

First Impressions

Team Report Form



Community Visited: Cunningham

Date Visited: Tuesday, Sept. 30, 2025 (2)

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. I had a good idea of what the community was like from the web search. Some information on the town website such as the Christian and Sacred Heart Church had the same information and the picture of the Christian Church was of the old building as they have a new one now. Some of the attractions and services were in Pratt or Kingman and not in Cunningham. I was able to get quite a bit of information on the city website.
- b. The Christian church info was incorrect. Some of the sites listed were actually in Kingman which seemed odd.

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. Cunningham is a very clean town with some really nice homes with well-kept yards. There were a lot of businesses. The downtown businesses had fall decorations in front of them which we found out later that they were going to have a contest at the fall festival on Saturday. There was a sign on highway 54 showing the exit to Cunningham. Before we got there, we could see the sign for Love Travel Stop and Subway. As we drove towards the town, we saw the Hill Top Manor on one side and Skyland Grain on the other side which covered a lot of ground. As we drove around the town we saw the Catholic Church, the school, the park with the baseball field, swimming pool, and playground, but didn't see any signs directing us to them. There were signs honoring people or organizations at the parks.
- b. A very clean, tidy town. The only thing that looked bad was a trailer house where there were tall weeds in the back yard and things lying around. The school looked new. The parks were mowed. No trash lying around. One house needed paint. A big agricultural business was obvious. There was no signage for finding the business district or the school. Loves was the main gas station getting off 400. Large Catholic church, but Christian church listed there too. Not all the street signs were easy to read; most were. Very few trees.

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. The buildings were attractive and signs easy to read. There were some older brick buildings such as the bank and museum. There were some newer buildings such as the library, Post Office, and community center. We didn't see any businesses to purchase anything except for somewhere to eat. Cozy's Pizza had good food and service for a reasonable price. Everyone in Cozy's Pizza was very friendly. They were really busy, but we didn't have to wait long before we were being waited on. They asked several times if we needed anything.
- b. Museum. Not good signage, but a wonderful museum. Very well done. A community building with good signage. Building- haircuts? Other side empty- no signage. Kingman Clinic with the hours on the door. Insurance Office with a sign by the door. Baseball boy statue, Gazebo in the little park. City Hall- sign over the door. Two buildings with no signs. Cozy's Pizza, hours on Door. Silo building to the right. US Post Office with Zip Code. Library, statuette of girl reading. Ninnescah Valley Bank. Skyland Office Building. We didn't see any stores with merchandise. There were two places to eat. We didn't go in the liquor store. The Cozy Pizza was very busy when we entered. The City Hall lady saw us and brought us menus. The waitress came soon. We ordered and were served quickly- good food. The two ladies talked with us when we were checking out. They are proud of their town and the festival coming up on Saturday.

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. There were public restrooms in the library and Cozy's Pizza. I didn't notice any drinking fountains, benches, or trash receptacles. I think there was WI-FI in the library, but I didn't see any signs for it. Main street was clean and decorations were in place for their fall festival. There were some statues at the library and a park on main street. We didn't have any problems finding a place to park. The parking places in front of Cozy's Pizza were full, but there was plenty of parking on the other side of the street.
- b. There were two benches. There was a restroom at the café. Saw no trash receptacles, but there was no trash on the streets anywhere. No drinking fountains or public restrooms were advertised. The businesses were all participating in fall decoration contest for the fall festival, so the streets were colorful. Parking was plentiful and you could walk to all the businesses.

4. Other Retail Shopping Areas

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

- a. We didn't see any other retail shopping areas than downtown. There was Love's Travel Stop and Subway along the highway, but we didn't stop there. A flower shop has recently closed.
- b. The other café was on the next cross street. The gas and repair shops were scattered on the outskirts of town as well as the Skyland silos and working areas.

5. Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas

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

- a. I don't know if there was a specific area for new manufacturing, but we were told that seven graduates of Cunningham High School are involved in newer businesses in town. Skyland Grain owned a lot of ground south of the downtown where the old elevators still stand and are being used. There were three self-serve card gas outlets.
- b. There was an empty train depot where a business could be located on the outer edge of town.

6. Health Care Services

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

- a. There was a health clinic located on main street that is open some days during the week. The hospital is located in Kingman. There was a Kingman County Area Resource Guide at the library that gave health resources for Kingman County.
- b. The Kingman Clinic was right in the business area. We were told they mainly did small things like any clinic. Hospitals and Doctors would be in Kingman, Pratt, Hutch, Wichita; none of which are very far away.

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

- a. Some health services are available at the Community Center for senior citizens.
- b. Besides the nurse at the Clinic, there were no other services.

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

- a. The Hilltop Manor is a skilled nursing home that was along the road into town.
- b. One care home on the edge of town, Hilltop Manor has short-term rehab and long-term care as well as Hospice Care.

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. There are not many houses available to rent and fewer to buy. There were a few that might be available sometime. Most of the lots were being cared for and the size of the properties were the usual size. There are two new houses at the edge of town going to be built.
- b. The city lady had us get on her golf cart and she drove us around town pointing out places that were for sale or soon would be or might be for rent. There was no printed list available. The majority of homes were average. There were a couple of very large homes and some town homes (rentable), and a few small one- or two-bedroom homes. Only one house needed painting. 2 houses had "for sale" signs.

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

- a. Many that are for rent or sale are ones that need to be fixed up if someone wanted to do that.
- b. Apparently, the local farmers are buying up properties and renting them out. We did not see any signs saying for rent. The 3 town houses were for rent. Two are listed for sale on Realtor.com.

8. Schools

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

- a. Cunningham is a part of a consolidated district with a preK-6th grade school and a 7th-12th grade Jr/Sr High School. The new building was completed about two years ago, so it looks big enough for the area. The building and grounds looked good.
- b. The schools were all in a new building which was now the hub of the small towns in the area. The old schools were replaced with this building. The building stretched down the street. Football stadium is by the school. Basketball hoops in many yards. The school has pre-K 4-year-olds.

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

- a. I didn't find much to tell me about the quality of the system.
- b. The site gives the math and reading proficiency scores for grade and high school as well as teacher/student ratio. Their school sports and activities are listed.

9. Childcare

What childcare services are available? Is it affordable?

- a. There is a childcare center, but we didn't find out the rates.
- b. A childcare center for up to 12 years is available. 7:30 am to 6:00 pm.

10. Faith/Religion

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

- a. The three churches are Christian, Methodist, and Catholic. They were all well-kept. We talked to the Christian Church pastor, and he said they were all active in the community.
- b. The Catholic church is very large, new, and has a building on the edge of town. The Christian Church has a smaller metal covered building. Spoke with the pastor who also heads up the museum. The Methodist church is an older brick building. We saw cars there- don't know of any activities.

11. Civic

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

- a. Organizations include 4-H, American Legion, Lions Club, Women's Club, and PRIDE. The Lions Club maintains a playground and park and decorated the city hall for the fall festival. There were 4-H banners hanging in the museum. PRIDE does a Christmas celebration.
- b. I saw a Lions Club Sign. We were told that a couple of people planned the fall festival. People seemed happy someone was doing something.

12. Public Infrastructure

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

- a. Most of the streets were in good repair.
- b. Street signs were available, but there was no signage as to the location of downtown, the school, swimming pool, or the library. It's small enough you can drive till you find them, but it would feel more friendly if signs directed you.

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

- a. The city clerk was very friendly. She gave us a tour of the town telling us what properties are available or might be. We were told that the reason the yards looked good was that they had a code enforcement officer and the owners were sent a letter to clean up and if they didn't, they were taken to court and there was a high price to pay. There was a message on the whiteboard about using the tree dump which included getting a key and making a deposit.

- a. The city hall is small, but the clerk was very friendly and helpful. She drove us around to look at possible places to rent or buy when we asked. The list would be helpful on a day of rain, cold, looking later, etc.

Police/fire protection:

- a. They have a volunteer fire department. Police services are provided by the Kingman County Sheriff Office.
- b. There is a 6-door building on the edge of town.

Library:

- a. The library is one of the newer buildings downtown. The library aide was very friendly, and she told us the museum was open and we should go visit. They have a children's room, a lot of books, and three computers for people to use. It was very impressive.
- b. We were told about it was a new building. Very roomy. Shelves have room to be added onto.

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

- a. There is a large city park with a baseball diamond named after someone, a swimming pool, Lions Club playground, park downtown named after someone, and the school ball fields behind the school.
- b. One small park downtown with a gazebo. A larger park by the swimming pool, and a shelter house. Grassy areas. Did not see the ballpark, but people spoke of a man who promoted the games.

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. This year was the second year to have a fall festival. There were no signs of it other than posters or flyers of the events at the businesses.
- b. This was the second year for the fall festival. Money that is raised goes to a different recipient each year. The museum was one. We did not see a community slogan.

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

- a. The fall festival was going to be on October 4 so there was a decorating contest for the businesses.
- b. The festival events sounded fun, and the museum was getting a new area because of a community member.

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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. They have one of the best museums I have been in. They are very fortunate to have the museum to show the history of Cunningham. They also have a swimming pool that people from other towns utilize.
- b. The museum, the swimming pool, the train depot.

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. The place to get information would probably be the city hall.
- b. City hall serves our needs as visitors. The cozy Pizza people and the museum volunteers and the pastor were all extremely friendly and helpful, as well as city hall.

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

- a. No, especially since we are so far away.
- b. If I were in the area, I would take a friend to the museum and the Cozy Pizza, but I would not drive 1.5 hours to do it.

14. Wrap-up

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

- a. It is a very clean and friendly town. It looks like they have a lot of community involvement. The museum is very impressive.
- b. Their friendliness, their pride in their town, and the festival. The cleanliness of the streets and the good condition of the buildings and houses. Having a swimming pool. The way they supported the people planning activities was impressive—I was about ready to move there.

What are the biggest obstacles/challenges facing this community?

- a. I would say not having housing available.
- b. The trailer house with its weeds and vehicles.

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

- a. I will remember it as a very clean and friendly town with an impressive museum.
- b. The ride around the community with the city hall lady. The museum director. The ladies at the Cozy Pizza.

How much money did you spend while you were in the city you visited? \$54

(Please include total purchases: Gas, soft drinks, food, purchases. No detail necessary.)



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