

First Impressions

Compiled Report Form



Community Visited: Axtell

Date(s) Visited: a.) Tues 9/18/18

b.) Tues 9/18/18

c.) Tues 9/18/18

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?

- a. Very informative. No difficulty.
- b. Very nice web page
- c. Looked at the website 2 days prior to going to Axtell. I found the web site easy to go through with no difficulty. The information about Axtell Cash Program, Axtell Doughboy, Paul Grove Park and the Axtell Community Calendar were very informative.

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.)

- a. Very nice sports field, beautiful modern playground. Well maintained community. There was a nice large sign at Highway 36 and 110 intersection. Home of Eagles. West/South entrance very nice.
- b. Playground very attractive, paved roads are well kept and clean. Lack of signage for major buildings- city hall, community building, Axtell schools.
- c. The houses and yards of the community were very neat and clean. Lawns were mowed. Downtown was receiving some oil and chat on one street. I did not see a “Lot of junk” in the yards or behind houses. The 5-minute impression of the community was very good. Could not find any signs showing where the high school was located or the city hall. Of course, it didn’t take long to find them.

2. Downtown Business Area

Describe the buildings, signs, infrastructure, etc. Explain what type of businesses you observed and give a description of the variety and quality of merchandise displayed.

Describe the customer service received when you entered those retail businesses.

(Were you greeted? Did you have to ask for assistance?)

- a. Very nice, well-kept buildings downtown. Signs were good. Aces Restaurant/Bar. Food and drinks. Customer service was great as was the food.
- b. The buildings seemed to be well kept from outside and signage was okay. Aces Bar/Restaurant. We had lunch here and there was good food and customer service was excellent!
- c. The downtown business area looked neat and clean. Different businesses had their sign on their store. We ate lunch at the Bar and Grill. The food was excellent, and the manager was very friendly. We did not go into any other business except City Hall. The city clerk was not aware of the program "First Impressions" but she was very receptive and provided lots of information about the community and various organizations. Her people skills were excellent! There was no sign "City Hall" but we figured it out.

What public amenities were available (drinking fountains, benches, public restrooms, etc.) Comment on appealing landscaping and streetscaping. Did you have difficulty finding parking? Could you access multiple services from where you parked?

- a. Benches, restrooms, and picnic areas. There was plenty of parking downtown at the time we were there. It seemed like most businesses were within walking distance roughly 1-2 blocks.
- b. Benches and public restrooms at City Park. Parking was great, and all businesses were accessible from 1 block area.
- c. We parked on main street in front of the bar/grill. The sidewalks were clean and easily marked for the steps.

3. Other Retail Shopping Areas

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

- a. Food mart, Hardware store, and Auto parts within 1 block.
- b. Food mart, Aces Bar/Restaurant, Hardware store, bank, in same block, easy access.
- c. We did not go in any other businesses except the bar/grill.

4. Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas

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

- a. N/A
- b. N/A
- c. N/A

5. Health Care Services

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

- a. They have an ambulance within the community.
- b. Ambulance service in community.
- c. The city clerk stated that occasionally they have a nurse come into the City Office once in a while. I am not sure what the schedule was.

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

- a. N/A
- b. N/A
- c. N/A

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

- a. N/A
- b. N/A
- c. There was no long-term care in Axtell.

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 regard to finding acceptable housing? (Neighborhoods, size, properties for sale, etc.)

- a. Rental property is minimal. City clerk said they had several houses for sale at this time.
- b. Several houses for sale- contact City Hall. Rentals were minimal.
- c. The clerk said it is unusual but there are several houses for sale in Axtell and a few for rent.

What kind of rental properties did you observe for persons interested in building or simply living in the community prior to buying housing?

- a. Saw one building that might have had 8-10 units. City Clerk said they were small 1 bedroom.
- b. Small 1-bedroom apartments
- c. The houses all looked clean and neat for a person to rent or buy.

7. Schools

Do the following schools appear to be adequate in size or do you see the use of temporary classrooms? Are the buildings and grounds well-maintained?

- a. Pre-K through 12. Very well maintained and doing inside remodeling to move office closer to front of building for better safety for the children and staff.
- b. Very well maintained. Pre-K through 12. One concern- safety of bleachers at city park field.
- c. We visited the high school. We went in the high school and visited with the principal. The building part we saw was relatively old like a lot of small towns. The school (what we saw) looked neat and clean. The school secretary was not aware of the "First Impressions Program." She was very friendly and courteous to us. The principal and secretary talked about the possibility of renovating the building and moving the principal's office near the front entrance for safety reasons and to get more space.

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

- a. No, I couldn't find it. Some information but nothing on test scores.
- b. N/A
- c. N/A

8. Childcare

Were you able to determine if childcare was affordable and available?

- a. 1 out of town, 2 in town
- b. 2 in town and 1 out of town.
- c. The city clerk stated that there were two child care places in the community.

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?

- a. Methodist church- very nice. St. Michael's Catholic-- loved the stained-glass windows. All were well maintained outside. Lutheran Mission Covenant.
- b. No evidence of community service. Mission Covenant Church is okay, St. Michael's is very nice, United Methodist is beautiful, and the Lutheran church is okay.
- c. The church buildings all appeared to be clean and mowed. They were attractive buildings. We saw the Catholic church, Methodist church and the Lutheran church.

10. Civic

Tell about the variety of nonprofit organizations and clubs within the community. Did you observe any evidence of civic organization activity?

- a. American Legion Building/Community building. PRIDE, Axtell Economic Development program. N/A
- b. No signage related. Pride community. Axtell Economic Development program- website and city clerk. American Legion/Community building- city clerk.
- c. We saw the doughboy monument. It was well preserved. We did not observe any evidence of civic organization activity.

11. Public Infrastructure

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

- a. Sidewalks and streets were all maintained well, and streets were well marked. Homes and landscape were beautiful, very well kept.
- b. Streets well maintained as well as landscaping.
- c. We went to the south end of town and examined the football field and playground area. It was a very nice, attractive and safe playground. The bleachers on the football field looked old and dangerous.

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

- a. Very warm welcome and very informative. We were not given any brochures.
- b. Received very well. Very informative.
- c. As said earlier, we were very well received in the city hall by the clerk. She knew a lot about the town and organizations. It appeared the organizations support the community and its activities.

Police/fire protection:

- a. Very nice fire department building
- b. Fire department is a very nice building
- c. N/A

Library:

- a. Yes
- b. Yes
- c. N/A

City parks (walking tracks, ballparks, playgrounds, sportsplex)

- a. The playground was by the sports complex. Well-kept and fenced for protection of small children.
- b. Very nice playground with picnic area and well fenced for child protection.
- c. There was a walking area on the practice football field by the high school.

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?

- a. Axtell Days- info from city clerk.
- b. Axtell Days- Second weekend in August
- c. They have a 1-day event during the summer- Axtell Days. Games and celebrations. I was impressed about the cow pasture golf. They bury a gallon bucket in a pasture and mow around it and then play so many holes of golf.

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

- a. N/A
- b. N/A
- c. N/A

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

- a. N/A
- b. N/A
- c. N/A

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.

- a. No sign for City Hall, small sign in window for city clerk, staff outstanding, very informative.
- b. Not obvious. We found City Hall adjacent to fire station.
- c. N/A

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

- a. N/A
- b. N/A
- c. We enjoyed the meal at the bar/grill.

13. Wrap-up

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

- a. How well maintained the community was and how friendly the people were.
- b. Cleanliness, nice homes, and friendly people.
- c. The main thing that I really noticed was the cleanliness of the houses and the yards in the community. Somebody or an organization has seen to it that the appearance of the town is attractive. There must be a lot of pride in the people that live in Axtell. The city clerk shared with us how a lot of younger people are involved and active in the various volunteer organizations.

What are the biggest obstacles/challenges facing this community?

- a. Lack of employment within community.
- b. Lack of employment in the community- many people travel to other towns for work.
- c. I am not sure, but I know that in a lot of small communities/towns, it is difficult to maintain a good population for people to live there so that we can still maintain a good school system and community pride.

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

- a. How pretty it was. Homes and landscaping very well maintained. Residents seemed to take pride in their community- it showed.
- b. Very nice farming community and roads well kept.
- c. I liked the rolling hills and large cornfields. I will remember that it appears that people in this community take pride in their small community- with attractive houses and yards and various support groups that help maintain a quality of life in Axtell, Kansas.

PowerPoint Presentation is posted at:

<http://www.ksre.k-state.edu/community/civic-engagement/first-impressions/index.html>

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