

First Impressions

of

*Arcadia, WI
by Bloomer, WI
Visit Conducted May 13, 1994*

A program for community improvement

Developed by:

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Revised: 2/10/93

Our Bloomer team visited Arcadia on Friday, May **13, 1994**.

Our team consisted of four people - one man and three women.

We were, for the most part, favorably impressed with the City of Arcadia. There was very good signage and the city was clean and pleasant. The homes are well kept which shows the residents care about their community.

The parks are an outstanding feature of your community. The athletic facilities are excellent and the military exhibit is a wonderful feature.

Thank you for doing this exchange. We hope that this program will prove to be an educational one for both communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jane Geissler".

Jane Geissler
Executive Assistant
Bloomer Chamber of Commerce

rum/jg

I. What was my perception before visiting? What did I expect?

- (a) I thought the town would be smaller. I had heard only about chickens and the furniture plant.
- (b) Chickens, nice small town with good industry and retail businesses
- (c) A small quaint town - with crafts - which reflects Arcadia's Heritage signs on Arcadia Fryers
- (d) My perception before visiting Arcadia, Wisconsin was one of a small community. I expected to see a clean well kept farming community

11. The "five minute" impression:

- (a) Arcadia was clean and pleasant. The buildings looked well kept and prosperous. The parks were well maintained. There were many signs showing the locations of the business district as well as parks and other points of interest.
- (b) Nice looking town, trailer park coming into business district on 95 somewhat detracts from serene feeling golf course gives. Main street looks good. Nice signage, adequate parking width. City shop 1/2 block off main could use some work or should be moved to less busy location.
- (c) Nice farm on Highway 93, nice scenic road. Gas Station on 93 said no Chamber Office in this town. Nice parks, well kept.
- (d) My five minute impression was better than I expected. I did see a very clean community. I noticed that the boulevard had sidewalks for walking on Main Street, which was quite long. I noticed "Welcome to Arcadia" signs as we both entered and exited the city. I noticed nice boulevard trees of varying ages giving me an impression of continued planting. I thought the curb and gutter dressed the city. I also noticed the street signs and banners on Main Street and liked the way they looked. I did not care for the mobile home park on the entrance to town on the east side but I did feel that all the homes that aligned Main Street were well kept showing a sense of pride in the community.

As you "drive" around town:

- (c) The drive through the housing for the most part was very clean and neat. Easy access to fire department and school. The parks were well taken care of. Pride of ownership on most houses.

III. Drivin...evaluate EACH entrance.

- (a) 95 W - pleasant and clean
95 E - trailer park
- (b) 95 W - well kept farms and homes entering city
93 N - Lovely view, nice farms, homes and businesses when entering
95 E - You can tell the people of this community care about it, even the St. Stanislaus Cemetery, every bush pruned to same height
93 S - Nicely laid out business area, terrain helps the looks of this community
- (c) Clean, neat, rough road on part of town - detour
93 - nice scenic road
95 W
95 E nice road, looks clean
- (d) Driving though town on each exit, I noticed the "Welcome to Arcadia" signs and liked the fact they were on each of the four roads. Even leaving the city, I noticed that the farms were well kept. We came into Arcadia on Highway 93 from the north. Then we took Highway 95 both east and west of the city. I was very impressed with the view of the city from the south side of Highway 93. Arcadia is truly a nestled community.

N. (a) Drivin...evaluate the downtown business area:

- (a) I only noticed one empty store
- (b) Good signage, feed mill attached to City Hall is not very appealing
- (c) Business area was older buildings - large business area
- (d) The downtown business area is elongated. I did notice a business district sign **as** we approached the community. The area was clean and well kept. The Main Street road was not in perfect condition but seemed well kept and had an average amount of cracks running through it. There was plenty of parking space on Main Street. I did not see a municipal parking lot. The buildings in the business area are older and in good shape for their age. The buildings could use some sprucing up.

N. (b) Driving...evaluate other business area:

- (a) Large and prosperous
- (b) Business area on 93 well laid out, nice looking fronts. Barren areas coming in. Drove through this area. Nice apartments, well laid out residential area. Many retail businesses, we equate this to their proximity to larger shopping areas.

- (c) Back roads to some business areas were rough and in need of repair
- (d) The other business area is on Highway **93** going south **of** town. This seems to be the growth area for the city. There are several large farm machinery type dealers in this area. It would be a great area for a TIF district. I did not see a grocery store in either the Central Business District or in this outer business district.

V. Driving --comments on residential:

- (b) Overall homes are well-kept, nice apartments, very neat appearances on almost all homes in the community. You can tell residents care about their city.
- (c) Majority of residential areas - very clean and neat
- (d) In driving in the residential area I noticed a very nice new subdivision with duplexes or apartments. This area was well kept up and looked like a great place to live. I did see a large banner advertising the phone number to call for information on these homes. This makes it easy for people who are looking for a place to live. I also noticed in other residential areas that the homes were well kept and lawns were neatly manicured. I can not say I saw a blighted area of residential homes.

VI. Driving ---comments on:

- a. street signs
 - (a) Good and informative
 - (b) Good signage, able to follow directions well
 - (d) Street signs - I noticed many street signs including the following: school, hospital, business district, park, speed limit, welcome signs, Arcadia banners, detour signs, no parking signs, railroad crossings and athletic area
- b. traffic patterns/street conditions
 - (a) Good
 - (b) **OK**
 - (d) Traffic patterns seem to be east to west on Main Street and from north to south on Highway 93. Street conditions were in fair to good shape. I would not say that I thought the streets were great but I did see that most streets had curb and gutter and many of them had sidewalks.

- c. welcome signs (at entrances)
 - (a) I thought the welcome banners on the lights posts were attractive
 - (b) Nice! Like the changeability to advertise special events
 - (c) 93 - Good sign welcoming you - very attractive and like the idea of posting upcoming events on sign - real eye catcher
 - (d) Welcome signs were excellent

- d. direction signs to parks, schools, hospitals/clinics, attractions, services (i.e. police), etc.
 - (a) Good
 - (b) Great directional signs
 - (c) I did see many signs announcing where hospital or police station were located
 - (d) We saw three parks in the city. One was a deer park that the detour took us past. I am not sure I would have noticed this park had we not drove by it. I did not see any signs pointing to the parks that we saw. I loved the Soldiers Walk and Memorial Park. This park and recreation area is absolutely fantastic. The school was easy to find because it is right on Main Street. I, however, did not notice the library until I asked if the city had a library. I saw hospital signs but did not see any signs for clinics or dentists. I also did not see any signs for the police station and do not recall if there is one. I also liked the golf course.

VII. Driving....comments on industrial park/area:

- (a) Well positioned on main roads
- (b) Not well defined, did not see sign to get us back in area by Ashley Furniture
- (c) First Impression - I didn't see anything about industrial area. Very large lots of businesses and room for expansion - easy access to all
- (d) I did not see any signs for an industrial park area. It seemed to be obvious to me that Highway 93 south of Main Street is the perfect industrial area. It is located in a highly visible and easy access area. It looks like this could be an area of growth for the city. It also seems that this area is detracting from the central business area and could cause problems for the downtown area.

VIII. Driving....comments on schools:

- (b) Arcadia High School - looks nice, grounds neat, good signs
- (c) First impression - school easy to find
- (d) Again, the school was easy to find because it was on Main Street. All the schools are in one area and seem to be older looking.

IX. Driving....comments on parks play grounds, athletic facilities. etc.:

- (a) The parks were extravagant for such a small town. I liked the military exhibit.
- (b) Park on 95 detour nicely kept up, like the deer, bet your children do too. Athletic facilities fantastic. Veterans Memorial Park is fantastic.
- (c) You could tell where parks were. But not necessarily a sign. For such a beautiful Vets Memorial Park - there were no signs promoting it
- (d) Arcadia has an excellent athletic field area with new baseball, softball, football and tennis areas. It has a nice large parking area and bleacher area.

X. Driving...comments on other:

- a. hospitals/clinics
 - (a) OK
 - (b) OK
- b. billboards/advertising
 - (b) Nice signs, billboards especially Welcome signs
 - (c) Great signs on all roads coming into town. Very colorful and attractive. I like the way you can change upcoming events below the signs.
 - (d) I can not say that I noticed too many billboards on any of the entrances to the city except for the welcome signs. The signs in the downtown area were fairly easy to read **as** we drove by because many of them were perpendicular to the buildings.

XI. Walking around...comments on businesses (physical part):

- (b) Many downtown businesses could use a good face lift. Good signs by businesses. Many sidewalks need work. Garbage receptacles a little too big for the width of your sidewalks.
- (c) Down town area needed a face lift. Vacant building signs not real visible from sidewalk
- (d) I thought the signs in the Main Street area could use some paint. I also thought that the building in the Main Street area could use some sprucing up. I liked the big trash cans on Main Street. I did also notice benches for the public to sit on in the downtown area.

XII. Walking around...comments on people:

- (a) The people were friendly and helpful. I got my hair cut at the barber on the main street through downtown. He was pleasant and did a good job on my hair.
- (b) We visited on a Friday, walked around downtown for two hours only saw one person and she crossed the street before we reached her. If I was in retail in your downtown this would worry me. Friday is typically a busy day in most downtown communities.
- (c) They were friendly and willing to help. Visited a couple of businesses. I was told there was no Chamber of Commerce in this town.
- (d) I cannot comment on the people on the street in the downtown area because we did not see many, one or two at the most. I felt this was odd for a Friday afternoon on a beautiful day. We did stop in several stores and most places treated us friendly and asked if they could help us or answered our questions. I like the fact that Arcadia has a shoe store - not many towns have them. I noticed several pop machines that were not in bad shape. This leads me to believe that vandalism is not that great of a problem. I did notice that there are not many gas stations around - just the large one on the corner of Highway 93 and 95.

XIII

a. community brochure

- (b) Picked up brochures at City Hall and also purchased map. Suggest they give away small community map. Good public relations.
- (c) Not very informative

- (d) We stopped in at City Hall. The people there were very friendly. I purchased a map of the city. I did notice the bulletin board on the front of City Hall informing visitors of the Mayor and Alderman. Inside of City Hall there was information posted and brochures on the city free to take.

b. businesses/attractions brochures or directory

- (b) Not much. Only brochure for tourist type things. As a business person or shopper a list of retail businesses available would have been very helpful.
- (c) None
- (d) I noticed signs in the store front windows about the special events coming for the big Arcadia celebration. Also the usual type signs of community events were posted in the restaurant that we ate at.

c. community profile

- (b) If I ~~was~~ relocating to Arcadia with my business I wouldn't go downtown. Community needs to work on developing their downtown too. Like the new business area on 93 S.
- (d) City Hall had a list of property tax values for the city and the amount of tax each property pays. I did not see or ask about any other demographic information. I did see the population sign on the edge of town.

d. map

- (b) O.K. not up-to-date though
- (d) I asked about a map at City Hall, they have two sizes. I purchased the small \$1.00 map that did show me the town and where the utilities and businesses are in Arcadia.

e. other

- (b) Gazebo information center didn't see much of that

XIV. City Hall....describe your visit:

a. appearance of facility, including signing

- (b) Very small, wasn't quite sure what window to go to. Good signs, had no trouble finding it. Liked the billboard with city government information
- (c) Small, cramped area. The sign that says "City Hall" is a sign high on the building. Hard to see.
- (d) The outside appearance of City Hall is quite unique being on a corner and the way it comes to a point. It seemed a bit odd having the hall in front of a feed mill and right on the railroad lines. I can imagine it getting quite noisy at times. I did notice that a window was busted out on the second floor. The inside appearance surprised me that it was very small. There were only two windows that are used. I noticed that City Hall sells clear plastic bags for recycling. If all people had to go to City Hall to buy these bags the small reception area would get very crowded. The area the ladies in City Hall work in was much larger than the reception area.

b. helpfulness of staff

- (b) Very pleasant and helpful
- (c) Very helpful
- (d) The staff was very friendly and helpful

XV. Chamber of Commerce...describe your visit

a. did people know where it was

- (a) We got several different answers about the existence and location of a Chamber office
- (b) No - referred us to **City Hall**
- (c) People on street and in shops said there was no Chamber. When I went to Leader to get information they called someone on the phone and I got my information over the phone.

b. comment on information available

(a) Confused

(b) N/A

(c) Not a lot of information available. Just a small brochure, had no listings of businesses

c. comment on staff

(a) Never found them

(b) N/A

(c) The person on phone was very helpful, but limited

d. other

(b) N/A

a.-d. (d) There is no Chamber Office that is open on a regular basis. When I asked for the Chamber Office at the True Value Hardware Store, the woman knew who we were and why we were in Arcadia. She was very friendly and a good source of information about the community.

XVI. Other stuff....

a. public restrooms

(b) Did not see any public restrooms even out at Veterans Park

c. parking

(b) Adequate for amount of business generated. Did not notice any downtown parking lots, however

(c) Lots of parking downtown - there was no one on the street

d. water fountains, benches, etc.

(b) Lots of benches, not much in the way of water fountains (at least I did not see one)

- e. (a) Nice lamp post banners

- a.-d.** (d) I did not see any public restrooms, pay phones, parking areas or drinking fountains. I did see benches and trash cans on the Main Street. I also saw several pop machines as I have mentioned before.

Wrap Up

A. Using your "senses"

1. What does the community **TASTE** like?
 - (a) Needs restaurants downtown, my lunch was not good
 - (b) Smoked meats, restaurant/store selling meats when you first come in
 - (d) The community didn't taste or smell like anything. The downtown area seemed deserted. The only smell I can remember is of fish when I was entering a restaurant. The town was clean, it was a great day, sunny and warm but I still got the feeling of isolation.
 2. What does the community **SMELL** like?
 - (b) Spring, everything was in bloom
 3. What **SOUNDS** did you hear?
 - (d) There were not too many sounds that I can remember that stood out. I did hear a train but I don't think it went through town.
 4. What did the community feel like?
 - (b) Pretty deserted I expected more people
 - (c) Inviting, everyone was trying to be helpful. Warm place. The sidewalks were bad, I tripped three times on raised sidewalks
- B.** List the 5 most positive things you observed about the community:
- (a)
 1. Street light banners
 2. Parks
 3. War memorials

- (b)
 1. Beautiful scenery
 2. Very neat
 3. Good signage
 4. Pleasant store clerks

- (c)
 1. The Memorial Park
 2. The signs Welcoming you to Arcadia
 3. The scenery was beautiful
 4. Pride of ownership in housing - well cared for and maintained
 5. Nice golf course and easy access

- (d)
 1. Very clean. No trash laying along the curb or sidewalks with good trash cans along the sidewalks.
 2. Wonderful Memorial Park and athletic area. This is enough to make many a community jealous.
 3. Nice golf course. Well kept and watered.
 4. I liked the Welcome signs on all ends of town. They seem to be new.
 5. The sense of pride I seem to get from the homeowners, lawns well manicured.

C. Describe ONE idea that you will steal for use in your own business/community and describe how you will start to implement it within the next **72** hours:

- (b) Liked the sign outside City Hall listing mayor etc. Took picture and will show it to our own council.

- (d) I like the map that I got from City Hall. In Bloomer we have only large maps of the city. The size I got in Arcadia is just right.

D. What will you remember most about the community ~~six~~ months from now:

- (a) Park/sports complex

- (b) The beautiful drive in, the pleasant looking Welcome signs, the friendly clerks

- (c) The view - scenery

- (d) I will remember the Memorial Park the most. It is just a fantastic design and idea.

E. Other comments

- (a) Downtown seemed deserted
- (b) **You** have a very beautiful community. Need some major promoting to get more interest in the retail business available. Great industrial but according to questions asked very poor pay scale at both your largest industries.
- (d) Other things **I** noticed about Arcadia. There were no car dealers in the city. **I** did not see a large grocery store but did see the future site of one. There were very many taverns and three furniture stores. **I** liked the butcher shop, bakery and shoe store. **I** only noticed two churches which is few compared to Bloomer.