

***First  
Impressions***  
*of*

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**MONTICELLO, WI**

By Wautoma, WI  
Visit Conducted 10/22/97

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**A program for community improvement**  
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Report Compiled By:

▪  
Mark Hilliker  
Community Resource Development Agent  
Waushara County UW-Extension

## FIRST IMPRESSIONS

### WAUTOMA'S VISIT TO MONTICELLO

### COMPOSITE REPORT

CONTACT PERSON: MARK HILLIKER

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### TEAM MEMBERS

Rick Taylor, Mayor, City of Wautoma  
Joyce Wessley, Director, Wautoma Main Street Program  
Deb Behringer, Administrative Coordinator, Waushara County  
Mark Hilliker, CRD Agent, Waushara County UW-Extension

### WEATHER

Mostly sunny and cool with temperatures around 40 degrees

### DATE OF VISIT AND TIME SPENT

Wednesday, October 22, 1997, arrived in Monticello at 10:15 a.m. and departed Monticello at about 1:30 p.m.

### GENERAL SUMMARY

The group of four from Wautoma that visited Monticello was very impressed by the village. **All** team members left Monticello with some good ideas to apply in Wautoma and an increased awareness of the people and culture of Monticello. The entire group was impressed with the friendly and helpful people in the village as well as the natural beauty of the area. .

***I. What was my perception before visiting? What did I expect?***

- ◆ Cheese factories & Cheese outlets: Tourist friendly, craft and collectible shops.
- ◆ Expected a small village with what has become the typical mix of older and remodeled homes and a business district that had "modernized" old buildings.
- ◆ A small town - no idea of what to expect.
- ◆ A small, friendly village tucked in the hills of southern Wisconsin - perhaps with a little Swiss flair.

***II. The "five minute" impression:***

**Take one drive through the community without stopping. As you exit the community, pull over to the side of the road and write down what you felt about the town with only this quick look. Do this in silence, don't talk with the others in your group for this part.**

- ◆ Beautiful entrance off Highway 69—park, pond, signage, covered bridge.
- ◆ Compact, well kept, comfortable feel.
- ◆ Clean, homey, family-oriented.
- ◆ Totally surprised by Monticello—we drove in on 69/39, through town and over to the Depot parking lot. The village was so clean and well maintained—it was a real eye opener.
- ◆ Well groomed, compact. Beautiful parks, nice residential buildings. No franchises (this is great!).

### **As you "drive" around town:**

You now divide into your teams: one team will drive the town for about an hour while the other members will hoof it and start visiting businesses, village hall, etc. After lunch the teams will switch roles so everyone has a chance to drive the community and to personally walk into stores and visit with people.

### **III. Driving...evaluate EACH entrance:**

Go about ½ - 1 mile out each road and return. List each road (61 North, etc.) and list positive and negatives for each.

- ◆ 69/39 Entrance
  - Beautiful welcome sign, lake, pool, park, covered bridge—very inviting.
  - Most inviting of entrances— very nicely done!
  - Very aesthetically appealing—wonderful entrance to a nice village.
  
- ◆ 39 South Entrance
  - My eye was drawn to the Cargill facility and also to the depot redevelopment area.
  - Not as scenic as 69 entrance, but still pretty. More of an industrial feel with water treatment plant and other businesses.  
Could improve signage on this side of town.
  
- ◆ County Road C Entrance
  - Rolling land to downtown area offers nice views.
  - All roads seem to lead to the downtown area—easy to find
  - Not a major entrance, but still attractive. Some signage is needed.

### **IV. Driving...evaluate the downtown business area: (Signs, appearance, size, etc.)**

- ◆ Very compact, easy to get around on foot.
- ◆ Well kept buildings, very clean
- ◆ Interesting building facade restoration
- ◆ nice centennial banners
- ◆ Halloween decorations are great!
- ◆ Clean, friendly, colorful
- ◆ Signage appropriate to buildings
- ◆ Not much retail other than market and auto dealers
- ◆ Primarily service related businesses and food/beverage

## **V. Driving... comments on residential:**

- ◆ Many older homes in very good condition on tree lined streets.
- ◆ Newer housing development on NW side of village looked barren by comparison.
- ◆ Very few homes needing repair-well kept properties.
- ◆ Lovely, well kept homes with beautiful yards, lots of trees!

## **VI. Driving...comments on:**

### **a. street signs**

- ◆ Easy to read-well displayed.
- ◆ Good signage. Have an opportunity, since the village is so compact, to do even more creative signage, especially to school, parks, bike trail, and the TID/Business Park area.
- ◆ Only a few signs appear to be missing or in poor repair. Nice signage to the Sugar River Trail.

### **b. traffic patterns/street conditions**

- ◆ Streets in good repair-even at noon, little mid-week traffic.
- ◆ Good traffic flow-streets in good repair.
- ◆ Being off the main highway helps traffic flow and makes the village pedestrian friendly.

### **c. welcome signs (at entrance)**

- ◆ Very nice entrance sign on Highway 69, other entrances had Monticello population signs, except one that appeared to be missing or down (north of village by new housing development).
- ◆ Nice signage, a couple of signs on edge of village could use minor repairs.
- ◆ • Sign with businesses and services in lot at the depot is wonderful and attractive.

### **d. direction signs to parks, schools, hospitals/clinics, attractions, services (i.e. police), etc.**

- ◆ Good-legible and posted so you have time to turn if needed.
- ◆ Could use more. Wonderful opportunity to market the community. Since the village is so compact, some creative signage would be cost effective and very useful to those who visit the community.

## **VII. Driving...comments on industrial park/area:**

- ◆ Well placed—large area for development. Could use some signage to designate the area as TID. Area by Depot is obviously industrial as well and could use some signage/other information regarding development.
- ◆ Looks like good expansion opportunities. Could use some marketing—signage/informational kiosks, etc. to let prospective businesses know what is available or who to contact.

## **VIII. Driving...comments on schools:**

- ◆ Nice looking school—looks as though all grades under one roof.
- ◆ Centralized schools are very nice. Look to serve needs of the community. Good opportunity to control costs by sharing fields/facilities. Nice small community feel.

## **IX. Driving...comments on parks, play grounds, athletic facilities, etc.:**

- ◆ Park, pool complex on west side of village is wonderful. Central to all housing and a great visible asset upon driving into Monticello.
- ◆ Beautiful parks, trees, playgrounds, swimming pool, etc.
- ◆ Wonderful that people are so generous with donations, volunteer time to make park areas and trails so appealing.
- ◆ Beautiful new covered bridge adds a great deal to the park at the entrance off Highway 69.

## **X. Driving...comments on other:**

### **a. Hospital/clinics**

- ◆ One clinic noted on the Main Street—wasn't sure about accessibility, must have been a handicap entrance on rear of building?
- ◆ One doctor's clinic noted—Monroe Clinic Branch. Nice to have a doctor in a small community.
- ◆ Clinic kind of hidden on Main Street, but is mentioned in the Green County overview document and on the sign at the Depot.

## **b. Billboards/advertising**

- ◆ Didn't notice any billboards—which is wonderful.
- ◆ Very few billboards/advertising—I think this is great because it would detract from the charm of the village.
- ◆ Signage that is in place is tasteful and the right size. No overwhelming displays of commercialism.

## **XI. Walking around...comments on business (physical appearance, signs, etc):**

- ◆ Neat and clean. Very good historic displays in windows of old drug store. Signage is generally very nice. No tasteless plastic beer signs.
- ◆ Nice looking businesses, interesting displays. Only a few downtown businesses looked in need of repair.
- ◆ Colorful, well maintained. Disappointed that some businesses only open in the evening for meals. Not many tourist, craft or collectible shops.
- ◆ The grocery store appeared to be the anchor of downtown businesses. Appealing building facades and painting. Total Look Beauty Salon is very attractive inside and out.

## **XII. Walking around...comments on people:**

***Were they friendly, did they know answers to questions, did they try to help, etc.***

- ◆ People were very friendly wherever we went.
- ◆ Friendly and very helpful. Shop owners and workers were very informative and wanted to help. Grocery store luncheon area was very nice, seemed like a very social place.
- ◆ People knew answers to questions or who to refer to. Tried to help/assist or make recommendations.
- ◆ Very few people on the street. Those people seemed friendly—returned a good morning to a stranger.

## **XIII. Community information: comments on.....**

### **a. Community brochure**

- ◆ The tri-fold brochure is a good quick overview—nicely laid out.
- ◆ Nice insert for Depot Days
- ◆ Good quality brochure—gives local flavor
- ◆ Nice use of landmark sign from village on cover

#### **b. Businesses/Attractions brochures or directory**

- ◆ The best document I have seen since coming to Wisconsin three years ago. The county-wide focus with a village insert is a great idea and helps share costs.
- ◆ Excellent brochure with a great map and very useful information. Like the Green County folder and four page summary as well. Very nice!
- ◆ Very attractive and useful brochure that covers economic and demographic information very well. Nice format.

#### **c. Community profile (demographic, industrial type information for prospective business people, etc.)**

- ◆ See b. above. The demographic and industrial information was tied up nicely in one community brochure/profile.

#### **d. Map**

- ◆ See b. above. Very nice map included on cover of the community brochure/profile.

#### **e. Other (i.e. bulletin/notice boards, kiosks, etc.)**

- ◆ Very attractive kiosk at Depot. Included great community information and referrals to people if assistance is needed.
- ◆ Nice board of information at the Depot—all the information a hiker or biker would need!

### ***XIV. City Hall...describe your visit:***

#### **a. Appearance of facility, including signing**

- ◆ Neat and clean. Well signed. A true one-stop shop for residents with administrative functions, police, and library all combined in one building. Adds to sense of "community."
- ◆ Nice older building with good signage. Easy to find.
- ◆ Interior of village office was pleasant, but it looked very cluttered—disarray, but the staff was able to find things very quickly. Suggest a neater work environment might give visitors a better first impression of the office.

**b. Helpfulness of staff**

- ◆ Carol Strause was WONDERFUL! Very helpful and friendly. Quickly found for us brochures and maps. Talked glowingly of events/attractions, volunteer efforts of residents... Showed us the TID area map and talked very knowledgeable about the labor force, opportunities for expansion in the village, municipal services, directions and recommendations, etc. Very excellent point person for the village!
- ◆ Carol is a jewel—she is a wonderful spokesperson for your community and is truly enthused to talk with prospective industrial clients.

***XV. Chamber of Commerce...describe your visit***

- ◆ Got the impression that the village hall acted as the chamber of commerce, though a Monticello Business and Professional Association is listed in the Green County four page summary.
- ◆ People easily referred us to Carol at the Village Hall for information regarding economic development.

***XVI. Other stuff...***

**a. Public restrooms (available, condition, etc.)**

- ◆ The group noted public restrooms adjacent to the Sugar River Trail as well as in the village hall. Seemed to be in good condition.

**b. Pay phones (working, phone book intact, etc.)**

- ◆ The group noted at least *two* pay phones in the community. Both appeared to be working and had phone books.

**c. Parking**

- ◆ Ample on-street and lot parking. All in close proximity to where people need to go. Very pedestrianfriendly village.

**d. Water fountains, benches, etc.**

- ◆ Seemed to be many benches in the downtown area. Didn't notice any water fountains.
- ◆ Nice street banners commemorating the village's centennial.
- ◆ Very nice Halloween decorations—loved the witches, especially!

## Wrap Up

### A. Using your "senses" ....

#### 1. What does the community TASTE like? (specialty bakery, restaurant, etc.)

- ◆ Great bakery and deli in the grocery store—looked like a popular spot for folks to stop in and eat—very social atmosphere.
- ◆ We had a very good lunch at one of the pubs on the Main Street. Good food and good service.
- ◆ Cheese! Great cheese at the plant adjacent to downtown.
- ◆ Two great looking restaurants, with interesting menus on Main Street—only open in the evening. We'd like to come back and try them.

#### 2. What does the community SMELL like?

- ◆ Good, fresh clean air on a beautiful fall day.
- ◆ No particular smell, either good or bad.
- ◆ Clean air.

#### 3. What SOUNDS did you hear?

- ◆ Quiet, very little noise.
- ◆ Normal traffic sounds, nature sounds.
- ◆ Very quiet, little auto traffic—nice to be removed from highway and all the traffic noise—very pleasant sounds—wind through leaves.

#### 4. What did the community feel like? (Emotional response, i.e. cold/warm, crowded/deserted, inviting, etc. or physical response, i.e. rough streets, etc.)

- ◆ Had a very homey, comfortable feeling—we felt welcome. Cozy atmosphere—inviting/welcoming feel. People very friendly.
- ◆ A quiet, friendly, clean small community—seems to serve the current needs of citizens well and is positioned with the new industrial park to create future jobs and growth.
- ◆ People were very friendly, eager to help.
- ◆ Warm, but seemed a little deserted. Seems many people leave the community to work elsewhere during the day.

B. List the 5 most positive things you observed about the community:

- ◆ Clean.
- ◆ Lake, Park, and trails—beautiful public space.
- ◆ Friendly/helpful people.
- ◆ Aesthetically pleasing building facades—nice ties to the past. Pastoral setting in the hills and agricultural land.
- ◆ Future growth opportunities in industrial areas.

C. Describe ONE idea that you will steal for use in your own business or community and describe how you will start to implement it within the next 72 hours:

- ◆ Focus on service at City Hall - have better brochures/profiles developed like the Green County Development Corporation folder with inserts.

D. What will you remember most about the community six months from now?

- ◆ Carol Strause—wish I could clone her for our city.
- ◆ Unique and interesting architecture— downtown buildings.
- ◆ The warm/inviting feeling of the place, the friendly people, and the absolutely beautiful setting of a small village clustered in the rolling hills with agricultural land around.
- ◆ The beautiful park and facilities as you enter the community.
- ◆ The absence of a commercial strip - it was very refreshing.

E. Other comments (that just didn't seem to fit anywhere else!)

- ◆ The people on the street were very personable. No one hesitated to wave or say hello. Keep that small town personality—it's charming!