

# First Impressions

## Compiled Report Form



**K-STATE**  
Research and Extension

**Community Visited: Randolph**

**Date(s) Visited:**

- a) 4/24/2019 (Wed)
- b) 4/11/2019 (Thurs)
- c) 4/12/2019 (Fri)

**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. Wikipedia provided some historical information, but I didn't find much on current services. There wasn't much available by doing a web search, probably due to the size of the community. However, the Unified School District's web page provides good information regarding the community. The community does have a Facebook page.
- b. In March I visited the Randolph community website and was able to find helpful information about the town, events, businesses, and schools. However, when I attempted to locate the website again the week of April 8<sup>th</sup>, the page no longer appears to be available.
- c. I had no problem online gaining quite a bit of information from Randolph's website. It was easy to navigate with clearly defined subjects/tabs, the community calendar appeared to be current, and the Randolph PRIDE committee had provided quite a bit of information about their activities. It was evident they were very involved in their community. Randolph also had a Facebook page. It was helpful to discover both the website and FB page. The website provided information at a glance and was quick to navigate while FB scrolling required much more time. As I did the research for this report, I much preferred the website for the ease in navigation and the speed in which I could learn about the community.

As useful as the website was, there were outdated areas with information only as current as 2017. I have included some suggestions below as potential growth for the website.

- Randolph has a unique history in that it was relocated for Tuttle Creek's establishment, and its first name was Waterville. It would be interesting to elaborate with a map showing its former location and more pictures of the old town. It would also be interesting to see the pictures of the two men competing to be founders of Randolph on the Randolph website. This information can be found on Riley County's Historical Society's website so perhaps a link to RCHS could be included on Randolph's site as another option.
- There is no evidence of population. Find a place to incorporate the latest data.
- The community calendar is the only place some things are revealed, such as Girl Scouts being in the area. From the calendar activities, one could get ideas for elaboration within the website.

- The school system is ranked 12<sup>th</sup> in Kansas school districts. What are some reasons? What is enrollment and/or class size? Provide some data, awards, teacher recognitions, etc., to give this statement more support. Why would people want their children to go to school in Randolph's school district?
- The PRIDE committee provided past newsletters from 2015 through 2018, but there hasn't been anything new added since June 2018. Do they still meet? What are their new endeavors?
- There are no town council minutes. It might be good to incorporate minutes for the benefit of community members. Show residents what the council does for them. There is a statement that the council works hard for Randolph – make it believable by featuring examples.
- There is a whole page dedicated to real estate and/or rentals, but it is blank. Is this page ever used? If not, perhaps remove it so it doesn't appear neglected. You could also incorporate these ideas:
  - Contact information and/or logos for - local rental owners, local land for sale, contractors with lots to sell for building sites in and outside of town, the motel where there are rooms rented out, and realtors in the surrounding communities where Randolph housing might be listed
- Online, it says there is a Fitness Center in town in the old Ag Shop. When I got to town, there were no signs directing me to it. Perhaps online, add an address with hours of operation and fees, plus a phone number to call for more information.
- Online, it says there is a Senior Center and it is located near the Park Gazebo. The building on the highway frontage has a sign in the window that says meetings have been moved to the high school. Clarification with contact information would be beneficial.
- Online, there is mention, or dates on the community calendar, of such things like the Lions Club, Rotary Club, Girl Scouts, and 4-H but no contact information. Are there activities to be listed and photos to promote interest? How big are the clubs? Where do the clubs meet? Do you have to live within a certain range to join?
- Online, it mentions the City Hall and VFW have space to rent. Provide physical addresses and contact information so a person can drive by and/or visit with someone. I did not find a City Hall.
- Tuttle Creek is a big attraction for tourism and the local economy. Take advantage of this to boost the local economy especially while the water levels are higher. Randolph is a lakeside community and could be marketed as that to a greater degree. Elaborate on the activities available in the area: walking/biking trails, Frisbee courts, local swimming areas and boat ramps, camping grounds in proximity of town, what type of fish are stocked in the lake, where to buy fishing licenses, bait, and related supplies available for purchase in town, the shooting range and hours of operation, contact information for the off-road trails for ATVs and related clubs or events. I noticed several people in Jeeps gathering at the trail location outside of town. Where are the closest mechanics for water vehicles? How about local hunting or fishing guides for hire? There is a lot of material to use.

**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. Clean, small community. Not a lot of businesses. The highway is the commercial corridor. There's a large sign with the name of the community at the main entrance.
- b. Our first impression was that the town was easy to navigate with clear street signage. The streets are wide, well-maintained. The city park is fantastic! Street signs are visible at nearly every intersection. The city park is a real asset. Recommend improving the city park sign. It appears a bit worn-down and the park is so great that a nice, substantial city park sign on the corner would be nice. This could be an area for flower beds, brick pavers, etc.
- c. Randolph residents have pride in their community as evidenced by nearly all yards being attractive and clear of clutter. A work-in-progress of the removal of a former trailer park, will create a sizeable area for development within the residential area. The large city park, with newer facilities and play equipment, covers two blocks and is clearly the hub of activity for the locals. The newer bank building along with a lakeside housing development (on the east of town) indicates Randolph is not a dying community. There are also newer homes in all directions from town. They all suggest there is adequate population in the area to sustain the business and support a range of housing preferences.

Randolph sits at the intersection of two highways, so traffic from four directions pass through this busy spot on the map. No “Welcome to Randolph” signs exist from any of the 4 entrances into town. Welcome signs invite people to stop in – buy fuel, get a drink, take a look around... join us! Signs also create focal points along the roadside where flowers and shrubs could be added to increase the feeling of welcome.

The highway frontage with buildings are sadly in need of some color to make them more inviting! Color could be added through new paint, fresh professional-type signage, benches, flags, and pots with flowers. Raised flowerbeds could also be installed.

The south entrance into town passes an old stone house sitting in disrepair and blocks the view of the bank. If it is historical and there are no plans to tear it down, maybe some signage would be nice to explain its significance. It's a bit of an eye sore.

Boxcars on the west side of the highway, coming in from the south, were being used for storage. Only because one was opened with two men visiting in the doorway, did I realize this area might be serving as retail space for antique sales.

### **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. Due to the size of the community, there really is not a downtown, but most buildings and signs are in good condition. There are a few businesses along the highway. The main business we observed was a convenience type store but had a large variety of merchandise available from grocery items, hunting and fishing supplies, gardening supplies, automotive supplies and even greeting cards. We were surprised and pleased by the variety of offerings. The clerk described their business as the "Wal-Mart" for the northern part of Riley County. The soft serve ice cream was excellent too! The customer service was terrific. We were greeted and asked if we needed any help. When asked other questions about their community, they were most helpful. The clerk was informative as were other persons in the store. There was a prominent bulletin board area with lots of community announcements.
  
- b. The downtown business area includes the frontage road along Highway 77, as well as, the first block along W. Randolph Street. Several of the buildings were not clearly marked so it was difficult to determine if they were businesses, garages, or something else. The south side of W. Randolph near the Post Office was clean and free of debris. The north side of W. Randolph near the VFW appears to be more industrial but the buildings were not clearly marked. While the streets are wide, there was no downtown sidewalk to access and connect the businesses. The following businesses were observed:
  - Post office
  - Car wash
  - Plumber
  - Golf cart rental
  - Garden and seed supply
  - Storage units
  - Bank
  - Liquor Store
  - Gas Station – large variety of groceries, personal care items, hunting and fishing supplies, and auto repair needs. Gas station appears to be "community central" and has posted information about events and services, not only for the Randolph community but for surrounding communities, as well.

I visited the Post Office and purchased stamps. The young clerk at the Post Office was friendly and courteous. I visited the gas station and purchased water and snacks. Three gentleman were working near the front of the store managing inventory. They were friendly and provided good customer service.

- c. The business area of town incorporated one block of a side street and the equivalence of two blocks of highway frontage. There were also a few business structures around the east side of town; however, it was not clear whether they were still operational.

The buildings that line the highway on the west were a bit in disrepair and not very welcoming.

The only green space was around the bank. The side street of the downtown included buildings that were closed up, with no traffic, on a Friday morning. The motel, bank, and convenience store were the only businesses clearly open. Perhaps, lighted "open" signs should be incorporated.

The only business open for browsing was the convenience store, and it was filled to the brim. Everything from food to hardware to greeting cards and boots were on display with very little organization or separation. This instantly raised concern about food safety. As crowded as the store was, insects and rodents were surely hard to spot and/or control.

There was room for 4 people to sit down near the south door and the very small counter for the register was located in the middle of the store, near the north exit, in a very cluttered area.

The parking lot was riddled with potholes which made driving through it very unpleasant. The only parking spots were on the south and limited to about six vehicles while the north side of the building was cluttered with discontinued machines and items to prevent parking over there. Clutter and neglect on the outside tends to set the expectation of what one may find inside.

I was greeted at the door by a community member sitting with a couple more, but the man running the register said minimal.

**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. The community has a very nice park with picnic tables, very nice public restrooms and trash receptacles and playground equipment. However, the park was located away from the highway. Maybe a sign directing people from the highway to the park would be helpful. Landscaping and streets were overall in good condition. Parking was ample.

b. Nice clean public restrooms in the city park. On the day of our visit, the bathrooms on the north side of the park were locked, but the restrooms on the south side of the park were open and clean. Trash receptacles were available in the park, as well as, in front of the gas station. Picnic benches and tables were available throughout the park.

The city park has beautiful mature trees. Limited to no streetscaping, although it is early in the season. We had no difficulty finding parking. Ample gravel lots on the frontage road paralleling Highway 77. Clearly marked parking spaces were available in front of the Post Office and at the city park. Randolph St. is very wide so on-street parking appears very feasible. Limited sidewalk access throughout town, although the streets were wide enough to walk around without being near traffic.

c. The park was the main resource for these items. There were two public restroom facilities: one on the north side and the other on the south of the park. I found the north building locked up with no signage indicating so, but was able to enter the south structure. Inside, it was brightly lit with daylight and stocked with paper products and soap. However, there were dead bugs everywhere. Perhaps the same person who stocks the facility could also run the broom during those visits to make it more inviting. Dead bugs work against the feeling of cleanliness. A drinking fountain was on the outside of the building as well as a few trash receptacles. The park also included a few picnic tables and a couple benches.

For the size of the summer festival described online, I expected more tables and benches throughout the park. The park consisted of two separate units: one with newer playground equipment and the restrooms, and the second unit to the east was mostly green space. Here

would have been a nice location for additional picnic tables and seating. The small bandstand in the northeast corner of the first unit had merely one bench facing it.

No wi-fi was available in the area.

Parking was available along the park and minimally along the business area. Due to the limited length of the business area, access to all was reasonable from any parking place. Randolph was typical of many small towns with wide streets but no sidewalks.

Landscaping around homes was present but not in any of the business region except the bank. It was late enough in the spring to observe bulbs blooming but too early to pot up containers.

No blooming bulbs were evident, and no businesses had containers or flowerbeds waiting to be prepared.

Due to such limited greenspace around the business structures, containers and planters would create a greater sense of welcoming. Plants would add color and liven up the business district dramatically.

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

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

- a. There was a small liquor store – easy to access. The bank was visible. Other businesses didn't look open.
- b. All businesses and the city park could be accessed by a single parking spot, if needed. Some commercial areas were unmarked making it difficult to know what was available in the various stores. The frontage strip along Highway 77 does not "sell" the town. From the highway there is nothing that would pull you off the highway towards the city park. You might stop for gas because it is convenient, but it is not attractive or welcoming. The Attwood House Bed and Breakfast appears to be a nice lodging option. The exterior was clean and free of debris and there was clear signage in front. From a web search, a room could be rented for about \$90.
- c. No other retail shopping existed in town. Residents must rely on resources outside the community: Green is located 14 miles west, Olsburg is 8 miles east, Waterville is 18 miles north, and Manhattan is 24 miles south.

Fink Beef Genetics is located 1 mile north of town.

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

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

- a. There was not a defined area for manufacturing due to the size of this community. There appears to be room for more commercial activity.
- b. There could be industrial park opportunities along the edges of town.
- c. On the northeast corner of town, there is a triangular section of ground where Hwy 13 and Gardener Road intersect. Here is located a propane business. All along this stretch of highway frontage and Gardener Road would be an ideal location of industrial park development.

## **6. Health Care Services**

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

- a. Due to the size of this community, there is no hospital or EMS services. We did see a fire station.
- b. Noted an ambulance access/garage along Randolph St. I found no other evidence of health care services available in town.
- c. There are no medical services in town.

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

- a. N/A – See above
- b. No apparent doctors, dentists, or health care providers appeared to be available in town.
- c. n/a

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

- a. None exists
- b. No apparent long-term care services, assisted living, or nursing facilities appeared to be available in town. We did observe a senior community center along the frontage of Highway 77.
- c. N/A. There is a senior center advertised, and according to online event descriptions, fund-raisers are conducted during the July 4<sup>th</sup> celebration to help offset the cost of operating.

## **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. Most housing is of the same relative style/type and is in basic good condition (A few may need a coat of paint). One home for sale was observed. Nicer, newer housing would be a plus.
- b. Most housing appears decent with varying sizes and price ranges. From on-line searches, I was able to identify some properties and homes for sale in Randolph. For one of the homes listed on-line, I also observed the “For Sale” sign in their front yard when we visited the community. Most of the available housing appears to be available along the bluffs of Tuttle Creek Reservoir. Some lots appeared to be available along the Reservoir for construction, as well. If one were to purchase a lot and build a new home in this area, there appears to be limited options for temporary housing/apartments while the home is being built.
- c. The homes within the city limits were one-family dwellings. No multi-family homes were evident. These were all older homes probably serving the needs of the low to middle-income wage earner.

Outside of town to the east, there was a housing development with newer, larger, and more expensive construction on large lots with gravel roads. There were also newer homes built on acreage outside of town in all directions. Additionally, I have learned that there is a new housing development in the works.

No rental signs existed except at the motel. One house was listed with a realtor.

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

- a. No "for rent" signs were observed.
- b. Limited multi-unit apartments. Cedar apartments advertised \$450 per month or \$150 per week. These apartments are right along Highway 77 and could use some sprucing up. These apartments are right along Highway 77 and could use some sprucing up. These apartments did not appear to be the quality that one would choose to live in while waiting for a house to be built.
- c. Rentals were only apparent at the Cedar Flats Motel. With the proximity of Tuttle Creek camp grounds on the edge of town, one could feasibly park an RV at the lake while waiting on construction to be completed.

## **8. 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. The school system is a real highlight for the community. There is a preschool, middle school and high school in this community. The schools are sized appropriately. It appeared the schools and grounds were very well maintained. A new Agricultural Education building was recently added and it is an amazing asset to this school and community. Improvements have also been made to the middle school, football stadium, gym, FACS, and science areas. It is great to see this support from the community. Class sizes are small ranging at this time from 5 to 25 in the high school.
- b. Schools are a real selling feature for this community. It is hard to find a town that still has a middle and high school. The schools are closely co-located and the high school has an Agricultural Education Center. This is a big deal! The schools are significant in size and the grounds were very well maintained.
- c. The school properties appeared well-kept and included a community fitness facility behind the high school. Preschool, Middle and High schools were available in town while elementary aged children were bused to Olsburg. The District office was also located within the high school structure.

The parking lot at the high school was full and there didn't appear to be much room for expansion of the building on the existing property. If the fitness center was relocated, there would be that space to use.

Online, in 2017, there was reference to remodeling and school improvements planned with a bond. This also included sidewalks and technology additions.

At the high school, there was a memorial east of the building. This area was probably nice when it was first installed but now it is very overgrown. Two benches sit around a pond surrounded by brush. It makes a sad statement for a memorial.

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

- a. The school district does have a website that provided very good information about the community and schools.
- b. In March when I first accessed the Randolph website, I was able to learn more about the local schools. By the week of our visit, the website was no longer active. I was able to find helpful information about the schools from the USD 384 website.
- c. There were only comments that the school system was ranked 12<sup>th</sup> in the best school districts in Kansas but not the evidence to substantiate this ranking.

I did find some data by searching outside the Randolph website. You might consider adding these links to your website:

<https://www.publicschoolreview.com/blue-valley-high-school-profile>

<https://www.usd384.org/o/blue-valley-usd-384/news>

## **9. Childcare**

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

- a. There is a preschool available at the school and when searching the internet, one daycare provider was located in the surrounding area.
- b. From an on-line search I found two options for Childcare in Randolph – Kozy Kids Daycare and Jodi Innes Daycare. Both are limited to 10 children each. From the information posted on-line, the cost of \$75-140 per week is less expensive than most care within a larger community.
- c. Nothing was advertised on the web, and no signs were evident in any yards. Where do people take their children for daycare? Perhaps, feature some ideas on the web.

## **10. Faith/Religion**

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

- a. No places of worship were observed in this community, however, we saw signs for one country church in the area.
- b. Only one church was observed within the town – the United Methodist Church on East Garrison. No other churches were observed. Signs in the gas station promoted a prayer breakfast in Green, KS. No other faith-based community services were observed.
- c. There was a United Methodist Church inside the city limits which looked well-kept. I found no evidence of any other faith in town, but 8 miles to the west, on County Road 378, there was the Alert Covenant Church. It looked well-tended to and had vehicles in the lot.

## **11. Civic**

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

- a. Lions Club, VFW, and local 4-H club. The community's PRIDE Facebook page promotes an annual city-wide garage sale, city-wide clean-up day and 4th of July Celebration. There were numerous flyers and announcements at the convenience store.
- b. Observed the senior center as well as the VFW Hall. There were no signs posted outside these building promoting upcoming events. A sign outside the Senior Center noted that the space could be rented for weddings or other events. Aside from the VFW Hall and the church, there was no evidence of civic organization activity.
- c. The only evidence of organizations was found online. Between the community calendar and event descriptions, I learned there must be associations with Lions, Rotary Club, 4-H, and Girl Scouts. Randolph PRIDE was a large part of what was featured on their website. I did not see evidence of civic organization activity.

## **12. Public Infrastructure**

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

- a. For the size of this community, the general condition of it overall was in good condition
- b. Streets are well-maintained and wide. Limited curb & gutter so it is possible that drainage could be challenging during major storm events. Limited sidewalks available throughout town. Public restrooms were clean and well maintained. We visited during the day so it was difficult to tell what lighting would look like in the evenings. Limited landscaping, but we were visiting in early April. Zoning ordinances appear to allow for a variety of home maintenance. Some houses were very well maintained (fresh paint, paved driveways, free of trash and debris) while others right next door in town would not be well maintained. If I were looking to move to the community I would be concerned that my neighbor would not be required to keep their house and lawn maintained.
- c. The streets were wide and marked with signs, parking was possible all along the streets in a parallel fashion, and public restrooms were in the park. Sidewalks were minimal – around the church and school. Minimal landscaping and streetscaping – at the bank, church, and school then evident at many of the homes.

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

- a. The town hall was not located. We asked at the store and never found it.
- b. We could not readily locate any city or town hall.
- c. There was a city clerk noted online, but a City Hall was not apparent. I did notice the VFW building, and online it mentioned a person could rent it for events. The VFW was closed so there was no one to visit with.

**Police/fire protection:**

- a. A fire station was observed
- b. A fire station and Riley County public works is located along the frontage of Highway 77.
- c. No police in town - Randolph is covered by the Riley County Sheriff's Department. A volunteer fire department exists.

**Library:**

- a. None observed
- b. No library was observed during our visit. From an on-line search it appears that the nearest libraries are in Olsburg, Riley, and Leonardville. Most signs and advertisements posted in the gas station for activities were for other towns (Green, Waterville, Olsburg).
- c. n/a

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

- a. Very nice park with playground with multiple seating and open areas to enjoy.
- b. Wonderful City Park! The park includes playgrounds, picnic areas, disc/Frisbee golf. There are basketball courts to the west of the church.
- c. Nice City Park as discussed earlier, no sports complex or ballparks observed. Playground at park and preschool. Walking trails located on lake property at edge of town

### **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. We saw no slogan, however, the reservoir which displaced the original location of Randolph now creates lots of opportunities for outdoor recreation, including hunting, fishing, and off road vehicles. There are numerous recreation areas close by. 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration that is always the Saturday before the 4<sup>th</sup>, includes a car show, vendors, and fireworks.
- b. The community is well known for their 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration. During our visit to the gas station, there was a coin collection bucket at the cash register to support the fireworks.
- c. Online, their 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration was featured as being a big draw for tourism with an antique car show, fireworks, firework sales, homemade ice cream and other food vendors. Tuttle Creek provides a source of reaction and tourism year-round.

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

- a. 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration. Lots of posters the convenience store.
- b. The Randolph PRIDE Facebook page promotes several upcoming events including an Easter Egg Hunt, City Wide Garage Sale, Quarter Craze, and PTO fundraiser. These events were not publicized with signage in the town during the day of our visit. It took some work to land on the Facebook page so it would still be helpful to an outside visitor

(or non-social media user) to be able to find this community information either in town or on a community website.

- c. Not in person, but online they mentioned several events and/or listed them in the community calendar: Summer Fish Fry, Citywide Garage Sales, Greenhouse Sale, Citywide Clean-up w/ dumpster available, Quarter Craze fundraiser for school children in need, monthly PRIDE meetings, aerobics, and Girl Scouts  
Blue Valley Ball Association was featured online for summer ball.

**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. Due to the location and the proximity of a state lake and rural setting, boating, fishing, and hunting draw people to this area.
- b. Hunting and fishing are a big draw to the area. Tuttle Creek Reservoir has a multitude of outdoor recreation opportunities and is a significant draw to the area. It is apparent from the gas station and even the B&B advertising that they cater to hunters and fishers. There is also a shooting range at Fancy Creek. From the highway there is limited signage indicating that Randolph is a gateway community to these recreational opportunities. If you didn't know that Randolph was a great place to stay while you were enjoying Tuttle Creek or Fancy Creek you would drive right by.
- c. Randolph is a lakeside town on Tuttle Creek Reservoir so this would be the main attraction. It is also the location of the mile-long bridge over the lake which is very impressive. Because of the proximity to the lake and state park property, visitors can enjoy shooting sports, ATV trails, camping, fishing, water sports, walking/biking trails, Frisbee courts, and more.

During low water periods, the former structures in old Randolph can be spotted in the distance. Online, on a different website, Old Randolph was featured by someone who hunts ghost towns.

**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. There is none of these, but the business we stopped in provided good information about the community and what it has to offer. What if there was a community kiosk near the highway that could provide visible community information 24-7?
- b. No. We did not observe a visitor's center, chamber of commerce, or main street office to welcome visitors. There is a really interesting looking limestone building along Highway 77 just to the south of the bank. This could be a great little museum and visitor center if restored.
- c. N/A

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

- a. If going that way, we would stop at the convenience store for a refreshment as they were helpful and friendly and have anything that you might need.
- b. Unfortunately not. We intended to eat lunch while we were in Randolph but the gas station appeared to be the only option and they didn't offer a full lunch. We ended up driving to the Farmhouse in Olsburg for lunch instead.
- c. I visited nearby communities of Green and Olsburg to investigate what Randolph residents have for shopping options. The nearest restaurants are located in Green and Olsburg and both offer family dining options. It would be beneficial to the Randolph community to incorporate a sandwich shop, a donut shop, or even a pizza shop (something not found in Green or Olsburg) along the west side of town where there is high traffic.

The former business buildings sitting along the highway are used minimally and could be additional retail opportunities to boost the local economy. Is there much competition in surrounding towns for a barber shop or salon? This strip would also be ideal for unique businesses that typically attract passersby and entice them to pull over for a look such as: shops for collectors, quilters, and crafters; ice cream parlors, coffee shops, bakeries.

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

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

- a. The community is small and clean with friendly people, has lots of outdoor recreation opportunities, and has a nice school with impressive new investments in facilities.
- b. The City Park is a wonderful feature of this community. However, you would never know that this park is there when driving by from Highway 77. Other positive aspects of the community include reasonably nice residential areas, great schools, and the proximity to Tuttle Creek Reservoir.
- c. The people there take care of their community and want it to thrive.

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

- a. Not having a local restaurant, though one is said to be opening soon. There is a business that provides rooms, probably for hunters, that could be better maintained.
- b. The town lacks the charm from the highway to pull you in to the community. Poor visible marketing of their positive features. Lack of visitor attractions such as a restaurant and shops.
- c. Retail business to attract shoppers and gain tax dollars to support their community.

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

- a. The friendly people at the convenience store (complete with ice cream) and the quality of the new building at the school.
- b. The beautiful city park and the disappointing down town.
- c. I was pleasantly surprised at all there is to offer in the region surrounding the small town. There was evidence of numerous ag and cattle operations, a breeding business, activities tied into the lake property, and overall a nice clean community in which to raise children. The drive to neighboring towns of Green (population 120), Waterville (pop. 641), Olsburg (pop. 220) and Manhattan (pop 54,832) is pretty in any direction. I drove over to Green and had lunch in their café. People in the area seem happy and are friendly to visitors.

PowerPoint Presentation is posted at:

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

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