

# First Impressions

## Team Report Form



Community Visited: St. Francis

Date Visited: August 30, 2016

Pre-visit web search: How easy was it to get information on the community you were visiting? Did it accurately reflect what you saw? Did you have difficulties obtaining information on the community through a web search?

- <http://www.stfranciskansas.com>
- <https://facebook.com/places/Things-to-do-in-Saint-Francis-Kansas>
- <http://www.cncoks.us>  
*This has great county government info and tons of important info on landfill, driver licenses, taxes...really impressive and helpful*
- <http://www.stfrancisks.com>  
*This one had more civic organization info than anywhere else but site looks dated*
- *There were many websites to find information!*

1. The "Five-Minute" Impression: After taking a five-minute drive through the community without stopping, the following reactions were noted. The following observations were noted when entering the community from major entrances (signs, streetscapes, buildings, etc.)

- *We were pleasantly surprised and impressed by what the community of St. Francis had to offer.*
- *From HWY 36 there is a totally different tone than what you feel, see and experience once you get downtown.*

2. Downtown Business Area

Describe the buildings, signs, infrastructure, etc.

- *Very nice, well-kept and maintained. The new LED lighting, benches along main street, brick and concrete sidewalks shows financially the community has invested in upkeep. It is apparent that business owners take pride in their stores and in their community.*

Explain what type of businesses you observed and give a description of the variety and quality of merchandise displayed.

- *A very nice, clean, friendly grocery store with a great selection!*
- *Jewelry, coffee shops, hardware/home repair/lumber yard, feed store/coop.*

Describe the customer service received when you entered those retail businesses. (Were you greeted? Did you have to ask for assistance?)

- *Everyone was extremely friendly, both walking along the businesses and going into the businesses. One thing we really noticed is when our group said we were just browsing, they always suggested other stores that might be of interest. This was great of the businesses to be referring each other to other stores or eating places in town.*
- *Another thing we all noticed is that when we went into a business, and they of course knew we were from out of town, almost all of them offered us a brochure or literature on St. Francis, attractions and info. WOW!*

What public amenities were available (drinking fountains, benches, public restrooms, etc.)

- *The public park by the courthouse had some GREAT history and is a wonderful asset to the community no doubt. One thing that was a turn off was how it was in disrepair with boards/benches needing paint, a rusty fountain, and broken flower pots. The public restrooms were wonderful – location and cleanliness. Benches scattered all over town invited passerby's to sit and enjoy life in Sainty!*

Comment on landscaping and streetscaping. Did you have difficulty finding parking?

Could you access multiple services from where you parked?

- *Nice wide streets*
- *They have done a wonderful job in public areas with making things feel welcoming*
- *No trouble at the time we were there to find parking*
- *Curb and guttering all clean and well maintained*
- *Sidewalks all through the town in good shape*

### 3. Other Retail Shopping Areas

Describe other retail shopping areas. Were the areas attractive and easy to access?

- *We felt for the size of the community there were a lot of businesses*
- *Downtown had just a wonderful welcoming atmosphere with the landscaping, benches and store fronts*
- *The main road through town, HWY 36, is not as well kept as downtown. There are signs to direct you off the main highway but it doesn't represent the entire community or showcase what there is to offer and is not as welcoming as downtown*

### 4. Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas

Is there a defined area where manufacturing industries could easily locate/expand? If so, describe.

- *We never saw anything or could find anything in the way of what we would think would be an industrial park*
- *Nice storage units*

## 5. Health Care Services

Comment on the availability and apparent quality of hospitals and emergency medical services.

- *The health care center looks really progressive, they had a Hays Med trailer out front*
- *The clinic and hospital have a well maintained appearance!*
- *They have a really attractive website that looks welcoming and seems to be kept up*
- *The website showcases all the specialists that are available at the local facility....this is such a bonus to have those types of partners and provide those services in our rural settings*
- *Senior center downtown, it is in a nice location, but it needs a new coat of paint if it is still the main building used for services. Is it a meal site? Does it provide something like a "Meals on Wheels" or delivered meal program? What is this facility used for?*

Comment on the availability and condition of facilities for physicians, dentists, optometrists, public health and other healthcare providers.

- *Chiropractor*
- *Health Clinic*
- *Hospital*
- *DOT physicals offered*
- *Eye care*
- *Dental*

What long-term care services, assisted living or nursing facilities exist in the community?

- *Looked like a Good Samaritan Society and home health care services*
- *These facilities looked really nice, well-kept and up to date*

## 6. Housing

Give a brief description of the existing mix of housing stock. Does the local market have housing that would appeal to all income wages? What challenges do you see in regards to finding acceptable housing? (Neighborhoods, size, properties for sale, etc.) What kind of rental properties did you observe for persons interested in building or simply living in the community prior to buying housing?

- *When we asked what housing availability there was at the city office they seemed to think there was not much available*
- *When we drove through the community there were at least 20 houses with for sale signs in the yard*
- *There were a variety of types in what we would think would be a range of prices*
- *As far as rentals, that might be a different story but we asked if there was some kind of contact list of landlords to give interested people and to the city clerk's knowledge there was nothing*
- *We did not make contact with landlords to see availability*

## 7. Schools

What schools are present? (Head Start, Preschool, K-8, High School, Post-Secondary, etc.) Do the schools appear to be adequate in size? Are the buildings and grounds well-

maintained? Were you able to find print information in the community that helped assess the quality of the educational system?

- *Maybe it is intentional, but there are no signs on the schools. In fact, when we first came in, we couldn't tell what the grade school building was and thought it was abandoned.*
- *The high school looks well maintained*
- *Both facilities look adequate in size*
- *We heard that the pool is/might be moving to the lot beside the grade school and this might be the cause but the outside facilities/playground equipment looked sparse and the facility looked very intimidating and unwelcoming*
- *They have a great website that gives great information, has current pictures and articles, it is just wonderful!*

## 8. Childcare

What childcare service are available? Is it affordable?

- *We did not dig in to this. People commented that daycare is difficult to find but we find in our community that it is more of a perception and not a reality unless you survey (and limit the survey to only those in daycare or trying to find daycare or daycare providers) there might not be truth to the statement*
- *Does the Health Department have a list of providers (heard they cannot do this legally)?*

## 9. Faith/Religion

Comment on the number of denominations and the physical appearances of the churches represented in the community. Did you observe any evidence of church-sponsored community services?

- *We saw several well-kept churches*
- *Methodist thrift store*
- *The church by the pool needs sign work*
- *We saw several old, smaller churches converted to businesses! What a neat idea and great way to preserve and put to great use a piece of heritage!*

## 10. Civic

Tell about the variety of nonprofit organizations and clubs within the community.

Did you observe any evidence of civic organization activity?

- *The <http://www.stfranciskansas.com> website has nothing under Community Organizations*
- *Evidence of civic organization activity was seen everywhere around town, memorial benches downtown, shelters in the park, really nice aluminum benches. It may not be listed on the web but you can tell they are active (past and present)*

## 11. Public Infrastructure

Comment in general on the streets, street signage, sidewalks, parking, lighting, restrooms, landscaping, and streetscapes in areas **other than downtown**.

- *The community has great street signage*
- *The sidewalks are throughout the city*
- *Wide streets making parking and getting around easy*
- *The parks are a wonderful asset even though they could use a little updating*
- *Downtown and city/county offices – the landscaping is well maintained*

Did you observe land-use planning?

- *Pool will be moved to the center of town*
- *Most streets/sections of town laid out logically*

Comment on city/town hall (How were you received? Was there information about the town available?)

- *The lady at the front desk of the treasurer's office is a tremendously helpful person. Very welcoming and willing to share whatever info she had. We didn't ask but wondered if you have welcoming packets for new people or families moving into your community. This would be a great place to put them and hand them out.*
- *Deloris at the courthouse was very friendly and shared all kinds of great info and things to go do/see/shop in the community*
- *City Office-Awesome care/maintenance!*

Police/fire protection:

- *Right across the street from the courthouse, well maintained, looks current*

Library:

- *Our group didn't run across the library. I found info online later on this site <http://www.stfranciskansas.com> under the "Meet Us" tab*

City parks (walking tracks, ballparks, playgrounds, sports complex)

- *Sand volleyball court really awesome*

## 12. Recreation/Tourism

Is the community well-known for any particular attraction or event? Do they have a community slogan that capitalizes on that asset?

- *They have really utilized the Arikaree Breaks as seen in their brochures that all businesses/offices hand out and in their ad in the NW Kansas Magazine*
- *They also use the slogan "The land of open spaces and friendly faces" which we found to be so true*
- *There was no sign by the public fishing NW of town – Keller's Pond. In fact, we found info on the website and went to find it and ended up west of town and it looks like that pond may be privately owned*

Did you see any indication of significant events taking place in the community that would be of interest to both visitors and residents?

- *Flyers posted around town on many events*

Elaborate on any significant natural or manmade features that have the potential of drawing people to the community.

- *Arikaree Breaks and your community capitalizes on this well*

Is there an obvious visitor's center, chamber of commerce office, main street office, or other facility that serves the needs of visitors? Comment on the staff, facilities, signage, visibility, etc.

- *Cheyenne County Community Development building looks busy, as evident by table full of stuff seen through the window, but they were closed the day we were there*
- *Chamber office in the courthouse was wide open, lights on, no sign on the door and we hung around for quite a while and no one ever showed up...perhaps a dry erase board with a note or place to leave a message when someone swings by?*

Are there any restaurants, specialty shops or attractions that would bring you back to this community in the near future?

- *Deann's Gift Shop*
- *Coffee Shop – neat place*
- *Motorcycle Museum*
- *Jewelry Store*
- *Arikaree Breaks*
- *There was so much to do we couldn't fit it into the short day we came and several of us will be back*

### 13. Wrap-up

What are the most positive things you observed about the community?

- *Pleasant, friendly, helpful people everywhere*
- *Well established downtown main street that includes nice businesses and the majority take pride in their appearance*
- *The cleanliness of the parks*

What are the biggest obstacles/challenges facing this community?

- *Getting people to turn off of Highway 36 and get downtown to the treasure of possibilities, places to explore and shop in. Your signage is great but that first impressions isn't the best.*
- *We realize this is mostly private property and can be a huge obstacle and challenge when encouraging people and businesses, no matter what kind, ag, repair and even abandoned businesses and homes, to clean up.*

What will you remember most about this community six month from now (positive or negative)?

- *The first place we walked into (courthouse and city office) and all the businesses we visited, felt great pride in their community and what they have to offer. Being an outsider, they really seemed to support one another as was evident in encouraging us to shop at each other's stores or grab a bite or coffee at the restaurants. The unique variety and number of businesses available. St. Francis has some great features – park, Arikaree Breaks, nice town. But honestly, the friendly people are what made this community so wonderful during our visit!*



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