



First Impressions Revisited*

A Program for Community Assessment & Improvement

The Center For Community Economic Development

Community Visited:

Date of Visit:

Visit Completed by (community):



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*A revised and updated version of the *First Impressions* program developed by Andrew Lewis and James Schneider, 1991

First Impressions Revisited: A Program for Community Assessment & Improvement Final Report

Community You Visited (City and State): Coleman & Pound, Wisconsin

Visitation Team Profile:

Name1: Jim

Age: 51 Gender: M Occupation: Extension Educator

Address: _____

Phone #: _____ E-Mail: _____@_____

Name2: Tarrie

Age: 35 Gender: F Occupation: Motel Manager

Address: _____

Phone #: _____ E-Mail: _____@_____

Name3: Denell

Age: 34 Gender: F Occupation: Insurance claims manager

Address: _____

Phone #: _____ E-Mail: _____@_____

Date of visit and time spent: Two spent 1/2 day, one spent all day

Weather on date of visit: Warm & windless

1. Prior to Your Visit

How easy was it to get information on the community that you are visiting?

It was fairly easy to obtain a listing of upcoming events and attractions from Jean Grosse of Associated Bank. I made a telephone inquiry at the information number listed in marinettecounty.com website.

Did it accurately reflect what you saw?

The information accurately reflected what we saw in the villages. However, there was little in the print material on Coleman-Pound.

Did the information arrive in a timely fashion?

The information arrived promptly and with a pleasant cover letter from Jean.

Did you have difficulties obtaining information on the community through a web search?

A Google.com search on "Coleman-Pound tourism" yielded only minimal information on Coleman-Pound. In fact, Marinette County's website does not emerge near the top of the search results – Oconto County's site does. Clicking on its link brings up Lena business information.

What was the quality of information obtained from regional/state agencies and organizations?

Mediocre. The "Summer Destinations" publication for the 3-county area has essentially no information on Coleman-Pound. Marinette County Chamber's website has a well-organized listing of attractions and services; too bad it isn't at the top of the search list of Google, for a more casual searcher would probably quit after trying the first couple of links.

2. Past Perceptions

What was your perception of the community before this visit? What did you expect to see?

All three visitors had never been to Coleman-Pound. One visitor had seen local TV News stories at the beginning of gun-deer season, which gave the impression “Coleman-Pound is a place to pick up your last minute food, gasoline, hunting supplies and drinks on the way to deer camp”.

Please comment on your knowledge of this community:

Minimal. Located in the zone where agricultural lands transition to the northwoods.

3. The “Five Minute” Impression

After taking a five-minute drive through the community, without stopping, the following reactions were noted:

One visitor noticed the new park on right hand side in Coleman. The billboard thanking visitors made an impression on all 3 visitors. One person noticed the banners. A clash of signs made an impression on one. We noticed nice residential landscaping in Pound. Sidewalks could be made safer along the “strip”.



4. Community Entrances

The following observations were noted when entering the community from major entrances:

Approached from __141N__: Very nice park as you enter town, and nice residential landscaping. No welcome sign for Pound. Excellent welcome sign thanks those leaving Coleman, but what about entering the village? Some signs are rusty or overgrown. Nice building going up in front of bank. Implements scattered across large lawn.



Approached from _141S_: Construction zone impinges on travel, lots of congested traffic. Strip development dominates entrance. Heavy traffic in vicinity of sidewalks near churches appears to make pedestrian movement unsafe.

Approached from ___Co. Hwy B-West___: Nice flower gardens in residential area.



Approached from Co. Hwy. Q-West: Beautiful barn side-by-side with residential storage units is a land use conflict, and a precursor of more conflicts to come with new bypass.

Approached from Co. Hwy. Q-East: An odd mix of nice homes and commercial decay.



Little Peshtigo River crossing of Hwy. B – a “special place”

Approached from __Co. Hwy B-East____: Lots of remodeling going on near entrance. Beautiful, natural stream corridor (Little Peshtigo River?) crosses highway.

5. Downtown Business Area

Observations about the general appearance of the downtown area: Downtown Coleman looks like “Anytown, USA” with wide-open strip development and visual clutter. Directional signage to commercial facilities on streets crossing 141 is lacking in both villages. We observed lots of empty storefronts on main drag. Pound sidewalks are in need of repair near churches, which is probably a high-traffic area. The welcome banners with business names on them are attractive and show pride of place.



Any Town, USA

General Appearance of buildings, displays, signage: Downtown Pound has several very attractive commercial buildings, such as the new Ace Hardware. Downtown Coleman has some odd positioning of really nice buildings right next to or across street from eyesores. Much of the commercial signage competes for the traveler’s attention, but ends up confusing the traveler. Directional signage for way-finding is generally lacking. “Temporary” portable signs detract from otherwise appealing buildings.



Very nice building, but portable sign detracts

The variety of shopping: The communities generally have about all you can expect for a small place. One thing missing for a supposed sportsman’s paradise is a sporting goods store, or did we just miss it? Eating places are few and some are hard to find, especially Dan’s U-Turn -- although well worth the trip.

How would you rate the variety and quality of the merchandise? We didn’t shop much, but feel there are diverse traveler and specialty services in the communities. Ace Hardware, Self-Service Mart, and Piggly Wiggly have lots of variety for their store types. Ace is especially clean and has neat aisles.

What kind of customer service did you receive when you entered the retail businesses? We experienced good, friendly service at Self-Service Mart, Barnstormers, gas station on north side of Pound, and at Fireworks store. We received great service at Dan’s U-Turn, at Ace and at Pound Country Store. Ladies at the latter store were super – helped find information on community attractions, parks and other needs that I had, related to my pretend “family reunion in the area”. In contrast, clerks at Piggly Wiggly were busy talking to each other, but not to customers.

Were there any governmental or nonprofit organizational activities that might serve as a magnet for the shopping district? The presence of post offices, schools and municipal buildings surely helps draw customers. The Coleman park looks like a potentially hopping place for baseball games, reunions, parties, etc., and the Pound Park has good potential – eye catching helicopter and playground equipment. Don’t forget to use these portals to invite people to shop.



Unightly, should be fixed up or removed

Were there the following public amenities?

Pay phones (working with phonebook intact!): Saw a couple of pay phones.

Drinking fountains: These were present in Coleman's park, but didn't see any in Pound.

Benches: Only present at parks.

Public restrooms: None in downtown area. Restrooms at Coleman park were open and clean.

Appealing landscaping: Commercial areas were mostly lacking nice landscaping. One private business took it upon itself to partially landscape a drainage ditch along Rt. 141 in Coleman – looks very nice, but neighboring businesses have done nothing to landscape their part of the ditch.



Clutter on Main Street

Did you have any difficulty finding parking? Could you access multiple services from where you parked?
No problems finding or accessing parking anywhere in the two downtowns.

6. Other Retail Shopping Areas (Big Box Retailers/Shopping Malls)

What types of businesses did you notice that would fit the general category of “Big Box Retailer”?:
None, really. Piggly Wiggly comes closest as a chain grocery, but not really a ‘big box’.

General Appearance of buildings, displays signage: Highly variable.



Highly visible but quality sign, and unobtrusive changeable copy sign

The variety of shopping: We saw grocery store, hardware store, florist, professional services, pharmacy and chiropractic clinic.

How would you rate the variety and quality of the merchandise? Nice variety for a small town.

What kind of customer service did you receive when you entered the retail businesses? Friendly, welcoming, and open on a Saturday when we needed them.

Did you have any difficulty finding parking? Could you access multiple services from where you parked?
No problems with parking in any commercial districts.

7. Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas

Is there a defined area where manufacturing industries could easily locate/expand? We observed one industrial area just off Main Street in downtown Coleman. It appears to have only modest room for expansion. Other comment: did not see an area for expansion nor an existing industrial park. Jim’s comment: Pound has a blighted area (old concrete loading platform) that appears ripe for a Tax

Increment Finance (TIF) development or brownfield rehabilitation grant, and which could be a future industrial area.



Potential TIF development?

What did you find attractive about the potential locations for manufacturing/commercial businesses? The industrial area is located next to the abandoned rail corridor, which could serve as an amenity for workers who want to walk or sit during lunch breaks. This would require some landscaping and investment.



Amenity for workers & residents?

How would you evaluate the general health of manufacturing businesses that are currently located in the community? Judging from the paint jobs on a few of the buildings, these businesses appear to be hanging on but not thriving. An exception would be the new grain elevator at north end of Coleman.

Could you find print information and information and informed persons that could provide you with data that would help you make an informed business location decision? No. The grocery store had some community information, and we found a map at a gas station, but nothing in the nature of economic development marketing materials. Other comment: did not see an area where we could get information except at the grocery store.

8. Health Care Services

Comment on the availability and apparent quality of hospitals and emergency medical services: The area has a clinic, several chiropractic offices, and dental care. It appears you can get regular if modest medical care in town. No hospital, but a nice-looking emergency services building.



Note appealing monument sign & landscaping

Comment on the availability and condition of facilities for physician, dental, optometrist, and other medical care: The chiropractic and medical clinics in Pound are newer-looking facilities. Physical therapy place was OK.

What long-term care, assisted living, or nursing home facilities exist in the community? Saw several decent-looking long-term care or nursing facilities.

9. Housing

How would you evaluate the existing mix of housing stock? Coleman-Pound is home to many well-kept older homes. Mixed in are some homes in need of rehabilitation or removal, but the general look is that of residential neighborhoods in which the citizens have much pride. Could this be a retirement community mecca some day? Neighborhoods are quiet and relaxing, for a Saturday afternoon.

Were there any indications that the housing market was depressed? None that we could see.

Were there any signs that it would be difficult to find acceptable housing? We saw few homes for sale. However, there appears to be land available for new home construction.



Does the local housing market have housing that would appeal to all income ranges? Are there sufficient rental properties for persons interested in building or simply living in the community prior to buying housing? We noticed an apartment building converted from old school, but sign says ‘school’. Saw few places for anything other than elderly. Are many small homes and 2nd-floor retail shops rental units?

10. Schools

Do the schools appear to be adequate in size or do you see the use of “temporary class rooms”? Are they well maintained? Please comment on the following: High/Middle/Elementary School complex appears adequate and well-maintained. Gem of a nature trail for learning lab is found behind public schools. High school sign is hidden behind trees – either trim trees or move sign?



Classic lines and landscaping, well-done monument sign

Pre-School/Kindergarten/Head Start/Day Care facilities: We saw daycare facilities in both Coleman and Pound, but alien dumpster has landed at Coleman facility. E-gad! Save the children!



Elementary School: See above.

Middle School/Junior High: See above.

Higher Education (Community College, Technical College, University): None.

Were you able to find print information in the community that helped assess the quality of the educational system? None found, but none really sought by us.

11. Faith/Religion

Comment on the number of denominations represented in the community: We noticed several Baptist churches, plus Catholic, Assembly of God and Lutheran. Noon church bells in Coleman have nice effect.

Comment on the physical appearance of the churches in the community: Mostly very well maintained. A couple of them could use more landscaping, which would make them appear more stately and softened.



Are there any signs of church-sponsored community services? We didn't notice any.

Are there any facilities or statements that some would view as intrusive or that would make someone feel uncomfortable if they were not of a particular faith? None.

12. Civic

Does it appear as though there are a variety of nonprofit organizations and clubs within the community?
We saw FFA, FHA, Firemen, and Lions signs in town. The FFA sign could use some landscaping.



13. Residents

In what ways did you find (or not find) people helpful? Several made suggestions for places to eat.

How did people talk about their community? What were their attitudes about their schools, public leaders, and community services? One fellow talked about the small-town politics, but not so negatively.

Were community members knowledgeable about their community or able to refer you to people who were? Mostly, yes. As for things to do for young people, one resident was aware only of playgrounds.

Did residents reflect the diversity that is represented in the rest of the country? Are there some segments of the population that would not feel comfortable in this community? This is northern Wisconsin, so none of us expected it to represent much diversity. We did not see offensive racial symbols or sayings.

14. Public Infrastructure

Streets, street signing and lighting: Way-finding signs were often lacking. Streets are mostly in good shape, with a few notable exceptions. Coleman Park's sign hidden by large trees.

Land Use Planning: We saw several real or potential land use conflicts, including a trailer home in a modest middle-class neighborhood, self-storage units next to red barn, and transmission line and towers running through residential neighborhood.



Sidewalks: As noted, there are some sidewalks in rough shape, especially near Pound churches. Some uneven sidewalks near downtown present a hazard.



Degree of difficulty = 2.7 (for the less ambulatory)

Public Restrooms: We found those at parks to be clean. No public restrooms near shopping areas.

City/Village/Town Hall: Very nice buildings and easy to find, for the most part.



Police/Fire Protection/Emergency Medical Services Facilities: Rescue service was well signed and easy to find. Looks professional.

Public Parking: None noticed, nor necessary?

Library: Missed it. Is there one?

Landscaping/street trees: The old RR right-of-way is in most desperate need of tree planting, but street trees could also soften main streets of both communities.

Pay phones, drinking fountains, benches, other misc.: Drinking fountains and benches found only at parks.

15. Recreation/Tourism

Is the community well known for any particular attraction or event? Do they have a community slogan that capitalizes on that asset? None of which we were made aware.

Comment on the availability and selection of overnight accommodations: None available. One website said that Super 8 in Shawano is near by!

Did you see any indication of significant events taking place in the community that would be of interest to both visitors and residents? The Firemen's Picnic was being promoted by banners when we were there.

Are there any significant natural features that have the potential of drawing people to the community? The school nature trail is a beautiful walk and has great potential for additional nature interpretation. The old mill pond would be a wonderful walk, if public access could be secured and developed. At least create a sitting area nearby to take advantage of the scenic asset.



Old mill pond as potential passive recreation site?

Are there any significant man-made attractions? Parks with great equipment and very nice shelters, and helicopter at Pound's park are classics. It would be nice to have a history of the particular helicopter's service.

Is there an obvious visitor's center, chamber of commerce office, Main Street office, or other facility that serves the needs of visitors? Please comment on the staff, facilities, signage, visibility, etc. NA.

Are there any restaurants, specialty shops or attractions that would bring you back to this community in the near future? The patio at Barnstormers, Dan's U-Turn (beautiful building, but needs matching signage), nature trail, and the funky variety store/bar with 50's motif might get us back again.



16. Using your Senses

What did the community taste like? Was there any specialty food item, bakery, restaurant, or candy store that you will remember? Hamburgers at Dan's U-Turn and sunshine with beer on Barnstormers patio will be remembered.

What did the community smell like? Nothing in particular.

What sounds did you hear? Church bells at noon and a fair amount of traffic on main drag.

Did you have any experiences that impacted the way the community feels? The gardens along west entrance on County Hwy B are special. However, we could do without the dog that was very unfriendly as we admired the flowers up close.

16. Wrap-up

What are the 5 most positive things that you observed about the community? 1. Beautiful homes 2. Parks 3. Banners 4. Nice commercial buildings, and 5. new commercial area of Pound.

What are the five biggest obstacles/challenges facing this community? The bypass itself, lack of major retailers, great need for landscaping of public property, lack of industrial facilities, and blighted spaces.

What will you remember most about this community six months from now (positive or negative)? Banners along streets with business names on them, Coleman's billboard, gardens, and variety store/bar will be most memorable.

Describe ONE idea that you will borrow for use in your own business/community and describe how you will start to implement it within the next 72 hours! Wittenberg will look into development of banners with business names on them.



Have a banner year!