

First impressions

of

Fennimore, WI

*by Bellevue, IA
Visit conducted 4/15/91*

A program for community improvement

Developed by:

Andy Lewis

Grant County UW-Extension Resource Agent

James L. Schneider

Exec. Dir., Grant County Economic Development Corp.

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

*Really did not know what to expect with the exception of the cheese factory. Had passed thru town previously but **only** remembered the mouse at the south edge of town.*

I had never been to Fennimore. I expected clothing, crafts, and tourist attractions.

*Having never been to Fennimore prior to this visit, I anticipated it to be very similar to other Wisconsin towns. I was highly impressed with the roads and streets in Fennimore, but not surprised **as** most of Wisconsin (**from** my visits) appears to have excellent highways and towns. I was also hoping to find a cheese place/factory of some sort which I did. Other than that I anticipated Fennimore to be a beautiful rural community with gift shops, antiques, and a lot of history.*

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

*We came in **from** the south side of town.*

*I picked up **on** some of the billboards and kept a keen eye out for the Silent Woman (though I was disappointed that it was closed).*

Positive:

South • Good road and well maintained properties. Adequate signage.

I enjoyed the cheese factory, the gift shop, and being able to watch the cheese being made.

*We entered town from the South and I was excited to see the "Mouse" which I had read about in the papers. I also noticed the Jehovah Witness building upon entering. I was highly impressed with the condition of the streets upon entering town. I also noticed that the town had a lot of nice clean looking and large lots. And how can I forget seeing the flags. It's too bad it took the Persian Gulf to remind a lot of communities (including Bellevue) that Patriotism **is** a year round endeavor. I do commend you upon **your** flags!*

Negatives:

*North • Junkyard **on** left. A definite eyesore.*

*From the North, the entrance into town **is** okay, but **as is** similar to our own community, sometimes trash/junk in a yard can hinder one's view. A suggestion might be to have a wood fence constructed around this area or to ask the owner to clean it up some (but it's easier said than done).*

3. As you drive around town your comments on;

Appearance

1. Downtown

Nice. Wide street. Good traffic flow. Tidy shops and good variety. Adequate parking & no meters.

The outside appearance was basically buildings in fair condition. I was very disappointed with the interior.

The downtown is neat, clean and has adequate parking. The large parking spots and no meters is a definite plus. Also, the buildings (most) appear to be well-kept or are in the process of re-modeling/refurbishing. I like the train cars by the Subway Shop.

2. Residential

Apparently well kept homes with large lots. Good streets with curbs & gutters.

Generally neat and well kept homes.

Beautiful residential system and you appear to have a lot of apartment complexes. I enjoyed driving through these areas and was pleased to see well-kept lawns and large lots for the homes. And the streets to get there are fabulous.

3. Industrial park

Good road and wide streets within the industrial park Room for much expansion.

Excellent. Very neat and tidy.

Nice area. I did not notice the sign, but I knew that this was the area Well kept, nice streets through the area

4. Parks

Typical small town park

They seemed a slight bit crowded together. It could be a larger area

Not overly impressive. Appear to be small with few items. I only recall seeing 2 parks, but I may have missed others. The pool looked nice. I did not like the drive through in the park, but that is my preference for pedestrian type parks due to safety etc.

5. Schools

Appear modern & well kept.

*Very good
Looked good Nice to see that you have a Vo-Tech school in addition to the elementary and high school. All facilities looked well kept from the outside.*

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

Up to date and well maintained

Very impressive!

Streets are wonderful. I imagine the lighting is adequate-it was day time so I really didn't notice too much. Sidewalks were good

7. Other

City Hall, Police Station, and Fire Station were all well kept and a fairly nice structure. I was surprised by the size of the library. The library was not open but I thought it would be larger.

Overall, my first impression of the town by driving through was positive.

B. Signing

1. Community entrance/exit signs

Only noticed usual state sign upon entering town, except for business advertising bill boards.

Fair.

Okay. Nothing really grabbed my attention. Are there exit signs? I know we don't have any in Bellevue.

2. streets

Nice & wide. Well maintained.

Excellent.

Good

3. Directions to Hospital/Parks/etc.

*Did not see **any** signs.*

Fair. .

Didn't really notice any.

4. Storefront signs

Some interesting, others rather plain.

Good

5. Industrial park

Adequate.

Excellent.

Must have missed it, someone in the group though commented upon it.

6. City Hall, police, etc.

*Did not see a sign., but easy to locate in the middle of town, on the **main** street.*

Excellent.

Good

7. Billboards/advertising, etc.

Only noticed bill boards on South outside of town. They were well kept.

Good

***Okay** as far as billboards go.*

4. Visitor/community information (Visited by one team only)

A. City/Village Hall

1. Is there a street map?

?

We paid \$50 at City Hall for a street map. It was quite informative.

*Yes, we had to pay for it though. I thought the map was good, but it did not list any places **on** it other than street names, thus I think it would be nice to have the schools, city hall, etc., listed **as an easy** reference.*

2. Community brochure/directory

?

*I felt there **needs** to be several more brochures.*

*The community brochure **is** attractive. I would **also** suggest developing a community directory. I had to almost drag information out of some people and a directory would have helped*

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

?

*Did not receive this, **nor** was it offered **on** our visit.*

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

Referred out of town.

*Unfortunately, we were referred out of town when we told others that the Silent Woman was closed. No one seemed to know that the restaurant was not opened **on** Monday & Tuesday. We did have coffee and muffins at Hardee's and their help was extremely friendly and courteous, but not real informed **on** the town. The one lady seemed confused when asked where the depot was and if it was being restored.*

5. Contact people & addresses listed if I want more info.

?

The newspaper was very helpful.

No, and people were confused if a Chamber existed in town and who to contact.

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

?

No. *What* we received we had to purchase, except for a taste of cheese at the factory.

B. Chamber office/visitor info center

The visitor center was closed

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

Evidently do not have an active Chamber of Commerce. Store clerks did not know who to refer us to.

I feel the city as a whole needs to have a more informative Chamber of Commerce. The people we talked with seemed unsure about the chamber.

Unfortunately not. We asked several people and kind of got the run around from person to person not really knowing who was the president or if there was an office, etc. We found the Tourist Center which was closed. It does appear to be rather small.

2. Comments on info available (Street map/brochures/community profile/etc.)

As a whole I feel the City Clerk's office was probably the most helpful and knowledgeable.

Not applicable at this time.

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

N/A

4. How prepared/helpful were they.

They all were helpful, but were unsure of information.

The center was closed but a gentleman working at the lumber company outside was very helpful in telling us about the depot restoration work and the upcoming plans for a museum, etc. This was very interesting.

5. Convenient hours?

I was disappointed to see the Silent Lady Hotel and Restaurant was closed on Monday and Tuesdays. The little art store was also closed.

N/A

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

1. How knowledgeable about the community were they?

Not very informative or interested in supplying information.

City Hall, a gentleman at the lumber co., Jewelry Store.

The lady at the clothing store tried very hard to answer out questions and attempted to refer us to others who might be of more assistance. Thank you! The gentleman outside the lumber company was very informative. The couple at the one craft shop kept referring us out of town for all the questions we asked. They did though have a very nice shop. They key I believe is to keep the community informed and educated on what YOU have to offer (this though is not an easy task).

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

One store clerk tried to locate someone to answer questions. We were referred to the bank and he tried to be helpful.

Yes, a couple of people did. Or they tried to look up the answer for us. We did manage to find the newspaper office, which was of excellent assistance to us.

3. Attitude, appearance, etc.

Some were rather negative, especially when asked about the Railroad Depot, which is in the process of being restored.

Overall appearance and attitude was good.

The overall attitude was okay, although some doubted what there was to do in town and why some individuals even had a shop as they are never open. Shop keepers and convenience people were okay. The lady at the pharmacy was very helpful, friendly, etc.

4. Other comments

The craft shop people were helpful!

The gentleman working on the building in front of the lumber co., was probably the most informative and positive. The City Clerk's office was helpful.

5. General

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

If they do they do not like to talk about it.

Pretty well.

Average .. We got information from about 1/3 or 1/4 of the people we talked with.

B. Services..variety of retail ..lodging facilities...

Adequate.

I feel they need more retail to attract tourists - antiques, crafts, and clothing. I was very impressed with the furniture store.

I was very disappointed with the variety of retail shops and what they had to offer. I expected more shops to browse in and possibly some antique shops. Was unaware of lodging facilities.

C. Are there public restrooms.

Not that we saw.

I was not aware of any.

At city hall, which is a great looking facility.

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

Did not see any.

We went to the phone company and they wanted \$4.50 for a book!

Didn't notice. But was upset when we were referred to the phone company to get a phone book and they wanted \$4.00 or so for a book, especially when we were inquiring as a potential new comer.

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

Yes. Much room for expansion also.

Excellent.

Yes.

F. What does the community TASTE like? (Specialty restaurants/bakeries/etc.)

Only had coffee and muffin at Hardy's. It was the usual. When we asked about a place for lunch were referred out of town. The Silent Woman was closed the day we were in town.

***Only** had the opportunity to have a pop and a muffin at Hardee's. I do though hope to come back to try out the Silent Woman • it looks fabulous from the brochure.*

G. What does community SMELL like?

Nothing unusual

*Didn't smell anything. Do you **do** any downtown planting of flowers etc., for the summer?*

H. What SOUNDS did you hear?

Usual traffic. Noon whistle.

Traffic. Did not see or hear many people anywhere, but it was a Monday.

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

The emotional response was indifferent.

Friendly. There was not a lot of people but it was Monday.

*Community felt almost deserted • not quite. Was a somewhat non-interested in you type feeling. I noticed about half the shops, the owner failed to greet **us** when we came in or it took them 3 • 5 minutes to do so, and **no** one else was there.*

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

*Most everyone **was** quite friendly. The secretary at the City Clerk's office was especially helpful.*

I enjoyed visiting with the folks at the newspaper, pharmacy, ladies clothing store
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and city hall. I was though not impressed with their first assumption that I was a student and could find a job at Hardee's if I wanted. Generally, we had to say Hi to people on the street first and in the shops, but I guess that that is partially due to outgoingness of our group. I cannot though say that anyone was rude to us in any way and they attempted to be helpful.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/OBSERVATIONS:

A couple of things I would like to comment upon in this section include city hall. I felt the reception was very helpful, but I was disappointed that when we mentioned about moving there etc., that no one else stepped forward to help us or to help the reception. She had to answer the phone, deal with daily customers and try to help us at the same time, while 3-4 other people in the office went about their own business so to say. I guess I thought they could have pitched in, as we eventually left with about half of the information we wanted because we felt bad for taking up her time. I think it is fabulous that there is an effort to restore the train depot and turn it into a museum. Will there be a chance of moving your tourist information center there also? This might be a good idea.

WHAT WILL YOU REMEMBER ABOUT THIS COMMUNITY SIX MONTHS FROM NOW

The mouse at the South edge of town and the somewhat negative attitude of locals when asked about the Railroad Depot.

The Silent Woman being closed on Monday.

The "Mouse" who greeted us as we entered town. The fine condition of the streets and not getting to visit the Silent Woman, but that will be rectified next time I visit. Of course, we did take pictures and it was interesting the gift shop at the cheese factory. I think I'll remember the Vo-Tech school and my missed opportunity to attend as offered by the people I met.

6. Doing it Right!

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

1. The amount of traffic thru the town shopping area
2. Potential of the Industrial Park
3. Schools & Churches.
4. Cleanliness of the town in general.
5. Well maintained streets.

1. Industrial Park.
2. Schools.
3. City Hall Facility (Police, Fire Station).
4. Voc-Tec School.
5. Excellent Schools.

1. Street condition and excellent parking.
2. Outside of Silent Woman.

3. Subway/train car shops.
4. The mouse.
5. Beautiful residential areas and seeing the recycling bins on the curbs. Nice progress and we were told you've been doing this for a couple of years.

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!

The trash containers attached to the light poles. Good idea up off the sidewalk Mentioned same to our local Chamber of Commerce Director as a possible project for the future.

I like the idea of hanging trash cans in each block They take up very little space. My steps to implement this in our community would be to bring it up to the Chamber of Commerce and/or the City Administrator.

The continue the push with the city government for street improvements. Also, I think the key was not finding a Chamber Office or Tourist Center open which makes me realize that our in Bellevue is not that accessible either. Thus, we have taken a positive step since we visited and our Tourist Center will open May 1, 1991, and our Chamber of Commerce Office will be relocating on June 1, 1991, to a business complex down the street which will give us 7 days a week accessibility. Visiting someone else helped to remind me of what needs to be done at home.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS: