

First impressions

of

Guttenberg, IA

by Boscobel, WI

Visit conducted 10/28/91

A program for community improvement

Developed by:

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

I had never been to Guttenberg before. I really had an open mind about what I was going to find.

River town • expected mobile summer homes along waterfronts. Antique stores and tourist town similar to a small version of Galena.

I really had no idea of what Guttenberg would be like. Knew the approximate size and that it was on the river.

I thought of Guttenberg as a tourist city along with a fishermen's paradise.

I expected to see an older river town slowly deteriorating. A city fighting the elements of bigger cities being close by.

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

Highway 52 North • neat, orderly farms and beautiful view of river and countryside.

Highway 52 South • neat, orderly appearance. Sawmill operation along railroad was as neat and orderly as possible. Necessary evil.

Positive:

Highway C7X • no distracting sights.

Evidently Iowa does not mow shoulders of roads.

Extremely well kept homes and farms, if not new, well maintained and in good repair with well kept lawns. A safe driveout that blended so well with the wooded area.

- Hwy. 52 from the North • beautiful entrance to city. Nice lettering on water tower. Well kept farms leading to community add to positive feeling. Impressive view of river.*
- Use of Crown Vetch for cover on hillside was attractive.*

Small town signing - noting the individual stores and services.

South Entrance • nice welcome sign - beautiful scenery - huge American flag • was impressive. Nice pool and park North entrance • nice welcome sign again.

Negatives:

Some of the taller brush along the road overlooking the island and river needs to be topped. Would like to see population listed on city name sign.

Signs did not look very professional • small • entrances were quite clean.

Report Introduction

The First Impressions visit of Guttenberg by Boscobel was conducted on Monday, October 28, 1991.

The five member Boscobel team profile:

- 4 men, 1 woman
- 2 are connected to government
- 3 are current businesspersons
- 4 have long time ties to Boscobel
- 3 are involved in economic development.

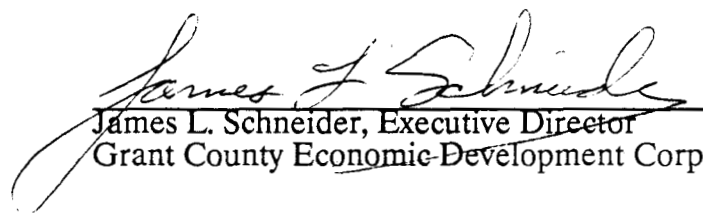
The temperature was in the low 50s and ~~was~~ raining miserably.

We split into two teams of two and one individual, We took turns driving around the area and walking through the business district. We tried to visit as many businesses as possible and there ~~was~~ some overlap.

We requested information in advance and received a prompt response with several useful pieces of information.

The following pages provide a composite of the five individual reports. If further explanation is required on any of these, I invite you to contact me at 608-822-3501.

It was a pleasure visiting your community. May all your "First Impressions" be winning ones.


James L. Schneider, Executive Director
Grant County Economic Development Corp.

3. Industrial park

Excellent approach. Well signed. Impressed with new buildings. Where will new expansion take place?

Beautiful sign - needs to be lighted Small, but very well kept up and landscaped

Nice looking - sign sets it off: Buildings were neat, attractive.

Excellent sign. Area is on a slope, which makes it hard to build on.

Very nice entrance sign. Looking around industrial park, is there room for expansion? If so, maybe it should be staked or fenced out.

4. Parks

Outstanding. A big plus for the city. They are to be commended for their efforts toward the parks and boat landings. City should be proud of these facilities.

Lovely - benches to sit and watch river, boats or birds. Only one thing bothered me - fences led to a gate - but nothing on the other side of the gate.

Very fine parks. Most constructed by Corps of Engineers on river side of town. Well kept and inviting.

Beautiful park along river. To me this has to be a great advantage for downtown merchants. Maybe business should somehow emphasize on this riverfront more.

5. Schools

Satisfactory appearance. Appeared to be short of playground space. Couldn't find football field and track

Set right on river bank - beautiful, but very limited for playground.

School on river seemed o.k., although space limitations must mean activities for students are really limited.

Buildings look small for size of town but in good repair and neat.

OK - should blend outside decor of buildings together. Would help them look more uniform.

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

Lack of sidewalks in some areas was apparent. Lack of curb and gutter in some areas was also apparent.

Sidewalks - new, very handicap accessible, benches available for leisure time.

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Would be nice to know population. Maybe someday mention the beautiful park along the river sooner.

3. As you drive around town your comments on:

Appearance

1. Downtown

Obviously a lot of work had been put into the new downtown project. It looked great. Store/home fronts evidenced a lot of work and pride. Alleys were well kept. Rear entrances in most instances were far above average rear entrances.

New streets, new lights, looked great. However, walkway in front of Sweater Shop had several barrels with dead flowers, two of your new trees bent over need to be reset. Ben Franklin upstairs has plywood over top floor windows. Do not like to see homes right in the middle of the shops.

- Some very nice work being done - the 400 block was very impressive.
- Degner-Green Insurance has done **an** excellent job with the front of their building.
- Dentist has nicest window display in town. Good use of space.
- Meuser Lumber - good looking buildings.
- Vacant buildings - always a concern and they can quickly become an eyesore. Could the Business Association or service groups do something in these vacant display areas. Just clean windows can help!

Town is clean. Individual business places are trying to fix up - shows progress.

Very clean, most buildings kept up or restored nice. Very good main street.

2. Residential

Majority of properties were well kept with a few homes showing requirements for owner/landlord maintenance. Residents appeared to have pride in homes.

*Most houses were in good repair and well kept **in** their front and also clean and uncluttered **in** their backyards. Alleys were unblocked, well marked and in relatively fair road condition.*

Newer apartment building on 1st Street (near St. Pauls) - nice to see design to fit in with neighbors, why no street # on that building?? (I used to deliver for UPS, so that always bugs me.)

Many nice homes on edge of town - area towards care center is especially clean and nice. Town has more than usual amount of small, old houses.

Most homes clean - yards also. Streets were in good condition.

One sign on Highway after that - just guess which way to pull into emergency. Did not see a sign for park but you could not miss it.

Saw sign for library.

Usual signs from highway to hospital I did not find anything down town to show me how to get to the hospital

*Sign to hospital was noticeable - **also** saw one big sign to down town park I still would advertise this beautiful park sooner - like coming into town.*

4. Storefront signs

Average.

*All had their names visible but no two were similar in style **or** design.*

I liked Esser's sign and Degner-Green Insurance.

Nothing unusual but they have all different kinds of signs - nothing uniform.

*Most were **flat** signs on front of stores. You really had to get right in front of stores to tell what there name was.*

5. Industrial park

Excellent.

Beautiful - but needs to have a light.

Damn nice sign - what a great image it projects.

Hard to build on because of being on a hill.

Beautiful entrance sign.

6. City Hall, police, etc.

Barely adequate. Never did find a rescue squad sign - if there is a rescue squad. Didn't see a police sign.

City Hall easy to find, well marked, blends well with building exterior. Police - did not find.

City Hall was easy to find and Municipal sign was noticeable. How about office directory at entrance?

Did not go in but outside looks inviting.

Really didn't notice any signs telling where they were located.

New street area is attractive - I like the old style lights. (Why are they on pedestals?) Was intrigued by the 2x6 boards in the walkway - I liked it. Older sidewalks seem in reasonably good condition.

Excellent new lights down town. Rest of town average like most towns.

*Sidewalk - good condition, **also** streets and lights (new).*

7. Other

*I felt the community had a great deal of **PRIDE** in what they have accomplished, where they are going and how they are going to get there - especially in this day and age of short tax dollars. More power to them.*

Boat landings, accessible, well lighted, public restrooms and telephones - taking good advantage of a natural asset.

B. Signing

1. Community entrance/exit signs

Requires a great deal of attention. Inadequate.

*Emblems under major **sign** - need to be touched **up** - they are showing age and neglect.*

Didn't see one on Hwy. 52 North, although the water tower lettering is impressive.

Welcome to Guttenberg signs in good repair. No exit signs that I saw.

Entrance signs were good in welcoming us to Guttenberg. Really didn't notice exit signs.

2. Streets

Adequate.

Well maintained and easy to read.

I noticed the Jaycee logo on the street signs, but no one knew why it was on them.

*Streets are in good repair. Alley back of Main Street **is** excellent - city needs some curb and gutter installed.*

Most streets, had signs

3. Directions to Hospital/Parks/etc.

Very difficult to find the hospital. In an emergency it could be a real problem to find the hospital. Signing should be a lot better for the parks since the city has such beautiful parks.

Nothing - Nada - I was surprised by this since you have an industrial park and try to attract visitors as well.

City is out working for more industry but doesn't appear to have much more room to locate a plant.

I would say there is good opportunity for businesses both downtown and Hwy. 52.

4. Recommendations on place to stay/eat/visitetc.

People very friendly and willing to provide information if they had it. Some new residents were hesitant to provide information but that is understandable.

Eat - *everyone recommended Doug's Place, easy to see why.*

Very helpful with info, they were knowledgeable about area, although they didn't know why new street lamps are on pedestals. Both were good boosters of the community.

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

Not available. Would be nice to have a directory available at a central location.

Everyone seemed to know the Mayor's name, where the Chamber President worked (didn't know his name).

Had names of contact people and wrote them down for me and gave me directions to their places of business.

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

Brochures only. I am not particularly interested in "presentos" but other people are.

Library had book markers, brochures on central areas in Iowa. No coupons.

None

I see a couple of stores carried postcards.

B. Chamber office/visitor info center

Didn't contact.

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

Chamber secretary operates out of home. President works for local supermarket. Visitor information center open but no one there. Lady in jewelry store next door obtained info out of visitor center for us.

7. Billboards/advertising, etc.

Weathered. Don't let the number of signs get out of hand and destroy the natural beauty of the river, town and hills. This could happen - particularly on the strip.

Close to road, cluttered, aging - need paint.

Nothing good or bad.

Usual for small town but not as many as most towns.

Most signs OK

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

Saw one sign in middle of business on Hwy. 52. Maybe this information should be told on approach signs on the edge of town.

A. City/Village Hall

1. Is there a street map?

Couldn't get one. Limited information. Had some a while ago - seemed to be the stock answer.

There was a city map, but was difficult to understand.

No street map available, only the walking tour info.

I did not go in the city buildings, but they look neat and in order.

Did not visit.

2. Community brochure/directory

Never did find a complete, up-to-date one.

Community brochure was unable to find, Library had one community profile, outdated by 9 years, but historical events correct.

No community brochure or profile available.

Two brochures that help anyone trying to find specifics about the town. One is of high quality, the other just another paper brochure.

Did not see any.

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

Never found one.

1. How knowledgeable about the community were they?

*Above average. Waitress at Mom and Dad's Cafe was very helpful.
Owner and employees of Karn's Imports were outstanding.
Ladies in jewelry store were outstanding.*

Shop employees seem to know what is happening and are trying to help each other.

Restaurant waitresses were informative and tried to direct you to places of interest.

Sweater shop employee offered history of button factory and granary and the Karn family retail business.

Waitress at Mom & Dad's sknew a lot about the area. Very enthusiastic.

Teller at Security State Bank was friendly and helpful when I wanted to know if my Tyme card would work in their automatic teller machine. She readily gave suggestions on places to eat.

Ben Franklin clerk was helpful and tried to get info for me - had a copy of "Autumn Attractions": which I found interesting.

Talked to customers in a bar. They had comments both pro and con on their city. A new main street look seemed to be the topic of the day.

Some knew history of the city.

Shop employees were friendly and courteous.

All in all felt very welcome.

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

Yes.

Told us where the Chamber President worked.

Gave us the Mayor's name and offered address and phone number.

Most directed us to Tourist Info Center admitting they were not sure it would be open.

When we asked about Chamber of Commerce activities we were referred to the City Clerks office. This is where the activity seemed to start from.

When asking for Chamber of Commerce they said at City Hall someone might know.

3. Attitude, appearance, etc.

Neat, well groomed. Pleasant.

Neat.

Pleasant, helpful, friendly.

Dressed with a pride in themselves.

*No Chamber office. People knew where Chamber President worked.
Information Center closed.*

Everyone knew where the info office was but no one knew it was closed.

People really didn't know where to go or who to contact.

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

*More copies of available information should be provided Never did see
community profile.*

None given by either agency.

*Closed - probably for season, which is understandable. How about a sign
in window suggesting alternate locations for info, contact persons - and
maybe a map.*

Really didn't see any.

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

No recommendations because no one available to provide them.

None given by either agency.

Most recommended Joe's Steak House.

4. How prepared/helpful were they.

N.A.

*Only info available was an Octoberfest newspaper taken from closed Info
Center by the jewelry store owner who has a shop next door.*

5. Convenient hours?

No.

Chamber office - non existent. Info Center closed - no hours listed.

*The fact that the sign was taken down made it a real pain to find. I
walked past about 5 times looking for it before peering through the
window and seeing the sign laying in the hallway.*

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

Seemed OK for community of this size, although I was a little disappointed in cafes/restaurants.

They seemed to offer all necessary facilities.

Small variety of retail and lodging facilities seemed OK

Two motels nice looking but signing is very poor.

C. Are there public restrooms.

Yes.

Yes • City Hall, both boat landings, library, restaurants.

In City Hall and at boat launches.

Yes • in the parks. Seem to be adequate.

Yes.

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

Didn't notice any but assume there were some.

Phone books at boat landings and City Hall.

Phone in City Hall which had phone book Didn't see any elsewhere.

Didn't notice.

? Didn't see any.

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

Yes. Well signed and maintained.

Extremely.

Good looking park

Very nice but small and on a hillside.

Active and attractive.

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

Excellent food at Mom and Dad's Cafe and Doug's. Germans are always good cooks.

Really no specialty restaurants or bakeries. Ate at Joe's Steak House - very good.

Waitress at Mom & Dad's was very helpful and upbeat about the area Overall, what I expected. People at Esser's and at Kann Import were definitely the best I met.

Most people had a good attitude towards their city.

Most attitudes were good
Appearance also good

4. Other comments

It was a pleasure talking to the local people we encountered.

Disappointed that library did not have info on community. History book was only item available. Most libraries usually have a file of city info.

Guttenberg is a city doing most of their business in the summer. The town increases in population considerably at that time and the local people seem to like that.

Kann Imports - extremely well informed, helpful, and friendly employees. This is an outstanding facility that is a definite asset.

5. General

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

Average for a small community.

Working residents seemed well informed of events and directions in their town. Few had knowledge of history. As it was rainy and cold no other shoppers were on the streets or in the stores.

Very good on directions. Jaycee logo on street signs stumped everyone.

I found several people willing to discuss their city. Most seemed to know what their heritage was.

Hardware store owner knew his history.

Mom & Dad's Restaurant - waitress was very informative where to visit. Most people recommend Joe's Steak House.

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

Adequate. A distinct lack of signs telling location of motels. Appeared to be a lack of restaurant facilities or at least a lack of signing telling where restaurants are located. A good mix of businesses.

Retail variety seemed extremely good. Well balanced variety of necessity and gift stores. Easy shopping community.

The people were friendly and willing to discuss their city. A small town wanting to move forward.

Clerks at Kann Imports friendly **and** helpful. Friendly at Joe's Steak House, also at the hardware store.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/OBSERVATIONS:

- Paint or replace plywood in upstairs windows of Ben Franklin store.
- Update "River Town Currents" folder found **in** library. An excellent brochure, but dated **1982** and needs to be updated
- Librarian was very helpful.
- City Hall should be better prepared to answer requests of visitors by providing up-to-date brochures, etc.
- Walking tour brochure - I always appreciate these and was glad to get yours at City Hall. You have some **fine** building to be proud of. The narrative leaves something to be desired though. Perhaps more comments on architectural styles. The best walking tour brochure I have ever seen **is from** Evansville, Wisconsin. You might want to get theirs and compare.
- Kann Imports - what a positively delightful store. Your displays avoid a cluttered look while showing **off an amazing array** of products. Very interesting selection of merchandise. The whole place has a good "feel" to it - everything **from** the background music to the friendly clerks all blends in **for** a positive end result. Your clerks have mastered the technique of engaging the customer in conversation without overpowering them. Subdued, subtle approach was appreciated
- **Hey** - a postcard - thanks, Kann Imports - you made sure I had a brochure before I left the store. Good Work!
- Moxies gave me directions on places to eat. Typical Wisconsin bar - I felt right at home.
- I was surprised to find out that Oktoberfest was a new event. Given your buildings and heritage, I would have guessed you would have exploited this long ago!
- A local newspaper **is doing** a good job when you can read it and feel like you just visited the area. That's what I felt - good job.
- Aquarium - your sign is partially obscured by the trees. Could you trim the trees or raise the sign?
- Autumn Attractions - I like those types of publications. The articles were interesting and would encourage me to visit more of the area.

WHAT WILL YOU REMEMBER ABOUT THIS COMMUNITY SIX MONTHS FROM NOW

I will remember the neat, well organized community with a great sense of **PRIDE** in themselves and their community. I will especially remember the entrances into the community - particularly the well cared for farm yards and buildings. I will remember the **fine** people I talked to who are so proud of their heritage and rightly so. It would be fun to a part of what they are doing.

The Import Shop (Kann's) - will return to look at leisure. The beautiful park and river view. Would like to see in the summer.

Doug's Place - truly good, old fashioned food **in** a friendly, clean atmosphere.

Nothing special comes to mind.

G. What does community SMELL like?

Air clean with limited pollutants.

City Hall had a stale, **food** smell. Downtown had a clean fresh air breeze.

Nothing dominant although you can "feel" the river's presence.

Great - I love the river.

H. What SOUNDS did you hear?

No loud, disturbing sounds.

Waves slapping the banks, **swinging** signs creaking with the wind.

Only sound was new age music at Kann Import. That was tasteful and appropriate.

River - wind - rain (wasn't really a **good** day).

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

A warm community with a proud German heritage.

They appear to have a pride in community image.

Most people were very friendly. You seem to be trying to do some positive things, although I am not sure you have decided what you want to be.

Warm and inviting from most store clerk. Streets **kind** of deserted.

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

Friendly, helpful, great.

Waitress at Doug's Place - friendly, pleasant and very knowledgeable of sights and shopping. All 3 personnel at Kann's friendly, extremely helpful and knowledgeable. These people have it together. They are definitely concerned with promoting their community.

Essers men's wear owner was a pleasure to talk to. He took time to help me with information that was not going to lead to a sale **for** his business, Very positive and outgoing. Overall I was very impressed with the people I met.

- I **now** realize how important it is to attempt to have a better than average knowledge of our own town.
- We will hold a general "inform my employees" meeting.
- We need to be able to answer tourists questions, they may not give us a second chance to make a first impression.

Industrial Park sign • sets a positive and businesslike tone.

*Paint remaining tall street lights (poles) black
Guttenberghad a recreational vehicle park (I think **run** by the city)
just a couple of blocks off main street surrounded by a small park • an
asset to this tourist town.*

Maybe purchase giant American flag.

View of the river and Kann Imports.

*The city has a very nice park system all along the Mississippi River.
This park and the river is a tremendous asset to the city.*

The beauty of downtown along the river.

6. Doing it Right!

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

1. *Downtown project.*
 2. *Industrial Park.*
 3. *Friendly people, i.e., clerk's and Mr. Kann in Kann's Imports, librarian, ladies in jewelry store, waitress in Mom and Dad's Restaurant, waitresses in Doug's, young owner of new flower shop across street from Doug's.*
 4. *Maintenance of downtown buildings.*
 5. *Rear entrances to retail businesses and homes in downtown area.*
-
1. *They are using their scenic river to promote their community growth.*
 2. *It is a growing community trying to update as it expands.*
 3. *Realize the value of its older structures and keeps them in good repair.*
 4. *Downtown offices and stores are centrally located for walking ease.*
 5. *Angle parking for those of us who are unable to parallel park*
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1. *New riverfront street work*
 2. *Use of river including parks and access points.*
 3. *Lettering on water tower.*
 4. *Work on buildings downtown, especially 400 block*
 5. *Kann Imports.*
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1. *Friendly people.*
 2. *Park system.*
 3. *Two boat landings on the river.*
 4. *New street lights.*
 5. *Good roads.*
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1. *Great sign for industrial park • very impressive.*
 2. *Nice, friendly entrance signs and giant American flag.*
 3. *Great park downtown along river.*
 4. *Advantage of having a business along the river.*
 5. *Looked overall very clean.*

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!

- *Industrial Park sign. Get City of Boscobel Common Council and Boscobel ,Developers, Ltd. to invest in a similar sign.*