



BURLINGTON AREA
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

September 29, 1993

140 E. Chestnut Street
Burlington, Wisconsin 53105
(414) 763-6044

Wisconsin Electric Power Co.
Suzanne Spatz
231 West Michigan - Suite P421
Milwaukee, WI 53201

Dear Suzanne:

Thank you for inviting our community to participate in the First Impressions program. Our report is enclosed.

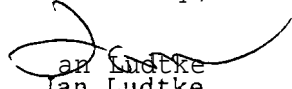
On the day we visited, weather was cool and overcast. Our group consisted of three people - two men and one woman. One of the team members does have children, one is a single individual and the other person is married with no children. One insurance agent, the director of Main Street Program and Chamber of Commerce Executive Director made up the group.

We visited on Thursday, September 16 and arrived in Fort Atkinson about 9:30 a.m. We spent the entire morning there and part of the early afternoon.

We did take photos but they did not really turn out well. We visited most businesses, etc. Individually; visited the museum as a group and did re-group for lunch. We identified ourselves as planning a family reunion, re-locating a business and potential move for employment purposes, etc.

Please contact me at 414-763-6044 should you have any questions.

Sincerely,


Jan Ludtke
Executive Director

DIRECTORS:

Peter Ferris

Paul Hobbs

Carmen McKinney

Bil Scherrer

Jo Sturdevant

Kevin McKillip

FIRST IMPRESSIONS
SUMMARY FOR FORT ATKINSON

1. WHAT WAS MY PERCEPTION BEFORE VISITING? WHAT DID I EXPECT?

Never visited before - no idea but that it had been matched with Burlington as "similar".

Perception affected by recent drive through visits on my way to Madison. The things I remember most were the sign, tea room and rather ratty commercial development on Hwy. 12 south of town.

Similar in size to Burlington; lots of antique shops. Expected a good comparison to Burlington.

2. "Five Minute" Impression:

Older, well established community; many major highways converge in the city. Signage needs updating (the welcome signs). Heavy emphasis on "Fort" - pockets of business district seem to need attention but many nicer retail businesses.

Initial drive through left me with the impression that something needed to be done to force property owners (residential and commercial) to maintain their property. Also, signage on commercial buildings needs improvement. Banners are very nice.

Well marked streets, straight shot, no one way streets. Well kept, neat farms, handsome industrial industrial park from highway.

AS YOU DRIVE AROUND TOWN:

People pleasant, helpful. Impressed with the businesses I visited; cordial and responsive.

Chamber office very accommodating. Polite, helpful. Offered to make a call for me and did so. Inviting.

3. DRIVING - EVALUATE EACH ENTRANCE:

Highway 12 from south - some areas could be cleaned up.

Highway 26/106

Really nice drive along the river.

Well marked.

Industrial Park easily accessible.

4. DRIVING DOWNTOWN BUSINESS AREA:

Banners easy to read, eye catching.

Signage could be improved upon.

The green space by the city building needs attention.

Downtown seemed quiet, traffic moved well.

5. DRIVING --- COMMENTS Oh' RESIDENTIAL:

Older homes seemed to have sense of pride -- lots of flowers, overall well cared for.

Nicely maintained.

Felt housing was too near. the industrial park.

6. DRIVING

Street Signs - standard signage.

My biggest complaint has to do with heading north on 12 right by McDonalds you have to turn left to stay on 12 but when you do the only state route sign you see is for 26 - makes you wonder if you made the right turn.

Traffic patterns/street conditions.

For the most part were in as good condition as you find anywhere else in Wisconsin. Traffic patterns ok.

Welcome Signs (at entrances)

Emphasis on "Fort" also means they should be kept in good repair.

Rather overgrown.

Well done, lists all service clubs.

Direction signs to parks, schools, etc.

Good directional signs, found the high school, hospital, parks, police department.

7. DRIVING - COMMENTS ON INDUSTRIAL PARK/AREA

Seems to have a good industrial grouping, diverse, space still available.

Entered from Highway Q- excellent access for truck or train.

8. DRIVING - SCHOOLS

Only noticed the senior high - a little space crunch going on - time to build a new one???

Nice high school - seemed a bit squeezed into its area, but still very nice.

9. DRIVING - COMMENTS ON PARKS. PLAY GROUNDS, etc.

Parks on a whole well kept, "Fort" could be so great - needs attention. USE THE FORT - re-enactments, outdoor plays, have it manned and people in costumes.

Excellent aquatic park.

10. DRIVING -

Hospitals - well established, looked nice, easily marked - some road construction that day.

Billboards/advertising -

Please re-do the mural downtown!!!

Billboards well spaced - not overdone

11. Walking around - comments on businesses

Many very well done, including window displays, others need work

12. Walking around - comments on people

Did not encounter many pedestrians - some walking for exercise as opposed to shopping (indicated by shoes and dress mode)

Very nice, welcoming, helpful (always an asset).

13. Community information -

Community brochure - nice, full color, quality of life book.

Those available at the Hoard Museum were very well produced.

Very nice packet from Chamber - especially physicians brochure

14. CITY HALL

Outside well kept-easy to locate. Park area adjacent need work.
Staff was great - would be nice to see the entire block more vital.
Didn't visit.

15. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Easy to locate, people knew where it was, exterior appearance could be improved. very helpful, knowledgeable, enthusiastic; hours were fine - a little congested for space.

16. PUBLIC RESTROOMS

are there any?

PAY PHONES - did not notice any

PARKING - seemed ample

WATER FOUNTAINS, BENCHES - not always in good condition
Bandshell looked neat but could use maintenance.

A. TASTE - Lunch at the Christmas House - home cooked - great atmosphere

SMELL - nothing in particular

SOUNDS - peaceful along river - noon whistle - rather nostalgic

Community felt warm, not bustling on this day but friendly only the fort itself seemed uninviting and deserted.

5 Most Positive things -

1. Hoard Museum
2. The river
3. Banners
4. Industrial Park
5. Downtown Restaurants

Describe One idea you will steal and use in next. 72 hours:

The museum !!!!

Wish it were immediately possible here.

What will you remember most - The museum quite an asset

Other comments - The Fort itself - disappointing,
Dairy Shrine and museum - wonderful - great staff - tell them!!!
Creamery building could be used as an anchor for a major re-development
downtown - maybe a business incubator, post secondary school facility or a
downtown industrial park - lease whole floors to light, clean manufacturing
but don't forget about parking access.