

First Impressions

Compiled Report Form



Community Visited: Delia

Date(s) Visited: a,b) Monday, May 24

c) Friday Aug 6, 2021

1. 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. Web page may not have been updated. Best info on Delia was from Ks PRIDE president who sent list of businesses and contact numbers. This was especially helpful in making appointments in advance to talk to mayor and volunteers.
- b. No Answer (NA)
- c. I was able to find information about Delia by searching on Google as well as Facebook.

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. Clean, neat, NO abandoned structures, trashy car accumulation. Dogs comfortably resting in the center of the street. Not a lot of traffic. Yards mown and trimmed. I was ready to move in.
- b. How clean the town looked. No run-down houses- great up-keep. One offensive language flag. Welcome sign “Welcome to Delia” “Little Town With” “Lots of ❤️” Could see the Catholic Church through the trees, very appealing.
- c. A small town. Clean environment. Houses seem to be well maintained. Google Maps brought me into town from a gravel road.

3. 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. Not evident there was a downtown, previous fire may have reduced buildings, but all evidence cleared up. One old brick service station (closed) and blacksmith building- old post office converted into an upholstery shop. Upholstery shop welcoming. Gave us a tour plus history of the building- very nicely repurposed. Bathroom offered for our use. Impressive use of space. Did not visit hair salon, but got a huge tour of the schools now closed.
- b. We found what used to be Main Street, but no businesses now except for one. All buildings that are left are well-kept. Upholstery shop on Main street in a building that used to be a post office. Found out it was a bank before that. They have redecorated the inside keeping the “old” style look- even using the old vault for storage. The owner greeted us and gave us a tour. It was very beautiful and inviting. Many projects were being worked on.
- c. While driving around, I saw an embroidery shop, the fire station, the old school which houses the library and thrift store. I did not enter any businesses.

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

- a. None seen. Parked at Sacred Heart church, only a block to upholstery shop.
- b. Didn’t notice any but it wasn’t anything I was looking for. No trouble parking- pulled up right in front. There were a lot of pretty flowers- in the ground and in pots.
- c. Not much for seating, or trash receptacles. I did not enter any businesses to see if there were any public restrooms available. Not a lot of parking on main street.

4. Other Retail Shopping Areas

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

- a. None
- b. There is a “Thrift Shop” located in the old high school. Also the City Library was there. The Thrift Store is maintained by Delia Pride- very organized, lots of items but not junky. I could have found lots of things to buy if I had had more time.
- c. Not applicable

5. Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas

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

- a. None- but was interested to find out workers outside Delia are up railroad that passes through the town every 20-30 minutes with coal to Jeffrey Energy Center, Wolf Construction, Goodyear plant, asphalt work.
- b. No Answer
- c. The town is small and there did not seem to be many lots to expand into for businesses or industries.

6. Health Care Services

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

- a. Rossville/Topeka
- b. No local services. Closest is Rossville or Potawatomie Band Clinic. I don't know how far away. Probably also Topeka. Was told some go to Holton and or St. Mary's for the Onaga Health System.
- c. I didn't see any hospitals or medical services while driving around.

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

- a. None
- b. Available in other towns.
- c. Not applicable

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

- a. None noted.
- b. Not sure.
- c. I did not see any care homes or assisted living facilities.

7. 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.)

- a. Limited number of homes available, only 2 available for rent and none for sale.
- b. There didn't appear to be any homes for sale or even empty.
- c. There was a mix of older homes in the heart of town. Some newer builds on the edges of town. I did not observe any for sale signs in the neighborhood.

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

- a. Two available.
- b. Didn't see any, but was told there are two rentals.
- c. I did not observe any rental property or for sale signs in the area.

8. Schools

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

- a. Only closed buildings, deeded to the town and incurring expense for upkeep, heating, cooling, etc. However, Delia has made great use of the building. Students attend Rossville schools 8 miles south.
- b. No local schools. They are consolidated and are bused. The old buildings are still there – being used for various city things (library, thrift store) and are rented out for various functions (wedding receptions, reunions, etc.)
- c. There was an older school but I was told it houses the library and thrift store. The outside was well maintained. There was a recycling receptacle outside as well as a gazebo and a community building next to it.

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

- a. Not available
- b. Did not look.
- c. No

9. Childcare

What childcare services are available? Is it affordable?

- a. None available in town.
- b. We were told there is a child care service but the person was gone on vacation. So did not check it out.
- c. I did not observe any childcare services or daycares.

10. Faith/Religion

Comment on the number of denominations and the physical appearance of the faith communities represented in the community. Did you observe any evidence of faith-based community services?

- a. Two denominations, both neatly cared for and offer sporadic services. Linda gave a book on the Sacred Heart History to borrow and a tour of that church. Similar in size to the Presbyterian Church. Sacred Heart noted as a “stational” church available for baptisms, weddings, funerals, but no longer offering masses. Congregants go to Emmett for Mass.
- b. We saw two churches- one Presbyterian and one Catholic. Neither has services every week. They are open for weddings, baptisms, funerals, etc., as needed. They both looked well maintained from the outside. We toured the Catholic Church inside; it is in excellent condition. The priest and/or pastor come for services once a month, I think.
- c. There were 2 churches that look to be well kept. One looked to be utilized more often than the other.

11. Civic

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

- a. Delia PRIDE has money-raising activities reported by Connie and Eudora. But very few younger residents helping and volunteering. The Thrift Store in the old elementary school was 6 rooms full (many generous donations) 3-4 rooms rented out to women artists. Gym rented for events (Graduation, wedding, etc.) PRIDE Activities: The Community Center had a playground behind that serves as a “park” and the city council meeting room, plus tables for dinners as the city hall had and a kitchen to prepare food. Videos from Centennial Celebration available on the table.
- b. The only one mentioned was Delia Community PRIDE. They do a lot of fund raising with once a month soup dinners, taco feeds, and whatever else they come up with. It seems to be a great fund raiser for them – the townspeople look forward to them.
- c. No answer.

12. Public Infrastructure

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

- a. Lots of potholes and dogs in streets, parking around homes and city buildings landscaping neat except 3 homes/yards.
- b. Streets are dirt and rock, but really good. Didn't notice street signs. Landscaping was fine- lots of pretty flowers, well maintained yards.
- c. The streets were well maintained, some gravel and some paved. Street signage looked good; there were no damaged signs.

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

- a. Info all verbally given by Connie and Eudora (who provided cool water and directed us to restrooms). Received with warmth, patience and willingness to share info.
- b. We were welcomed enthusiastically by two residents. They showed us many things, talked about many things, laughed about many things—they are very proud of their town. We met another PRIDE member and the Mayor- very friendly. Met a business owner who was pleased to show us her upholstery business. It was a positive, good experience.
- c. I did not enter City Hall

Police/fire protection:

- a. Police from Rossville, 8 miles south. Fire House evident with a siren/light red truck present in front of station.
- b. There is a fire station locally, also a fire chief who I think they said was there daily.
- c. I drove past the fire station. It was very nice. Trucks were being cleaned and serviced.

Library:

- a. Part of school repurposed- librarian not present but evidence of summer reading program plans noted. Very musty in all school rooms.
- b. Located in the old high school building. There were a lot of books for reading and they were getting ready for their "Summer Reading."
- c. Located in the old school.

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

- a. At Community Center, otherwise, none evident. Ball diamond frequently used for team practice adjacent to city hall, but not viewed.
- b. Didn't observe any.
- c. I did not observe any playgrounds or parks.

13. 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. Newsletter put out by Delia PRIDE gives lots of information: sewing group, exercise equipment available at school (donated). Community Bake sales, breakfasts, September festival, soup suppers, 4-H, Car Shows.
- b. No Answer
- c. While doing research on Delia PRIDE Facebook Page I saw that they were having a Tall Corn Festival that weekend.

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

- a. No- very peaceful and quiet.
- b. Their monthly soup dinners and different feeds they put on.
- c. I did not see any signs or indication of the Tall Corn Festival around town other than on the Delia Facebook Page. I imagine a festival would draw interest and a crowd.

Elaborate on any significant natural or manmade features that have the potential of drawing people to the community. (Public art, museums, lakes, campgrounds, regional heritage locations).

- a. Only RV parking but that is a great service for residents who don't have room and reduces clutter on town streets.
- b. No Answer
- c. There was an RV park.

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. Not present
- b. No obvious visitor center, but the Thrift Store would bring in a lot of people.
- c. I did not observe a visitor's center.

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

- a. The upholstery shop- quality creative work offered; and the people were very friendly.
- b. No just the community itself. It was a great time.
- c. No

14. Wrap-up

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

- a. Close to Rossville for services lacking in Delia, as well as schools. A few die-hard workers that give everything possible to support the life/growth/health of the town. Neat residential area with no obviously abandoned homes. Recycling and trash removal available. We visited on trash day and people had cans full and ready for collection. Community activities are a BIG socialization plus. KS PRIDE participation is a positive.
- b. Cleanliness, friendliness, well maintained.
- c. The community was well kept and tidy. Homes had good landscaping and were generally picked up. The fire station was very nice and looked to be new.

What are the biggest obstacles/challenges facing this community?

- a. Lack of gas station, gathering place for morning coffee and socializing. Lacking younger generation involved in activities- city council, etc. No place for tree/leaf, grass disposal; it was misused and discontinued. Lack of emergency medical treatment. Maybe fire chief is trained? Prairie Band Reservation has EMT that would come for medical emergency.
- b. Probably the fact of no local restaurant as a gathering place for the locals.
- c. There does not seem to be a lot happening here. I did not see a playground for kids (playgrounds are always a draw for small towns; if you have a nice playground parents WILL bring their kids) I don't know if the community building is used for community events but could see it being a great asset to the community.

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

- a. Wonderful for retirement- quiet. Estimated that 30% of Delia residents are retired. Newsletter is wonderful to remind residents of activities- great idea!
- b. Positive: the welcome, the visit, the pride.
Negative: Very positive trip, but with more thought I remember only one negative: a flag flying at one house with vulgar language.
- c. Had a nice community feel to it. It looks like locals take pride in their town. It has a lot of potential.

PowerPoint Presentation is posted at:

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

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