than a lot of lakes (could use better looking boat ramps, though). Do you ever have fishing tournaments there? One that includes (or is just for) kids? The only thing that I could see hurting the lake's appeal and the town's is if too many long term camping permits are given out. Having too many people (or their campers and no people which appeared to be the case the day we came) living there all the time will take up spots that other outsiders could have. On weekends, this really could deter outsiders from coming in to see what the lake and town and town have to offer. The lake could end up being more of a KOA type campground / RV park than a recreational lake.
- 2) I think the historical theater could also be a draw. (I think it is, but I don't think the town thinks it is.) It has cool architecture and it could be used for quite a few purposes. I don't know if it's ever offered a "summer movie pass" where you could buy the pass for a certain affordable amount and watch as many movies as you want, but I think it could draw in more people. Another possibility would be offering older movies for senior citizen groups occasionally (a great place to go out of the heat in the summer and away from home (or care home)). It would be really cool to see a movie on the screen that was from the time the theater was built, too, just to see how much movies have changed and to experience what those living then did. I also mentioned collaborating with the library earlier, too. Another idea would be to bring in an area youth symphony or any local music group/band to play for people. The stage would also be a great place to put on a play. Bringing in groups from surrounding towns for any of these could

really help the theater (as long as there's good advertising and a positive attitude towards the events).

- 3) The golf course is another thing that I think could be a true draw with a few improvements. The first is making the road better. Even if it couldn't be paved, getting it smoothed out would make it look more like entering a golf course rather than a pasture. The second is making the area up by the house (?) more inviting. From an outsider's perspective, the area is not inviting. It isn't obvious where to park (and how a bunch of cars could park if there was a tournament, etc. and then somehow manage to get out). If there was a true parking area, I think people from outside of town/new to the area would be more comfortable getting out and golfing. However, the way it is feels like it is private property and getting out seems inappropriate. If it rains, can cars still get to the golf course with the dirt road? It also isn't obvious if there is a bathroom that is always open. It would be nice to see an informational sign that tells if there are certain days that rentals are available (cart, golf clubs for those that don't own them, etc.). The honor system for paying is cool. I also like the interesting looking short trees and the somewhat taller, thinner trees (don't know what kind they are).
- 4) Ozzie Bakes is a definite draw! With her outgoing personality, AMAZING desserts and meat pies, and section of items for sale made by small businesses, it is a great experience. I would be as likely to go back there as I would to the lake!
- I think there could be other draws to the town, too. The county fair might be one for the town, but I wasn't able to experience it. For our area, the county fair is a big draw to the town it is in (Winfield). I absolutely love going fairs for the exhibits, livestock shows, food, rides, etc. The museum would take quite a bit to make it a draw, but I think it could be possible. The exhibits weren't very organized (by age, genre, etc.) and it didn't seem like anyone in the area even really thought about it (no regular open hours, broken bench out front, moldy looking object leaning against the west front window, etc.). Someone also mentioned that there were also some nice Airbnb places in the area, but I didn't see anything advertising them.

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.

- No. None. There should be a central location of updated information regarding the community events, services and businesses available. How are others going to learn?
- None that I saw.

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

- Ozzie Bakes! Delicious food, I personally purchased some rare Wild Sand Plum Jelly and the staff was very helpful and friendly.

- Definitely! I hope to go back to visit Ozzie Bakes again as well as try Dave's Pizza. We heard about Dave's Pizza, but weren't able to try it. I also would like to see a movie in the Chief Theater – I think it would be cool! Finally, I would definitely have to stop at the lake (though I think I'd come during the week, if possible, to avoid the crowd).

#### 14. Wrap-up

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

- Everyone seems eager to answer our questions about their community. They are proud of what they have and should be because of being so rural, they do still have a lot to offer.
- Everyone we talked to seemed to like their community. Many said it was close knit, that people take care of each other and help when help is needed to get things built or done. Many also mentioned that the schools were good. Everyone seemed to like the lake and felt it was good for the community. There are so many great things in the town – a hospital, a lot of different kinds of businesses, and several fun things to do. They are so lucky!

What are the biggest obstacles/challenges facing this community?

- They really could use a successful restaurant to help with locals and visitors alike. Some residents even suggested having our noon meal in the next town, which we didn't do, but it is sad that they don't have a go-to locally.
- In my opinion, the two biggest obstacles the community has are they're not acknowledging all their town has to offer and advertising. Coldwater has so much to offer their residents that our town doesn't have – a hospital, movie theater, care home, restaurant, grocery store, lawyer, accountant, clinic, pharmacy, lake, golf course, etc!!! We have to drive a long way to get to any of them and they have them right in their own town. I would love it not to have to drive to all of those places!! I can drive to Wichita easier than people in Coldwater can, but in the end it costs more money (and time) – gas money, wear and tear on vehicle, time that I could spend at home or with family and friends, more money spent because more things are available to buy, and most importantly – that money does not stay in my community and help it! I felt most of the people I talked to felt the town didn't have much to offer besides the lake and jobs. I feel like they take a lot of their resources for granted. They should come to our town and find out what it is like to have quite a bit less!
- Advertising – I don't know if the people in your area are the same as ours, but part of them use Facebook to search for things and part do not. I did not look at any Facebook pages before going to Coldwater. I did go try to find them after going there because I was totally confused on why the businesses did so little advertising. I did find most of

the Facebook pages were ok to good, but I feel a website does a better job giving information that a visitor might need. I feel the business Facebook pages are more focused on the locals that follow them (people already familiar with them). I think asking other small towns if they'd display your town's flyer (and you, theirs) or finding a Sedgwick County website that advertises area attractions to promote your town's attractions would be a couple of good options.

- In the residents' opinion, it is lack of housing, whether rental or to buy. Two people mentioned that a lot of property has gone up in price due to competition from hunting companies/seasonal hunters. Another mentioned it took 6 months to find a house (rental) and it was just luck that she got it since someone else was supposed to get it and in the end couldn't.

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

- Welcoming individuals, not defensive, "Why are you here?" in any alarming way. I previously lived in farther Western Kansas and sadly expected this reaction.
- Positive – Lake, Ozzie Bakes, how friendly almost all the people were, the theater, and the nice looking downtown area. I am also glad I got to see a town that I've never heard about and find out it is a great place to visit because of this program!
- Negative – The lady at the city building.

How much money did you spend while you were in the city you visited? \$25; \$40  
(Please include total purchases: Gas, soft drinks, food, purchases. No detail necessary.)



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