



## First Impressions Revisited\*

A Program for Community Assessment & Improvement

The Center For Community Economic Development

## Report from Deshler, NE Visitation Team

A program sponsored by:  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension  
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**First Impressions:  
A Program for Community Assessment & Improvement  
Deshler, NE Visitation Team Final Report**

**Community Visited (City and State): Firth Nebraska**

***NOTE: You will notice that not everyone answered all the questions....especially if they felt it didn't relate to Firth.***

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**Date of visit and time spent: 9/21/06**

**Weather on date of visit:**

- Beautiful day, sunny and fair
- **September 22, 2006—sunny, Balmy and about 65 degrees**
- **September 22, 2006 Approx 10:30 – 1:45 Sunny & Windy temps in the 60's**

**Prior to Your Visit**

**How easy was it to get information on the community that you are visiting?**

- N/A
- **Did find the Farmers and Merchants Bank and Mick G-Angelo's web page. Also the Norris School District had a really nice web page**
- Did not do.

**Did it accurately reflect what you saw?**

- **Yes**

**Did the information arrive in a timely fashion?**

- Mid morning

**Did you have difficulties obtaining information on the community through a web search?**

- No – nice site, perhaps not recently updated
- Yes – Being persistent I found the Firth City Pages at <http://local.yahoo.com/?csz=Firth+NE> and then found the following link on the Farmer and Merchant Bank web site: <http://www.ci.lincoln.ne.us/towns/firth/> . I also found an informative Norris School District web site. Children do not have to bring home notes for parents – this site has it all.

**What was the quality of information obtained from regional/state agencies and organizations?**

- Most referred you to Lincoln agencies.

## **2. Past Perceptions**

**What was your perception of the community before this visit? What did you expect to see?**

- No previous perceptions except for thinking there were more local businesses
- I have always noticed the sign on Hwy 77 North of Beatrice and had just a general idea of where Firth was located. I had never driven into the community. I expected a small deteriorating town with little business area.
- Did not know what to expect. Thought Firth could be a lot like Deshler

**Please comment on your knowledge of this community:**

- That this and surrounding communities were Dutch/German heritage
- Probably the most I knew about Firth was after the tornado when scenes were shown on television about the progress at Norris School as it was being rebuilt.
- This is my first visit to Firth so the only perception I had is that it was close to Lincoln and I have an Uncle that grew up in the Firth area.
- South of Lincoln

## **“Five Minute” Impression**

**After taking a five-minute drive through the community, without stopping, the following reactions were noted:**

- Noticed the streets seemed well cared for (no curbing), but how neatly the lawns and edges were trimmed.
- I first noticed the attractive well kept yards in the residential area—also the variety of homes side by side—well kept older homes and newer homes. The business area was extremely clean with no deteriorating buildings. We noted the large elevator and buildings connected with that business. I was impressed by the parks facilities and location near downtown. The ball field was well kept and had a playground area. I also noted the large Faith Reformed Church.

- Very nice mixture of homes that are well taken care of. Business district and park were also well maintained. Churches looked nice with appropriate signage information.

## 4. Community Entrances

The following observations were noted when entering the community from major entrances:



### Approached from West:

- Continued heading east – noted neat and tidy surroundings. Made u-turn and headed back toward Firth.
- As we approached from the West I noted the rolling hills and neat farmsteads. We were able to see the water tower from quite a distance. As we grew closer we noted all the acreages with newer homes to the North of the highway. We noticed the sign to Norris School and saw it in the distance. I noticed the clean yards and well kept homes on the edge of town.
- Approached from West: water tower same as Deshler's, new housing development, population sign, Nemaha River, and a mix of farm land and acreages.
- mowed nice – nice homes, duplexes and apt. NO welcome signs. Nicely manicured community, neat and clean.

### Approached from East:

- Noted attractive watershed area – wondered if it was a recreational site. Turned into town and observed many neat, attractive and well-tended homes and yards.



- From the east we saw a large undeveloped pond. Again there were several acreages with newer homes. On the edge of town there was a "Welcome to Firth" sign. Next we saw the attractive Oakview Rest Home.
- Neat, well taken care of acreages. Noticed welcome signs by duplexes



### Approached from South:



- Elevator area – very rough RR tracks – noted activity related to businesses in that area.
- When coming from the South we saw the large elevators and railroad tracks. Parked next to the railroad were propane tanks and piles of tires. It was unattractive. Then just inside town is the Countryside Coop with several buildings. The first building is a gas station and

mini convenience store. The coop offices are in a separate building that looks like a beautiful two story home.

- Tires and elevator, ground and storage. Are tires a health hazard for mosquito breeding. Fence could hide these
- pile of tires. tire store, nice 2 story building.

### Approached from North :

- Smaller homes, mowed and taken care of
- Approached from north: well kept up houses and yards, spacious park with steps and handrails to access park slope, Papa D's Pizzeria.

## 5. Downtown Business Area

### Observations about the general appearance of the downtown area:

- Very few cars or people in sight. The city park was pleasant and inviting. Area generally neat and clean.
- I felt the curved street between Main and Nemaha seemed fairly busy with traffic and could be dangerous when people are walking.
- Nice. Well taken care of and maintained. Minimal businesses



### General appearance of buildings (clean, repaired, painted, windows clean etc.)

- Some buildings were obviously empty. Impressive co-op office, traditional older bank building.



- When coming from the South we saw the large elevators and railroad tracks. Parked next to the railroad were propane tanks and piles of tires. It was unattractive. Then just inside town is the Countryside Coop with several buildings. The first

building is a gas station and mini convenience store. The coop offices are in a separate building that looks like a beautiful two story home.

- Most buildings had a neat appearance, if Andy's Truck & Auto Repair would organize his inventory that would improve the appearance around the business.
- All the businesses appeared to be clean and painted. Only exception on neatness was the auto repair shop. Other business had very little out of order



### Historic and Interesting buildings (architectural and design details preserved, enhanced, removed or covered up? ("Re-muddling" present in community?))



- The bank appeared to be the oldest building, well kept with nice corner location.

- The Farmers and Merchant Bank has done a great job of preserving the outside of the building.
- The bank building looked very original and kept to original design
- No significant historical looking buildings besides bank

**General appearance of displays, signage (professional, clear, fits with building or community and/or store type):**

- Few new style, mostly “hand-fashioned”
- The signs on the General Store were typical with windows showing specials, etc., but neat & clean. The Farmers Bank had a professional look on its signs. The post office was in the middle of the block and not too well marked. The Coop had the typical signage for their business. The building for the fitness center was more difficult to determine what it was—at first I thought it was a beauty shop. The car wash was well marked. The auto repair shop was surrounded by old vehicles in front and in the alley and any signage on the business was blocked from our view.
- Most businesses I observed had great signs although I never found a sign for Countryside Cooperative. Most signs were indicative of the business.
- Yes, appropriate signage that fit the businesses. Some were professional.



**The variety of shopping:**

**How would you rate the variety and quality of the merchandise?**

- Some basic grocery and other items in the café, a few in the convenience store.
- The General Store is where we ate our lunch—our food was tasty and service quick. After lunch we met the owner of Mick D-Angelo’s Pasta Sauce. His business is next door and he graciously gave us a tour and samples. His product is being promoted by Affiliated Foods. He already ships to 15 states. He informed us that we can find the sauce at Arend’s Foods in Deshler. He will be on coming soon to Deshler to do a promotion at Arend’s Food.
- Good variety of quick shop items at Papa D’s Pizzeria. Also walked by barbeque grills at Countryside Cooperative.
- Minimal/basic goods available at store. A nice variety of businesses- bank, general store, health club, service station, elevator...



**What kind of customer service did you receive when you entered the retail businesses?**

- No one appeared curious, but friendly when approached.
- Very willing to answer questions and would find someone who could answer inquiries if they did not know.

- Good customer service at retail stores. They were helpful and gave information that was needed. Very friendly.

**Were there any governmental or nonprofit organizational activities that might serve as a magnet for the shopping district?**

- None I could see.
- **None that I noticed.**
- **didn't notice**
- Community center, post office, park – did not notice any events.

**Were there the following public amenities?**

**Pay phones (working with phonebook intact!):**

- N/A
- **None that I noticed.**
- **did not see any**

**Drinking fountains:**

- N/A
- **None that I noticed.**
- **Didn't notice any – saw some pop machines**
- **Yes - park**



**Benches:**

- Yes
- **There was a bench in front of the General Store**
- **In park and in front of Papa D's Pizzeria**
- **Yes - park**

**Public restrooms:**



- In the park.
- **I didn't see any—but the Community Building was not open so perhaps there are some there.**
- **didn't see any obvious restrooms**
- **yes - park**

**Appealing landscaping:**

- Yes
- **Enjoyed seeing trees, also park was inviting, lake east of town has possibilities for recreation for all ages.**

**Did you have any difficulty finding parking? Could you access multiple services from where you parked?**

- No problem with parking, everything within easy walking distance.

- Parking was easy and you could walk from the General Store to the bank and post office easily.
- Plenty of parking spaces in downtown area.
- No difficulty in finding parking. Yes – multiple services

## 6. Other Retail Shopping Areas (Big Box Retailers/Shopping Malls)

What types of businesses did you notice that would fit the general category of “Big Box Retailer”?

- NONE
- None

General Appearance of buildings, displays signage:

- good care. Buildings looked nice and had appropriate signage

The variety of shopping:

- a couple of used car lots and a variety of items in the Pizzeria, a tire store, and a Coop
- general store, possible gas station



How would you rate the variety and quality of the merchandise?

- Good
- Adequate – but limited

What kind of customer service did you receive when you entered the retail businesses?

- Very friendly and willing to answer questions.
- Very good, friendly service. They gave good information.

Did you have any difficulty finding parking? Could you access multiple services from where you parked?

- Plenty of parking.
- No difficulty in parking. Multiple services were easy to reach.

## 7. Industrial Parks/Commercial Areas

Is there a defined area where manufacturing industries could easily locate and/or expand?



- Not in city limits – surrounding area is rural or acreages for home development.
- Not that we noticed.
- Unknown. If there is no zoning in the place for residential, commercial or industrial – that

should be a priority for the future expansion of community.

## What did you find attractive about the potential locations for manufacturing and/or commercial businesses?

- A few buildings available for cottage type industries.
- Community has potential for continued growth – building core population for greater downtown business and job growth needs for manufacturing.



locations

## How would you evaluate the general health of manufacturing businesses that are currently located in the community?

- The co-op and tire company seem to be the backbone of employment for the area.
- Both the elevator and the tire store have done well with multiple

## Could you find print information and information and informed persons that could provide you with data that would help you make an informed business location decision?

- Another member of the group visited the bank – there was no local realtor.
- Bank offered phone number for city board member. No written information available.

## 8. Health Care Services

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

- None in Firth
- I did not see a clinic. There was a fire hall and possibly they have emergency medical services
- Must go to Adams or into Lincoln for services.
- No clinic in town. Emergency services available through volunteers.

### Comment on the availability and condition of facilities for physician, dental, optometrist, and other medical care:

- None in Firth
- Not available in Firth, Must go to Lincoln, Beatrice or other area towns.
- None available



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

- Very nice nursing home
- We drove around Oakview Rest Home and found it to be very well cared from outside appearance and well arranged with nicely

kept grounds. Next to the home is some newer housing-- Gracemount Apartments—which are duplexes.

- Lakeview Rest Home looked spacious from outside and good view of lake to the south.
- Nursing home

## 9. Housing

**In general, is the housing stock appearance clean, repaired, painted?**

- Yes
- The houses were extremely well cared for and in good repair—either painted or with newer siding.



- You could tell residents take a lot of pride in their homes and gardens. When I commented to one of the people in town about the tidy appearance of the homes in town, she stated “We have to or they (did not say who they are) get after us.” I only observed one home that really looked like it needed attention from the outside.
- Yes, yes, yes

**How would you evaluate the existing mix of housing stock? (Individual homes, multi-family housing, etc.?)**

- Nice mix of older homes along with the new. Attractive duplexes near nursing home and apartments across the street south.
- I noticed several individual homes but no other multi-family homes except for Gracemount Apartments.
- I did see Gracemount Apartments. The building seemed to blend well with the rest of the area.
- Very good



**Is there historic and interesting housing? (Architectural and design details preserved, enhanced or covered up?)**

- Many nicely preserved older homes.
- In the short time we had to observe we saw one older home that had new siding but the owners kept the look original with a broad porch and detailing on the door. It would have been interesting to be able to walk around the neighborhoods.
- Not really

**Were there any indications that the housing market was depressed?**

- Several for sale signs but I would consider that an opportunity for population growth.
- I saw only a few “For Sale” signs—more on the acreages than I saw in town, so I would say the market was not depressed.

- No

**Were there any signs that it would be difficult to find acceptable housing?**

- No.
- “For Sale” signs were on different types of housing.
- There were some houses for sale.
- No

**Does the local housing market have housing that would appeal to all income ranges? Are there sufficient rental properties for persons interested in building or simply living in the community prior to buying housing?**

- As there was no local realtor I don’t know price ranges or rental opportunities.
- It appeared that there were several houses available for all income ranges. I saw no signs for “rentals”.
- Looked like a lot of condo. Did not see a real estate officer to ask questions.
- Yes, -- ??? to second question

## 10. Schools

**Do the schools appear to be adequate in size or do you see the use of “temporary class rooms”? Are they well maintained? Please comment on the following:**

- Excellent school nearby with beautiful facilities.
- The Norris School is a dream school—a fine example for any community. It is a large campus with three separate buildings—very adequate in size at this time.
- Wow” came to mind when you see Norris Public School District’s campus. To have 3 levels of school buildings have to be a dream comes true for the communities. A big surprise is the landscaping. I knew that the district won the Wrigley Gum Grant to help plant trees after their tornado, but the greenhouse and the rest of the landscaping were a nice surprise. Also what a bonus to have a lunch room, library and gym in each building.



- Great school campus – “first class” setup. Walking or running path

**Pre-School/Kindergarten/Head Start/Day Care facilities:**

- No pre-school or head start that we could determine. The Kindergarten is part of public school system.
- The Norris School is a dream school—a fine example for any community. It is a large campus with three separate buildings—very adequate in size at this time.

- Nice looking building. Did not go inside.
- Kindergarten available at public school. No head start or preschool

### Elementary School:



- See below.
- Kindergarten through fourth
- Very nice facilities. Staff – very friendly and accommodating. They answered questions about the school.

### Middle School/Junior High:

- The Norris Public School is absolutely top of the line. Well planned and thought out. I enjoyed touring the school, visiting with staff and observing some bright and happy students during their lunch period. The pride shown by staff in their school is obvious and well-deserved.



- We visited the middle School (Grades 5-8) at lunch time and observed the sixth graders. The food looked great (Chili Soup & Cinnamon rolls). The students ate in a high ceiling, glass enclosed lunch room. The principal met with us and showed great pride in his faculty. The building is built like a hub and spokes of a wheel—each spoke has a different grade. There are nearly 500 students in this building. We also visited the High School. When we entered we met a Police Officer. The school has a program where he is available to students and teaches some classes—He was very personable. The High School is grades 9-12. The building included a huge gym and a theater type auditorium. What impressed on the outside was the greenhouse, the track that circled around the buildings and the soccer fields.
- Visited building and very impressed with atmosphere of school lunch room and all of the positive signs hanging on the walls. Great Security – we were immediately met by school personal and our questions were answered while staff found the principal for the 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Impressed that the principal was not sitting behind his desk, but was out where the students were and taking an active role in the lunch break.
- Nice to see sheriff there providing education and support for students

### Higher Education (Community College, Technical College, University):

- Lincoln and Beatrice are within 25 miles and have a large variety of continuing education opportunities.
- No higher ed

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

- Yes. (found in school)
- I went to the internet and Norris School District has a really nice web site. Did not find information around town about the school.
- No

## 11. Faith/Religion

**Comment on the number of denominations represented in the community:**

- I saw two churches but thought I heard a comment there was a third. If so I did not see that one.



- The two churches I saw were the Firth Reformed Church and the Evangelical Free Church.
- Noticed 2 churches. Buildings as we drove by looked inviting.
- E-free, Dutch Reform

**Comment on the physical appearance of the churches in the community:**

- Very attractive and welcoming.
- The two churches I saw were the Firth Reformed Church and the Evangelical Free Church.
- Nice and inviting
- Nice – taken care of...looked like nice facilities.



**Are there any signs of church-sponsored community services?**

- One flyer in the café.
- I didn't notice any
- There was a colorful sign on the corner by the Evangelical Free Church inviting people to come to Awana on Wednesday, at 7:00 p.m.
- Did not see any advertised community services

**Are there any facilities or statements that some would view as intrusive or that would make someone feel uncomfortable if they were not of a particular faith?**

- Not that I saw or heard.
- I didn't see any
- No offensive facilities or statements were noticed

## 12. Civic

**Does it appear as though there are a variety of nonprofit organizations and clubs within the community?**

- Nice community center that I imagine would be the hub of such activities. It was closed.
- We looked at bulletin boards in The General Store and the Post Office and didn't see any.
- There is a community building but did not go inside to check out what group meet there.
- Wasn't aware of any of these organizations. Did not see any signage of Chamber or Lions etc.

### 13. Residents

#### In what ways did you find (or not find) people helpful?



- The people in the café and convenience store were helpful answering questions. There were no other people walking about town so no opportunity to interact with them.
- We were pleased that the owner of the pasta sauce company took off time to show us his business—he was most friendly and enthusiastic about his community. We visited with a lady that worked at the bank outside the bank on the street and she too showed pride in her community. At the Countryside Coop, I purchased some gum and we struck up a conversation with the clerk. She told us about the Coop employing around 200 people & that surrounding communities were a part of it. She also told us about the community celebration of “Firth Days” and then said she and her father organized the annual Auto Show event. She also had very good things to say about the school.
- People at the Papa D's Pizzeria, Countryside Cooperative and Auto Gallery were very willing to tell about what there is to do in Firth. If they did not know the answer to a question, they found someone in their businesses that could.
- People answered questions about community and were friendly and helpful



#### How did people talk about their community? What were their attitudes about their schools, public leaders, and community services?

- Those with long term connections had community pride. They seemed hopeful that more of the newer residents of the area would come to share that pride and connection.
- As I noted in the questions above the attitudes were very good—I did not ask any questions about public leaders. We did discuss the recycling center and how much it is used.
- People were generally positive about the community. Quite a few people I talked to lived in Lincoln and worked in Firth.

- Very positive about the schools. Comments about some disconnect of people on acreages with people living in town.

**Were community members knowledgeable about their community or able to refer you to people who were?**

- Generally, yes.
- The ones we talked to were very knowledgeable about their community.
- Yes
- Yes

**Did residents reflect the diversity that is represented in the rest of the country? Are there some segments of the population that would not feel comfortable in this community?**

- I didn't observe ethnic diversity in the community or the school.
- I think the feeling I got was the friendliness of a small town & peaceful residential area. Anyone looking for an exciting life style or fancy eating places or shopping would be very disappointed
- I didn't notice. After we ran into someone that lived in our area and knew most of the group and he made the comment "what are you doing in Firth Ne". I felt that we were the ones that stood out.
- Not much diversity. Outsiders of another nationality may feel uncomfortable.

## 14. Public Infrastructure

**Streets, street signing and lighting:**



- Most streets were okay. Noted one new stop sign by the convenience store and was told three more would be in place on that corner soon. Probably good because of the truck traffic, etc.
- I found the streets to be in good repair and I wasn't driving so paid little attention to street signs. Since it was day time I neglected to look at the lighting.
- I felt that main street -- by NE Tires could be a safety issue. When walking by, there was a semi backed in and blocking most of main street. This was a fairly busy street and cars had to go around the truck. I felt I was dodging the traffic and a large water filled mud hole to get by the area. I feel if trucks block this street very often this could be a real safety issue, especially when the children are out of school.
- Appropriate signs and lighting

### Land Use Planning:



- Some sidewalks

### Sidewalks:

- OK
- The sidewalks were smooth and newer where we went.
- could use some across the street from NE Tires

### Public Restrooms:

- OK
- I didn't see any.
- didn't see any
- in park



### Recycling Center:

- This was excellent – I was very impressed with the location, new cement and facilities.
- This was most impressive. We found a flyer in the post office telling of the location and services available, so we went to the alley and found it and took several pictures. It is centrally located on concrete and extremely well marked.
- Best recycling center I have ever seen.
- Yes, downtown. That's great to have
- 

### Village/Town Hall:



- Not open. Nice flag pole but no flag flying.
- The Community Center is a very attractive building—it was not open when we visited.
- nice building did not have the opportunity to go inside.
- Is it the community center?

### Police/Fire Protection/Emergency Medical Services Facilities:

- I heard that the volunteer fire fighters were very dedicated. I was impressed with the county sheriff's office participation at the school – not as a “guard” but one of the staff and working with the kids.
- No to police; yes for fire protection; no to medical service facilities

### Public Parking:

- Plenty
- There appeared to be plenty of parking on the main street, but by the Coop there was very little.
- Yes, nice amount

### Library:

- None I could see
- I didn't see any.
- No

### Environmental respectful community: (Tree retention, natural landscape features, water features, etc. taken advantage of. Are these features included into a retention policy and/or conservation efforts?)



- Nice trees and plantings throughout town. The watershed area to the south (side of the highway) is a jewel – if available to the public and for events like our “Kid’s Fishing Contest” during Deshler Daze.
- Lots of trees and the lake east of town is a watershed project. If this lake is available to the public this could be developed into a great recreation area for the town.
- Yes, nice pond on east edge of town. Should take advantage of that. Nice landscaping around homes.

### Bike and walking paths (also usable by children and elderly?)

- At school. Nice walking path at school – however not here in town.

### Pay phones, drinking fountains, benches, and other misc.:

- Did not notice pay phone – benches were in the park and in front of café.
- Did not see pay phone. Fountain and benches in park.

## 15. Recreation/Tourism

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

- Firth Days and an annual car show (nice comments on those)
- From the information we found out the two events are Firth Days and the Auto Show. I don't know of any slogan.
- Car Show in August sponsored by the Auto Gallery. Firth Days in July or August.
- None

### Comment on the availability and selection of overnight accommodations:

- None in the community that I noticed.
- There are no overnight accommodations available—Most visitors probably will go to Lincoln since it is so close.
- Must go into Lincoln or Beatrice. Also one business person thought there is a bed and breakfast in Hickman
- None

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

- The Car Show.
- None

**Are there any significant natural features that have the potential of drawing people to the community?**

- Beautiful Nebraska countryside!

**Are there any significant man-made attractions?**

- The Prairie Land Dairy east of Firth. This also is an organic farm.
- Pond on east edge of town



**Is there an obvious visitor's center, chamber of commerce office, Main Street office, or other facility that serves the needs of visitors? Please comment on the staff, facilities, signage, visibility, etc.**

- The city office wasn't open – no specific center noted.
- There is the community center but it isn't open on a regular basis
- Papa D's Pizzeria - if your nose does not tell you where to go there are signs that indicate where the restaurant is.
- None

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

- The café was nice with good food. The proprietor took us to his spaghetti sauce site which was interesting and I would come back again.
- Defiantly the Lasagna from Papa D's Pizzeria.
- Just general store – pizza place. \*\* Need a reason to come and visit.

## 16. Using your Senses

**What did the community taste like? Was there any specialty food item, bakery, restaurant, or candy store that you will remember?**

- A sweet and unusual spaghetti sauce – very good. I know because I took a jar home.
- It tasted like pasta—the little restaurant was our first stop—and the visit to the D-Angelos
- Italian - will go back for more pasta sauce
- Pizza place smelled good

**What did the community smell like?**

- Clean country air.

- I think it smelled like fresh air.
- Pasta Sauce – made you hungry as soon as you got out of the car.
- Quaint, fresh, inviting

#### What sounds did you hear?

- Congenial chatting in the café.
- It was very quiet while we were there. There was some noise from trucks at the elevator—but we remarked that we didn't hear any trains while we visited.
- Ran into two people that attended the same High School during the same time period that I did. It's always nice to see a friendly face.
- Quiet

#### Did you have any experiences that impacted the way the community feels?

- Pleasant and ordinary. I intend this as a compliment when thinking of so many problems prevalent in our society today.
- No trains came through. Businesses felt friendly.

## 16. Wrap-up

#### What are the 5 most positive things that you observed about the community?

- 1-Clean and neat. 2-Nice people. 3-Cottage industry. 4-Sense of survival. 5-Location\*
- 1. Neatness of homes, churches, yards and park 2. The thriving Coop business 3. The excellent Norris School 4. The Recycling Center 5. The small Pasta Sauce business
- Norris School District, lake east of town, Mick D-Angelo's Pasta Sauce, Nursing Home, and Park
- Very clean; well manicured; friendly; GREAT school; look like somewhere I would like to live!!

#### What are the five biggest obstacles/challenges facing this community?

- 1-\*Location – often referred to as “bedroom community” can be a blessing or curse. Blessing if you can get them to become part of community and curse if they shop and socialize only where they work. 2-Retention of services. 3-City government 4-Funding (as it is for all of us) 5-Be open to change
- I think the biggest obstacle is involving and uniting the people living on nearby acreages with the people living in the community. I believe that they need to make sure that there is a community business or gathering place (like the café in the Country Store) that will be available for socializing on a daily basis. I am also concerned whether they will be able to attract new business or manufacturing to the community.
- Safety issue on main street, Lincoln and Beatrice being so close is a mixed blessing for the town, I think this defiantly impacts the businesses in Firth, 2. Gathering place for residents to just hang out and enjoy each others company.

- Zoning; business growth; connecting rural acreages with the community – and making them feel a part of the community.

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

- How very peaceful and quiet it was.
- I'll remember the friendliness of the faculty at Norris School. I will also remember our tour of the pasta sauce company. I will remember the quiet, clean community—and not think of it as a sign I drive by.
- Mick d-Angelo's Pasta Sauce and the school.
- Very nice looking community. Tires need to be hid behind tall fence.

**Describe ONE idea that you will borrow for use in your own business/community and describe how you will start to implement it within the next 72 hours!**

- The excellent recycling center – I will contact our refuse company to see if they can provide such a service.
- Push for cleaner properties, with more landscaping to make our community more inviting.

**You might want to consider tracking purchases (perhaps even finding a sponsor to provide \$50 to each participant). It would be useful to report where any money was spent within the community.**

- Only spent money for lunch