



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): Fennimore, Wisconsin

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Date of visit and time spent: 08/30/04, 08/25/04, 08/28/04

Weather on date of visit: mid 60's overcast cool day for time of year / Sunny – 75 Degrees / Cloudy, humid

1. Prior to Your Visit

- I did attempt to go to the website – but only was able to find a site through the area guides.net. I eventually found out I was spelling Fennimore with only 1 “n” – when I did find the website it was excellent. Very informative about the communities services.
- Prior to visiting Fennimore I went to their website, which I was easily able to access by typing in www.fennimore.com. They have a wonderful website, very easy to navigate and it very accurately portrayed their community. There were plenty of contact numbers and as I said very easy to navigate.
- I browsed the Fennimore.com web site. Excellent!! Information source and guide. Whomever designed and updates should be complimented. All information prior to visit was obtained through website.

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

- Website is wonderful. It was very informative and complete.

Did it accurately reflect what you saw?

- Yes, website was very current and up-to-date.

Did the information arrive in a timely fashion?

- Information arrived a day after I e-mailed Linda Parish. I even got their Thursday's paper on Thursday!

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

- Not at all

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

- Good
- The information received from Linda was very complete. It included their buyer's guide, along with their town's newspaper, information about the schools, medical facility and museums.

2. Past Perceptions

- I have driven through the community of Fennimore many times and have stopped to eat at the café across from the library a couple of times. I always thought the little park area with the train was very eye catching and unique, along with the mouse at the cheesehouse. Did not have any real pre-conceived ideas about Fennimore – other than they seem to really have a lot of traffic through here.

- I had only been through Fennimore a couple of times prior to this visit. The only thing I had remembered was the railroad park and the Hardee's. The thing that I remembered the most was the hand dipped ice cream cones at the Hardee's restaurant and the mural on the wall of a building in the little park across the street from Hardee's. I think my past perception was of a small town with not a lot going on. It interested me however to go to this town, especially to see how they might be growing and how they are dealing with accepting and respecting the growing Amish community.
- Did not have any past perceptions of the community.

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

Please comment on your knowledge of this community:

- Being in a rural area, I felt this community may be depressed like many small rural towns. What I remember about this town from past experiences is the train.

3. The “Five Minute” Impression

- The Fennimore signs at each entrance to the town are very well done – nice size. There appears to be several churches in the community. I really liked the idea of having your fire and rescue/American Legion/City Offices all together in one building – very nicely done. The fund raising goal board was nice to see for the Rescue Squad. Also, liked that some businesses downtown have the same shingling appearance – pulls them together. The downtown area seems to be quite busy – lots of traffic through town. There are several quick marts. The mouse by the cheese house is quite a tourist attraction – people having pictures taken with. Also, the information center with the train and mural on the building is very inviting. There was an auto repair shop with a truck with demolished cars sitting on it the whole time we were visiting – sat right on the main drag – not a good look for the community.
- Upon entering town from Hwy 61 North I noticed a beautiful Welcome sign depicting their railroad history. Then shortly after that I noticed a gravel/sand yard with lots of weeds (a real eye sore) on the left hand side...across from the hardware store. The gravel/sand yard was very unattractive. Then I noticed a restaurant (Fredrick's) that was done to look like a train motif...Looked like a nice place to dine. Noticed the Hardee's and the train museum and train park and the mural. Upon entering downtown we noticed a very nice newer Public building housing the chamber of



commerce...and a very nice new bank done also to look like a railroad depot. Nice landscaping around bank. Noticed on beautiful yard full of flowers on the right had side. I noticed at least four chain gas station convenience stores. Kwik Trip, BP, Casey's and Cenex, which surprised me. I noticed the downtown where the restaurant/hotel building was...looked interesting. Drove out to the industrial park/college campus area. Overall I would say my first impression was of a small town that is pretty progressive, especially with the new development in the industrial park. It was much different than my past recollection.

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

- The day was overcast and rainy and the temperature was around 70. "More cosmopolitan that I thought." "Village has a lot to offer." "Wasn't first impressed, until we got out of the car and starting looking at shops."

4. Community Entrances

- Each entrance has a beautiful welcome sign with the train theme. There were small signs directing to the parks but had difficulty finding any signs directing to schools other than the school crossing signs. Also, no sign directing to medical facilities.
- We liked what we saw

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

Approached from Hwy 18 West: I felt the city could use a lot of improvement and interesting development on that end of town. Beautiful sign, but not much else.

Approached from Hwy 18 / West to East: Appeared to be the lowest traffic entrance into the town. Did not seem to be any growth or improvements on this end.

Approached from Hwy 18 West : We found another welcome sign and Kiwanis and Lion's sign.

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*Approached from Hwy 61 South:* The cheese factory looked like it might be open for tourists. Not a lot else appealed from that way into town.

*Approached from Hwy 61 / South to North:* Noticed the new housing subdivision to the west. New homes being built, which would indicate that there is some growth.

*Approached from Hwy 61 South:* We found Igor the mouse and had to stop for some cheese curds.

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Approached from Hwy 18 East: Obviously the industrial park, and the technical college mark this area and show the new growth and development of this town.. However entering the town itself one of my first impressions was the leaning Lions Club sign along side a barnyard.

Approached from Hwy 18 / East to West: Sign to high school. Nice signage in industrial park. Signs to museums. Seemed to be the end of town that is growing. All businesses were very well kept, including the farm on the edge.

Approached from Hwy 18 East : We found the Industrial Park with ease. Very clean and well kept.

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*Approached from Hwy 61 / North to South:* Signs to parks very helpful. No signs to schools that I could find on 61. All crosswalks clearly marked. Museum signs. Village entrance signs were very nice.

*Approached from Hwy 61 North:* Attractive

*Approached from Hwy 61 North :* We noticed many signs advertising local businesses. Welcome sign was colorful and neat with train. There was a small Amish produce market going on.

*Approached from Hwy 61 North :* The highway appeared to be in very good condition. The Welcome sign was beautiful and showcased the town's apparent railroad history. Railroad museum/tourist information located on this end of town was nice to see. Signage for schools could be more prevalent, since school was tucked way back into the residential area. Street signs look to be new and in good condition but could be larger and easier to read. Main part of downtown was aesthetically pleasing with old buildings being used for retail space. I did notice a couple of empty buildings and for sale signs.

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12 Street: We found the Mason's Lodge to be in disrepair. Could you use a little TLC. (See picture)



5. Downtown Business Area

- I visited several of the downtown stores. Some of the storefronts seemed to be quite dirty (windows, siding etc...), as if roadwork was taking place. This was not the case, unless it has been done in the past and just not cleaned afterward. Some window washing would help make the buildings sparkle. There is quite a good mix of businesses – doll/toy store, furniture, pharmacy, florist, grocery, and hardware. These are all clearly marked. There are just a few empty buildings where it looks like businesses have left. There were quite a few law offices, which seemed kind of odd for a town this size, some realty shops, and several banks. The clerk at the doll/toy store was very friendly – along with a gentleman in the store at the time. They offered some history on the community and talked of some upcoming events. The clerk seemed to enjoy her business – kept very neat and tidy. The clerk at the floral shop was also friendly. Her business seemed to be quite crowded – could use some help. Lots of nice items but difficult to get at. The town does have several bars and restaurants. We ate lunch at the Silent Woman – which was very impressive and quite an attraction for the community. The lunch was excellent – waitress did not seem to know the history behind the restaurant. The LION drinking

fountains are very unique – but could use some paint and upkeep. Parking does not seem to be a problem – most businesses are within a 2-3-block radius.

- For a town that seems to want to attract tourism there were very few places to shop that would attract a tourist. We did visit a wonderful Floral/Gift shop located in a beautiful older two story home...very impressive. There seemed to be a nice mix of services though. Restaurant/Hotel (Silent Woman) was very nice and definitely a tourist attraction. I noticed lawyer offices, chiropractor, day care services, hardware/variety store, doll museum/gift shop, bank, café, floral shops (2), public utilities building/chamber offices. I did not have a chance to go inside or to visit with any of the city employees. I did not have a chance to go inside or to visit with any of the city employees. I did however have a chance to speak with several people in town, ladies in both floral shops, the doll museum and the volunteer at the railroad museum as well as the waitress at the Silent Woman. We also spoke to some young girls at the village park, and a couple people at the Cheese Factory. Everyone seemed to be very friendly, but not real knowledgeable about what else there was to do in town or where we should go or what we should for sure see while in town. The street/highway that ran through the downtown was very nice (relatively newly paved as it appeared) but the sidewalks were in ill repair. Most all of the sidewalks needed to be repaired or replaced. Many of them had crack with grass growing up in between the cracks. Overall though, I felt their downtown was a typical of a small town, but progressive in the sense that there were a couple of fast food places and the gas station convenience stores. I visited the public park and used the restroom facility. Very nice/clean bathrooms. The park seemed to have nice/adequate playground equipment. Adequate picnic tables etc. There didn't appear to be a lot of special pride put into the park...flowers beds.. landscaping etc.

Observations about the general appearance of the downtown area:

- CJ's Auto Repair needed the most cleanup of all downtown businesses'. Junk cars – lot area gravel.
- Buildings are in great shape. You should be very proud of your community. (See pictures)



General Appearance of buildings, displays, signage:

- Buildings in good condition.
- Very clean and neat. Nice signs.

The variety of shopping:

- Seemed to have a good mix of retail services. Beautiful Library. Very friendly people in all stores.
- Large variety of shopping opportunities.
- Good Variety.



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

- Very reasonable priced. Do need to comment on the stores closed on Saturdays. We were disappointed to find several businesses that we wanted to discover closed on Saturdays. The Silent Woman, a Café close by and the pharmacy. So realize it is probably a family-run business, however, they are missing an opportunity when tourists drive through town on the weekends.

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

- Good Service.
- We were always acknowledged when we walked through the door and clerks were helpful when asked.

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

- Several community activities and festivals.

Were there the following public amenities?

Pay phones (working with phonebook intact!):

- Didn't notice any.

Drinking fountains:

- Yes, Lion water fountain.

Benches:

- Found a few benches on Main Street that appeared to be placed there by businesses.
- Yes
- Benches on the main street were inviting.

Public restrooms:

- Found public restrooms at the park. Doors were unlocked which was very nice to see. Were very clean and had a new paint smell.
- Found public restrooms in Marsden Park, however, they were locked on a Saturday afternoon.

Appealing landscaping:

- Well Landscaped, especially the industrial park.
- Very attractive.

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

- Parking seemed to be adequate.
- No / Yes
- Ample parking available for churches and businesses.

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
- Ace Hardware

General Appearance of buildings, displays signage:

- Appeared to be a roofing company business with a lot of junk lying around. (See Photo). This was the most noticeable messy area in town.
- Good.
- Building was in good condition with adequate signage. Parking was not a problem. Customer service was adequate.

The variety of shopping:

- Good

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

- Adequate

7. Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas

- There is a rather large area going out of Fennimore on Hwy 18 that is clearly marked as the IP. This looks to be growing – apparent new building site. Rayovac seems to be a large industry for the community. Very neat appearance. The SW Tech School is located near here and is a very impressive sight. Well maintained.
- Other people on my team covered this area.. but just a few comments.. I was very impressed with the Rayovac plant and the industrial park in general. It seemed to be growing with an obvious new construction beginning. Impressive for a town this size. I was very impressed with the fact that there was a swimming pool in the public park/school area.

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

- Yes, appeared to have a well-developed industrial park with site available.
- Yes. Eye appealing and inviting
- Yes, excellent. Again, the website was very informative.

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

- Landscaping, trees, mowed lawn areas.
- Loved the curb and gutter and TREES. Very classy. Nature park is nice touch. Painting on barn of the recycling center represented the community well. Construction in progress – a sign of expansion.

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

- Appeared to be stable with some new building taking place.

- Nice well-kept or new buildings in the park with many cars parked nearby which indicate employees are at work.

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?

- Again the website was an excellent source.

This commercial area that could use some attention.



8. Health Care Services

- Coming into town there is a building called Fennimore Health Services (large sign by street). There is also an emergency sign (in need of repair). The only sign on the building was for a dentist. Not sure if this was medical clinic or not – confusing. We stopped at the small clinic in downtown – the two women working explained there was a physician at the FHS. They were very helpful and friendly. There was an office for children's services and for mental

health. On touring the town we found the Good Samaritan Center – elderly housing. Very well maintained and in a nice area overlooking the country and also has a large yard. There is an addition being added which tells us there is an aging population that they are meeting the needs for. There is also a Meal Site downtown.

- Again other people from our team covered this. I did see signs for the medical clinic and see the clinic.

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

- Health Clinic
- Plattner Health Care Services: very interesting: only saw a DDS sign; No hours listed; Emergency sign but no direction after that as to where to go.
- Nice looking clinic, however, would suggest hours to be posted on the door and maybe where the nearest hospital is located. The clinic was closed when we visited however the hours were a question.

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

- Medical center down town; posted hours and phone number.
- It was quite interesting to find a psychiatrist in a basement office.

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

- Good Samaritan nursing home appeared to be a very nice and well-kept facility. Noticed some construction, which could indicate that the age of the town is getting older and they are outgrowing their facility.
- Well-kept buildings – new additions indicate good use.
- Noticed a sign for a nursing home, however, we were unable to find it.

9. Housing

- There are many older homes in the community along with newer ones scattered. Most homes are well maintained but there are some that could use some fix up work – especially some of the homes/yards on the main drag. There appears to be quite a few homes for sale. There are a few apartment buildings and also some very nice subdivisions. Saw evidence of some homes being remodeled, which is a good sign of adding value to the homes and staying in the community. There were a lot of gardens in the community – big yards. The mobile home park appears well established with some very nice yard and homes. There are of course a few that could use some help as with all MHPs but overall was in a very nice area.
- Most of the residential area looked to be kept in quite good repair and aesthetically pleasing. I seen mostly older homes and a few newer homes.. Some homes for sale.. I would have liked to have had a chance to talk to a real estate agent to see what the housing market was like.. just didn't have the time.

How would you evaluate the existing mix of housing stock?

- Very impressive subdivision with a lot of new construction on the southwest end of town.
- Mix of old and new old homes in good repair
- Houses were in good repair and very attractive with nice landscaping and flowers. (See picture).



Were there any indications that the housing market was depressed?

- Noticed for sale signs but not so many that indicated a depressed market.
- No
- Not much, the properties around the elementary could be cleaned up a little. (See picture).

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

- A lot of For Sale signs.

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?

- Appeared to be apartments for rent.
- No
- There appeared to be many housing properties available at different income levels.

10. Schools

- The elementary school has a very nice large playground area – fenced in for protection. Very attractive. The high school is located near the large park – could use some updating. Very lucky to have the swimming pool/tennis courts close by.
- The schools were not really all that accessible. They were back in a residential area.. which I guess is great for being accessible by the students. I think there could have been better signage coming into town for the high school for visiting families for athletic events etc. Upon coming up to the school from the entrance to town coming in on 18 West (from Madison) the high school was not very appealing looking. Looked more like a hospital facility. Older but looked to be in good repair. After driving past the school and looking back at the signage and the appearance it was somewhat more appealing. It looked relatively small for the enrollment numbers that I had seen on the website. The Elementary school actually appeared to be larger than the high school. But I have noticed that they must be outgrowing their space as it looked like the administrative offices were across the street in a house turned office building. The Technical College appeared to be very nice. I didn't have a chance to tour the facility.

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:

- Didn't notice temporary classrooms, although the high school seemed small for the district size. Had a hard time finding schools. Didn't notice any signage from the main highway. Was able to get directions from a nice lady working in the yard. She was very informed and knew what grade levels were in each building.

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

- No signs from Hwy 61 directing you to the High School. Elementary and High School both appeared to be in excellent condition.

Elementary School:

- Nice large fenced playground area.
- Adequate building.
- Appears to have been built in the sixties. Loved the playground with rubber mats and fenced area. Noticed ADA sign on the fence to encourage disabled people to use the playground as well. (See picture)



Middle School/Junior High:

- Good repair plus swimming pool, tennis courts, and athletic field.

High School:

- Nice place for high school, residential area, next to public park.
- Surprised that many students fin in the school. Building doesn't seem that big. Appears to have been building approximately at the same time as the elementary. No modern changes visible from the outside

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

- SW Tech, very impressive facility, well kept and appeared to be growing.
- Large Campus, good buildings
- Very modern and well kept.

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

- SW Wisconsin Tech College, an added plus.
- Information was available on the website and also in the packet of information that was mailed.

11. Faith/Religion

- There are many churches represented. Most very well maintained and inviting looking.
- Several denominations represented in the community. Older churches. Did not see a whole lot of information about the churches throughout town. I was very interested to know what kind of response the citizens had to the growing Amish community in the area. I was shocked to find a very negative impression of the Amish. I spoke to a young lady at the Cheese factory who said they were dirty and disgusting and she had no time for them. I seemed to get that overall impression from most people that I mentioned the Amish to. I believe that is a huge mistake.. if the citizens accept and respect the Amish they will be able to use the Amish community and Fennimore has the potential to draw on that as an asset as Cashton does. I was told by the lady at the cheese factory that there was an Amish/Mennonite store a couple miles out on 61 South. She said she wouldn't go there herself because she seen them as dirty, smelly and that she thought they pumped their water out of the creek (which was probably some sewer water) to wash and

probably drink.. I drove out to the this little store and was actually impressed with the cleanliness and variety in the little bulk food store. I spoke to the Young Mennonite boy that was taking care of the store. He was actually more knowledgeable and helpful than many of the other folds that I spoke to in town. Please, do not make the mistake of undermining the asset that this community can be to your town !!!

Comment on the number of denominations represented in the community:

- Noticed 4 different churches of faith.
- 8 (variety)
- Very surprised to find four, Trinity Evangelical Free Church, St. Mary's Catholic Church, Methodist and Lutheran Church.

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

- Some old but all in good condition.
- All buildings seemed to be in good repair and two appeared fairly new.

Are there any signs of church-sponsored community services?

- Liked park outside of St. Mary's.

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?

- No signs of bias.
- No

12.Civic

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

- Several signs that show Kiwanis/lions Club groups are active in community. Wonder if there are other groups that could be advertised on signs?
- It appeared that there were several groups/clubs/organizations in the town. I'm quite certain that had I been able to go into the city offices I would have been able to get the information I would have been looking for in regards to these organizations. The website also gave mention to all of the civic organizations and contact info for all. I would suggest that the Lions Club have their sign in a better place and standing up instead of leaning!
- Noticed Lions and Kiwanis organization signs on all ends of town.
- Lion's Club, American Legion.
- Noticed signs for the Masons, Kiwanis, and Lions. Again, complete information was available on the website with names and addresses of contacts.

13. Residents

- Several residents smiled and waved as we drove around town. There seems to be quite an elderly population. The store clerks we visited with were very helpful – seemed proud of their community and businesses. The waitress at the Silent Woman could have been more helpful and more willing to discuss the business that employs her.
- Overall most of the people we came into contact were very friendly, especially the lady at the doll museum/gift shop and also the lady at the train museum. Other than those two I would say I don't think the residents think of their town as a destination.. only as a crossroads to other places.. Madison. I asked several people what we should see or do while we were in town. Most shrugged their shoulders and said they didn't really know except you could go to the train museum or the doll museum. I asked a lady at the post office how the little train museum was and she said she'd never been there.

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

- Everyone we encountered either passing by a person on the sidewalk who would smile and say hello or others that we asked for directions were very helpful and knowledgeable about their community. Whenever we had a question, the resident could help us. Did notice a little indifference with the Amish population. I understand there are Amish in the community, but only saw three. Residents we talked to didn't speak too kindly of them.

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

- Woman at railroad museum was pleasant, knowledgeable and proud of the community, an asset to the town.

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?

- Question the diversity as this is a rural Western Wisconsin area.

14. Public Infrastructure

- There could be more signage directing people to what the town has to offer. (schools, parks, medical facilities, also for museums and recreation) Some of the sidewalks are in need of repair – does look like some of the streets and sidewalks are being improved upon in the residential areas. The parks are very nice and well maintained with open restrooms for public use that were clean. Really like the looks of the large shelter in Marsden Park. Some of the flowerbeds could use some attention. Nice to see that the city provides recycling crates for residents – multi colored.
- Streets seemed to be in good repair for the most part. The town sidewalks however do need to be replaced. Nice painted cross walks in the downtown area. Restrooms at park were clean and in good condition. There seemed to be plenty of public parking.. no meter.. that's a good thing for a small town. Nice Library, Drinking fountain downtown (lion) benches in front of the Silent Woman. I went into the Post Office around 10:30 to

mail a package and found that the Post Office was closed from 10:00 to 11:15. I found that to be very odd. In a town this size I would certainly think the Post Office should/could be open all day except for maybe during a lunch break. I did go back later and mailed my package. Very friendly people at the Post Office, but not overly helpful in directing us what to do or see. I was impressed that the post office had a pay copy machine in its lobby for people to use.

- Streets were very well kept. A lot of thought has gone into planning for future expansion. Nice sidewalks, plenty of public parking. Beautiful facilities for town hall, police, benches. Love the architecture of the library. The landscaping is very nicely done. Like the large trees that line the streets. Curb area in clinic parking lots needs some attention. Noticed several nicely placed gazebos. We all love the area near the attorney's office, the walkway to the bank. Instead of an empty vacant alleyway, you turned it into a lovely small park with a winding sidewalk, shrubs and bust. (See picture).



Streets, street signing and lighting:

- Fine

Land Use Planning:

- Evidence of planning in industrial area.

Sidewalks:

- Good condition.

City/Village/Town Hall:

- Visible

Library:

- On main street

Landscaping/street trees:

- Tree lines streets and flower gardens most inviting.



15. Recreation/Tourism

- I only came across one motel on the edge of town towards Madison – older building could use some attention to paint/landscaping. A definite attraction to the town is the “Silent Woman” Restaurant. I will definitely come back and bring friends. Do not know if this is promoted much but could certainly be a draw to the area. The visitor's center is very attractive – did not take time to go inside but should attract many people.

- From what I could figure out they were trying to use their railroad history as an attraction to the city. Their Welcome sign accurately portrayed that as did the beautiful mural in the railroad park and the museum was wonderfully done. The little train outside the museum is a definite attraction. The Silent Woman Restaurant/Hotel complex was definitely an attraction. I would like to know a little more history about it. The waitress that took care of us didn't tell us too much about it. She said that the building had been used for many things such as a theatre. Definitely an attraction that I will not forget for future visits to Fennimore. I did only notice that one hotel. The new bank was nicely done to go with the railroad motif.. looked like a railroad depot. The cheese factory could be a great tourist stop. It appeared that there had been a recent festival. I believe I seen that on the web site. Again, I believe that with the right attitude Fennimore could capitalize on the Amish community as a way to draw tourists to the area.
- The community slogan of the train is noticed in many places around town. From the water towers, to the recycling barn, to the information center the train is very apparent. The train is a very positive and memorable tool for the town. Young and old love and remember the train. The information center seems to serve the needs of visitors. Most every establishment that we visited in Fennimore had brochures of area interest. Loved the art gallery and was quite impressed with the Redlines and Petersons. I liked the furniture store. Items to be very reasonably priced. We wanted to dine at the Silent Woman, but the restaurant was closed on a Saturday afternoon, which was a disappointment to us.

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

- Railroad, museum

Comment on the availability and selection of overnight accommodations:

- 2 motels

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

- Several festivals – 4th of July, 2 in August, 2 in September, Christmas Craft show, Unity tree in November.

Are there any significant man-made attractions?

- No

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.

- Obvious Visitor's Center and Chamber of Commerce.

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

- The Silent Woman, Canterbury Garden, Art Museums

16. Using your Senses

- Did not notice any offensive smells in town. Some noise from traffic going through.
- The Silent Woman was definitely a great asset to the community. The serene sound of water gurgling in the fountains was very relaxing as we dined. The food was delicious and attractively presented. The sense of smell was somewhat irritated by the smell of the cheese factory.. but that's how cheese factories smell. The town seemed to be busy with lots of through traffic, but not overly loud or annoying.

What sounds did you hear?

- Pedestrians

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

- No

17. Wrap-up

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

- Beautiful entrance signs; Very nice water tower – attractive picture on it; Small park with walking trail/benches etc; Drug free school zone signs; nice subdivisions showing growth of community – many homes in town with beautiful large yards.
- Wonderful restaurant, Silent Woman; Beautiful train park/museum; Flower shop/gift shop in older two story home; Great growth in industrial park; Nice Technical College/campus.
- General appearance, number of businesses, industrial park area.
- Industrial Park, Lovely parks in town, Availability of churches, Expansion in process, well-kept, clean, pleasant community.

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

- Being able to capture people that are passing through the other larger towns to stop and spend some times and \$ in community; Updating of some of the downtown area businesses/homes to make more attractive and inviting; area by Atlas Roofing definitely needs some cleanup; Not having signage to direct people to attractions/recreation etc...; ? Accommodations for people traveling here (motels, Bed & Breakfast etc..)
- Accepting and respecting your Amish community; Improvement/additions to the schools; Sidewalk improvements; Dealing with the sand/gravel yard; educate your community to know what to say to a tourist that asks “what is there to do around here?”
- Too many ‘dead end’ streets
- Can capitalize on Amish, Business section land locked
- Realize you have many family owned businesses, as a tourist would like to see businesses open on the weekend.

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

- I will remember Fennimore in a very positive way. We visited on a very beautiful late summer day. The beautiful yards and flower beds – the nice parks – your great visitor's

center, the train and mural – the beautiful homes and growing subdivisions – and last but not least the “Silent Woman”. This town has a great deal to offer families and growing business.

- Well kept community evidently residents are proud of the community.
- I definitely want to revisit this community when all of the stores are open. Could easily spend a day exploring the community. Fennimore has a lot to offer.

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!

***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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