

# First Impressions of FERTILE

1. What were our perceptions before visiting the community: What did we expect, etc.

Jungle Jims, Dwayne Knutson, and Bergerson Nursery (I had heard of these things)  
Small rural community with radio reports daily  
Didn't know what to expect  
No perception

2. Approaching the community, what do you notice first?

Positive:

Roadways neat and cared for  
Welcome signs up to date  
Nice evergreens  
Nice white fence  
Neat gingerbread trim on Erickson Oil  
FERTILE sign (flowers)  
The fence around the salvage yard was good  
The south and east entrances were very nice with trees, landscaping and pretty with the river.  
The rolling hills and river entrances were very nice. A pretty drive.  
Accentuate your river.

Negatives:

North entrance a junk yard  
East entrance -junk by a boat near the river  
Trees on north end would add interest

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

Appearance:

Downtown -

Eide Mercantile is an interesting building with leaded, stained glass windows, however needs upgrading on sign. Needs shades on the upstairs windows.

The Encore and Pharmacy are very inviting.

Mill Street Floral - nice frontage.

The Bakery window could be more inviting.

Is Gullickson open and if so how do you get into it?

Mac's Restaurant was nice. Emphasize main entrance so people know how to get into it.

Washington Avenue empty from restaurant to Main Street and is boarded up.

Needs work. (I understand you are working on a grant to clean this up.)

Country Mouse - inviting home.  
White implement is a very nice building.  
Pleasant looking downtown.

#### Residential -

Most yards were well mowed, trimmed, and maintained.  
Landscaping in older homes section needs attention.  
Had some very unique older homes.  
Interesting potential in the building sites section with areas to expand - needs sign saying "building sites available."  
The apartment building on Garfield - needs identification.

#### Industrial Park -

We did not see any. When we asked a community member, they weren't aware of any.

#### Parks -

Needs better signing.  
The fencing needs painting and the bathrooms need upgrading.  
Will the Sand Hill Golf Course be a park area too? It is very inviting.

#### Schools -

Loved the billboard - up to date and informative.  
Appears to be an integral part of the town.  
Could you hang banners on the crosswalk there in the summer to publicize on-going events?  
Glad to see school using fairgrounds.  
School had no visitor parking area.  
Very friendly, helpful secretary: was given tour and booklets.  
Good computer department, shop areas.  
Could possibly use interior upgrading in school.

#### infrastructure (sidewalks, streets, lighting, etc.)

Appear to be in good condition.  
Nice wide streets.  
Sidewalks are handicap accessible.

#### Other -

##### Fairgrounds -

Fairgrounds are an integral part of the town. They are nicely painted. They have a nice grandstand and trees. They are well kept up. It is wonderful to see the school making use of the fairgrounds, i.e., football field. Great to avoid duplication. They are well mowed.

## Nursing Home -

Outdoor walk area nice  
Staff friendly  
Common areas very nice  
Expansion with Summerfield Place - great.  
Town seems committed to caring for the elderly.  
No odor and very clean.

## Other comments -

Old rusty water tower was unique. Could it be developed into an attraction or tourist center?

We noticed three water towers in town. The white one by the fire department needs paint.

Fire Department Maintenance Building was well marked.

## B. Signing

### Community entrance/exit signs -

good and current  
Welcome Deer Hunter signs noticed

### Streets -

Fine

### Directions to Hospital/Parks -

Park signing should be enlarged.  
No sign on Main Street showing where to turn to Nursing Home.

### Storefront Signs -

Pierson Hartz needs bigger sign  
Eide Mercantile needs painted sign  
Evanger Church - sign is rusty and needs work.  
Need bigger sign for directions to Country Mouse.  
Anything off of Main Street needs better signing.  
Funeral Home needs better signing.

### Industrial Park -

**N/A**

### City Hall, police, etc. -

The Community Center needs bigger signing for police, library and clinic.  
The Fire Department Maintenance Building has excellent signing.

Billboards/Advertising, etc. -  
Up-to-date  
School billboard is excellent

#### 4. Visitor/community information

City/Village Hall/Community Center -

The City Office was very helpful. They explained the removing old buildings grant was being explored. They gave us a street map. It was very usable. This also contained a directory of the community.

The Community Center seemed to be an activity hub. It is a clean attractive building, housing a number of things including Police, City Offices, Library, Senior Citizens, Clinic, and Community Room, and Public Restrooms.

The Library was inviting and well lit.

Public pay phone was outside the Community Center

General Community -

We asked for directions from the Cenex and they were helpful. Wherever we asked questions, the people were very helpful.

We asked for recommendation for restaurants and all restaurants were recommended and directions were provided.

They did refer us to different businesses within the community.

We noticed that there is a positive attitude and a more casual appearance in the stores.

We noticed that customers seemed pleased and upbeat such as in Encore. In Encore, we were impressed with the lighting and display and use of signing for a business that specializes in second hand clothing.

One gas station we visited had a dirty restroom.

#### 5. General Comments

- A. Residents know their community.
- B. Nice variety of services - noticed 1 motel  
Limited clothing selection for outside visitors.
- C. Public restrooms at park looked okay; at Community Center were nice.
- D. Pay phones by Community Center
- E. Did not notice an industrial park

- F. Community Taste - hometown rural cooking.  
Bought homemade fresh doughnuts at Eats 'N Antiques
- G. Community Smell - smelled like Christmas at the Flower Shop  
Some of the older buildings smell like older buildings.
- H. Community Sounds - the wind; pleasant happy conversations.
- I. Community Feel -warm, helpful, involved, supportive of other businesses;  
a united community - caring community.

Additional Comments or Observations:

Bulletin Board up town was good.  
A lot of stuff going on in this community.  
Pleasant looking town.  
The people we met were friendly and helpful.

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

The fun we had at the Country Mouse  
The flower shop - Mill Street Flower Shoppe  
Unique older homes - at the corner of Lincoln Avenue Northeast  
The big flower FERTILE sign.  
Looks like your community cares for the elderly - nursing home, assisted living, many medical services - a "caring community."  
We are envious of your hills.

6. List the 5 most positive things you observed about the community:
1. Calling Cards - received in 3 different businesses.
  2. Community Map - easy to read and "user friendly"
  3. School involvement - noted with bulletin board.
  4. Fairgrounds are an integral part of the town.
  5. Seemed like the businesses were meeting the community needs.

One idea we will steal -

The community map - easy to use.