

# First Impressions

Compiled Report Form



**Community Visited: Oswego**

**Date(s) Visited:** a) Saturday, March 26  
b) Monday, April 18  
c) Tuesday, March 15

## **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. Very easy to find information. What I found accurately reflected what I saw. I had no difficulties obtaining information on the community from a web search.
- b. I did a FB search first and came up with information on the town. It seemed up to date and current. I then did a web search and found a city page with lots of helpful information and accurate to what we encountered. Lots of information with tabs and pull-down information.
- c. I was able to find the Facebook page and website information from the City News flyer I picked up at the Black Crow Trading Company. The Facebook page had a posting about the upcoming Easter Egg Hunt but did not have a posting before that since January 14. The page has 1,759 followers. It has the city website linked, a phone number, a way to message, and an email address. It is linked to the Chamber of Commerce page. The website has a list of legal notices. I tried to click on the Historical Park link in the left column, and it said "error." There is a list of upcoming events. It has a good slide show. I could get the City Code. There is a confidence report link, but the storm shelter link did not work. The City Calendar worked, and there was good contact info. It would be good to have a link to the school district, and sports calendars attached. Is there an Oswego Rec League? If so, contacts for that should be listed. The website was much better than the Facebook page. This may be unfortunate, because in my experience people look at Facebook more than they look at websites.

## **2. 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 welcoming! --Very large wood and stone signs at the three entrances into Oswego set the tone for what was immediately to come—an overall sense of pride and community—several homeowners were working in their yards or in/out of their homes, garages and outbuildings, well maintained homes, yards, and landscaping (98%). Vehicles moving about town and several parked at the businesses (shopping, etc.) all through town. Store fronts and buildings (non-vacant) were nearly all (95%) well maintained and inviting. Downtown people were talking to each other on the sidewalks, smiling, laughing; a strong sense of community, belonging/inclusive and friendly. Note: the stone in the “Welcome to Oswego” signs tied into the stone of the bath house and structures in the 1902 Riverside Park), a very nice touch!

There are nice smaller “Welcome to Oswego” directional signs (pointing toward Riverside Park, Swimming Pool, Fair Grounds, Kamp Siesta RV Park etc.” dotted along the main highways into Oswego (newer--black metal decorative poles supporting the signs that are matching in color and style to the three large wood and stone Welcome signs), very well thought out and coordinated. Entering town from the North you drive through a more industrial park type area. There is a Midwest Fertilizer business and a Tank Connection business with large yards for piping, tanks, and other similar large businesses as well...all had very orderly, clean, and well-maintained buildings and yards. Was very evident the pride they, especially Midwest Fertilizer and Tank Connection, have in their businesses and the town. Similar experience driving into town from the South and for the most part driving in from the East, although driving in from the East and North, and the closed Depot Deli, there were a few vacant buildings and the play equipment at the Schmoker Park (next to the highway entering town from the North) that were mild to moderately “tired” and in need of freshening (honestly--just paint) and would then bring them to the level of the efforts and pride evident elsewhere throughout town.

- b. The downtown area is older buildings fairly maintained. Not fond of water tower in middle of town. I didn’t like the look of the courthouse in middle of town. South entrance has a nice sign but no lettering; had civic signs with groups. The best was on the east entrance coming up the hill, civic signs not great but good directional signs to downtown, swimming pool, parks.
- c. Some houses are nice, some need to be kept up better. Looks like affordable housing—but the types of houses there really need to be kept up to look nice. The downtown area needs work, but I could see some people are working on it. School buildings are very nice. Pool could be worked on. Not very many people utilize the park; the day I went the weather was conducive to using the park. I saw one family there. There needs to be better signage on some businesses. It is hard to tell what they are. The motorcycle shop needs signs that are easier to read. Need the lettering on the larger brown signs to show sites.

### **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. (See also #2 above.) Additionally, right at the busy main intersection of the two highways/across from the entrance to downtown, I loved the very nice aluminum can collection pen that was built and prominently displayed for collecting cans “to support the Animal Lovers Shelter.” Also, I love the concern for the residents and solution: there is a public announcement type billboard set up on the same parking lot notifying the public that there is “poison ivy and poison oak prevention through 3/31/22 at Oswego Drug Store.” Very visible bank and easily accessed ATM for the residents and visitors, long established Drug Store/gift and card and candy shop, hardware store, flea market and retail shop, gas station/convenience store, two restaurants, museum, health clinic and express care, three beauty shops, 2 day cares and two auto repair businesses. There were at least ten others, but these are the ones that come to mind as I did not write them down. The sidewalk with the larger groups of people visiting and enjoying each other was in front of the Black Crow Trading Company (flea market and retail home décor and clothing store) there were a couple tables out front with miscellaneous potted plants and plant starts for sale by one lady (maybe 2) (think: farmer’s market style). I decided to park and shop the plants and visit with them and their sidewalk customers—all very warm, friendly, and engaging which was also my experience inside with the cheery store owner—Courtney. Very clean, organized and neat store and with a nice variety of well-priced merchandise (I purchased 1 antique, 1 new home décor item, 1 clothing item and a nice pair of slightly used end tables). I enjoyed a long conversation with Courtney and was impressed with the volunteer commitment she and the other Oswego Chamber members shared as Courtney explained. I had lunch at the “Stonehouse Grill” established 2021. Very attractive and inviting exterior (stone and glass) and the interior was recently renovated and very tastefully decorated and coordinated with the exterior, very neat and clean inside, with a relaxing atmosphere. It is a very nice family-owned and operated restaurant and very reasonably priced (think: pre-covid pricing) large variety of sandwiches, sides, salads, and dinners. Food, presentation, and service was excellent and portions large. Very obvious that the food and renovations were prepared with heart and soul. I hope the community supports them; their prices might well be priced too low for the quality.
- b. Several downtown businesses could use some cosmetic updates. Signs for stores were not well visible. Sidewalks looked in good condition around businesses. Could use some welcome flags. There was an older building of a True Value on the corner. Older theater (not operational?), optometrist, and a pharmacy in an older building. I did not go into any of them at the time. We had lunch The Stonehouse. We received very good customer service there. Talked to the manager about the town and how business was for her.
- c. The buildings are old and need to be kept up. I could see that people are working on it. I could see there are a variety of businesses. The middle of the street parking is unique and helpful. The area could use some banners, plants, benches, and trees. I did not go into the shops.

**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. Water fountains, benches, trash receptacles, covered shelters, and public restrooms (open) at the Riverside Park. Public restrooms in the restaurant. Trees, shrubs, and lawns up and down the sides of the two highways for both homes and businesses through Oswego, but not downtown as building after building is connected to one another and concrete sidewalks from the doors to the curbs and streets. Not a criticism, just the way it was designed. Maybe could benefit from the softening and beauty of pots of flowers dotted down the sidewalks of downtown...collaboration or guidance with/by the Riverside Park "flower committee?"
- b. I didn't observe any of the above amenities in the downtown area. At the parks there were benches, trash receptacles. There seemed to be enough parking in front of each store. Could use some sprucing up with lights, flowers, murals, or welcome flags.
- c. Did not notice any of these--especially public restrooms downtown. Would not want water fountains for health reasons unless it is to fill up water bottles. Did not notice any trash receptacles and I think wi-fi was available. Could definitely use some landscaping and streetscaping. Liked the parking in the middle of the street. Need plants and trees downtown. No difficulty finding parking and could access multiple services.

#### **4. Other Retail Shopping Areas**

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

- a. To the south of downtown approximately 2 blocks there is a large well maintained and busy grocery store (G and W) and next to it Bill's, then Dollar General and then a Home Health. All had several customer's vehicles parked out front.
- b. Other businesses I observed where a Mexican restaurant, Pizza Hut, and nice flea markets but where not open at the time. Newer meat market and a car wash. I did not see a liquor store in town or any bars. There was a Dollar General also. Has two gas stations. A beauty salon and tanning place. For a town, this size it had a grocery store for community was a great plus!
- c. There was an area with a G and W grocery store and Dollar General. It was confusing to have the "Bill's" sign up; needs to be taken down. Too many signs at Sport Zone Liquor. All could be more attractive.

## **5. Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas**

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

- a. In conversation with Courtney, President of the Chamber, she mentioned that the Oswego Meat Locker was moving to the Industrial Park from in town and there were other businesses as well. She said there was plenty of room for new businesses there.
- b. The industrial park was hard to find. No visible signage I found. It was hidden away. Found Tank Connections at the edge of town, Industrial Diamond Coach, and a county prison also. Bartlett Coop wasn't in good shape.
- c. Yes-but little to no signage for it. There was the Co-op, the detention centers, and the Diamond manufacturing area.

## **6. Health Care Services**

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

- a. There is a very prominent and beautifully kept Labette Health Clinic and attached Express Care. I understand that there is local momentum and efforts underway to re-open the community's hospital and the plan is also to offer in-patient stays. This is exciting, in general, outside of specialists and specialty surgical procedures, there are no health care gaps.
- b. I located Labette Health in the town which was fairly new. Looked nice. I presume it is like a Quick Care but no hospital. They had a fitness facility which is great.
- c. Noticed the Harry Hynes Hospice. There was a 3D sonogram center downtown that a lot of people seem to use. There is a Labette Health Oswego Clinic and Express Care, Home Health Care, St. John's Medical Center, and Oswego Health and Rehab-but they are hard to find. There is an optometrist in town.

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

- a. There are a handful of independent physicians, a dentist, a home health service agency 2 blocks south of the downtown main intersection. There is a pharmacy and durable medical equipment (Oswego Drug—been there several years).
- b. I found a pharmacy and an optometrist but no other physician's facility.
- c. The Harry Hynes Hospice seems to be in excellent condition. However, the signage made it seem temporary. The 3D Sonogram Center could be in a better building. I did not see the other buildings.

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

- a. Within 4-6 blocks SW of the main intersection there is a nursing home/Oswego Health and Rehab. At this time there is no assisted living facility or ambulance service situated in Oswego.
- b. The only nursing facilities I found was a small facility. The assisted living was closed.
- c. Harry Hynes Hospice, Oswego Health, and Rehab

**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 regarding finding acceptable housing? (Neighborhoods, size, properties for sale, etc.)**

- a. There is subsidized housing for over 55 and disabled. There is quite a variety of homes in Oswego: small and quaint much older 1 and 2 story 1-2-3-bedroom homes to larger Victorian style 2-story homes ranging from approximately 1900 to primarily mid-60s and many ranch style 70s to new homes built since then. What homes I saw "For Sale" signs in the yards they were all realtor signs and "pending sale" or "sold" attached to them. The homes are maintained moderately well to very well, have medium to large yards. I saw a home that had caught fire at some point and was in the state of being gutted. Understandably the renovation or possible tear down of this home will take some time. I only saw three very poorly maintained homes and yards in deplorable condition. The issue is the yards: filled with derelict cars, large piles of sorted and unsorted scrap metal, large piles of discarded household items and appliances, etc. I imagine living or owning a business in proximity to these 3 yards would be upsetting to view when working or relaxing in the yard or coming/going to work, school, errands and having guests over, etc. or the neighbors trying to sell their home and at a price that is not reduced due to the view and condition of the 3 specific properties. I would like to see City officials review or tighten up the ordinances around these issues and gently begin the process of setting goals and with flexibility be steadily working toward end-dates with the three owners of these homes/properties feeling and receiving support from the City and community. Possibly high school students doing community service projects? or volunteers? to help clean up the yards, take the scrap to re-cycle for the owners, etc.
- b. There is a diverse array of housing for everyone. A lot of nice older homes well-maintained and others not so maintained. I only saw a few for sale signs. I didn't see any new area or subdivisions for development.
- c. All the housing seemed to be in the medium to low price range. There were a lot of older homes, so upkeep really seemed to be a factor in whether a house seemed nice. They could all be nice if people would keep them up. The houses that were not kept up made the town seem to be "past its prime." The challenge is for people to take care of their property.

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

- a. Rental properties are not obvious. Will require visiting with City Hall for a possible list of property owners/rental properties.
- b. I could not distinguish any rental properties. I observed several very nice cabins in town and talked to owner in length about her properties. She rents thru Airbnb and has several nice extended stay homes for people when moving into area before buying or building to rent.
- c. Saw what seemed to be some income-based housing. There did not seem to be much land in town that could be used for building new structures. There did not seem to be rentals. Housing would appeal to young families (affordability, good schools, parks) and seniors (available health care and pharmacy).

## **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. There is Head Start, K-8 and a High School. All appear to very appropriately meet Oswego's needs, and all are well maintained.
- b. We observed the fairly new high school and middle schools. The outdoor facilities were really nice also like the football field and ball fields. They have a head start program. The grade school was there also. For the size of town, the schools looked very well maintained.
- c. Could see Elementary, Middle School, and High School. Nice for a town the size of Oswego. The elementary school seemed a little small, but the junior and high schools seem to be more than adequate. They are well-maintained-except the football field.

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

- a. Yes, and prominently displayed and touted on a 20+ ft tall and 10+ ft wide sign at the main intersection: Oswego Indians received the Department of Education for 2011 and 2013 Academic Excellence.
- b. I found some information on the internet but not a lot of information about the school systems.
- c. Excellent online resources. Especially liked the online introductory video. There is also a great Facebook presence. One would need to know the school district is called USD 504 Oswego-Service Valley on Facebook. Otherwise, one would think it is a Facebook page for Service Valley only.

## **9. Childcare**

**What childcare services are available? Is it affordable?**

- a. There are at least three childcares, I did not inquire about the cost.
- b. I did not get any information on this.
- c. I saw one day care. Not sure of the price.

## **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. I made a comment to a lunch customer that the churches (the ones I saw were: Oswego Christian Church, St. Paul Lutheran Church, another Lutheran Church, First Baptist Church, Oswego Assembly of God—they even had a small cute sign on the highway entering town from the North pointing their direction and the times of services) are all very well maintained, large, and do a nice job with inviting messages on their signs in the front. The customer added that the churches are all involved with community improvements as well and work together.
- b. Lots of churches with several denominations. They all seemed well maintained in appearance.
- c. There were many churches. It seemed “The Church” and the “Lost Soul” churches are non-denominational. There seemed to be eight churches in town. All the churches could work on appearance. Many seemed to be “past their prime.” I did not see much evidence of community services. I saw signs for a free Wednesday night meal at the Baptist Church.

## **11. Civic**

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

- a. A local restaurant customer mentioned there are several civic groups and committees doing different things in Oswego. I told her I saw the Smith-Hollingsworth cabin/home (a well-maintained treasure given to the city by the family, built in 1867), maintained by the Oswego Historical Society. I mentioned I had seen the Museum front downtown, but it was closed. She said the Historical Society does a good job with the cabin, but she would like to see the Museum open more than it is. She wasn't criticizing the group, she just thought they just needed additional help/more volunteers to help.

Note: as you enter Oswego coming from the East on 160 there is a medium sized round

sign on the North side of the highway that is barely readable, neat old sign, I think it read "museum." I would love to see it saved, just needs a little facelift. Oswego Senior Center has a huge sign not far north on Hwy 59 as you just entered Oswego from the south. Below it on a separate sign is the announcement of their Bingo days and times. There is no missing it, a great promotion of both the Senior Center and the Bingo.

- b. Not applicable. Had an Oswego Senior Center in kind of poor condition.
- c. It is evident that 4-H is very active, because the fairgrounds are excellent. There is a very nice Community Center. I did not notice a Senior Meal Site. There is a Chamber of Commerce. On one of the signs coming into town, it said there is a Kiwanis and Rotary Club. I noticed activities done by the Chamber of Commerce on the City News flyer. Did not notice a Lions Club.

## **12. Public Infrastructure**

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

- a. Well-marked street signs and traffic control signs. Average wear and tear of streets as compared to other rural small towns in SE Kansas. Not all residential streets have sidewalks but not high traffic either so unnecessary. Most residential properties have larger yards and therefore longer driveways. Parking in residential was not congested nor downtown or at the Fairgrounds, park, etc. No professional style landscaping but it is not needed and was not anything I noticed as "missing." A lot of mature trees throughout residential and along the highways in town.
- b. No answer
- c. On the south side of town, there need to be street signs. The streets are narrow, and the paving is OK, not great. There needs to be a big, lighted sign at the Tomahawk Lane corner to the High School. People would have a hard time finding where to turn for the Junior and High School at night if they had not been there during the day. GPS might not help.

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

- a. Did not go into City Hall as was Saturday. I saw it, the courthouse and the law enforcement building to all be very nicely maintained and appropriately adequate.
- b. The city, fire, and police buildings were in nice condition. I did not go in. There was signage for parks, and fairgrounds.
- c. Everyone was friendly. No information about the town available except the City News flyer I happened to pick up at a business. There was not any information available at the Post Office. I did not go to the city/town hall. I only knew about the online sources of information because of the flyer.

**Police/fire protection:**

- a. No answer
- b. They are both nice buildings, well maintained.
- c. Did not notice a fire station. Good police-when I drove around a neighborhood twice, a police officer seemed to follow me to check out what I was doing.

**Library:**

- a. I forgot to look for the library
- b. I observed an older structure for a library which I believe is a Carnegie Library.
- c. Needs to be kept up better on the outside. I did not feel comfortable to go in. It did not seem to be open. No signage visible from the street as far as hours. No information in City News flyer about it.

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

- a. To the immediate northeast of the fairgrounds there is a large area of assorted playground equipment for varying ages and interests for children. Very well- maintained grounds and equipment. Walking trail through this area, very nice views, trees, and shrubs. In another conversation I learned about the Riverside Park being established in 1902, how beautiful it was and how well maintained it is by the City workers and about a very active committee of very dedicated community residents that plant and maintain the flowers. I visited the picturesque park on my way out of town and it is just breathtakingly beautiful even without the flowers that have not yet been planted or bloomed!
- b. There are several city parks and playgrounds well maintained with covered picnic areas. They also had a walking trail inside of Riverside Park. The sports complex at the high school was fairly new.
- c. Really liked the Riverside Park-but people did not seem to use it much. The weather was nice, so it was conducive to use. The baseball and softball fields were excellent-but the football field did not seem as nice and was hard to find. I read later online that the football field is in the process of being renovated.

### **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. Next to each of the very large "Welcome to Oswego" signs as you enter Oswego are red and white signs next to them stating "Home of Renowned Sports Artist Ted Watts." The Riverside Park (established 1902) is a draw and gem for the community for its beauty and enjoyment and being historical. The Labette County Fairgrounds is the Fairgrounds in Oswego. The permanent structures for the exhibits, barns and activities are very well maintained. The barns are quite large and set up very well and accommodating for the animals, their owners, and fair goers. The exhibit building is air conditioned. The Fair itself is also very well known for being the best and draws huge numbers of people to it each year.
- b. I don't know about a slogan, but I've always known it for the river that they have. Beautiful view around the park area of it.
- c. The 3 D sonogram center, the Harry Hynes Hospice, and the pharmacy are well known. Saw slogan on the City News flyer-but the slogan does not seem to capitalize on any particular asset.

**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
- b. I saw a sign for farmers markets for the summer months.
- c. Saw flyer for a Sidewalk Sale on April 9. Also, saw signs for a free meal at the Baptist Church. Also, the fair must be important-but no dates for this seen-this could be put on a sign. Also saw information for a city-wide garage sale, Easter Egg Hunt, and BBQ Cook Off in the City News flyer.

**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. The museum, the cabin, the original town well, Riverside Park and its grounds, location, and view of the Neosho River below it to the north; there are RV campgrounds access to it, the historic bath house at the Riverside Park (sunbathing was done more discretely on the roof), the Fair grounds were established around 1917 or thereabouts.
- b. They have Riverside Park which is very nice. Has several shelter houses and a great view of the river. Camping, fishing area. Also, the fairgrounds are a plus for the county. Had nice camping area and a large, air-conditioned building for use.
- c. Riverside Park, Community Center, Fairgrounds, Baseball and Softball fields. Campground by the river.

**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. See comments about volunteer Chamber in #3.
- b. No answer.
- c. No Visitor's Center, etc. apparent

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

- a. I will definitely return to Black Crow Trading Company, Stonehouse Grill for good and friendly conversations and food and shopping! I plan to return later this Spring and again in the Summer to see Riverside Park in its full bloom. I hope to take in more of the other stores I did not see or shop in this trip.
- b. Being there on a Monday there was a flea market I wanted to go in, but it wasn't open. I have a friend that says it is a good one, so I definitely want to return to visit there. I was also told there is a specialty business for 3-D sonograms for babies.
- c. I would maybe come back for the Chicken Coop and the Black Crow Trading Company flea markets. I would enjoy spending time at Riverside Park, the fair, sports events tied in with the schools, and events at churches.

#### **14. Wrap-up**

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

- a. I really enjoyed all of my experiences at Oswego and most of all the friendliness! I look forward to returning and seeing what else they all have done in preserving the good and positives, the new things and projects I know with their very obvious commitment and love of Oswego they will be continuing to develop and do to honor, maintain and not lose its past but also while growing, evolving and progressing it into the future.
- b. The schools, parks, tennis courts and a grocery store are all an A+ for community!
- c. Friendliness, schools, Riverside Park, Fairgrounds. Great to have a G and W store, Casey's, and Dollar General in the Community.

**What are the biggest obstacles/challenges facing this community?**

- a. Nothing specific to Oswego and its citizens that's any different than any other older or smaller rural community in SE Kansas...if they continue to work together, build on what they have, stay flexible and creative, work toward what they need or do not have, they will attract future generations to stay or also return home so there is always a thriving Oswego.
- b. The downtown facades on the businesses could use updated. The courthouse could use a makeover. It needs some restaurants also. Could use an updated swimming pool. Really could use some senior housing and community center.
- c. The houses could be kept up better. Also, for people to improve the downtown area and have more civic groups. The downtown area could be really great if people would improve the building facades and add benches, trees, banners, and plants.

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

- a. One of the friendliest places I have ever visited, anywhere. A very comfortable and at home feeling—the experiences, the surroundings, and the people.

A lunch customer talked with pride and hope for Oswego in that several of the younger generation that grew up and moved away from Oswego are returning back to Oswego to live and raise their families (30-40 year olds), are opening businesses and that these are also the ones that are the newer and growing members that have joined in the efforts of the Chamber.

After lunch I was followed out into the parking lot by a friendly gentleman that struck up a conversation with me having listened in on the conversation inside. His mother lived at one time in Oswego several years ago and although she is gone now and he lives in Iola, he returned to visit recent years back, fell in love with Oswego's friendliness and he now visits Oswego for a couple of days every 2 years. He's a photographer and began taking pictures of the architecture of SE Kansas buildings and homes and has turned into for his own pleasure now documenting the evolving changes in the SE Kansas towns. He is in awe of the positive changes in Oswego's efforts over the years. He also believes Oswego is the friendliest, then Yates Center and Caney. It was a unanimous vote of two in the Stonehouse Grill parking lot that Oswego is the friendliest.

- b. I would say Riverside Park, it was very peaceful and pleasant also.
- c. The excellent school facilities the wonderful Riverside Park, and that people need to work on their properties. There are some beautiful houses—they just need to be kept up. It is also hard to find the Courthouse. I am used to courthouses being a focal point in the county seat. Your two flea markets are also draws to the community. The Fairgrounds, school facilities, and Community Center are great.

PowerPoint Presentation is posted at:

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

First Impressions was developed by the University of Wisconsin-Extension and adapted for use by K-State Research and Extension. Restructuring made possible through a partnership with the Dane G. Hansen Foundation.

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Revised: 8/20/20