

# First Impressions

## Compiled Report Form

Community Visited: Atwood

Date(s) Visited: June 10 & 11, 2015

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?

*I just googled Atwood, Kansas. Visitrawlinsco.com was very resourceful. I would suggest adding city names behind the phone numbers of places to eat and the churches. A Very impressive school link. The government links are not all updated as well as the calendar.*

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.)

*Very friendly town, everyone waves and smiles. It is clean and inviting. Great welcome signs. You can't mistake where you're at! Love the arch "Welcome to Atwood" over the main street.*

*Nice initial appearance, clean, well-kept homes & businesses on 4<sup>th</sup> Street. Older vacant buildings on cross streets of downtown. High school looks like it could use some sprucing up – lawns not mowed, no landscaping. The large sign on the south before entering the city coming from the east on Hwy 36 is really nice! Signs at entrances are good – especially the curved metal sign over the street entering 4<sup>th</sup> St. to downtown. Signs on Hwy 25 indicating where to turn for business area, schools, etc. are great.*

*Clean, well-kept friendly community with lots of outdoor opportunities. Business district seems to be thriving. Not many empty store fronts. Seemed like only 3 didn't have anything in them off one of the side streets. Homes appeared to be in good repair and improvements being made. Enjoyed seeing the welcome to Atwood sign.*

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?)

*For the most part looks like there has been recent updating, painting & stucco on the bank & grocery store for instance. There was only one block that was run down just around the corner of the Main St. (State & 5<sup>th</sup>). I made a visit into the grocery store. We have ShurFine foods as well here. We thought the prices were the same or just a few*

*cents higher. Great variety of product to choose from. Stopped in Mojo's for breakfast. A nice gentleman gave up his table for us to sit together. We were greeted quickly at each business & offered assistance. The gentleman at the grocery store was a delight joking with us as we checked out.*

*Seems to be a wide variety of businesses for a small town and they are well-kept. True Value and TLC General Store, good grocery store, 2 restaurants – Mexican and Mojo Bistro. Had a good lunch at Mojo's which I found to be a very pleasant establishment. Some obviously empty buildings, but some (old Chamber and Youth Center) not so obvious and still have signage. Entered the newspaper office and TLC General Store. Both were very friendly with greetings and offered help. I made a purchase in the TLC Store which had a great selection of a wide variety of merchandise.*

*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? We found public amenities and they were very clean. Nice yards, nothing extremely overgrown. Liked the way the school hid the air conditioning with decorative metal sheets. The gazebo was awesome, well taken care of and the hanging baskets with drip system, how inventive. The Army tank by the Cenex store with the cross store – would've liked to see this area a little more spruced up. Weeds dead & alive on the walk way and a cigarette butt catching pickle jar, some trash, not an appealing sight for recognizing our vets. Parking was good. Got to many things by walking less than a block from our parking space on Main Street.*

*Restrooms could be found in businesses. There is a drinking fountain on their main street (4th St.)!! The benches along the street are good. Appealing landscaping and streetscaping – the grass medians to the school and downtown and the old fashioned lights. The gazebo with landscaping downtown is wonderful. We were able to rest a few minutes there and gather our thoughts. No difficulty parking and we walked everywhere we wanted to go in the downtown area. One area at the south of downtown on 4<sup>th</sup> Street needs to be cleaned up, but only area we saw in less than desirable condition.*

### 3. Other Retail Shopping Areas

*Describe other retail shopping areas. Were the areas attractive and easy to access? Observed some home businesses. Looks good – signs easy to read. Looked to be healthy thriving businesses.*

*Colby has everything Atwood wouldn't at only 30 miles away via HWY 25. From there you can connect with I-70 too. (I think they misunderstood the question.)*

### 4. Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas

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

*No signage for Industrial Park, but areas of land use seem well laid out. Seemed to be more on the east side of town.*

*Not my expertise, but seemed to have plenty of room for expansion. Not congested on the edge of town, not too far away or too close.*

## 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?

*Rawlins County Health Center looks good. Observed location of ambulance service. DSNWK office. Observed offices for dentist, hearing, and optometrist – great to have those services in a small town. Article in newspaper about new provider at hospital, Yvette Fensler, APRN. FNP gives good impression of care available. Also article about major (\$410,000) renovation of surgical room being done through CDBG. Did observe some long term care facilities available, but didn't find out level of care. Also observed veterinary services available.*

*Good Sam & housing authority. Like that Good Sam can look at the lake.*

*We drove by, didn't stop, but plenty of parking. Well marked with signs. Notices a dentist office and optometrist. Great things to have in a small town. Good Samaritan Center, 650 Lake Rd, right next to the Rawlins Co. Health Center (two thumbs up) with a view of the lake – awesome!*

## 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?

*Did not get into housing. Didn't observe any empty houses. Some new housing, perhaps senior apartments on east edge of town.*

*Doesn't look to have many houses for sale but that isn't necessarily a bad thing for those in town but for someone moving in this could be trouble finding available housing.*

*Noticed not many houses for sale nor any new development. Good mix of houses at all income levels. Can tell everyone takes pride in keeping their property tidy. We saw a few multi-family dwellings. Could use a little attention – siding, gutters, roof, A/C window units looked a little questionable.*

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

*Did not observe temporary classrooms. The elementary school is right next to the street, but they have done some great landscaping with that small space. Particularly like the metal work that hides the air conditioning units!*

*Looks like nice school. Ag area is nice with a greenhouse and I like the school garden.*

*We drove by during the summer so hard to tell. Grounds were mowed and being watered as we drove by. Like the outside garden at the high school. Not sure if there's enough parking to be a host school for sports events, aka, tourney.*

## 8. Childcare

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

*Noticed multiple daycares.*

## 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?

*Church directory in newspaper lists 6 different churches. All that we observed appeared well kept and vital. Didn't see anything that stood out as intrusive or would make someone feel uncomfortable if they were not a particular faith.*

*Looked to have some different faith based churches.*

*Well rounded, plenty of choices, good*

## 10. Civic

Tell about the variety of nonprofit organizations and clubs within the community.

*No listing available at City Office, but the gentleman there verbally listed some to me – Lions Club, Masonic Lodge, Rebeccah's, American Legion. He suggested to contact the Extension Office. We did observe a man making repairs to the American Legion Building.*

*K of C, Masons, Rotary, Boy/Girl Scouts, 4-H. 510 Youth Center. Awesome place for teens to hang out and not tied to any faith based organization.*

*We stopped at the new teen center. Going to be very cool. They were very nice and easy to talk to. It will be a great benefit to the community. Best of luck! Noticed different signs posted, ex. Rotary, 4-H.*

## 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?

*Streets in general good repair, lots of sidewalks, liked old fashioned lighting. Land use planning is evident.*

*Great signage, streets were maintained, lighting on all streets, speakers downtown, nice gazebo.*

*Covered in question 2.*

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

*Went into the City Office to ask for information about the town in general. Most disappointing part of my visit. The gentleman there did ask me to have a chair in his office and gave me some time out of his day, but he could offer no written information or brochures or anything about the advantages of Atwood. He did try to verbally list civic organizations and said the Ox Roast at Herndon is this weekend.*

*Didn't visit*

Police/fire protection:

*Both presence observed. Newspaper has article about new officer receiving a life-saving award from KS Assoc. of Chiefs of Police.*

*Available in town, good*

Library:

*A little dark, not as inviting, could use a remodel. Like the butterflies display.*

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

*We did drive by Kelley Park with a playground and the pool and one other park which all seemed taken care of. There is an area that has some great landscaping with metal art work in it. The metal art work around the city really is nice and not the usual thing seen everywhere. Noticed in the newspaper a letter to the editor that indicates they must be having a problem with vandalism and kids trashing the pool and being disrespectful in general which is something we also struggle with at times.*

*Love the lake and walking trail with benches and picnic tables. Ballpark is nice. Playgrounds and pool in town very nice.*

*Nice walking area with picnic tables around the lake. Ballpark looked nicely groomed. City park was active with kids playing and having a good time. I would take my kids there.*

## 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? Did you see any indication of significant events taking place in the community that would be of interest to both visitors and residents? Elaborate on any significant natural or manmade features that have the potential of drawing people to the community.

*According to the Ec. Dev. brochure, they have five major events each year from the end of May to the end of September. Some signage in business windows evidenced that we had missed the Early Rod Run held the third weekend of May. An attraction they have is Lake Atwood right on the north of the city. Their website does use the slogan "City by the Lake" which is a good description. The walks surrounding the Lake are great.*

*According to the Ec. Dev. Brochure, there are driving tours of historic sites and landmarks available at the Library and Museum. Sounds like something I would like to do, but didn't hear about it from my visit to the Museum or anywhere else. I have to say though that I missed the regular worker at the Museum who was gone to the post office or somewhere and may have gotten more information from her had she been there.*

*I liked the reoccurring statement, "That'll do." Very fitting title of "City by the Lake." Heard the 4<sup>th</sup> of July show by the lake is worth the drive to visit next year. Liked all the metal sculptures made there in town.*

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.

*There is a Chamber of Commerce office to serve the needs of visitors, open part-time. It appears to have just moved and the Chamber person was out that day. The new office is sharing space with an insurance company whose helpful representative wrote down the Chamber person's name and phone number for me. I picked up the Rawlins County economic development brochure from the Chamber counter before leaving and it had quite a lot of information in it.*

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

*The lake, Mojo, and the teen center.*

*I wish we would have made it into the museum, especially growing up and seeing and hearing Smokey the Bear commercials.*

## 13. Wrap-up

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

*The most positive thing observed about the community in general was its generally good curb appeal, both in the business district downtown and the residential areas. People were generally very friendly and accommodating. They have a lot of variety of businesses for a small town. Some of the things they have going for them that not all*

*communities of their size have these days are a movie house, a newspaper, a good grocery store, a museum, a library and being the county seat always helps. The lake is a great asset that they seem to be using quite well.*

*Very well maintained and clean.*

*We were ready to move there after only a few hours. They have a nice comfortable town with lots of visual pride. Enjoyed our visit, would go back!*

What are the biggest obstacles/challenges facing this community?  
*I can't think of obvious obstacles or challenges for this community.*

*Lack of housing for those moving in. No new building.*

*Housing*

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

*What I will remember most about Atwood in six months is probably the lake and the generally good appearance of the businesses and homes. Any my disappointment with the City Office as I worked in the Stockton City Office for 20 years and felt we always tried to help whoever came in with whatever they needed or wanted. The City Office is as much a "face" of the community as the Chamber or anyone else.*

*The lake and teen center*

*The welcome sign across the road, beautiful lake, nice people, and clean town.*

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