

First Impressions

Ever wonder what people visiting your town think? First impressions are important as the community works to improve the overall quality of life and develop its sense of place.



Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Stations and Cooperative Extension Service

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First Impressions

Need more information?

If your community is interested in participating in First Impressions, please contact:

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A Method to Boost Community Vitality

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How does it work?

The program allows you to see your community through the eyes of a first time visitor. A volunteer visitation team agrees to make the visit. The team members are from other communities with similar characteristics. Business leaders, community and economic development directors, Chamber of Commerce members and other interested volunteers are common visitation team members.

These unannounced visitors explore your community's residential, retail, and industrial areas; local government entities; schools; and other points of interest. Visitors follow clear guidelines as they evaluate appearances, access to services; friendliness, and other community attributes. Training for the team ensures that evaluations from individual visitors are standardized, resulting in a thorough final report for the community.



How will it help?

The program is designed to increase awareness of a community's strengths and highlight areas of concern. It can help your community do the following:

- Evaluate the success of current development initiatives.
- Set goals and priorities for new development.
- Identify ways to strengthen community services.
- Identify initiatives for community support agencies, civic groups, city/county leaders, or community economic development organizations.

How will results be delivered?

The results of the visit are a written report and a presentation that include team comments, photographs, and recommendations. Although the recommendations are a summary, many of each visitors' individual comments are included in the final report. Recommendations are designed to lead community actions that improve perceptions of visitors.



What is your commitment?

- 1) Identify sponsoring group and lead contact person for your community.
- 2) Be willing to gather a team of volunteers to visit another community, which includes a brief training program and a day for a visit.
- 3) Organize a community-wide forum to share final report.

How do we participate?

A request is made to participate in the program. It is then followed with a visit to explain the procedures and explore "sister city" possibilities. Information is exchanged between the two communities and a timeframe to complete the exchange is agreed upon. There are no fees to participate in **First Impressions**. The only associated costs are time, mileage, and meal expense when conducting the exchange visit.