

Sister Bay

As you approach the community..

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

- I had been to Sister Bay 2-3 times before. I expected a clean, scenic, progressive community -- a quality tourism attraction with its wonderful backdrop of water.
- I've been to Door County two other times. I remember it as very clean, with lots of shops and tourists.
- I expected a very busy town, with a lot of shops and eating places.
- Having visited Door County - 1 year ago - my perception always is the beauty of all the area - not only Sister Bay.
- I expected the town to be buzzing with tourists/locals throughout the entire place. Beautiful scenery, water, etc.

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.

- Very quiet, many businesses closed. (I wasn't surprised or shocked at this). I was impressed with the signs. The harbor area/park is very well done. Especially impressive for a village your size. Congratulations.
- I was shocked at how "still" the town was. I couldn't understand how it could be so busy and then so dead.
- Very little going on, no problems parking.
- Not much activity - was shocked not seeing any local people.
- Where is everybody?? For being a tourist town there was no one around. Reminded me of the musical "BRIGADOON," where the entire town goes to sleep for 100 years.

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, city 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.

- Very clean.
- Town very neat and clean, impressed with attractive buildings, such as motels-inns, etc.

III. Driving...evaluate EACH entrance.

Go about 1/2 - 1 mile out each road and return. List each road (61 North, etc.) and list positive and negatives for each.

- A little touch-up, a little more attention would be helpful, but certainly not a major problem. Congratulations on holding the billboards to a roar. It was difficult to tell exactly where Sister Bay ("greater Sister Bay") began and ended.
- The entrance from the south was well signed and attractive. From the north could use a little sprucing up. East - towards Blue Willow the junk yard should be cleaned up. That was the main eye sore I saw.
- **42** north very attractive with golf course and motel. **42** south could use a little sprucing up. **57** north same as **42** south. By adding a more attractive entrance sign on each road would separate your various villages in your area. A small green and white sign does nothing to attract people.
- Highway **42** north most attractive approaching golf course. More attractive signs would be more appealing as you enter **42** from the south.
- Entrance highway **42** by Tannenbaum seemed neglected, not well kept at the entrance coming from Ephraim.

IV. (a) Driving...evaluate the downtown business area:

(signs, appearance, size, etc.)

- I was very impressed with your signage, crisp and clean. Park and marina are wonderful.
- Quaint shops - well lit. Beautiful landscaping. I liked the signage for the most part.
- Signs are attractive but should be a little larger.
- Very clean and well kept.
- Clean, good signage and the new marina is especially beautiful. What a great natural setting to play-up!

IV. (b) Driving...evaluate other business area.

- I wondered about somehow linking them together with the downtown -- because things are spread out so -- in a safe, attractive, "environmental" way, e.g. walking/biking trail or additional lane by the highway - something to reduce the

dependence on vehicles (?)

- Other area to country walk could be better advertised. Bigger sign and what is in the shops or what kind of shops.
- Seemed to be too long of distances from one shop to another!
- Business on edges of town are very neatly kept; landscaped, etc, but they seemed to be too far apart. Possibly connect them with a sidewalk for pedestrians.

V. Driving...comments on residential:

- Very nice. Landscaping, trees - nothing junky or tacky.
- The homes we saw were beautiful. Again the landscaping around them was beautiful. They could be close to the downtown area - yet private.
- No rundown houses or junkie vacant lots.
- Most attractive homes very well kept with eye catching landscaping.
- Attractive, beautiful landscapes. Lots of trees surrounding their property which gives them privacy during the busiest season.

VI. Driving...comments on:

a. street signs

- None missing that I could see or defaced, etc. Clear, clean, crisp. Effective.
- Streets were marked clearly. Information booth easy to find from both directions.
- OK.
- Very informative and easy to read.
- Clear and informative.

b. traffic patterns/street conditions

- Streets seemed fine, hard to tell traffic "patterns" because of so little traffic. I wondered about the hill, welcome center and safety; is that a problem at peak times?
- Excellent roads coming to Door County. Traffic patterns and shrubs in S.B. were not a problem for us.
- OK.
- Good roads - traffic good as there wasn't much.
- Seemed to be in good condition

c. welcome signs (at entrances)

- Excellent!
- South entrance had a nice sign.
- See #3.
- Signs were attractive.
- Beautiful sign at (Ephraim side) entrance. Gave me a sense of really being welcomed.

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

- I saw several. The community is small enough I'm not sure what else is needed.
- Saw park, clinic and information booth signs. If there were others, missed them.
- Could be more.
- Parks could be marked better.
- Did not notice.

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

Sign well defined...busy...growing...new...etc.

- None. I assume industry is not a priority and doesn't fit your image. (No problem; a valid choice).
- Did not see one.
- No industrial park
- Not aware of industrial park - don't think there was one.

VIII. Driving...comments on schools:

- Looked fine.
- School looked cold compared to the rest of the county. Warm it up with better signs and landscaping.
- School looks in good repair.
- School looked good - very neat and well kept.
- Buildings looked nice - but the field with bleachers seemed to be needing a little attention.

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

- Would always like to see more, but for your size, there seemed to be plenty of opportunities.
- The playground by the park was nice. I am not sure if that was the only one in Sister Bay. I mentioned grills and picnic tables but I guess it's too late in season. I would have liked to see a fence with heavy rope to give the playground a safer feel by the water.
- Did not see athletic facilities.
- Seemed there should be more playground equipment to attract young children.
- Park by library was the only one I noticed. A nice neat park but lacking a couple of things. As a parent of toddlers, there was equipment geared toward that age group - plus being so close to the water, I felt a fence was needed by the water edge.

X. Driving...comments on other:

a. hospitals/clinics

- Clinic looked nice, easy to find.
- It looked as though your clinic was new. How lucky you are to have a physician.
- Very nice looking clinic.
- Clinic looked nice.
- Sister Bay Clinic was beautiful, very well tended.

b. billboards/advertising

- Keep fighting the billboard fight.
- I noticed there weren't billboards in Sister Bay - I liked that! I feel they would have taken away from the scenery.
- Billboards are very attractive but could be larger, not the huge ones, but an in-between what you have now.
- Billboards were attractive and inviting - fit well with the towns.
- Not too many - which to me says they are a "warm small town community - not too commercial."

c. Other

- Even though it is off season, I thought you should have had something in your sign by the information booth.
- Possibly too many "For Sale" signs posted along the outskirts of town. Makes a new incoming business wonder if they could survive in that community.

XI. Walking around...comments on businesses (physical part):

Appearance, displays, signs, etc.

- Signs great, appearance fine, saw some very nice window displays.
- The corn shocks, pumpkins and corn - fall displays outside a lot of the shops were a very nice touch, too bad more people couldn't enjoy them.
- All buildings are nice looking, no rundown or junky buildings.
- My favorite shopping square except very few shops open.
- Store fronts were very attractive, clean, and well signed. I really enjoyed the "shopping square" (behind Church Hill Inn), even though so many shops were closed. I could see the action happening in that location.

XII. Walking around...comments on people:

- Yes, very -- I found that throughout Door County, incidentally. People didn't seem jaded by all your visitors. Helpful and courteous.
- It was really strange the day we were there, I felt everyone else left. Where are the locals? Where do they shop?
- People very friendly.

- People were most friendly and the few we did see were most helpful.
- Never ran into any locals on the street.

XIII. Community information: comments on....

a. community brochure (tourist type)

- The Sister Bay brochure itself could use a little bit of work, but fine. I'd like to see more narrative percentage in the Door County book and a smaller percentage of ads.
- I felt "The Year Round Vacation Village" on the Sister Bay brochure was false, advertising when 75% of area shuts down. This is no place to vacation.
- Good.
- Felt the Door County Visitors Guide is most attractive and useful to a tourist visiting.
- Very informative - complete.

b. businesses/attractions brochures or directory

- Good.
- Informative and done well.
- Informative - done with taste.

c. community profile (demographic, industrial type information for prospective business people, etc.)

- Did not receive.
- Good.
- Hard to answer as very few people around.
- Town seems to "shut-down" end of October. Location of business vital - locate in the "heart" of other business areas instead of edge of town.

d. map

- OK.
- Good (2).
- Well layed out - easy to read.

e. other (ie. bulletin/notice, kiosks, etc.)

XIV. City Hall...describe your visit:

a. appearance of facility, including signing.

- Was not open, but a very nice building.
- Signed well. Locked up tight, including restrooms.
- Building in good repair.
- No comments - was locked up.
- Nice, well kept building.

b. helpfulness of staff

- NA (2).
- Not open.

(c) other

XV. Chamber of Commerce...describe your visit

a. did people know where it was (or who to refer you to?)

- Yes, county-wide in Sturgeon Bay (3).

b. comment on information available

- Good but the county-wide book needs more information, not so ad-intensive.
- Good.

c. comment on staff

- I personally had no contact with any of them.

d. other (hours, appearance, locations, etc.)

- Nice looking facility - got there after-hours, so couldn't evaluate.

XVI. Other stuff...

(a) public restrooms (available, condition, etc.)

- I had no problem finding a restroom in businesses, restaurants, etc. However, public restrooms were locked.
- Clean - the ones in the Country Walk shops. Other shops offered us theirs also.
- Village Hall only place for public restrooms and that was locked.
- Only one found open was in the shopping square by a speciality shop.
- Building was locked - but a couple different stores, Blue Willow and Tannenbaum offered theirs, very nice.

(b) pay phones (working, phone book intact, etc.)

- OK
- No problem
- Just two pay phones in one place, books intact.

(c) parking

- Seemed OK, but very few people around. Couldn't really judge, not knowing your volume of people.

- Easy?
- No parking problem this time of year.
- No parking problem. No one around. Lots of room.
- Noticed a couple larger parking lots. I'm sure they fill up fast during "tourist" months, but nice to have available.

(d) water fountains, benches, etc.

- Benches excellent. One water fountain(?).
- I thought the benches with Sister Bay on them were great.
- No water fountains working, a number of benches.
- Closed for the season.
- The village (town) benches were very nice - and available through out the town. Did not notice water fountains.

WRAP UP

A. Using your "senses" . . .

1. What does the community TASTE like? (Specialty bakery/restaurant, etc.)

- I enjoyed the food - everywhere. I liked the "taste" of the water atmosphere, the smells and sound, e.g. birds, water, etc. That, to me, is Door County.
- The meals we had were all very good.
- Specialty Store.
- Food excellent - Johnson's Bowling Alley and Church Hill.
- We ate at Johnsons, Sister Bay Bowl and Church Hill. All three were very good. Church Hill - Beautiful layout of brunch table.

2. What does the community SMELL like?

- The shops all smelled of potpourri, one smelled as good as the next. Outside the air was crisp and clean - nice!
- Water.
- Very clean.
- Clean, fresh air coming off the water - wonderful!

3. What SOUNDS did you hear?

- None.
- Nothing
- Not too many, quiet and peaceful.
- Very quiet and relaxing.

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.)

- Very warm and inviting. People were hospitable. Seemed deserted because of

"off-season," but not cold at all.

- We were treated very well. People in shops were very friendly and made us feel welcome. The shops decor on outside was very inviting. The only negative feeling I had was the town felt deserted.
- Deserted.
- Made me feel most welcome in the few places I was in - most deserted. High utilities lines could be underground.
- We had wonderful hospitality - very welcome feeling, even though the streets were rather deserted. Everyone really made you feel like returning again and I'm sure I will!

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

- People
- Hospitality/customer service
- Water
- Signage
- Park/marina/waterfront
- *Food was great!
- *Clean, crisp
- Buildings well kept and decorated, corn, etc.
- *Relaxing atmosphere
- Waterfront
- Hospitality
- *Clean streets and gutters
- Friendly merchants
- *Attractive stores inside and out
- No rundown businesses
- No junky looking vacant lots
- *The Bay
- *Friendly merchants and shop owners
- Clean
- Relaxing and peaceful
- Terrific hospitality
- Clean
- *Relaxed atmosphere
- *People working together to continue on a warm community
- Pride in their business and themselves

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

- How you did your signs.
- All buildings were so well kept. I went back to my store front and freshened up a window. I look forward to decorating with fresh greens and white lights this year at Christmas for the first time outside building.

- Clean streets and gutters.
- Clean streets.
- I take a lot of pride in being a "warm" business employee, but will work even harder to show appreciation even more toward all who enter the store.

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

- The people and atmosphere. I'll be back! Your potential.
- We were treated so well.
- The friendly people
- Friendly people, food good. Natural beauty of the water.
- The warm hospitality. The clean, crisp air and clean community. The experience of being involved in a program such as "First Impressions" was very rewarding.

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

- As a county and community, I think you need to start working on not having a season. That seems like an outdated concept to me. I would suggest "off-season" and "mid-week" packages. And I'd stop (save \$) advertising during the summer and fall. You don't need to. Off-season/mid-week coupons and advertising is your key, I think. Spread the peaks and valleys out.
- I worry for you about growth management/land use issues as everything "sprawls" together county-wide.
- Thanks for a wonderful visit!
- Play up the marina and your natural beauty. I loved the nautical signs and fences with the heavy rope. Make an effort to keep Door County, Sister Bay more of a year-round vacation place. Mid-week packages, holiday shopping, craft shows. It's too nice to shut down 6 months.
- The view from Church Hill Inn to the downtown area could be very beautiful if the wires were at eye level. Sidewalks could be extended to the village limits.
- Key shops open until at least after Thanksgiving and Christmas.
- I have enclosed a couple of guide books from a past trip to Mystic, Connecticut. I just thought they may help give ideas if your community does decide to play-up the natural beauty of the water. "Nautical theme". These photos and books are for you to do with as you wish. But if you do ever want to return them (but not necessary) my address is: Kellie Engelke, Box 933, New Glarus, WI 53574.

When looking at the photos of your town and Mystic, look at the similarities. I saw a lot of similar things. I wish you all success in the continuing building of your community!!