

First Impressions: A Program for Community Assessment & Improvement

Community visited: Reinbeck, Iowa

Date(s) of Visit: December 13 & 29, 2008

Visit completed by: Columbus Junction, Iowa

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

Community visited: Reinbeck, Iowa

Visitation Team Profile

Mary Weinand

Age: 47 Gender: Female Occupation: Educator

Lena Schrader

Age: 74 Gender: Female Occupation: Retired

Ron Scheef

Age: 62 Gender: Male Occupation: Retired

Nitza Loper Castillo

Age: 41 Gender: Female Occupation: None listed

Mallory Smith

Age: 46 Gender: Female Occupation: Community Development

Freda Sojke

Age: 57 Gender: Female Occupation: Shop Owner/ Semi-Retired

Date(s) of visit: December 13 & 29, 2008

Time spent: 3-4 hours

Weather on date(s) of visit:

- Beautiful, but very windy.
- Cold-very nice sunny day
- Beautiful
- Winter, between storms

Past Perceptions

What is your impression of the community before this visit? What did you expect to see? Please comment on your knowledge of the community.

- Seemed like a really nice small town, by the website. I have never visited before today, have never heard of it. I was very impressed with the website, the information available, the directory.
- Very nice website. The FAQ section is very useful and a nice resource for new comers.
- I think I've been there once for a football game. It's not a town you heard about. I expect it's a bedroom community for Waterloo.
- From the Internet I believe it to be a small country town. Adequate facilities but not very modern; much like C.J.

Prior to your visit

How easy was it to get information by mail and telephone about the community? Are you satisfied with the quality of the information received? Did the information arrive in a timely fashion?

- Web site excellent

Please rate and comment on the community's online Web materials and information. Could you find information on state and regional tourism Web sites about the community?

Range of Scores: **7-10**

- Exceptional for a town this size. We could do well to get a good website like theirs.
- I liked the on-line material. I liked the link to the MSL Housing info. It would be nice if the business page linked to the business websites.

Five Minute Impression

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

- Very nice, houses in good shape. Small & condensed.
- Nice sign (E, W), Sure Fine food store, nice Sr. housing, Pioneer/PCI, Ball fields (soccer, baseball, Aquatic, Gladbrook/ High School, Grade School, Newer housing (east), new sight for church, Co-op
- We were very impressed when we drove through this town for five minutes. It had a lot of nice churches, very good schools. The downtown area was cute. There were nice parks and ball fields. Beautiful homes in the new area. It has a lot going for it for a small town—for everyone, senior citizens, families especially. They probably could use more few young people. I our most impressive thing was how clean the whole town was.
- The community seems very nice & clean. The ‘downtown’ is off the beaten path. Not on Main Road. The buildings are well kept & nice upper stories.
- We came into town from the East. They have a beautiful welcome sign and area, but the industry along this main road distracts from the appearance. The rest of the town & residential area are clean, neat, attractive. Drove thru, turned & started observations and notes.
- Quiet // Clean // Not connected or near anything of note. There are no signs saying ___ miles to something I’d find interesting—a park. Interesting town, unique tourist attraction. Strange the burnt warehouse/factory is still there. Pioneer is huge and very well kept. The new houses especially seem like bedroom community houses—do people in Reinbeck earn enough to afford such houses?
- Stone sign from East, Big industry-Pioneer looked tidy, PCI, kept neat, printing company, typical store, nice looking park sign on highway. Really nice senior center. Nice park on main road.

Community Entrances

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

Hwy. 175 from the East

Range of Scores: **3-9**

- A very pretty sign as you enter the town, but on the right side of the road was a lot of stuff (junk) sitting around. PCI was clean and neat and so was Pioneer.
- Industry on this (?), burned out building see shortly after entering town. Nice sign.
- Burned buildings—near entrance // open landscape—nice sign.
- Looks like something caught fire.
- Nice entrance but a burned out building back off the road is a terrible sight.
- Burnt bldg. ↓ Pioneer ↑. The sign is nice.



Hwy. 175 from the West

Range of Scores: **6-9**

- Ball field, looked nice. Nice sign. Sign for business district.
- Clean entrance and nice sign.
- Very nice and clean—nice senior center and park—nice sign
- Nice & Clean
- Nice athletic fields and water park.

From the North

Range of Scores: **4-8**

- Nice new homes
- Did see that a church is being built. Biggest thing we noticed was burnt building.
- A new church site will be an improvement.

From the South

Range of Scores: **6-9**

- Not much of interest.
- Clean, but pretty plain.
- New housing addition very upscale.

Housing & Residential Areas

How would you rate the overall quality, affordability and availability of housing?

Average score: 8

Range of scores: 7-9

Quality

Average ratings for:

8.7 - Existing/Older Homes

9.8 - Housing for seniors

8.8 - Apartments/rental housing

9.5 - New homes

9.0 - Vacant lots for new homes

- Very nice neighborhoods.

- The houses seemed very well kept & clean. The new housing development appeared well planned.
- Many very attractive apartment buildings and senior housing.



Affordability

Is there an adequate mix of housing to suit a variety of income levels?

- It appears so. The community is very well planned—housing areas are complete and well kept. Industrial is in its own area.
- Yes. I saw for rent signs in home as well as apartment buildings.
- Yes and very few houses that were not up to snuff.
- Some very nice newer homes. Some smaller homes too.
- Excellent, big variety of types of homes, plus saw several apartments, and community living apartments.
- Yes // Several homes were older & nice, but there were lots of new ones, but not vacate.

Availability

Average ratings for:

8.25 - Existing/Older Homes

8.25- Apartments/rental housing

8.50 - Housing for seniors

7.66 - Vacant lots for new homes

8.25- New homes

- Not sure if there are many homes for sale. Didn't see very many signs. Did see sign for apartment for rent.
- There were not many "For Sale" "For Rent" signs. Apparently adequate for population.

What are the most and least appealing features of the housing in this community?

- As stated above. Nearly every home showed a sense of pride.
- The community seems very well planned. New development is planned well.
- Only found one home that was junky. We were surprised of how well taken care of the homes were. Even older homes were painted and looked neat. Didn't notice junk around very many.

Comment on the quality and availability of residential infrastructure (i.e. roads, sidewalks, lighting, public transportation, bike trails/lanes, green space, trees, yards):

- Wide streets—Great! Clean sidewalks.
- There doesn't appear to be much in the winter
- Sidewalks, nice trees.
- Streets bumpy, potholes but it is winter. Didn't notice side walks. Lighting in town seemed adequate.

Appeal

Average ratings for:

7.2 – Single young adults

8.4 – Young Families

8.8 – Middle Income

9.0 – Senior Citizen

8.2 – Upscale/Professional

- There seemed to be a wide variety of types of homes, small to extravagant.
- This would be an excellent place to live, providing you find employment.
- Upscale professionals may want a country club.
-

Education, Health, Social & Emergency Services

Education

Comment on the availability and appearance of schools.

Pre-school/Kindergarten/Head Start:

- Nice looking, easily accessible by walking.
- There is a pre-school.
- Not Sure
- ?

Primary/Elementary/Middle School:

- Very nice—nice playground land available for expansion
- Very nice
- Nice school. Looked fairly large.
- This school was in the middle of housing.

High School:

- Very Nice
- Nice School!
- Beautiful building—
nice entrance.
- Nice older school, but kept up and added on.



College/University:

- None—Community college 30 miles from town
- N/A

What do residents think about the quality and availability of their local schools?

(No Comments)

Overall, how would you rate the adequacy of schools for a community of this size?

Average score: **9.0**

Range of scores: **8-10**

(No Comments)

Health Care Services

Comment on the availability and apparent quality of healthcare facilities.

Hospitals:

- No Hospital. But there is a clinic available.

- We saw a Family Practice, dental, chiropractor. The buildings are very nice looking.

- N/A

Physician, dentist, optometrist and other medical offices and clinics:

- There is a dentist & a clinic.

- Definitely adequate for this size community.

- Did see all three.

- Yes, we saw all of the above except an optometrist.

Long-term care, assisted living and nursing home facilities:

- Senior housing is available & nice. Assisted living facility.

- Yes, these were very nice and on the edge of town.

- Nursing home, other care facilities.

Other health services (i.e. Chiropractic, psychotherapy, naturopath, massage, etc.):

- ???

- Adequate.

- Yes, chiropractor.

- Chiropractor.

Overall, how would you rate the adequacy of health care services for a community of this size?

Average score: **7.6**

Range of scores: **7-8**

- Seemed good for this size of town.
- Very good with hospital near by in Waterloo.
- No hospital—town is too small for major health care.

Social Services

What social services (i.e. day care, senior center, counseling, etc.) are available?

- I'm not sure about the daycare or counseling but they did have a senior center.
- Not sure.

Overall, how would you rate the level of social services for a community of this size?

Average score:

Range of scores: **7**

*Only one participant provided a rating for the above category

Civic

Are there a variety of not-for-profit organizations and clubs within the community?

- Not sure
- ?
- Yes—girl scout-boys scouts—women's club, etc.

Overall, how would you rate the level of nonprofit/civic services for a community of this size?

Average score:

Range of scores: (None Given)

Emergency Services

Overall, how would you rate the police, fire, ambulance and emergency medical service facilities?

Average score: **8**

Range of scores: **8-8**

How do local residents feel about these services?

- Fire department seems adequate for the community.
- We saw a fire department, didn't talk to anyone about them.
- We were the drive through team.

Local Economy



What is your impression of the health of the local economy?

(No Comments)

Downtown

Could you locate the downtown easily? If not, why did you have difficulty finding it?

- Yes, we ate at the Country Café & before leaving town visited the soda fountain.
- Yes
- Yes
- It was easy to find the down-town area.
- Yes—easy to locate.

Rate and comment on the overall appearance of the downtown (buildings, displays, signage, streetscape).

Average score: **7.75**

Range of scores: **7-8**

- Nice signs—limited parking time to 20 minutes?? Plenty of parking.
- Neat.

Rate and comment on the variety of shopping in the downtown.

Average score: **7**

Range of scores: **7-7**

- Good, did notice only one place for groceries.
- Not a big choice, but it is a small town.
- For a small town, good variety. Florist, gift shops.
- Surprised to find women's clothing, the pharmacy & hardware store were closed on the Saturday we visited. The grocery store was well stocked and easy to find. The bank is huge.
- Not a great variety of stores or merchandise.

Rate and comment on the customer service you received in the downtown.

Average score: **9.75**

Range of scores: **9-10**

- Wonderful service
- Every store I went to everyone was very helpful and nice.
- The stores sell local/regional products but don't market them as a group under a "buy local" or "best of northeast Iowa" campaign.
- Ate at the café, had ice cream at fountain shop. Neat places. Lots of atmosphere and great service.
- Very good. Very friendly.

Rate and comment on the signage in the downtown.

Average score: **7.3**

Range of scores: **6-9**

- Very Good.
- Nothing stood out.
- Not many signs downtown—nice sign for events.

Rate and comment on the window displays in the downtown.

Average score: **7.25**

Range of scores: **6-9**

- Noticed Fountain shop had Christmas theme in their windows.
- A little bit “too much” in some.
- Good.
- Cluttered, not good indicators of what’s for sale inside.
- Pleasant displays—some shop windows did not convey the product very well.

Rate and comment on the variety and quality of merchandise in the downtown.

Average score: **7.5**

Range of scores: **7-8**

- The merchandise was good quality—1 store carried high end retail goods—clothing.
- Some variety. Noticed hardware store.

Comment on the mix of facilities and services in the downtown (housing, professional services, retail, recreation, accommodation and food, industry, parks, etc.).

- Not any—little variety.
- Good!
- Excellent, retail, professional, food, parks.

Rate and comment on the quality and availability of parking in the downtown.

Average score: **7.75**

Range of scores: **6-9**

- Lots of parking but there was 1 sign that limited parking to 20 minutes?
- Good
- Too much parking available—because there weren’t many customers.
- Seemed like plenty of parking.

Rate and comment on the quality (appearance, adequacy, etc.) of lighting in the downtown.

Average score: **6**

Range of scores: **5-7**

- Lighting seemed adequate.
- Very nice. Clean quiet—very little foot traffic.

Does the downtown play a role in tourism? Is there potential for the downtown to play a greater role?

- Yes. I think it could play up the Soda Fountain theme.
- No, No.
- No-No. The shops could be found anywhere—nothing original.

Describe the residential housing mix in the downtown (apartment, single detached).

- Saw what looked like 2nd floor apartments. Not sure on the shape.
- Not a lot of housing on Main St. but the rest of town had very impressive looking residential housing.
- No-not much to choose from.
- No residential housing-downtown. Are there apartments upstairs?

Would you find the downtown a desirable place to live?

- I wouldn't want to.
- No!
- Are there any living spaces downtown?
- Not enough going on to suit me. Not enough food options

Were there any government or nonprofit organization activities that are serving as traffic generators for the downtown (city hall, post office, YMCA)?

- ??
- City Hall & Post Office
- City Hall & Fitness center—that's nice!!
- City Hall offers Internet. Very nice building.

- City Hall is downtown. Post office.

General Information about Overall Retail

Describe the mix of retail shopping available (malls, specialty shops, strip malls, big box stores).

- No Mall.
- No Malls.
- Good mix for a small town.
- Feel most shopping is done out of town.
- Not much mix of types. Only mom & pop types.

What retail goods do local residents appear to need to travel to surrounding communities for?

- Clothing, Furniture.
- Clothes, furniture, drugs, more choice of groceries.
- Shoes, electronics, appliances, furniture...the usual.
- Didn't see clothing or shoe. Didn't have any Dollar General, maybe grocery store provides.

What stores or services were missing that you would expect to find?

- Dollar General.
- We were surprised no Subway, franchises of other kinds. Not that that is a bad thing.
- Either there are no overnight accommodations, or we drove past without seeing any.

What retail stores or services did you find that were unusual or unexpected for a town of this size?

- Women's Clothing
- So many gift shops & florists.

What store(s) in this community would you travel a distance of more than 30 miles to patronize?

- None.
- I doubt that would happen in a small town like Reinbeck.
- Probably none.
- Fountain Shop—not sure about others. Might.

Rate and comment on the overall condition of the retail sector.

Average score: **6.5**

Range of scores: **5-8**

- It was okay, thinking it had potential to be fixed up cuter.
- Small novelty shops—Nothing that will attract people from other areas.

Other Retail Shopping Areas

Type: N/A

Location:

Rate and comment on the overall appearance.

Average score:

Range of scores:

Rate and comment on the variety of shopping.

Average score:

Range of scores:

Rate and comment on the customer service of businesses you visited.

Average score:

Range of scores:

Rate and comment on the variety and quality of merchandise.

Average score:

Range of scores:

Local Industries



Consider industries only within or adjacent to the community. What are the major industrial sectors in the community (i.e. manufacturing, construction, transportation)?

- Pioneer is the one I saw.
- Construction & Pioneer
- Construction, Seed.
- Pioneer, Tube or mold, Co-Op, Truck place

Who do you think are the major employers in the community?

- Pioneer is a very big presence.
- Looks good.
- Construction & Pioneer.
- PCI & Pioneer.
- PCI & Pioneer?

What are the major types of manufacturing in the community?

- Ag-Manufacturing.
- PCI & Pioneer.
- Not sure which is largest.

What are the major types of primary industry in the community (i.e. agriculture, mining, forestry or fishing)?

- Agriculture
- Agriculture—PCI, construction

Is the community noticeably dependent on any one type of industry?

- Yes, I'm sure they are dependant on at least the 2 large companies in town.
- Pioneer & PCI, but not sure how dependent.
- Pioneer, Ag in general.

Is there a well-defined industrial park or improved land where industries could locate or expand?

- Yes-Yes.
- Yes
- Not sure, industries line the main highway.
- Yes.

Are the industrial facilities well-maintained?

- Yes.
- Yes, for the most part!
- No, No clean up after a fire.
- They appeared neat & maintained, other than the burnt building.

Would this community be an attractive location for industrial development? Why or why not?

- It would depend on the industry. The community is a bit land locked—they would pay high transportation costs.
- With proximity to larger city, corn fields, would think so.
- At the edge of town there are spaces, providing that is practical for this small town.
- Not on main transportation routes.
- Yes, they are located on one side of town and the residential is on the other side.

Commercial Services

What types of commercial businesses serve the local community (high-speed Internet provider, print shops, etc.)?

- Saw a printing company. Saw a sign for free internet at City Hall.
- I didn't see any.
- ?

What commercial services appear to be missing in the community?

- ?
- Perhaps a "Quik Stop," Dollar General, or a fast food, pizza, etc. other than Casey's.

Professional Services

Are banks and ATMs conveniently located? Do the banks have convenient hours of service?

- Yes
- Yes, very. On main drag. Not sure, but assume ATM is 24 hours.
- Yes.
- Conveniently located.
- Yes-Yes.
- Yes—the bank is very nice.

How would you rate the adequacy of financial services for a community of this size?

Average score: **7.25**

Range of scores: **6-8**

- Not sure.
- I noticed several banks.

What other professional services are available (accounting, insurance, legal, etc.)? Are there any apparent gaps?

- Accounting, Insurance, Legal were seen.
- Accounting, legal, Adequate.
- I saw a few lawyers' offices, insurance.

Tourism

Does the community have a strong tourism sector? Please comment.

- Don't feel it is a tourist attraction
- No, or at least not is.
- No.
- Didn't notice much other than Fountain Shop.
- No.

Does the community have a slogan/brand?

- Yes. "The Town That Does Good Things Better." Very nice.
- Not displayed in town.
- Yes.
- Maybe—but it was not apparent from the visit.
- Yes, The town that does good things better.
- Yes, slogan.

Is the community well-known for an attraction or event?

- No.
- Not sure.
- ?
- No.
- No.

What have you seen that could be developed into a tourist attraction (natural or man-made)?

- Love the old-time fountain.
- ?
- Barn Quilts.

Rate and comment on the quality and appearance of existing tourist attractions.

Average score: **3.5**

Range of scores: **2-5**

- There are no tourist attractions. They should try to promote Barn Quilts.

Do you consider any of the attractions underdeveloped?

- Barn Quilts, hunting, snow mobiling?
- Not a lot of tourist attractions.

Are there any community events that could be expanded/developed to be a tourist attraction?

(No Comments)

Comment on the availability and selection of overnight accommodations in the community (hotels, motels, campgrounds, B&B's).

- I did not notice and hotel or motel.
- I didn't see any.
- Don't think there was any.

Are there facilities to accommodate a conference and/or a large number of visitors?

- None that we could see.
- We drove through.
- ?
- No.

Is there a Visitor's Center, Chamber of Commerce office, or other facility serving the needs of tourists? Comment on staff, facilities, signage, marketing material, maps, etc.

- Yes, downtown.

- ?
- Yes...sort of at City Hall. Closed on Saturday.

Rate and comment on the customer service of Chamber/Visitor staff:

Average score: (none given)
Range of scores:

- ?



Rate and comment on the quality of restaurants:

Average score: **7.4**
Range of scores: **5-8**

- Food was good—service good. Excellent sausage.
- The restaurant was clean, attractively decorated, and friendly service.
- Downtown Café.

Variety/Mix of restaurants:

Average score: **7.5**
Range of scores: **7-8**

- Mostly small town cafes, pizza restaurants.
- Found Italian, corner café, fountain café, and saw on the web there were two other restaurants.

What do local residents recommend on where to stay, eat and visit?

- ?
- N/A

What local restaurant, specialty shop or attraction would bring you back to this community in the near future?

- Fountain Café. Saw a couple of interesting shops, but didn't have time to stop.
- No.
- A small café with a soda fountain (old time).
- We are two hours plus in driving and would not return except for a special event.

Local Government Information

Are municipal offices conveniently located?

- Yes, right on Main Street.
- Yes, right downtown.

How would you rate the availability and quality of the following information provided by the municipal government?

Community brochure/guide:

Average score:

Range of scores: **1**

*Only one participant provided a rating for the above category

- ?, They had a glassed in case for community activities on the highway.

Business directory:

Average score:

Range of scores: **1**

*Only one participant provided a rating for the above category

- ?

Community profile (includes business and industrial sites):

Average score: (none given)

Range of scores:

How would you rate the helpfulness of government employees?

Average score: (none given)

Range of scores:

N/A

Public Infrastructure

Comment on and rate each of the following for quality, accessibility or availability.

Public transportation:

Average score

Range of scores: **2**

*Only one participant provided a rating for the above category

N/A

None

Sidewalks:

Average score: **8.3**

Range of scores: **7-10**

- Nice sidewalk throughout the town
- Very good, there seems to be sidewalks throughout the community

Streets:

Average score: **7.6**

Range of scores: **6- 9**

- Well maintained

Landscaping, street trees:

Average score: **8.0**

Range of scores: **7- 9**

- They could use some more landscaping in their downtown area.
- There was a lot of snow but the parks, etc appear to be well cared for.
- Parks looked good.

Public restrooms:

Average score: (none given)

Range of scores:

- ?
- N/A

Street signage:

Average score: **7.6**

Range of scores: **7-8**

- Good!
- Street signs good.
- Good.

Pay phones, drinking fountains, benches, public Internet access points, other misc.:

Average score: 5

Range of scores: 5

*Only one participant provided a rating for the above category

- I didn't see any pay phones. No internet access.
- City Hall has public Internet.
- Free Internet at City Hall. They hired the high school kids to build benches for them with money that they had donated by businesses & companies.

Planning

Do you see conflicting land uses in the community (i.e. a residential subdivision next to a pulp mill)?

- Not really.
- No.
- Not really.

Are all land uses appropriate (commercial, residential, green space, etc.)?

- Yes the town seems to have a nice plan.

- Mostly.

Did you experience traffic congestion anywhere?

- Nope
- No
- No

Are community facilities and infrastructure generally accessible for people with disabilities?

- Not especially.
- Not sure.

Does the community appear to be pedestrian/bike friendly?

- Yes—new sidewalks.
- Yes. (Pedestrian)
- Yes.
- Yes

Recreation, Faith, Culture and Heritage

Recreation

Rate and comment on the availability and appearance of each of the following types of recreational facilities.

Parks:

Average score: **9.25**

Range of scores: **8-10**

- Very pretty parks and well equipped.
- Very nice.



- Open space—looks like a great place to visit in the summer.

Public recreation facilities:

Average score: **9**

Range of scores: **8-10**

- Good location.
- Water park, nice water park.

Private recreation facilities:

Average score: (none given)

Range of scores:

- ?
- Is there a private club? There should be signs for recreation & parks.

Based on your impression, what do people appear to do for recreation/fun?

- I noticed a water park.

What recreational facility (private or public) in this community surprised you?

- Aquatic Center
- Wonderful senior housing for this small town. Hopefully has usual sr. recreation.
- The water park. (small town & they had that available there)
- I was surprised to see a water park in such a small community.

What recreational activities or facilities seemed to be missing?

(No comments)

Rate the overall suitability of the recreational facilities for each of the following populations using a 1-10 scale (10 is best):

6 – Families

5– Children (12 and under)

5 – Teens

7 – Senior citizens

7 – Singles, young adults

*Only one participant provided a rating for the above category

Entertainment

What does the community do for entertainment?

- Probably school and church activities.
- ?
- There doesn't appear to be much in the winter.

What entertainment opportunities do residents feel they lack?

(No comment)

Does the community have a vibrant nightlife?

- I don't think it does.
- I don't think so.

Faith/Religion



Comment on the number, appearance and selection of denominations.

- Too many to count, but they all looked great.
- There are many churches.
- Very good selection of beautiful churches.
- Several! Nice!

Are there any outstanding architectural or design features found on the religious buildings you visited?

- Yes.
- Yes, stained glass.
- We all loved the beautiful old Congregational Church.

Please rate the religious buildings and denominations represented in this community.

Average score:

Range of scores: **10**

- There are many denominations. The churches seem very nice.

Culture and Heritage

Does the community hold any events (festivals)? Which events are held annually?

- We did not see signs or notices for any events.
- Yes Christmas time and 4th of July.

What events are popular with residents?

(No comments)

Do the residents feel there is a lack of community events?

- Yes.

Does the community have historical buildings or places? Are they well-maintained?

- Nearly everything in town was well cared for.
- Bridge north of town.
- Yes, I didn't really see a lot of historical buildings, but the whole town was well maintained.

Notes

- Lots of ball fields—soccer & softball & baseball // aquatic center // parks // Beautiful churches—lots of choices. I didn't notice a museum.

General Observations

Role Playing

Would you consider this community as a suitable location for a young family?

- Yes. There are nice schools & parks—but...employment may be an issue
- Yes, good schools & churches

Would you consider locating your retail or service business here?

- Probably not. Not large enough to make much of an income.
- No—the town may be too small to have a retail store.
- No. I visited on a Saturday & the downtown was empty—I'd think with people off from work on the weekends, there would have been more going on downtown.

Would you consider locating a manufacturing business here?

- It would depend on the workforce. I'm not sure I would be able to attract enough workers. Also depends on my product—freight cost would be a lot, there are no railroads.
- No, not large enough.
- No.

Would you consider this a suitable location for a retired person?

- If public transportation was available to Waterloo.
- Yes, very nice looking retirement home. The main problem would be a hospital, but there are larger towns close.
- Yes—very nice senior center but is there a pharmacy? And adequate health care...

Would you consider this a suitable location for a young adult?

- Yes, I think there is local employment at the two large factories. Also there were a few homes for sale plus several apartment buildings. There seemed to be a lot of different things going on to be active in.
- Beautiful town. Would depend on employment opportunity.
- No—not enough to do for a single adult or young adult.

Would you consider visiting this community as a tourist?

- No—I don't see many tourist attractions. In fact we saw very little foot traffic.

- I would go back again. I'd like to see some of the gift shops and see a little more.

Information from Community Residents

Were community residents knowledgeable about their community?

- Yes, we only talked to a couple!
- Yes, the two places we visited.
- Talked to business owner. Seemed on top of events, economic development.

Did they refer you to someone else who would help?

- Yes—referred us to another store.

In general, did residents you spoke with have a positive or negative attitude toward their community? Why? Did you sense community pride?

- People spoke very nicely about their town. Suggested stores for us to visit.
- Positive.
- Positive, yes.
- Yes the residents did seem proud of their community.
- Positive, seemed to have pride.

Did residents identify a particular issue to be of major concern?

- No.

Overall, how would you rate the quality of information from community residents and business employees?

Average score:

Range of scores: 5

*Only one participant provided a rating for the above category

Using Your Senses



What did the community taste like? Was there any specialty food item, bakery, restaurant or candy store that you will remember?

- Ice cream sundae in a very unique café—catered to families. We also had a good lunch at “The Corner Café”
- No aromas.
- There was a soda fountain with many selections. The breakfast sausage was wonderful.
- N/A

What did the community smell like? Was there any offensive industrial, agricultural or sewage smells? What about pleasant odors?

- No offensive odors.
- It was fine as in unnoticeable. North of town someone was spreading manure and you could smell that at close range.
- N/A
- No smells. It was cold and windy the day we visited.
- There was some manure spreading north of town.

What sounds did you hear? Please comment on the level of noise in the community (traffic, industrial, birds, water falls, music on the street, trains, noon whistle, etc.).

- Nice & quiet. No trains or noon whistles.
- It was very quiet.
- Very very very quiet.
- N/A
- Not much noise.

How would you describe the overall environmental health of the community (air quality, litter, noise pollution, etc.)?

- Very good.
- It is very neat/well kept. There's lots of space dedicated to parks and there seem to be recent tree plantings.
- Very clean
- Good!

Did you experience anything that had a strongly negative or positive impact on the way the community felt to you (hateful or angry responses, crowded or deserted streets, safety issues, smiling faces, etc.)?

- No negative feelings.
- We figured there would be more activity on a Saturday morning. There were not many people out and two key stores were closed—pharmacy & hardware.
- For me it was the lack of people about.
- Friendly

Do you think your impression would be different if your visit occurred during evening hours?

- Maybe.
- ?
- I think evenings, in the winter at least would be worse. Weekdays might be better.
- I think we would have met more people but I think they would have been as friendly.

Wrap-Up

different from what you expected?

I was more impressed than I thought I would be. Not as big a “town” area as I thought there would be.

Was very much like I expected from web site

Had more beautiful, modern buildings than I thought.

Did the information you collected prior to the visit accurately reflect what you observed/experienced?

Most of the time!

Well—everything I saw in town I was able to find there.

Yes

They have a super web site, but that never prepares one for what you find.

What is the most outstanding feature of this community?

CLEAN! Lots of nice homes and apartments.

The entrance signs.

Clean, neat, well cared for residential area attracted me most. Downtown seems adequate for most everyday needs.

I really liked the fountain shop, old time one. They actually have families hang out & play games there.

List five positive things you observed about this community.

1.

- Nice Residential
- Reinbeck seems to have very well planned (“dupt”)—the business district is all together as is industry. Housing developments are completed and there is planned room for expansion.
- East entrance sign.

2.

- Nice Schools
- The recreation facilities are great.
- Neatness of homes

3.

- Beautiful Churches
- The senior citizens facilities are great.
- Friendliness

4.

- Friendly people
- The businesses we visited were well stocked & staffed and upbeat.
- Nice schools

5.

- Great jobs.
- Very neat and tidy...everywhere!
- Nice parks.

What are three potential opportunities available to the community?

1.

- Regional marketing—tie in more with the barn quilts, stores' regional products—candies, soaps, fudge; link stronger to county marketing—I didn't see any of that.
- If practical a motel

2.

- Have the school or FFA start some business sort of like JA
- If practical a quick stop service station

3.

- Get more people to move there—stressing available lots, low building costs and a great school. There didn't seem to be to many houses for sale. It seems great—safe, involved, caring place to raise kids.
- If practical a sign posted centrally naming upcoming events.

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

1.

- Small retail area
- Small population: small school, small stores, few jobs.
- Its out of the way

2.

- Streets (need to be improved)
- Off of main traffic routes

3.

- PCI needs to clean up some in back
- Not in an area known for attractions natural or man made

4.

- Grocery store needs some update
- Like most small town in Iowa/not unique

5.

- Clean up the factory that burned
- The charred warehouse at the entrance

What will you remember most about this community six months from now?

- Friendly, very clean town.
- Nothing. I really didn't care for the town.
- Attractive homes.
- The big Pioneer facility, the soda fountain, the unexpected clothing store, the sausage, the church with a for sale sign.

What have you learned here that has changed your impression of your own community?

- After seeing Reinbeck I am going to think of "all" of our positive things in our own community rather than any few negative things.
- We need a more attractive entrance to our town, especially from the East.
- No.
- It's a reminder of how different CJ is due to the Hispanic population. I'm even more grateful than I was for all of our retail & services.

Has this experience given you any new ideas about what is needed in your own community?

- Yes, I feel like we need to enforce an ordinance to "clean up" some of our private homes around town.
- We're working on it. Small towns like ours need money from grants.
- No.
- I think we need to work more on clean up/improvements to private homes, business & rentals. Create a culture of aesthetic pride.

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!

- I liked some of the organizational featured of the website—it seems to breakdown well into categories then subcategories then topics.
- Not within this short space of time but we are working on a neater entrance from the East.

Other comments:

- It doesn't seem to be a town that needs to grow. It has what it needs except more industry, and what Waterloo offers will meet other needs that are not practical for this town or ours. One negative note: One house in residential area had junk cars in yard.