

# First Impressions

*of*

## Boscobel, Wisconsin

*Sauk Prairie Visit 10/21/91*

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*A program ~~for~~ community improvement*

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*Sauk County Development Corporation*

*Developed by:*

*Grant County UW-Extension Resource Agent*

## SUMMARY REPORT

Three representatives from Sauk Prairie visited Boscobel on Monday, October 21st. All were men. All were between the ages of 30 and 50. One person was the manager of a restaurant. One person was a banker. The third person was a developer. None had ever been to Boscobel before. We arrived at approximately 9:30 a.m., and left at 2:00 p.m. The day was bright and sunny with temperatures in the mid sixties.

Overall, we were favorably impressed with the community. The parks were nice, as were the airport and industrial park. The downtown renovation, new subdivision, and treatment plants show a community willing to spend and take chances. Schools were impressive. Boscobel is a town trying to move ahead.

The main problem we all agreed on was the haphazard planning and zoning that is in effect. Mansions next to hovels. Junk cars, oil drums, implements and appliances left in the open. Brush and scrub land in the middle of town. **Unpainted buildings.** If there are no laws in effect, make them. If they are in effect, enforce them. Boscobel is a great town that just needs to be cleaned up.

If you have any further questions, please contact David J. Piggott at (608) 356-3133. Thank you.

David J Piggott  
Executive Director

**1. What was my perception before visiting the community: What did I expect, etc.**

I did not know anything about the community. I have never been there.

I thought of Boscobel as a typical Wisconsin river community. The buildings would be older and the town quaint.

I figured it would be a small river town.

**2 Approaching the community, what do you notice first? (Evaluate EACH entrance)**

*Positive:*

Attractive business - supermarket on Hwy 133.

Entering from the north, the community looks fine with the marshy area. South entrance is attractive. East entrance into subdivision very scenic. Nice entrance from the east towards airport and industrial park. West entrance OK.

Beautiful hills and marsh area. A park that was well kept up. Sign to Boscobel very well done. Furniture store/bowling alley newer buildings.

*Negatives:*

Two old houses & run down mill - stone building. Many small businesses and houses on the main highway. Not eye appealing.

An old unappealing bridge.

Ancient mill. Main highway seems cluttered as it goes through town.

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

**Appearance**

*1. Downtown*

Older downtown with new bank and drive through. Bank modern design. All other buildings old. Empty hotel and other vacant buildings.

Attractive older buildings. Looks like good work is being done with streets, lights, and the depot project. Obvious pride in the downtown. Back alleys clean except for hotel lot. Too bad that the bank and hardware store went for modern look. Too many empty buildings.

Jaycees rest area nice - needs paint. Mix of old and new buildings - new businesses look great. S&L inside supermarket - poor impression. Sidewalk upgrading looks nice, but could you spend money better to attract customers?

## ***2. Residential***

Spotty. Very nice wealthy neighborhoods abutted with substandard housing and deteriorating commercial businesses. There is no possible way that I would ever believe anyone who told ~~me~~ zoning was enforced. Junk yards, dumping and fill spots, and unkept properties are routinely interspersed with residential areas. I was surprised at the number of new homes.

Very nice new homes. Old houses are in very poor condition with garbage cans and cars in the area. Many houses without garages. Too much trash and brush in residential areas.

Some very nice neighborhoods. Apartment buildings were all well kept. Trailer home area run down. Some concrete dumps in residential areas.

## ***3. Industrial park***

Very nice roads - some businesses.

Industrial park is set up well. Fire hydrants and entrances are nice. No lights at the railroad crossing.

I was impressed. Nice roads, entrances and lot sizes. Took a walk - ground seemed sandy and soft (is this a concern?). Nice lot sizes. **WARNING!** There is an old blue rusting oil drum sitting square on the middle lot. This must be removed today!

## ***4. Parks***

Excellent parks that were there. Could maybe be a few more smaller parks.

Didn't see much **of** a park.

Athletic facilities near high school were nice. North side park was nice. Could definitely use some smaller shaded parks and sitting areas for relaxing.

## ***5. Schools***

Very good buildings.

Impressed with the situation overall. Great new elementary. Nice high school. Nice rehabbed building. Must do something with the boarded up building.

Very good looking facilities. Why is the administration office downtown?

## ***6. Infrastructure (Sidewalks, streets, lighting, etc.)***

Newer sidewalks. Streets were in good repair.

Many newer sidewalks. Are these new or repaired?

Good streets. Nice treatment plant and city garage. Looks like the village is not afraid to spend the necessary dollars. Must now enforce brush and property clean up rules.

## *7. Other*

It is a very nice town. It just needs to be cleaned up a little.

### **B. Signing**

#### *1. Community entrance/exit signs*

Signs on the north and south were excellent. One sign on south is obscured by brush. Need better signs at entrances from east and west.

Many signs around town entrance - get wooden cut signs. Why is the drugstore advertising on the community sign? Sends a mixed message.

Main entrance signs good on major highway. Back entrances need improvement. Downtown signs excellent. Make you want to go downtown.

#### *2. Streets*

Very good repair.

Adequate.

Street signs need some repair - upkeep.

#### *3. Directions to Hospital/Parks/etc.*

Hospital - OK. Downtown - Fantastic. Everything else - nonexistent.

Good sign on 133 to hospital.

Not real plain to someone from out of town.

#### *4. Storefront signs*

No theme. Everyone does what they want.

Could use a common theme along Main St.

Haphazard.

#### *5. Industrial Park*

Spotted the big sign along the highway. It does the job. Could use something a little smaller and snappier maybe.

Big sign, but very little info about the industrial park.

**OK.**

6. *City Hall, police, etc.*

**OK.**

Needs better signage.

Easy to find.

7. *Billboards/advertising, etc.*

**OK.**

Heart attack/burn pizza advertising is tacky.

No problems.

**4. *Visitor/community information***

**A. *City/Village Hall***

1. *Is there a street map?*

In the community room there is a flood plain and street map.

I paid twenty cents in the library to copy the street map out of the phone book.

Yes.

2. *Community brochure/directory*

Not one offered if it exists.

Not that I saw.

No.

3. *Community profile (including business and industrial opportunities)*

Not one offered.

No.

No.

*4. Recommendations on place to stay/eat/visit...etc.*

Are there any nice full service restaurants in town?

Yes, by local business people.

Unique **Cafe**.

*5. Contact people & address listed if I want more info.*

Yes, I did get name & # to follow **up** with.

Did not ask for any.

Yes, from newspaper receptionist.

*6. Complimentary Items (Postcards, bookmarks, coupons, etc.)*

No.

No.

None offered.

**B. Chamber office/visitor info center**

*1. Easy to locate (and did people refer you to it?)*

There is none.

I had to ask many questions.

There is none.

*2. Comments on info available (Streetmap/brochures/community profile/etc.)*

**N/A**

None at stores or banks.

I couldn't find anything.

*3. Recommendations on places to stay/eat/visit etc.*

Only from local store owners.

No.

N/A.

*4. How prepared/helpful were they.*

Store owners were helpful.

N/A.

There was no chamber.

*5. Convenient hours?*

N/A.

No hours.

By appointment it seems.

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

*1. How knowledgeable about the community were they?*

Most were knowledgeable - if prodded. I was given info on tourist sites nearby.

Unaware of where the hospital was.

Average.

*2. Did they refer you to someone else who could help?*

Yes. In all instances someone tried to help.

Yes. Was given a chamber person name and phone number. People seemed apologetic at the lack of information available.

Yes.

*3. Attitude, appearance, etc.*

Helpful. One person said "I hope it doesn't get busy."

Business attitude was so-so.

Fine.

*4. Other comments*

People informed me that the nearest instant cash (Tyme) machine was down **the road** in Fennimore. **Come on!**

## **5. General**

### **A. Do residents know their community history/events/directions/etc.**

They seemed well enough informed.

### **B. Services...variety of retail ...lodging facilities.,.**

Many services were available.

Many of these were closed at 10:30 a.m. Monday. Photography - paint - hairstylist.

Seemed to have all angles covered. All the modern conveniences etc... except no cash machine.

### **C. Are there public restrooms.**

At the public parks.

Yes.

In city hall and at the ballpark.

### **D. Payphones...are they working, phone books intact.**

Didn't check.

Ok.

Didn't see any.

### **E. Industrial park...does it look active & attractive.**

Looks fine except for that incredible oil drum.

Not much out there.

Yes.

### **F. What does the community TASTE like? (specialty restaurants/bakeries/etc.)**

Ate at the unique cafe. Food was great. Stopped at bar ( Greg & Joan's, or Bill & Fred's or something like that) for a Diet Pepsi. They did not have a pay phone but they let me use my card to make a long distance call on their phone. I was amazed.

Food was good.

Unique Cafe should have more turkey products.

**G. What does the community SMELL like?**

Smells good.

Unique Cafe smelled good from across the street.

No smell.

**H. What SOUNDS do you hear?**

Construction.

Leave eaters were going great guns.

Downtown street work being done. Little other activity.

**I. What did community FEEL like? (Emotional response i.e. cold/warm, crowded/deserted, inviting, etc.)**

Quiet downtown. Old people sitting on benches. Much downtown reconstruction.

Luke warm.

Confused. Modern or old? Rich or poor? Growing or dead?

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

The people I met were typical small town midwesterners. Nice enough, but not going out of there way to be friendly.

Construction worker on the sidewalk seemed unhappy about work. Restaurant worker did not want much business. Newspaper receptionist was very helpful. Cashier at variety store didn't know where newspaper was. City Clerk informative but cold.

People were friendly and responsive to questions. They did not offer a lot of local news or events that make their community special.

**ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS:**

**The** police seemed suspicious of our activity. Every time I turned around I saw one cruising by. By the way, that story on the front of the newspaper about "car ornament" necklaces was outrageous. What ever happened to innocent until proven guilty. The notion of carrying a receipt to prove you are not a thief is unbelievable. Putting this notice in the paper gives the impression of a high crime rate and an overbearing small town police force. You have an extremely impressive airport for a community of this size.

It appears that the residential community could do a lot by having a clean-up day. Old barrels & rusty junk piles could be cleared to make it look nice.

Wide main St. Many downtown stores closed. Need to work on turkey promotions. Need a major business in industrial park to help downtown. Making downtown look nice is **OK**, but will not solve the problem. You need a major employer. Many expensive and well built homes, but many run down homes. Dog kennel in residential **area**. Many for sale signs on houses - do they sell? Nice looking apartment buildings. Turkeys on garbage cans.

**WHAT WILL YOU REMEMBER ABOUT THIS COMMUNITY  
SIX MONTHS FROM NOW**

Downtown reconstruction.

The parks were exceptionally nice.

Downtown renovation. Spot zoning and no enforcement of zoning and planning laws.

***6 Doing it Right!***

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

- 1.) Downtown renovation and depot project.  
Attempt to increase downtown business with new sidewalks.  
Signs to downtown.
- 2.) Nice school system.  
Nice new houses.  
Upkeep of the sidewalks in residential areas.
- 3.) Seeming willingness to spend some money on infrastructure.  
Good school facilities.  
Some renovation of the business district.
- 4.) Nice airport.  
**Housing.**  
**Some** of the new development was very nice.
- 5.) Good industrial park.  
Quiet downtown.  
Parks look excellent.

**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!**

**Get** business and community information into the stores for visitors to **look** at.  
(Boscobel needs this too!)

The depot renovation is great. We have some buildings in Sauk Prairie that could be used for a similar project.

# The Boscobel Dial

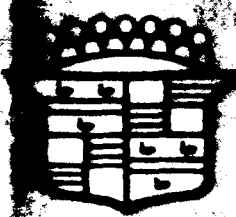
VOL. 119—No. 43

BOSCOBEL, WISCONSIN, THURSDAY, OCT. 17, 1991

\$15.00 per year



**HEAD START YOUNGSTERS** received "personalized" storybooks Tuesday. First row, l. to r., Derek Pederson, Jessie Dobson, Jodi Utzig, Michael Gagliano. Second row, l. to r., Ryan Hunt, Adam McClimans, David Weeke, Kody Cathman, Alisha Jera. Third row, l. to r., Alicia Starkey, Kyle Belghley, Terry Hird, Craig Jones, Lisa Jerrett, Dustin Tanner. Fourth row, l. to r., are home visitors, Meredith Strang and Lisa Trumm.



**Warning from the chief**

Boscobel Police Chief Jerry Staskal says, "If you're wearing a hood ornament necklace or carrying a hood ornament key chain, you'd better have a receipt from where you bought it."

The police have received six reports of hood ornaments over the past two weeks.

**Accidents in city reported by police**

Boscobel police report two motor vehicle accidents.

Todd L. Christianson, rural Boscobel, attempted to pull out from the alley next to the Citgo station onto Hwy. 61 Oct. 4 at 5:05 a.m. and struck a south-

## Multi-million lawsuit planned against designer of incinerator

The Muscoda Solid Waste Commission will bring a multi-million dollar damage claim against the firm which designed the ill-fated Muscoda incinerator.

The commission authorized its attorney, Kristine Euclide, partner in the Madison firm Stafford, Rosenbaum, Rieser & Hansen, to sue Estech Engineering after meeting with her in closed session at its regular meeting last Wednesday. The commission had previously directed Euclide to investigate the probability of a successful action against Estech and whether damages could be collected.

The commission agreed to pay Euclide's firm a percentage of damages collected from Estech.

## Little Britches to go national

The Young Riders... video of the Little Britches... held in Wisconsin this past August... scheduled for release in the month. The video will be available locally, according to Tom Productions vice-president and creative director, Lew Patton. The video will be at the... as planned.