

# First Impressions

## Team Report Form



Community Visited: Lincoln

Date Visited: 7/3 & 8/17

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?

*The initial web search was informative. However, it was not current information. The eating establishment I had researched and planned to dine at was closed although the hours online claimed they would be open. Not all eating establishments are listed online. I visited on July 3<sup>rd</sup> thinking I could participate in some holiday festivities. I found no events listed online for the holiday activities. While visiting the pool I noticed a sign about free snacks in the park. What a great event. I would have liked to have seen that posted on the website. It was an effective website as it said the necessities. However, I would have liked to have seen current activities and updated information.*

*Detailed website. Easy to find in a web search and lots of good links to attractions, lodging, events, etc. Branded "Post Rock Capital of Kansas." Website does look "dated" though.*

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.)

*It was unclear when coming into town from the west where the appropriate place to turn to go downtown. If there was a sign, I did not notice it. The initial houses were not kept up. I realize this is common in small communities. Once I got downtown it took a little exploring to determine the "main" streets. There were updated classy signs on the main streets that pointed visitors to the main attractions. They were very helpful in exploring the town. When visiting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July there were not many patriotic displays or community activities observed. I also did not observe any firework stands during my visit.*

*Interesting rock attractions – benches, tables, shelters in park unique. Nice "wide" street downtown. Most downtown buildings in good condition & occupied. Noticed downtown signage & full Main Street with lots of activity at 12:30 pm. Limestone sign kind of hidden on the west side. East side welcome sign is nice – color/printed! Noticed industrial business – US Tower along the highway.*

## 2. Downtown Business Area

Describe the buildings, signs, infrastructure, etc.

*Buildings were primarily limestone. Very beautiful buildings. A few vacant/empty buildings but primarily an occupied main street. When I visited there were decorated bikes periodically along Main Street. They were very classy and caught my attention. However, as a visitor I was uncertain the importance or significance of the bikes. The same classy signs were located at various places downtown.*

*Looked nice and clean. Nice brown signs pointing to places – downtown, courthouse, etc. Aging infrastructure, but most places look well kept. One noticeable building covered with plywood – all other vacant building not an “eye sore”.*

Explain what type of businesses you observed and give a description of the variety and quality of merchandise displayed.

*Law offices, eating establishments, hair shops, grocery store, athletic store (rare in a small town), museum, pharmacy*

*Clothing store – wow! Thrift store, gift store/frame shop, grocery store, hardware, restaurants. Services – hair, lawyer, tax/account, banks.*

Describe the customer service received when you entered those retail businesses. (Were you greeted? Did you have to ask for assistance?)

*Greeted everywhere! Everyone pleased to talk about Lincoln and things going on. Community minded. Shared history.*

What public amenities were available (drinking fountains, benches, public restrooms, etc.)

*I went with my family and while the children were playing at the very nice park my daughter needed to use the restroom. She went to the city pool which was adjacent to the park. However, it would have been nice to have restrooms, water fountain in the city park. I did not observe any public drinking fountains or community restrooms. There were several stone picnic benches and benches in front of several businesses.*

*Benches and planters for Main Street in the works. Didn't see public restrooms. Active PRIDE group – mentioned a few times.*

Comment on landscaping and streetscaping. Did you have difficulty finding parking? Could you access multiple services from where you parked?

*Parking was not a problem. I went during business hours the day before a holiday and there were many opportunities for parking. When we parked we walked several streets in both directions observing the stone buildings and bikes along Main Street. The necessities around town were conveniently located within walking distance. The pool/park/school are a distance away but I observed children walking to/from the pool so walking in those areas must not be a problem.*

*Sidewalks and Main Street clean and good condition. Trash cans on Main Street. Parking no problem. Not many “nice yards” – more so in housing area.*

### 3. Other Retail Shopping Areas

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

*There is a gas station on the edge of town as well as a hotel. There were no other retail shopping areas that caught my attention during my visit. The hotel looked charming but not classy. The gas station was inviting.*

*Mini storage, photography studio (residential area), possible greenhouse/nursery –couldn’t tell if in operation. Dollar General, Pizza Hut.*

### 4. Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas

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

*There was a Coop and tower company observed. Another location for potential industrial/commercial areas. I even observed a sign for a designated industrial/commercial park. However, was unsure what all businesses were located there. Signage was not the best for each of the businesses present. These are on the edge of town. Several houses nearby and the highway. However, a strategic company could easily find a way to expand.*

*East side by US Tower. Seems industrial services/businesses are scattered. Keevers (with old high school), Farmway Elevator – old elevator on west side – tear down? US Tower, Implement/NAPA, Collision Repair Shop.*

### 5. Health Care Services

Comment on the availability and apparent quality of hospitals and emergency medical services. Comment on the availability and condition of facilities for physicians, dentists, optometrists, public health and other healthcare providers. What long-term care services, assisted living or nursing facilities exist in the community?

*There was a nursing home/assisted living facility observed. It appeared to be well maintained with a new addition or remodel. A resident was happily sitting on the porch watching traffic. The yard was well kept and there were numerous vehicles but still ample parking. The hospital was small, bi-level facility with no room to expand. There was a clinic with the hospital with provider information on the exterior of the building. This was very positive for a visitor. With all the new technology and the small size of the facility I would assume that the hospital would be looking at expanding or building in the future. There was an eye doctor observed but no dentist. Chiropractor office as well. No mental health service was observed. A very nice EMS building. Did not observe or notice a public health office.*

*All services available for a small town. Nice 6-door emergency management building. Hospital – small, but adequate for rural area, nicely kept. Clinic parking – street parking, lot? – parking seems inadequate. Rest home available – new addition and nice view from highway. We saw clinic and hospital, health care department, chiropractor, dentist. Senior center with active meals on wheels.*

## 6. Housing

Give a brief description of the existing mix of housing stock. Does the local market have housing that would appeal to all income wages? What challenges do you see in regards to finding acceptable housing? (Neighborhoods, size, properties for sale, etc.)

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

*There is lots of rental apartments available. Several complexes (duplex or apartment complex). Did not observe many houses for sale or for rent during my visit. This is positive as a visitor that people want to stay in the community, but if I were looking to move and buy a house, this would be a worry. There is a wide mix of housing. Several large, classy houses with big yards and several run down apparently abandoned residences. If the homes were for sale there would be a wide variety of housing available.*

*Public Housing – small, but well kept. Variety of well-maintained and not maintained properties. Nice three story apartments with duplexes next door. Not many houses for sale. Lots of “condemned” houses. Assisted living. Small RV park. Public housing said “now leasing.” Did not see homes for rent.*

## 7. 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? Were you able to find print information in the community that helped assess the quality of the educational system?

*Did not observe any preschool, head start, etc. but I visited during the summer. There is a nice elementary school and a new high school. Both in great condition with updated play equipment and structurally sound. The high school appeared to be large for the size of community but unsure what all was within the high school. I am sure it is the appropriate size. Since I visited in the summer I did not find any school material in the community.*

*HS/JH – nice/new. Grade school separate. Old high school – empty, entrance drive is neat to old school. Sports complexes – baseball field, football field located in close proximity to school and altogether. Baseball field has nice dugouts and adequate grandstands.*

## 8. Childcare

What childcare service are available? Is it affordable?

*I did not observe any childcare establishments or any home based childcare from my observations. However, I did observe several children so there must be childcare opportunities in Lincoln.*

*Spoke with residents – were told of at least 3 in town, 1 large, 1 newly opened and 1 other. Said they weren't "at home" day cares.*

## 9. Faith/Religion

Comment on the number of denominations and the physical appearances of the churches represented in the community. Did you observe any evidence of church-sponsored community services?

*Beautiful churches. Several denomination choices as well as a non-denominational church.*

*Community Church, Baptist, Hall Chapel/Mortuary, Methodist, Wesleyan, Christian, Catholic, Catholic Charities van comes to Lincoln. All places nice and maintained.*

## 10. Civic

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

*I did not observe any signage stating the different civic organizations in the town.*

*PRIDE group – noticed "Yard of the Month" sign, TOPS, Community Foundation, VFW Auxiliary, 4-H, Public Transportation*

## 11. Public Infrastructure

Comment in general on the streets, street signage, sidewalks, parking, lighting, restrooms, landscaping, and streetscapes in areas **other than downtown**. Did you observe land-use planning?

*The streets were maintained. No large damages or obstructions. Streets all had signs, ample parking, nice signs on the main roads. Beautiful public building and other buildings with lots of character. There does not appear to be much lighting other than downtown. Signs are not placed anywhere other than the main streets. No observed public restrooms. Land use planning noted in the industrial park.*

*Streets common for small town – tar and asphalt. Nothing out of the ordinary that caught our attention. Residential development area has infrastructure to start home building – electricity, streets, sewer done. Additional room by school for expansion or additional facilities.*

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

*Charming city hall and courthouse as well as jail. Did not observe the fire station but EMS (fire could be housed there as well) was a new building on the edge of town.*

*Yes – have brochures/pamphlets – even Lincoln County magazine! WOW!  
Observed Sheriff's department and EMS Building*

Library:

*I did not observe a library. I should plan another trip to Lincoln as I enjoy visiting libraries.*

*Carnegie Library.*

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

*Nice stone benches, great scout cabin, camping area, city pool, ballpark, nice playground equipment. We spent over an hour at the park. Nice shade and great equipment. Two ballparks. One with the city park and the other on the opposite edge of town (ample signage).*

*Ball fields, swimming pool & park together. Small pool but adequate – lanes and slide. No pool house. Tennis courts. Park needed mowed. Another ball field on the west side – not well maintained.*

## 12. Recreation/Tourism

Is the community well-known for any particular attraction or event? Do they have a community slogan that capitalizes on that asset?

*According to the website, the city is known to be the "Post Rock Capital of Kansas" with an excellent school system, city park, etc.*

*Slogan – "Post Rock Capital." Lots of rock structures, rock yards, buildings, etc. Think website said the quarry was still in operation. Saw poster for dance academy.*

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

*Did not observe any community events for the holiday. They do free snacks in the park over the summer. That sign was noted at the pool.*

*Post Rock Festival in September – needs better sign though. Almost missed it. Lincoln Days, Danish Festival in Denmark*

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

*The courthouse has lots of architecture and has a well kempt yard with monuments and memorials.*

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.

*I did not see a visitor's center, chamber office, etc. However, those could have been in the city hall or I could have just missed them.*

*Chamber office easily seen. ED office in Courthouse. Business owners we visited did well promoting town and answering questions. They all talked about each other and promoted other businesses.*

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

*I ate at the Mexican restaurant and had great service and food. I wanted to try the diner but they were closed when I was there. I would come back to the community for a community event. However, there would not be much else that would draw my family to make a drive to Lincoln. I will start going by Lincoln on my way to other locations as I never knew the charm Lincoln had to offer.*

*Lincoln Arts Center, clothing store, frame store/Kansas shop, Finch Theater – both live and film shows!*

### 13. Wrap-up

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

*I observed a peaceful community. Children were happily playing and parents felt safe having their children walk the town. Main Street events such as the decorated bikes showed me they have lots of community involvement through businesses, etc. Lincoln does have a nice charm with the stone buildings. Something residents may take for granted is something visitors are astonished by.*

*Nice downtown for a small town – all business owners very friendly and have pride in town and people there.*

What are the biggest obstacles/challenges facing this community?

*One of the biggest obstacles could be getting visitors to stop as they pass by on the highways. The city is located at the intersection of two highways with only a gas station to capture visitors. A sign on the edge of town showing what all the city has to offer would be nice. An updated website so current events are listed. Possibly showcase various businesses so everyone gets some "fame" in creating the wonderful city of Lincoln.*

*Cleaning up the abandoned/condemned building. What do you do with old high school? (Structures like that.) Although there is an exploratory committee for possibilities of old high school. Of course – all challenges faced by small towns – lack of businesses, resident exodus, etc.*

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

*I plan to go back to Lincoln and visit the museum, the pharmacy museum and the library. I feel Lincoln has lots to offer but has not bragged about how great they are. I will remember this family trip as an enjoyable time exploring the "Post Rock Capital of Kansas".*

*Side comments: She was impressed that there was "more to Lincoln" than she thought. She was really excited about the museum and want to take her mom there the next time she is in Kansas. She was impressed with the number of churches in town. If we didn't have the kids we would have gone to the courthouse. It looks "beautiful." It was a very positive experience and opened my eyes to may "hidden" jewels in communities. Makes you realize what all you take for granted that a visitor would not know.*

*It was a great town. We ate good food, played in the park and visited the museum (they were closed, but we looked around), and learned a lot about Lincoln. We hope to go back when the pharmacy museum and the other museum are open.*

*Nice attractive Main drag downtown. Lincoln Arts Center, Finch Theater, Pharmacy Museum.*

*High School is awesome (school structure is important)*



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