

# First Impressions

## Team Report Form



Community Visited: Delphos, KS

Date Visited: 9/11/24 (2)  
9/14/24 (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?
  - Locating information about the city of Delphos was easy. I was able to navigate social media and look at photos from previous events, etc.
  - I searched for a Facebook page prior to the visit and while I did find one it wasn't very active, with the most recent post being in June. While on our visit I was told about two additional FB pages, Delphos ALIVE and You Know You're From Delphos (?). The Delphos ALIVE page is very nice and up-to-date with lots of fun activities. The other one I never did find.
2. **The "Five-Minute" Impression:** After taking a five-minute drive through the community without stopping, the following reactions were noted.
  - Prior to entering Delphos, we noticed the cemetery on the south side of the road just outside of town. I have personally cared for multiple cemeteries for over 35 years and am a good judge of how well they are cared for and maintained. Those responsible for this cemetery should be commended for their hard work. It appeared to have been freshly mowed and it is nice to see the grounds being well maintained.
  - We started with noting the Lions Club sign as we came into town, and also signs directing us to the schools and ballfields (so helpful for a visitor!) We noted that many of the roads seemed in pretty rough shape. There were many beautiful grand older homes well maintained and inviting, and as usual for a small town, a few eyesores. Saw a sharing box (yeah!). The biggest positive impact for us was the town square/park/downtown. For a community roughly the size of our own we were nearly shocked by the number of businesses that appeared to be there. It was a Saturday morning so unfortunately the gas station appeared to be the only thing

open. It was nice to see a ballfield but the broken-down bleachers gave it the appearance of not being actively used.

The following observations were noted when entering the community from major entrances (signs, streetscapes, buildings, etc.)

- We like the look and design of the Delphos stone sign at the entrance. The road into town seemed well maintained. We liked the touch of the blue “Welcome to Delphos” banner posted for all to see.
- The grass on the roadside had also been freshly mowed and made the entrance to the city look nice and tidy.
- There was what appeared to be a business on the north side of the road upon entering Delphos which also looked nice and tidy. No roadside trash was seen when entering town.
- We were excited to see the big sign on Hwy 81 showing features. Unfortunately, we saw it pretty much at the last minute and only caught something about Lincoln’s beard. But that made us curious to learn more!

3. Downtown Business Area Describe the buildings, signs, infrastructure, etc.

- We absolutely love the layout of the business district and give big kudos to the forefathers of Delphos who planned out this area. The appeal and charm of having the businesses surround the centrally located park reminds us of a “Hallmark” movie. We loved the simple fact one could stand in one spot and from almost any viewpoint can scan to see so much of the park and business areas.
- So nice! We saw at least... a library, a Sr. center, a bank, a post office, gas station, an insurance office, a medical clinic. We really liked the scrolling message board in the town square to let folks know what was going on around town. Also the mural was very eye-catching!

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

- There are a variety of businesses which is nice to see. There’s also space to add more.
- Observed was the gas station (likely the coop), a library, insurance company, bank, museum, senior center, auditorium, and churches.
- We were told there was a health office located just off the business square.

- Although some buildings are in better shape than others, some have been recently painted or renovated which gives the impression things are moving forward in a positive way.
- The electronic/digital signage at the park corner is helpful and is a great communication feature.
- We noticed some of the roads had areas of patch and repair, making the drive into the business area bumpy. The roads are generally wide enough for two vehicles to travel on.
- Types of businesses listed above... didn't note any particular merchandise other than the gas/service station.

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

- Our first and only stop was at city hall. We were impressed by the appearance of the outside of city hall with the clearly marked signage, the potted plants on the large covered porch, and the benches welcoming folks to sit for a spell. More on city hall in an upcoming section. We didn't enter any other establishments.
- We learned we had just missed a get together at the senior center prior to our arrival. We also learned the library and medical clinic are both open on a limited basis.
- Only place we went into was the post office and there was no one there.

What public amenities (drinking fountains, benches, public restrooms, trash receptacles and wi-fi, etc.) were available?

- We noted numerous benches throughout the park area. We didn't seek out wifi or public restrooms, though we were able to use the restroom at city hall.
- Did not notice the availability of these.

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

- The centrally located park is well maintained and seems to be quite the location for the city's events as posted in photos on the city's Facebook page.
- There is ample parking surrounding the park and plenty of spaces in front of all businesses.
- Landscaping was primarily well established and welcoming. Everything outside of residential was very contained in one area and lots of parking was available.

#### 4. Other Retail Shopping Areas

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

- No other retail areas observed.
- Did not note any.

#### 5. Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas

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

- We noted the agriculture area and silos/elevator at the opposite end of town and they were neat and tidy. It seems there could be a possibility based on the space in this area for potential expansion.
- It would appear that there is a huge amount of land surrounding the town. With the agricultural nature of the area that land might be hard or impossible to obtain.

#### 6. Health Care Services

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

- We were informed there is a healthcare office open for limited hours on Saturday. This is a major benefit for citizens.
- Any specialty medical needs would require traveling out of town.

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

- We didn't stop in to check out the medical clinic as it was closed.
- We only saw the clinic which appeared to have limited hours.

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

- None were seen.
- Did not note any.

## 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.)

- During our drive through, we noted many of the homes, like those in our own city, are older. Some of the homes were quite large and grand and have beautiful features and character adding to the charm of Delphos. We also noted homes in disrepair with many being overtaken by brush and trees, looking to be vacant for quite some time.
- Some properties have vehicles that appear to be inoperable in yards with junk sitting around.
- We saw a variety of home sizes, one and two stories, we did not note any signs indicating properties were for sale or rent and did not note any apartments.
- We only saw one for sale sign. There is a nice mix of small and large homes. Did not note any rentals properties. We did see the apartment building with maybe 8 units.

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

- No rental properties were seen during the visit, but we'd recommend talking to the city clerk or a real estate agent familiar with the Delphos area if there was interest in moving there.
- Did not note any rental properties.

## 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?

- We drove by a school building and noticed the lawn had been recently mowed, however it is clear the building is no longer being used as a school.
- We learned the school building was purchased by someone living outside of Kansas. We also learned that once the school closed it had a detrimental impact on the city.
- It's a shame seeing the school building sitting vacant and not being used.
- When inquiring where the kids go to school, we were told "neighboring towns." If I were a young mother, I would likely prefer to be in a city where my kids go to school so this may deter me from buying or settling in Delphos until my children were older.
- We only saw one school in town so assuming it incorporated all grades. There were no apparent issues.

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

- No, nothing was found online.
- No.

## 9. Childcare

What childcare services are available? Is it affordable?

- We were told there may be home childcare service offered soon. As we understand, childcare is a huge issue for young families so this would likely be a very welcome and much appreciated service for locals.
- Did not find any information concerning this.

## 10. Faith/Religion

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

- We noted more than one church. We didn't look at the denominations.
- We did spot two churches which appeared to be older but in great shape.

## 11. Civic

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

- There was a senior center. Upon asking if it was active, that's when we heard of the event earlier in the morning of our visit.

- There was a museum observed also. We were told the museum used to be open more often and at least for an alumni reunion, I believe once a year.
- We understand the need to find volunteers for the museum who are willing, dedicated, and able to make things happen. We hope the museum remains open and even becomes a pinnacle place for happenings in town.
- We were surprised to see the information about Lions club because of the size of the community.

Did you observe any evidence of civic organization activity?

- Nothing observed on the day of our visit.
- The flags in the city park were beautiful.

## 12. Public Infrastructure

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

- Some of the sidewalks have cracks and are broken while others are intact. There are many areas of patch and repair through the residential areas which makes the drive quite bumpy.
- We did not note any city-maintained planters or streetscaping, but did note some landscaping on private property.
- Streets were well marked, but a little rough in places. Did not note about sidewalks... however the streets were quite wide which would make it easy for walkers.

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

- Again, we were impressed by the appearance of the outside of city hall. The city clerk greeted us upon entering. The inside of the building is nicely painted and seems spacious for the requirements of the building.
- The builder, who we understood to be the mayor, did a great job on the structure! We were very impressed.
- The city clerk was very pleasant.
- The clerk was very knowledgeable and helpful in answering any questions we had for her. We came to learn she had served as the clerk for a very long time and has a pretty good handle on the nuances of Delphos. She was a very nice person eager to share information.

- Was not open during our visit on Saturday.

Police/fire protection:

- We were surprised to learn the city employs a part-time officer! That is great! And having a designated office space within city hall for him is great as well.
- We learned of the security cameras throughout town which is a plus for instilling more confidence in public safety.
- If it was there, we missed it.

Library:

- It is wonderful to be able to offer library services to the public even if on a limited schedule. There is so much potential and programming that can be offered because there is a library.
- Having been a librarian for 4 of the “mini” libraries in my area, my hopes are people would support and use the services offered at the library to the extent possible.
- Yes! Such a wonderful find in this small town.

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

- We loved the bandstand area. We love the whole city park. The amenities there like the grill, shelter houses, picnic tables, etc. make the park more enjoyable for folks wanting to spend time there.
- We loved the park and the amenities offered there. We love that the basketball area is available for people to come shoot hoops and enjoy the outdoors.
- The city park seems to be a great place to gather and hang out with friends, family, and neighbors.

### 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?

- We learned of the annual “Delfest” and think it is a great tradition that many folks likely look forward to attending.
- Delphos Alive has much to do with the Delfest and other family friendly events. We hope support for these events continues because it is such an



important way to create a sense of community and to create good memories.

- Abe Lincoln's beard was the only thing we noted! And we did spot the sign on the highway.

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

- We did not note any advertisements for upcoming events in the future but that doesn't mean there aren't things in the works with the holidays quickly approaching.
- The scrolling sign in the park lists such information.

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).

- Nothing additional to add here other than what was said about the museum already. It takes vision and a mission to create something new and different to draw folks in.
- We did not the beautiful mural recently painted and love the color and heritage represented.
- We find ourselves in a similar situation in McFarland, looking for ways to make our city more vital and vibrant and we'd love to share ideas and brainstorm with others in similar situations.
- Unaware of any.

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.

- No obvious visitor's center was seen, though the city clerk was our original point of contact for information.

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

- We did not note any restaurants or specialty shops.

- A restaurant was being worked on to be opened soon just a couple days a week. We had eaten breakfast in Miltonvale on our way there as we didn't find any food options in Delphos.

#### 14. Wrap-up

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

- We loved the entrance and detected a sense of pride the citizens must feel.
- We loved the city park and all the potential available for the buildings and spaces in the downtown area.
- We love that there could be an opportunity to have many service oriented businesses which can be such a convenience for the people.
- There is room for growth.
- The town square and the number of businesses in this small town.

What are the biggest obstacles/challenges facing this community?

- The school closed. Once schools close, many changes take place and usually not for the better. Teachers who may have lived in town or nearby may relocate to find work. There tend to be less for the youth to do such as organized after school clubs, etc.
- Young families may not move to a city with no school. We saw this happen to McFarland when the school consolidated.
- While there appears to be more opportunities for work in Delphos than compared to our own town, we know first hand the lack of businesses and services they provide equals less opportunities for people to work in town.
- Folks must commute elsewhere to larger cities for jobs, and then they shop in those cities and spend more time and money there than in their own small town.
- Street condition and privately owned property upkeep.

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

- It's a quiet town full of potential.
- We had the good fortune of seeing a couple weeding in their yard and walking over to visit with them. As it turns out she had been the ambassador to go to our town and so she knew right away what we were up to. She gave us so much that we hadn't found elsewhere and they are

jewels in the community. We found out that in addition to the active Senior Center there is an auditorium that can be used for larger events. Hopefully it is used frequently for family reunions, wedding receptions, and all kinds of things. She also told us about events in the town square including food trucks (SPLENDID IDEA which we will take back to our town). We had thought the apartment building might have been a Senior Living area but found out it was just apartments and kept at full capacity. We inquired about where people work... and learned it is a very agricultural town (huge grain operations/silos/elevator on the west side of town) and people mostly drive to Minneapolis or Concordia for employment opportunities.

- We were so impressed with Delphos and how many services it had available, again, compared to our own similarly-sized town. It felt like it would be a fabulous place to live and raise a family.

How much money did you spend while you were in the city you visited? \_\_\_\_\$0\_\_\_\_  
(Please include total purchases: Gas, soft drinks, food, purchases. No detail necessary.)



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