



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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EXTENSION

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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

The visitation team from Beaver Dam was made up of: a couple with young children, and four adult males. Visits were conducted in September and November 2006. There were some challenges in getting the final report compiled so a follow-up visit was conducted on March 8, 2007 to fill in some of the voids.

1. Prior to Your Visit

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

Most of the information was for the region rather than the specific community of Kaukauna. This made it a little more difficult to find things specifically located in Kaukauna.

I requested information from the Fox Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau and received a visitors guide within a week.

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

The City of Kaukauna web site was easy to find but didn't have much information for visitors. For example, the "Calendar of events" focuses on things like garbage collection and city meetings. There was a fair amount of information on the 1000 islands environmental center but it also had old information (i.e. a calendar of events for 2005 at:

http://www.cityofkaukauna.com/departments/services.asp?DeptID=14&Services=X201X#_201

The City web site did have a "community link" to the Heart of the Valley Chamber of Commerce. While I applaud the regional efforts the user should also be able to get information by Community (i.e. pick a community and then find information specific to that community).

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

The City web site had two links to regional chambers of commerce. These two web sites did not have a lot of information specific to Kaukauna.

2. Past Perceptions

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

Please comment on your knowledge of this community:

I was already aware of the "black liquor" smell prior to my visit to Kaukauna. My sister and her family lived near the Girl Scout camp and have recently moved to the rural area near Hwy 55.

Since I was not familiar with Kaukauna I expected a community that was much more "out of the way" and isolated. I expected the people to be somewhat cautious and suspicious of "strangers"

I'd never been to Kaukauna but had driven past on the interstate many times on the way to Green Bay. I guess my only thoughts were of the paper mills and the possible smell mainly due to other people's comments.

I had a belief that the “main drag” was dated and unappealing. By “main drag” I mean the area starting at Dick’s Grocery and going toward the downtown.

I expected to see an old paper mill town with a pungent order in the air. I had average expectations of Kaukauna

For some reason, the ghost on the water tower has always caught my attention on Hwy 41. I have always thought of Kaukauna as one of the many paper mill towns in the Fox River Valley. I have to admit....I hate that smell.

3. The “Five Minute” Impression

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

I would recommend signage restrictions so that there is better uniformity.

I liked the orange city signs pointing to areas of interest very helpful...and the very polite “thank you for visiting.”

I was surprised how many schools Kaukauna does have.

Kaukauna seems to have a small town feel in many ways but can’t quite escape from the larger metropolitan areas around it. This is reflected in the signs most notably the billboards some of which don’t quite go along with the area.

I did not think, or at least notice, that Kaukauna had too many billboards.

The town’s overall appearance was fairly neat, well-kept homes with typical commercial areas—warehouses, factories, etc.

The entrance from the interstate was discouraging with lots of industrial use land and unattractive signage. I was then surprised by the downtown which looked generally very nice. The street layout was confusing but the areas of houses we drove through were nice and tidy.

The downtown retail area was a fairly normal mix of ornate brick buildings and newer 70’s and 80’s storefronts.

The streets were in good repair, however, Kaukauna’s river and locks made for confusing street layouts.

It is without a doubt a manufacturing community, but the river views, parks, and schools certainly caught my attention.

The town is much larger and more spread out than I expected. The water separates different parts of town and the entire community seems much more diverse than I expected.



4. Community Entrances

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

The entrances to town were varied, although we did have some difficulty with road construction blocking or detouring the S and SE sides of town. Coming in from 41 felt like entering a small town, while other parts of town seemed more like a sprawling urban “community upon community” with little to separate towns except a sign.

It was relatively easy to find the Chamber, Police and other services. Signs to these locations were relatively well placed.



Street signs were decent but location signs were difficult to find and/or hard to read. There were some interesting arrows painted on the roads that sparked a discussion about their usage.

I can't say if I saw any welcome signs.

I've already commented on the primary approach for the interstate. I found all the other entrances but one to be neither good nor bad. The town started without fanfare and without any negatives. The one area that I found most distracting was entering the town from the other cities that have grown together. There is no clear signage that helped me understand I was no longer in Kaukauna or entering it.

Approaching from the North via Hwy 55, the community feels “industrial” and non-descript. I did notice a welcome sign along with numerous civic club signs.

In addition, the Kaukauna water tower serves as a large welcome sign from Highway 41. The old vacant dog park on the highway is a very odd site. They appeared to be tearing down one of the walls but it wasn't obvious what was planned for this long vacant complex.



From the west on County Road Z, one can not really tell where the Village of Combined Locks ends and Kaukauna begins. Only the alternate street parking sign provides a clue.



From the East on CE you pass by a very nice High School and Golf Course. I also noticed a County Trail system (interestingly, it isn't plowed for the kids going to the High school, but it was plowed on the west end!). And the parents probably complain about their kids wanting to drive to school! Also went by a shopping mall.

From the West on CE you also see several schools and the County Trail system. I went by a nice bike store. I did like the “Thanks for visiting our city” sign as I left town on the East (On the back side of welcome sign).

Highway 55 from the South – Rather non-descript, but did pass a nice looking new clinic. After what looked like a relatively new stretch of highway on the edge of town, I passed over a portion of road that was in poor shape.

From the East on Z, you have several nice river views and you go by several conservation areas.

Frankly, I don’t think I have ever seen a community with so many entrances. This creates some real challenges for the community as the communities seem to melt together. Very few of the entrances had formal entrance signs. The alternate street parking sign seemed to be the most frequent “welcome sign”. I recognize that this is required by statute, but it was often the only indication that you were entering Kaukauna. I didn’t even notice any of the official green

signs with the population that you typically see on state highways. The Kaukauna Banners were a nice touch and might be expanded to some of these entrance roads.

Entrance signs were more obvious at some city entrances than others; they also varied somewhat in impact.



5. Downtown Business Area

Observations about the general appearance of the downtown area:



The downtown business area, while divided by the river, was surprisingly interesting. I enjoyed the small shops and restaurants, and especially the park and seating by the river. I was also very impressed with the signage and the ease with which it made navigating such an interesting geographical area.

The downtown area was alright, but needed more of a distinct personality, although I do think it is more autonomous in fluidity than Beaver Dam’s downtown. I again think that a theme or uniform approach would do well for the area. It’s such a shame to lose the beauty and history to poorly

planned expansion or under-funded renovation.

The downtown was interesting as there was not just one main street. Each of them however was nice with most of the shops occupied. Nice restaurants and attractive architecture. The river goes through the downtown and the way the city grew around it is interesting to explore. I found the water level to be way too low in the river as it was being diverted down a side channel for some unknown purpose. A number of little parks downtown and sitting area's that were well maintained and pleasant stops. I found that we got out of the car a number of times to look at things which made the trip a nicer experience.

A normal downtown area for an older city.

Nice old buildings and average, newer buildings.

Not many vacant storefronts.

The retail area seemed to be spread out over quite a large area.

Storefronts were acceptable

There were actually several "downtown" areas. There were traditional businesses located on Second Street, Third Street, and Wisconsin Avenue. The Heritage Mall building was very attractive. There were however several businesses that were vacant on this street, including an attractive "Electric City Music Store" building on the corner. Many of the businesses that were vacant had not yet cleared their sidewalks (I did notice one house that seemed to have a city tag/fine on the front door for not shoveling....I didn't see this on any of the businesses). The businesses on Wisconsin Avenue seemed to be the most vibrant. I really liked the Kaukauna Coffee and Tea Shop.



General Appearance of buildings, displays, signage:

I did not think, or at least notice, that Kaukauna had too many billboards.

Most of our walking around was in parks or the downtown. I thought the downtown was nicely put together with a number of wonderful buildings and businesses.

The city signage was a consistent orange “Kaukauna” sign.

Consistent, legible signs worked well for us.

There were a few false facades that looked a little tacky. For example the metal siding on the front of the “Initial Impressions” store. Sign and facade on the “Look Back in Time store looked a bit faded.

Most billboards and signs were well kept—not too obtrusive. A few were shabby.

Newer revitalization downtown including coffee shops made the area feel much more friendly than just an area full of taverns.



The variety of shopping:

A pretty standard collection of businesses for an older city. For the most part they were well kept.

How would you rate the variety and quality of the merchandise?

I thought the Look Back in Time antique mall had an interesting selection of goods. There was another antique store on this store but it was closed (with a sign saying to call a phone number to open). I went by an interesting looking hardware store.

What kind of customer service did you receive when you entered the retail businesses?

Most of the clerks were friendly, but didn't go out of there way to provide help or find out what I was interested in. When I went in to the antique mall the person working there was busy talking to someone else. However, when I went to leave and asked for advice on where to eat, she was very friendly. Put in a good plug for Ho Ho's and their pie!

Were there any governmental or nonprofit organizational activities that might serve as a magnet for the shopping district?

City Hall was located near the second and third street businesses. I also noticed a St. Vincent's store. The entrance signs to the community indicated that there were a number of nonprofits active in the community.

Were there the following public amenities?

Pay phones (working with phonebook intact!):

Did not notice any.

Drinking fountains:

Did not notice any.



Benches:

I appreciated the memorial benches that were on the river walk at the dam. It was pleasant. However, I would recommend that all memorials be the same and the benches as well.

Gorgeous

Public restrooms:

City Hall had restrooms as did many of the parks.

Appealing landscaping:

There were a few very nicely landscaped areas.

Did you have any difficulty finding parking? Could you access multiple services from where you parked?

Parking was plentiful, with lots of on-street parking options.

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

Unfortunately finding the other business areas was difficult as I had a hard time finding where the city ended and the other city's around it began. The industrial area off the interstate had some signs in disrepair and a couple of large open area's storing steel pipes.

The Fox Cities region has many shopping options and in fact is the marketing slogan on the Fox cities Visitors Guide ("Wisconsin's shopping Place"). However, most of the shopping options are outside of Kaukauna.

What types of businesses did you notice that would fit the general category of "Big Box Retailer"?:

I didn't notice a lot of big box retailers but did go by a few shopping malls including the one on County Road CE. Also went by a Dollar General but would not classify this as a "Big Box".

General Appearance of buildings, displays signage:

Other areas nearby downtown were more industrial in nature but fit well within the overall personality of the community.

Some signage seemed ratty and falling apart.

The variety of shopping:

While I'm not a big fan of big box retail, I was expecting to see a stronger presence by some of these chains. I suspect they are in the area but not in Kaukauna.

Did you have any difficulty finding parking? Could you access multiple services from where you parked?

It was very easy to park in the Second Street/Third Street business area and access most of the businesses and services. The same was true of Wisconsin Avenue which had lots of angled parking stalls.

7. Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas

Is there a defined area where manufacturing industries could easily locate/expand?

This was a bit strange. When I entered the city from the North, I certainly noticed the businesses (i.e. Bassett Industries). However, you couldn't really see the business park behind these established businesses and there was no sign indicating that this was the city's industrial park. It wasn't until I stopped by City Hall and was told that there was an industrial park that I began to look. I did see one of the orange directional signs directing me to the industrial park and was taken back to the area that I had driven by. When I drove around this area, I realized how large this business park really was. It really needs some signage with contact information. This is clearly an industrial town, and one which should be promoting its opportunities in this arena.



It wasn't until I stopped by City Hall and was told that there was an industrial park that I began to look. I did see one of the orange directional signs directing me to the industrial park and was taken back to the area that I had driven by. When I drove around this area, I realized how large this business park really was. It really needs some signage with contact information. This is clearly an industrial town, and one which should be promoting its opportunities in this arena.

Seemed very much like many other industrial park areas; didn't look like explosive growth but also seemed to have enough business and businesses to not look out of place.

Didn't see a well defined business park, these area's seemed scattered throughout the area.

What did you find attractive about the potential locations for manufacturing/commercial businesses?

Business certainly seems to be prospering for the businesses that are here, and there are a lot of them. I couldn't get a sense of how many lots were actually still available for development.

How would you evaluate the general health of manufacturing businesses that are currently located in the community?

It seems to be very healthy. The paper industries along the river are also obviously major employment centers. They appear to be very old facilities and I know the paper industry is hurting in Wisconsin. This would make me very nervous.

It's hard to say if it was growing. Some appeared to be old, some new. Thilmany Industries appeared to be a very large employer with parking lots full of employee cars.

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?



When I stopped by City Hall and talked with someone in the clerks office I was told that there was an industrial park but that I would have to talk with someone in planning. There was no general information on either the industrial park or the community in the Clerk's office. I didn't have time to stop by the Planning office. The clerk was helpful and told me to also stop by the Chamber office.

The Chamber office didn't have much in the way of community profiles, maps of the industrial park, or information on vacant buildings.

8. Health Care Services

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

There appeared to be a surprising number of clinics that serve Kauakauna. The Kauakauna Clinic appeared to be the oldest and most established clinic. However I noticed an impressive new facility for Aurora Health on the edge of town. There was also a newer clinic next to the Bike trail on County Road CE. None of the parking lots at any of the clinics were all that full. I'm used to waiting a long time at clinics and was thinking that this community seemed to be very well served.

Comment on the availability and condition of facilities for physician, dental, optometrist, and other medical care:

I saw chiropractors, clinics, optometrists, and all of the medical services a household could need. I don't recall seeing a dentist's office, but I'm sure it was there.

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

I saw at least two assisted living /nursing home facilities: St. Paul Manor on Wisconsin Avenue and Roundhouse Manor.

9. Housing

How would you evaluate the existing mix of housing stock?

The residential areas we saw ranged from old, run-down homes to beautiful homes likely valued at \$400,000 and up.



Were there any indications that the housing market was depressed?

I didn't see a lot of for sale signs or Real Estate offices

Were there any signs that it would be difficult to find acceptable housing?

I saw a wide range of options for housing.

I saw everything from the very nice River Park Place apartments to new single family subdivisions to stately historic homes. There seemed to be a very nice mix of housing.

The residential areas were well kept and nice. There are some absolutely beautiful yards and houses on the river. There are also some very well kept and nice parks along the river. I was very surprised and stopped a number of times to look at various houses / parks.

There were many opportunities for housing within close proximity to the River (including the apartment complex and Roundhouse Manor. Residential neighborhoods were as varied as the business areas; while there appeared to be a good mix of different residential styles and income levels, they all worked well together in terms of an overall personality. Some of the river properties were, of course, gorgeous; however I was perhaps most impressed that some of the newer construction was able to fit within the styling's of the neighborhoods and not stand out like a sore thumb as in some communities.

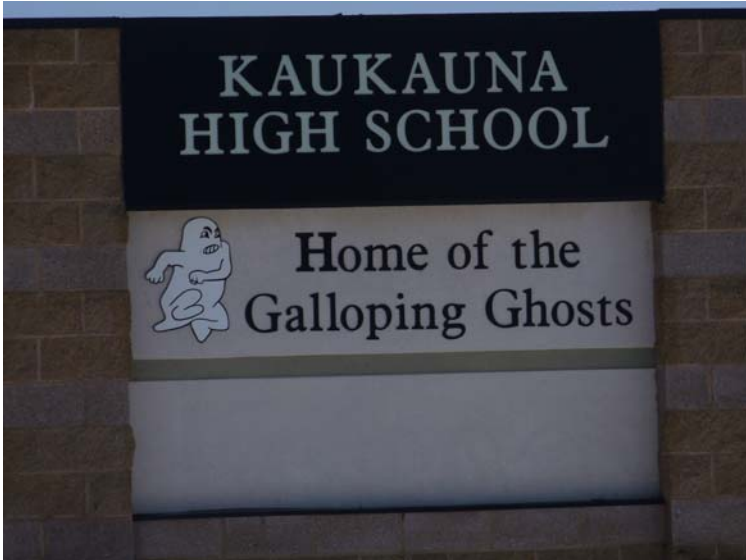
10. Schools

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:

I was surprised at the number of schools in Kaukauna.

The schools I saw seemed to be large and in decent repair.

The schools were neat and well marked.



There was an amazing number of both public and parochial schools. I think I counted as many as 5 elementary schools, the middle school and a very nice high school. Schools would appear to be a very high priority for this community and would be very appealing to young families.

School downtown near business / industrial area looked and “felt” old.

Pre-School/Kindergarten/Head Start/Day Care facilities:

I did not notice these facilities but suspect that they were there given the number of schools.

Elementary School:

I saw a range of elementary schools ranging from some nice older schools that had been nicely maintained to newer schools on the edge of town. They seemed to be well distributed throughout the community.

Middle School/Junior High:

Unlike the elementary schools that were spread out across the community, there appeared to be one middle school located next to the river. I thought it was great that the school had a river view!

Higher Education (Community College, Technical College, University):

Kaukauna is in close proximity to an outstanding technical school system and close to the University of Wisconsin Green Bay and UW-Fox Valley. I suspect the Fox Valley Technical College System is a huge asset to the local manufacturing businesses.

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

It’s clear that education is a priority for the city of Kaukauna. I was impressed to see that the Kaukauna Area School District had a section in the brochure from the Heart of the Valley Chamber of Commerce (with a link to the school web site at: www.kaukauna.k12.wi.us) The school’s web site is outstanding with a lot of great information.

11. Faith/Religion

Comment on the number of denominations represented in the community:

I saw a number of churches in town. I believe most denominations were represented.

Comment on the physical appearance of the churches in the community:

There were some very nice older churches with stained glass windows.



Are there any signs of church-sponsored community services?

I was surprised to see four parochial schools in addition to all of the fine public schools in the community. I also noticed a sign promoting the St. Mary's fish fry.

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?

We didn't see anything like this.

12. Civic

Does it appear as though there are a variety of nonprofit organizations and clubs within the community?

We saw a St. Vincent De Paul's building, and noticed a number of civic organizations promoting their clubs on the entrance signs.

13. Residents

In what ways did you find (or not find) people helpful?

People did seem to be friendly as my family and I traversed the city. I was traveling with my wife and children, ages 4 and 5. My kids were appreciated and not treated as an annoyance by persons we came upon at HoHo's, the Chamber, the 1,000 Island Park, and the Main Event restaurant.

Everyone I talked with in the community was very helpful. I enjoyed some of the banter at HoHo's between area residents. People I talked to on the street, seemed to like the community and spoke well of what it had to offer.

The people were very nice and directions were well thought out and detailed. Lunch in the downtown was a great experience. In fact there are a couple of restaurants that I didn't get to try that will generate a trip up the area to try.

There weren't a lot of people out that day; not sure whether or not it was unusual.

How did people talk about their community? What were their attitudes about their schools, public leaders, and community services?

I did visit the Chamber office. The woman who greeted me was very cordial and did provide me with a brochure of 1,000 Island Park. I would have felt a warmer reception at the Chamber if I was not talking through a small window and partitioned off from the rest of the Chamber by double doors. I would recommend that the interior doors be open and inviting as opposed to having people talk through a small window.

Were community members knowledgeable about their community or able to refer you to people who were?



Most of the people we spoke with were friendly and tried to help if we asked questions.

It became rather humorous after a while, but nobody in the community seemed to know the origin of the “galloping ghosts”. For years that image on the water tower captured my imagination, but nobody seemed to know where it came from. The waitress at Ho Ho’s said that she gets asked this “all the time” but never remembers the origin. Another person simply said that the mascot for the High School is a ghost on horse back. Others didn’t seem to know what the “electric city” slogan was based on, although I saw the

utility building next to the river and assumed that the city is generating its own electricity.

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?

I saw a very diverse population around town. I am assuming that the relatively high wages paid by the strong manufacturing sector provide livable wages for many families in the area.



14. Public Infrastructure

Streets, street signing and lighting:

Direction signs to parks, schools, etc. were fine.

Signs were plentiful and easy to read.

Streets were in general good repair, I liked how wide many of them were, and especially in residential area’s where lots of traffic goes

through.

I liked the orange city signs pointing to areas of interest. This was very helpful.

Signage that tells where you are was perhaps my biggest sign problem. We kept venturing out of the city and into surrounding cities without really knowing it.

Streets and roads were in good shape generally, although due to construction we were unable to fully explore all areas. Some of the one-way traffic was a little confusing, as were some of the markings on the roads themselves.

The streets were in good repair, however, Kaukauna's river and locks made for confusing street layouts.

The streets were a bit confusing at times since they had to deal with the river. Not too much street traffic.

I found the street to be under construction, but still very attractive and clean.

There was only one stretch of road on Hwy 55 South that was in poor condition.

I saw sections of the city that had some very classy older style lights (downtown area near city hall), and other sections that had the large, ugly new street lights. The bridge coming into town that offers some nice views of the river would be very nice looking if it was lined with the historic lights. Right now there is an odd mixture of old and new.

Land Use Planning:

The older manufacturing facilities dominate much of this city. There is not much that can be done about that. I liked the fact that the industrial park was located on the north end of town away from the residential areas. I liked the County trail that connected some of the residential areas to the high school. I also liked the distribution of parks and schools throughout the community.



Sidewalks:

Sidewalks were well maintained

The sidewalks in front of vacant businesses and houses often did not have the snow removed.

Public Restrooms:

The public restrooms we saw/used were in good shape.

The parks we visited were very nice and very clean with nice, clean restrooms.

City/Village/Town Hall:

City Hall was not all that attractive but seemed very functional. I liked that fact that it was located in the Main Street area and the staff were helpful.

Police/Fire Protection/Emergency Medical Services Facilities:

I can't recall seeing a hospital—saw some clinics/doctor's offices.

We didn't see a hospital but there were numerous clinics. We assumed that there were large hospitals in adjoining communities?



There was both a full time fire department and ambulance service located right next to City Hall.

I have to say that the police presence in your community appears to be very high. On one hand that could be a very good thing. On the other hand, at times, I found it to be a little intimidating. Before coming to your community I heard about one of our team members being “shoed away” by an officer when he was taking pictures of city hall. When I visited in March, I saw at least 3 vehicles pulled over during my short visit. Even more strange, was seeing police cars blocking traffic on three different streets with lights flashing (One in front of the Memorial bridge, another at Second Street, and a third near the Main Bridge in town). I also saw a squad care with flashing lights at the Middle School. Now, there may have been some unusual event taking place in your community during my visit, but it made me wonder what was going on (3-8-07).



Public Parking:

There was parking anytime we needed it.

It was difficult to see backing out of the angled parking spots on Wisconsin Avenue.



Library:

It was impressive coming into town across the river on the bridge and be greeted by a well maintained historic library. There was plenty of parking and it was located near the river. I imagined myself taking a long lunch break reading a book by the river.

Landscaping/street trees:

Nice Street trees. I believe I saw a sign proclaiming the city to be a “Tree City”. I also saw a few nice landscaped areas.



I wish I had come with the group in the summer. I think there are great possibilities for the riverfront areas.

Pay phones, drinking fountains, benches, other misc.:

The sitting area’s downtown were a great detour and well taken care of. Lots of good photo ops.

Kaukauna has a nice raised area for viewing the river. It also has bronze statues and benches—very inviting. This is VERY attractive and would make me want to stop and wander on my next trip.



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?

The slogan “The Electric City” has little value towards attracting visitors but might be appealing to potential residents and businesses....is energy more affordable in Kaukauna? I didn’t see any indication of any major tourism events. I did see an old poster in City Hall promoting “River Jam ‘93”. I thought that was a great idea (music on the river), but wasn’t sure if it was still being held. The City web site provided no clue as to the origin of “The Electric City”. In fact the web site refers to the City of Kaukauna as “the friendly city”.

There is potential. You have a very nice river park and boat landing. I suspect you might have fishing tournaments? The County trail system offers potential for bikers, but I wasn’t clear where it went.

I think you have some potential in developing an event around the school’s “Galloping Ghost”. Halloween is growing as a major holiday for retailers and I was thinking that you might be able to hold some major event around Halloween. Perhaps a haunted house at the Grignon Mansion or some other appropriate older home in town? I know that the Jaycee’s in some towns do these kinds of events.

I read about the 1000 Islands Environmental Center, but did not see that when I visited. Sounds impressive...perhaps needs better signage?

Comment on the availability and selection of overnight accommodations:

I only noticed the Settle Inn and this surprised me a bit for a city of this size. However, you are on a major highway and are part of the much larger Fox River Valley that offers a lot of other options.

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

See comment above...I saw no indication of any major events in town.

Are there any significant natural features that have the potential of drawing people to the community?

Certainly the river is a major resource that has potential for community events. I saw a number of eagles along the river and other waterfowl. The park system is outstanding. You have a very nice park system!

Are there any significant man-made attractions?

Lot’s of very nice parks, especially along the river.

The dam is very nice.

Had some beautiful parks—ball fields and nice sturdy looking park structures. Also very nice soccer fields



The Grignon Mansion looked very interesting. Its unfortunate that it is located so close to the older manufacturing base. The smells were pretty bad here.



Also, while traveling on hwy 55 there was good signage directing travels to turn on to DuCharme Street. However, there was no sign at the end of the road directing you to turn left on to Augustine (There was a sign directing people to the soccer fields). I drove around several times including the entire length of Grignon Street without success. Finally, I noticed someone walking and asked him for directions. He was very helpful and gave me directions. The mansion looks very interesting. I was also amazed by the size of the log cross section on display across from the mansion.

This community appears to be very supportive of youth. In addition to the fine school system, the park system is outstanding. I noticed a baseball field dedicated to little league and a skateboard park across from city hall, and

soccer fields behind the mansion.

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.

I did visit the Chamber office. The Chamber is a nice building in a highly visible location.



The Chamber office was shared with near-by communities and had a brochure on area golf courses.

I did not see any business/attractions brochures or directories.

The Chamber had a nice map of Kaukauna and other adjacent towns on one map.

The Chamber office was very visible and in a prime location.

The Chamber office had limited local information.

The Chamber staff was quite helpful.

The brochures I found at the chamber were helpful and well put together. The literature seems to lump all the cities together with little distinction between them. Understandable considering they literally run into each other along a number of major roads. Over all I liked the literature that was available.

The Chamber office was in a very nice building.

The Chamber office was in a very visible location and appropriately located on the river. When I stopped by here in March, the woman that was staffing the office was very helpful and friendly. She gave me several brochures and maps and was helpful in making recommendations on restaurants and hotels. The small window separating the staff from the public felt a little cold, but she came out and showed me some of the brochures in the rack on the outside of the building.

Plenty of information at the chamber office, easy to access from outdoors.

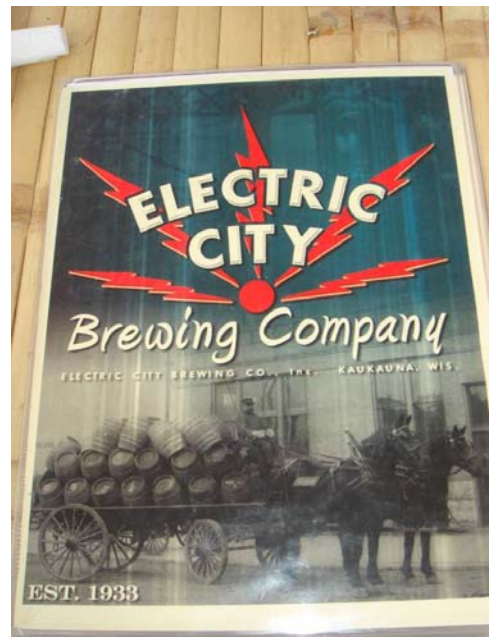
They sent us to neighboring communities rather than Kaukauna when we asked about golf.

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

My family and I went to the coffee shop and thoroughly enjoyed the patio. My kids scorned the summer sugar bees while we relaxed in the shade. Very nice.

We ended our visit having dinner with my sister and her family at the Main Event. Good service, nice area, although I was surprised that the business across the road failed to survive. But, being that a business failed, it did not appear to be a blighted area which can be problematic (note: this restaurant is actually in Little Chute...hard to tell!).

We had a very enjoyable lunch at the “Electric City Brewery”. Good food, nice menus, with a fun, helpful waitress (Jenna).



I would consider stopping again at the coffee/tea shop or the antique mall downtown.

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?

I had a very nice lunch at Ho Ho's. The pie and service were outstanding. Strange, but as a kid I remember a cheese spread that was sold in a small crock that I believe was made in Kaukauna? If that cheese spread is still made, I don't recall seeing a cheese store.



Blue-collar American – we had great food (and great service).

I didn't get a chance to eat at as many restaurants as I'd have liked to. The ones I did were outstanding in both food and service. Character best describes the downtown and it's tastes.

What did the community smell like?

There was a bit of a river smell just like Beaver Dam's river area. No paper mill smell like I expected.

When the wind was blowing the wrong way, the industrial smells could be bad at times. I have to admit, that's a smell I don't like. On the other hand, I have relatives that live in a town with an oil refinery and



they tell me they don't smell a smell that is very obvious to me as a visitor. Perhaps this is like the hog farmers in Southwest Wisconsin who say that the smell of manure is the "smell of money".

Didn't smell badly at all which was nice. The parks along the river smelled crisp and fresh – it was fall which is how fall is supposed to smell.

The community smells like a city that has found it's place—I'd guess there was a downturn in the area that was followed by some revitalization; the community now seems to be comfortable with it's status.

What sounds did you hear?

There was no shortage of industrial sounds, water running along the river, police sirens, trains.

Normal city sounds.

The water was almost always nearby so there was plenty of sound from that.

Everyday living

Did you have any experiences that impacted the way the community feels?

It is a typical older city in good condition. There seems to be money around for very nice homes and decent streets and city services.

I found the downtown streets comfortable and inviting. I found the residential area along the river the same and the rest of the city seemed to just flow together and disappear.

The community felt very industrial to me. If I was younger with a family and looking for work, this would likely be a community that would appeal to me.

16. Wrap-up

What are the 5 most positive things that you observed about the community?

Plenty of parks—Riverside Park is a beauty.
Some outstanding homes—both old and new.
The city swimming pool looked nice
Nice Chamber office
The river, while very green, is an asset and has to be protected.

The School system
The Parks system
The River
Manufacturing industries
Part of a prospering Fox River Valley Region

Parks
Signs
Friendliness
Sense of community
Cleanliness

Chamber office
Downtown
Parks
Wide roadways
Restaurants

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

This community is what it is...its industrial. That has an upside for employment but isn't very attractive to someone just passing through.

Kaukauna is really part of a region. One community tends to simply merge into another. I left wondering about the potential for consolidated public services or even merging communities into one? There are so many entrances into the city that it is hard to tell when you enter or leave the City of Kaukauna.

Police presence. Again, there must have been something unusual going on during my visit but the police presence seemed a little overbearing. Every time I looked there seemed to be a police car.

Aging industrial buildings/facilities

Industrial odors

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

The belief of mine that the main drag was unappealing was incorrect.

My visit to Kaukauna was pleasant and I would do it again. But, sad to say, I would do it again only because my family lives locally, not as a destination. But I did, and would, return to the coffee shop, the river walk, and the nature center.

The food and friendliness of the wait staff.

The downtown, the parks and the houses / parks along the river. It's easy to look past the entrance from the interstate when thinking about the nice lunch downtown at the brewery.

Riverside Park was great.

I think my impression of Kaukauna is that it will be a nice town to raise a family and it must have enough jobs nearby to make that affordable.

I will remember this community as a "family friendly" city that has invested in schools, parks, and places for kids to recreate.

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 really liked the viewing area above the river with the bronze statues. I'm giving some thought as to how that could be implemented in Beaver Dam.

The use of public art (i.e. the statues).

I don't know if this is an idea I'm going to steal, but I'm concerned about the future of the paper industry in Wisconsin. I'm left wondering what communities like Kaukauna will look like in twenty five years.

River Area—encourage the city to stop dumping into our river and make it a more pleasant part of the city downtown.

***Please don't forget to send a copy of your final report to:
ablewis@facstaff.wisc.edu (an electronic version would be appreciated!)***

Andy Lewis

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