

First Impressions

of

Montfort, WI

Visit conducted 1992

A program for community improvement

Composed by:

Citizens of Kendall, WI

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PURPOSE:

To help a community learn about their existing strengths and weaknesses as seen through the eyes of a first time visitor.

YOUR GROUP:

Ideally 2-4 people should work together on this.

Diversity is best if possible, i.e.; men/women, business/casual dress, different ages, different interests (active business people, government, retired, educators, etc.)

THE VISIT:

Plan to spend several hours minimum in the community. An evening stopover would be best (but may not be practical in most cases). Use the travel time to plan your approach to getting information (i.e. What questions will you ask, Who will visit city hall, stores, etc.)

Each person should have his/her own work sheet for personal comments and observations. Try not to be too obvious as you take notes.

TIPS:

Use all FIVE senses...

What does the community SMELL like???

What did it TASTE like???

What were the SOUNDS you HEARD???

What did it FEEL like??? (Bumpy
railroad crossings, perhaps??)
and also, What did you SEE??

Look for POSITIVE things as well **as** negatives.

Be HONEST...not polite, in your comments*,...but please try to include suggestions for improvements when criticisms are made.

THANK YOU

for carina enough to help us make an even better

FIRST IMPRESSION

in the future

** All participants will remain anonymous. The final report submitted to the community will be a COMBINATION of all of the comments received.*

1. **What** was my perception before visiting the community: What did I expect, etc.
 - o Small bedroom community with a small grocery store and gas station. I thought this would be mostly old homes, and the citizens would drive to Platteville and Dodgeville to work. I had driven through on Hwy 18 in early July and remembered absolutely nothing when I heard the name Montfort.
 - o A small town.
 - o Level not hilly. Hoped for friendly people -- Found it?
 - o A typical small town community? How many stores? Downtown?
 - o Expected the village to be on the level, but town is quite hilly.
 - o Wide spot on the Hwy. 18. I expected convenience store, machinery dealership, level residential area with perhaps retired farmers residences.

2. Approaching the community, what do you notice first? (evaluate EACH entrance)

Positive:

- o Hwy. 18 from West - orchard and veterinary service - grass clipped and everything neat - community welcome sign from organizations. Hwy 18 from East - everything is neat, signs kept neat and painted.
- o A sale barn
- o Apple orchard on left - neat. Welcome signs to Montfort - veterinary clinic (nice)
- o Nicely mowed. Seems like a growing town!
- o Neat sale barn and clinic
- o Very neat cattle sales or salvage barn on west end of village. Excellent veterinary clinic (very neat). Main Street clean. Neat park with swimming pool.

Negatives:

- o Hwy 18 from West - on the right hand side there is a dilapidated building that detracts from the first impression (perhaps the owner can be persuaded to tear down - village may want to proceed with condemnation on property - perhaps fire department volunteer to use as practice). County I - state green sign has spelling Monfort. Hwy 18 from East - car owner who is selling his vehicle parked in front of welcome sign.
- o An old run down gas station.
- o Collapsed building - barn on south side/old building on street as you come out of business district onto Hwy 80 is a bit negative. We own an old barn, Hwy P out of Kendall that will give you the same feeling. Plans to tear down in near future.
- o The two entrances on the highway (the signs community of Montfort) were obstructed. The older building that is falling down.
- o One sign on one side of town. Had Montfort spelled "**Monfort**". Car for sale setting in front of village sign.
- o Two buildings on highway should be removed. No Lions Club, Rotary, or Kiwanis Clubs or other service organization - Legion and Jaycees signs in evidence of existence.

Suggestions for improvement:

3. **As you drive/bike around town your comments on:**

A. Appearance

1. Downtown
 - Kept neat for number of older buildings. Street was newly gravel coated so could not tell if diagonal parking normally had paint stripes. Sign still up on empty building--perhaps could use windows for community information display or just cover with paper.
 - It was small
 - Flowers on store front and around light pole.
 - Surprised that they have two furniture stores, a lawyers office and a clinic. Not a lot of taverns-good.
 - Well maintained
 - Well maintained
2. Residential
 - Definitely pride in community shown with upkeep on old homes, a nice new subdivision, and many homes with flowers. I like the many mature trees.
 - Very nice houses.
 - Many well kept homes. Nice lawns and flowers. Some nice landscaping. Like all towns, etc. some are negatives.
 - A distinction between newer homes and older homes.
 - Homes very well landscaped and neat.
 - Very well maintained lawns and yards.
3. Industrial park
 - Could find no industrial park
 - Don't have one
 - None
4. Parks
 - Nice roomy downtown park with a swimming pool - the kids taking lessons seemed to be having good time. Nice kids equipment (however, one of our kids got cut on metal on slide - check for safety). Other park - clean but probably used for school events only.
 - Fun
 - Exceptionally nice park with pool, shelter, playground equipment. Another nice shelter near Montfort school.
 - No signs indicating.
 - Johnson and Maple Streets at park - no sign to identify the park.
 - Excellent with nice sized pool. Pool open.
5. Schools
 - School on hill - kept neat for being no longer in

use. Could remove the bike rack to avoid unkempt look. New high school and grade school in country will be a plus for combining communities.

- Too big-need a new school.
 - Drove by new high school and grade school. Great setting - plenty of room and hopefully a great education.
 - Apparently closed. The parochial school - kept up well.
 - School closed this year. Remove old bike rack at the old school.
 - Building old but well maintained. Closed end of 1991 school year.
6. Infrastructure (Sidewalks, streets, lighting, etc.)
- No sidewalks in new addition. Sidewalks in residential away from downtown in need of repair. Many potholes and repairs needed on secondary streets (ex. near cemetery).
 - Too high of curbs.
 - A terrific expense but some back streets and sidewalks could be repaired. Street next to Hardware Hank needs repair.
 - Streets not very wide and sidewalks not all over.
 - Sidewalks need repair.
 - Modern street lights. Sidewalks should be improved whenever possible.
7. Other
- Love all the flowers. Narrow old streets. Perhaps should set up a schedule of repair - one or two a year rather than just fill potholes. Most in good repair except near cemetery/near feed store.
 - There is a company able to take old appliances and recycle now. I believe in Eau Claire. Perhaps that will be an answer for we homeowners and businessmen someday soon. Hardware Hank - storefront nice - side could use paint. Gun and Saddle? Shop - didn't visit - wonder if it was closed! I'm always glad to see a town hold onto at least some of it's heritage - buildings like VFW and bar next to it. Is it closed or getting ready to open? Attractive clinic with accessible walk for handicapped. You're fortunate to have one. Attractive post office. A second furniture store - we stopped - door open - no one there - name? Barber shop closed. Attorney's office - nice front. Forgot to visit bar - sorry. Antique store on highway - very nice - neatly arranged - realize it is a modern building and have no idea what could be done to store front to make it fit the business - bet the owner has thought about that too. If business is no longer there, sign should perhaps be taken down. Couldn't read sign

but it's right off Hwy. 80 - first yellow (garage type) building. Nice building - unreadable sign. Hwy 80 - I thought the Mobil Station looked like a clean place. Not a lot of garbage - tires, old cars sitting around like some. ICOCO also an attractive gas station and convenience store. Cheese Factory - Busy owner I think - needs to be clean and uncluttered - sparkling window to see cheese made! Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board at Madison is loaded with helps - new bright posters etc. for the walls (I think they are free). Very nice lady at counter (owners wife I believe). Are freezers along wall in use? If not, perhaps would make room for more product to sell. A visit to Carr Valley Cheese near Cazenovia is good example. Lots of Wisconsin souvenirs etc. and good cheese like theirs. Wonder what could be done outside of building to make me want to not miss it? Flowers - neat sign - something to soften the black building? Tower Junction - Good food and lots to offer - bowling's interesting decor. Landscaping outside very nice - Tower sign unique. Placemats added to railroad theme. Prices reasonable. Bank - **Beautiful** grounds - well kept - attractive building and setting. Churches - Catholic Church - well kept- accommodates handicap with chair. Methodist - If I remember right couldn't see the church through the trees.

- Town spread out and larger than it appears at first.

B. Signing

1. Community entrance/exit signs

- Signs entering - kept trimmed and painted. Perhaps **Welcome to Montfort** sign should be in more dynamic colors to increase visibility. Small sign to business districts - perhaps some sort of directory hanging from it groceries
furniture
hardware
doctor
attorney
park

Small antique sign on Hwy 18 - not effective - did not see until second time through.

- Not enough direction signs.
- Exit signs (none). One welcome on north side. One on south - car for sale in front of sign - I noticed the car but not the sign first time through.
- Somewhat OK - not sure what is Main Street.
- One sign spelled wrong. Business district sign good.
- Business district sign very good.

2. Streets
 - Community needs a house numbering system to help with directions and locations.
 - Street signs - neat - well marked. Montfort - east entrance spelled wrong.
 - I was **surprised** at how hilly it is! Not very wide and quite broken up except for the newer part of town.
 - Needs repairs.
 - Newer standard street signs.
3. Directions to Hospital/Parks/etc.
 - Saw no directions to park. Park did not have sign - only slow for children (signs at park - no parking - slow for children need to be painted or replaced.)
 - None. Sign for park-needs new one. Is there a name for park or did we miss it?
 - None that we could see.
 - No hospital. No signs.
 - Did not see signs for school or park. School closed 1991. New school east of town.
4. Storefront signs
 - Kalish Customs (had flyer so knew name). Had only GREG above the door - not an invitation to enter if you don't know what is done. Empty Building - should have sign removed. Other signs attractive and informative. Newspaper office needs paint and door repaired (name changed on building).
 - Liked "**Whistle Stop**" sign and unopened bar on Main Street has green sign that goes with building. Greg Kalish needs a sign - we were impressed by his woodworking shop. Has a nice brochure. Does beautiful work - maybe too busy. **Doesn't** want anymore! Ha! Montfort Mail has attractive small building - bit of work on door and paint job would really enhance it. The building caught my eye. I wondered if it was a post office at first "**Montfort Mail**" Didn't notice the small sign with name of business until two ladies on street informed me where newspaper office was. It was closed. Neglected to buy a newspaper - wonder if they were at the grocery store? Didn't see any as we passed through. Perhaps several businesses could sell them - saw only one. It was at the ice cream shop for customers. A hometown paper tells a lot about your town.
 - Some stores need some signs indicating what it is.
 - Need painting.
 - 7-up, Fountain Street foods (could be redone)
5. Industrial Park
 - None
6. Village Hall, police, etc.

- o Library and village hall were marked.
 - o Nice entrance and flowers. Community hall sign could be painted again. Library sign on one side needs repair. An eye level sign on lawn would not make me wonder what the building is for at first.
 - o City hall was open but **wasn't** sure where the office was.
 - o City hall = a community center for Seniors Nutrition Site.
 - o Library and senior citizen's lunches served (about 30 meals) with counting carryouts
7. Billboards/advertising, etc.
- o Quite a bit on Hwy, 18.
 - o Didn't see any billboards.,
 - o Small business identification signs quite small.

4. Visitor/community information

A. City/Village Ball

1. Is there a street map?
 - o None found
 - o Didn't visit
 - o Didn't see one (a bulletin board in entry had goals for "Montfort on The Move".)
 - o Didn't see any
 - o No one there
 - o Not displayed outside on a billboard.
2. Community brochure/directory
 - o Found only centennial booklet at the antique store. The area booklet = the Uplands of Southwestern Wisconsin = was available. It included a description of the Whistle Stop-for antiques in Montfort.
 - o Didn't see any
 - o No individual current community brochure
 - o No brochure = maybe in the future
 - o None = proposing to prepare one.
3. Community profile (including business and industrial opportunities)
 - None found
 - o Didn't see any
 - o Didn't see any. Did pick some up in individual stores.
 - o Working with three other communities.
4. Recommendations on place to **stay/eat/visit...etc.**
 - o Recommendations on motel several miles away (willing to call). On eat = Tower Junction
 - o Tower Junction = ? Oak Lawn = motel (referred to Uplands brochure) = much information!
 - o Yes, the store employee's were very helpful.
 - o Post office person recommended Tower Junction. Hardware Hank recommended Tower Junction and Little Chef.

- Tower Junction restaurant - east of town. Good service R/R theme very good.
- 5. Contact people and addresses listed if I want more information
 - Didn't ask
 - Greg's shop
 - Greg - clerk at city hall
- 6. Complimentary Items (Postcards, bookmarkers, coupons, etc.)
 - None
 - None, but good idea

B. Visitor Information

- I did not visit the village offices
 1. Easy to locate (and did people refer you to it?)
 - I found it easily but did not visit.
 - Yes
 - City Hall - community center and library
 - East to locate - not a chamber office. City clerk and librarian with office hours on sign.
 2. **Comments on info available (Street map/brochures/ community/profile, etc.)**
 - Bulletin board in entry. When office open?? Office apparently closed that day.
 - No one there to talk to.
 - No brochure
 3. Recommendations on places to **stay/eat/visit etc.**
 - See page 7 number 4
 - Referred to Tower Junction restaurant - east of town on Hwy 18.
 4. How prepared/helpful were residents.
 - Good
 - Senior citizens were very helpful
 5. Convenient hours?
 - At library and city hall hours posted and convenient.

C. Info from general community (service station/motel/ bars/restaurants/shop employees etc.)

1. How knowledgeable about the community were they?
 - a. Talked to parents at pool - informative on how it was maintained.
 - b. **Those we talked with knew what was going on.**
 - c. OK-
 - d. Hardware Hank's very good - Greg's shop

- e. Satisfactory
2. Did they refer you to someone else who could help?
 - a. Young clerk at antique shop referred us to antique shop owners downtown.
 - b. Lady at Whistle Stop is especially helpful even called motel to see if accommodations available. They were " we weren't!! We were on another mission for First Impressions.
 - c. No
 - d. Was not necessary
 3. Attitude, appearance, etc.
 - a. Willing to help/even called on motel availability. Grocery store employees friendly. Smiles and helpful at Grab-n-Go.
 - b. I visited Whistle Stop/Furniture; Greg Kalish; grocery store; antique store on Hwy. 80; ice cream shop and cheese factory-Tower Junction. Attitude very nice " appearance OK too.
 - c. Very nice
 - d. Landscaping good
 - e. Very good
 4. Other comments
 - a. Not a tourist community " most shoppers seemed to be from nearby area.
 - b. A bed & breakfast would maybe be an asset to village.
 - c. Remove Ken's Corner Bar (closed) Hwy. 18. Remove old service station building across from convenience store on Hwy. 18. Work with owners (provide incentive).
 5. General
 - A. Do residents know their community history/events/directions/etc.
 - Resident gave direction to the newspaper office. Community does not have a community celebration such as Cobb's Sweet Corn Boil, Monroe Cheese Days. History available in Centennial History Book at Whistle Stop Antiques. Directed us to Tower Junction restaurant and

- o bowling alley to eat.
 - o Yes
- B. Services...variety of retail...lodging facilities...**
- o Very impressed with a community of 675 having as many businesses as it did -(ex. hardware store, furniture store, grocery, attorney, doctor, barber shop, 2 antique shops, used car, ice cream and fast food, cheese shop, gas station, veterinary, farmers feed store, bowling alley, no lodging - this may be an opportunity for a "bed and breakfast").
 - o Gas stations, barber shop, grocery store, post office, attorney, physician.
 - o No city lodging
 - o No motel
 - o No lodging obvious. Profitable retail businesses surviving.
- C. Are there public restrooms.**
- o Public restrooms at the pool were locked.
 - o Didn't see any - perhaps at swimming pool.
 - o Yes
 - o In community center
 - o At city hall and swimming pool
- D. Pay phones...are they working, phone books intact.**
- o Public pay phone worked, but there was no phone book attached.
 - o Working no phone book
 - o Yes
 - o Yes, no phone book
 - o One pay phone - no books
 - o One pay phone - no book
- E. Industrial park...does it look active and attractive**
- o None
- F. What does the community TASTE like? (Specialty restaurants/bakeries/etc.**
- o Tried the cheese curds made locally - squeaky good. Generous proportion on soft serve ice cream.
 - o Ice cream shop - small but busy - small cone was a large one in my book.
 - o Lunch very good
- G. What does community SMELL like?**
- o No particular smell
 - o Just fine
 - o None
 - o No odors noticeable
- H. What SOUNDS did you hear?**
- o Noon siren reminds one of home and small towns
 - o Nothing unusual - quiet - nice town
 - o Traffic - street equipment

- Autos, trucks on Hwy. 18 = quiet in residential
- I. **what did community FEEL like? (Emotional response i.e., cold/warm, crowded/deserted, inviting, etc.)**
- Friendly folks
 - Late morning/middle of day/a bit deserted
 - I liked the community because the people seemed very friendly.
 - Willing to cooperate and serve

DESCRIBE THE PEOPLE YOU MET (Friendly, helpful, etc.)

- People in town were friendly not only in the stores, but also locals on the street had said Hi and answered questions if asked.
- Friday, August 13, a bit cool = few kids in park. Saw no teenagers with exception of busy gal at ice cream shop. Senior citizens at community hall for dinner.
- Friendly
- Friendly and helpful
- Friendly and helpful

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/OBSERVATIONS:

- I was surprised the community was hilly = as from Hwy. 18 there is no indication that there is anything but a few blocks of old homes to the left and all the businesses are on the highway. Again some sort of directory or signage indicating businesses or services in the business district would be helpful.

WHAT WILL YOU REMEMBER ABOUT THIS COMMUNITY SIX MONTHS FROM NOW

- Small friendly town with a swimming pool and well kept homes with flowers and a large number of businesses for a small community on the way to Platteville.
- Old comic books in an antique store.
- Beautiful lawns and flowers, village park, and many nice trees.
- How hilly it was!! Nice swimming pool.
- All pretty flowers
- Two old closed businesses

6. *Doing it Right!*

A. **List the 5 MOST positive things you observed about the community.**

- 1.) Well kept homes with flowers; friendly people; swimming pool; antique shops for buyers and browsers, two churches and few bars.
- 2.) Antique store, park, swimming pool, ice cream shop, hardware store.
- 3.) Beautiful park/swimming pool; many nice yards with attractive landscaping FLOWERS ADD MUCH TO YOUR COMMUNITY; pretty cul-de-sac area; "Montfort on the Move" means progress and optimism. Difficult but necessary to survive!; friendly people - helpful. A visitor from Montana recently told me

Wisconsin people are genuine, friendly and helpful
- more than any other state she has visited"!

Nice to know.

- 4.) The swimming pool for community. The clinic, lawyers office and furniture store - still downtown. Friendly people. The majority of homes are being kept up.
- 5.) Committee "Montfort on the Move" \$25 membership; pool; park; most homes had very low amount of trash around.

B. Describe ONE idea that you will steal for use in your own business/community and describe the steps you will take to implement it within the NEXT 72 HOURS!

- o I did not find any idea I wanted to steal and use in Kendall. There are many ideas for change in Kendall but generally with lack of money and overworking of volunteers, things are done one thing at a time. for example, with the purchase of new park land will come new ideas. I would love to have Montfort's pool, but do not think it would economically feasible to build and keep up.
- Antique store, park (tornado slide), swimming pool
- o Meet with businessmen this coming Tuesday night and talk more beautification, some painting, etc.