

# RUSSELLVILLE

## ARKANSAS



1870 Russellville Public School District was formed.

## FIRST IMPRESSIONS

A program for Community Improvement

## Russellville Community Report

UNCOMMON  COMMUNITIES

*making our own future*

A WINTHROP ROCKEFELLER INSTITUTE PROGRAM







## VISITATION TEAM PARTICIPANTS

**Dr. Linda Birkner**

University of Arkansas Community College  
at Morrilton

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Morrilton Volunteer

**Barry McKuin**

Conway County Economic Development  
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Mayor, City of Morrilton

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Dirty Farmers/Greater Good Café

**Allen Nelson**

Woodmen Life

**Paul Casey**

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Natural State Investigations

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ESS Transportation

**Jacob Sheatsley**

Heifer International

Other members present were:

Steve Mallett, Community Tour Guide

Tabatha Duvall, Community Tour Guide

Mayor Randy Horton, City of Russellville

Venita Berry, Winthrop Rockefeller Institute

Dr. Mark Peterson, UAEX

Dr. Roby Robertson, UALR

## INTRODUCTION

The First Impressions program is designed to help a community learn about existing strengths and weaknesses as seen through the eyes of first-time visitors.

The assessment is modeled after the Connecticut First Impressions program developed by Laura Brown of the University of Connecticut Extension and Susan Westa of the Connecticut Main Street Center. These programs are adaptations of the original University of Wisconsin-Extension First Impressions Program developed by Andrew Lewis and James Schneider in 1991 as a structured assessment program that enables communities to learn about the first impressions they convey to outsiders.

On March 9, 2018, community leaders from Conway, Perry, Pope, Van Buren and Yell counties participated in a First Impression Tour of the city of Russellville as part of the Year III component of the Uncommon Communities program.



Uncommon Communities is a community and economic development program that marries the wisdom and methodology of celebrated community development expert Dr. Vaughn Grisham, professor emeritus of sociology and founding director of the McLean Institute for Community Development at the University of Mississippi, with the award-winning Breakthrough Solutions partnership, under the direction of Dr. Mark Peterson of the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service.

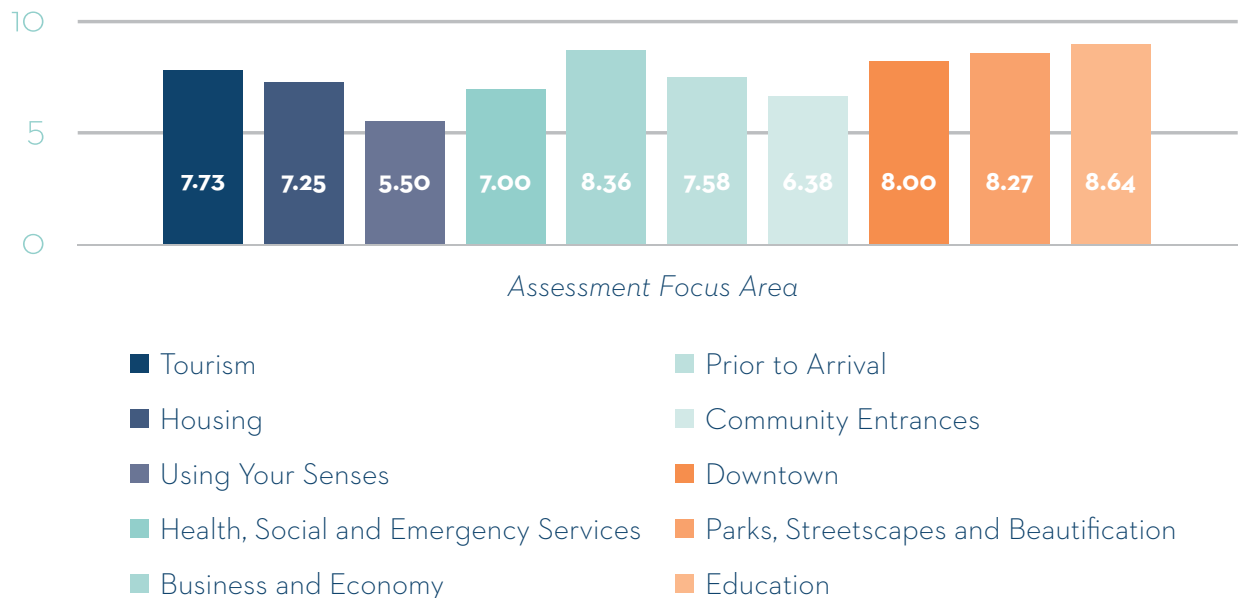
This comprehensive program produces a group of community leaders who are equipped to assess, plan, visualize and mobilize citizenry to work together in the areas of economic development, education and workforce development, and quality of life and place—the critical elements of thriving communities—with an aim to help them become vibrant and sustainable in the 21st century global knowledge economy.

Following the tour, participants outside the city of Russellville participated in a facilitated discussion led by Winthrop Rockefeller Institute staff to gather their thoughts, feelings and perceptions regarding both positive assets and opportunities for improvement in Russellville. Information contained in this report is a compilation of observations by these participants.

In addition to offering these observations, participants were asked to evaluate various aspects of the community using the following scale:

- 9 - 10 = What I experienced far exceeded my expectations.
- 7 - 8 = What I experienced was better than my expectations.
- 5 - 6 = What I experienced met (but did not exceed) my expectations.
- 3 - 4 = What I experienced did not meet my expectations.
- 1 - 2 = What I experienced was far worse than my expectations.

## RUSSELLVILLE AREA FIRST IMPRESSIONS RATING



The graph above shows the average score for each aspect observed. The lowest average score was for the “Using Your Senses” section, where participants’ experiences met but did not exceed their expectations. “Education” was scored highest at 8.64, reflecting experiences that were significantly more positive than participants expected.

Overall, participants’ first impressions of Russellville were positive. Participants were particularly impressed with the cleanliness of the community, the idyllic setting of Arkansas Tech University and the vibrancy of its downtown. They also noted Arkansas Tech University’s growth and the development along North El Paso Ave. to connect the college with the downtown.

While some participants mentioned an unpleasant smell from the rendering plant located north of the city on Highway 7, most focused on the enthusiasm of the city and college leadership and the wide variety of small businesses across the city. One said, “I wouldn’t mind living here if I had a young family; Russellville is a bustling city with a variety of entertainment and job possibilities and educational opportunities.”

This report is a compilation of observations and verbatim comments from each of the participants. It is not meant to offer recommendations for specific action; rather its goal is to inform a community action plan.

### PRIOR TO ARRIVAL

The past perceptions of the Russellville community were encouraging. Most of the participants were generally expecting a busy college town with a “variety of shops and restaurants.” Most of the participants were familiar with the Russellville area and cited mostly positive perceptions.

**When asked what their impressions of the community were in advance of the visit and what they expected to see, some participants answered:**

*“I expected to see a city on the move!”*

*“I expect to see a college town, interstate stopover, a city with a lake.”*

*“I am biased due to graduating from Arkansas Tech, so when I visit, it’s like home and I’m 17 again!”*



*“Gut reaction is that it would be a nice, welcoming place to visit.”*

*“A vibrant city with a great link of town to college, strong industry but in old economy.”*

**Participants were also asked to share their sense of the community based on online research ONLY. What were their gut reactions? Would they want to visit? Did the community seem welcoming?**

They reported that finding information about Russellville was easy. The city’s website is the first to appear in the results of a search for “Russellville, Arkansas,” followed by the Wikipedia entry about the city, the Russellville Area Chamber of Commerce website and the Russellville section of the Arkansas Parks and Tourism website. The top websites’ links were up-to-date with current photos.

Conducting a search for lodging through Booking.com and Expedia provided a listing of eight lodging establishments with an average price of \$116/night and an average rating of 3.0 stars. However, using national search platforms such as TripAdvisor and Yelp to find local businesses, restaurants and activities was less fruitful. As one participant noted, “TripAdvisor listed only eight things to do; however, I suspect there are more that are not listed.”

Participants’ social media research revealed some controversial statements regarding downtown parking and political races as well as insensitive comments regarding international students at Arkansas Tech University. One participant stated, “...such comments were surprising to see about a community, in my opinion, that is progressive.”

Also, many of the community’s tourism websites, including the Chamber of Commerce and Arkansas River Valley Tri-Peaks Tourism Association’s social media channels provided different information about the same events and attractions. Tourism information, said one participant, was “hit and miss – definitely in silos.” Participants recommended the city and regional organizations conduct more cross-promotion online and that the chamber ask businesses that have websites to cross-promote their websites and local events to help market the entire area to interested visitors.

<p><b>EXPECTATIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>College town</li> <li>Very busy bustling city</li> <li>Interstate stopover</li> <li>Natural resources with a vibrant downtown</li> <li>Lots of big-box stores</li> <li>Small conservative-looking town in the breadbasket of America</li> </ul>	<p><b>WHAT YOU SAW</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A big, small town with all of the amenities to keep young families happy, working and busy</li> <li>Far exceeded expectations with a great industrial park</li> <li>A city on the move</li> <li>Attractive</li> <li>A town with college students</li> </ul>
<p><b>POSITIVES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multiple transportation options (river, rail, air and highway)</li> <li>Arkansas Tech University</li> <li>Cleanliness with attention to details and planning for the future - lots of irons in the fire</li> <li>Vibrant downtown</li> <li>Lake Dardanelle</li> <li>Industrial park</li> <li>New construction</li> <li>Housing</li> <li>Small businesses</li> </ul>	<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Little Dam Bridge Concept</li> <li>Casino</li> <li>Convention Center</li> <li>Tourism marketing</li> <li>Old train cars near downtown</li> <li>Improved traffic flow</li> <li>Tourism</li> <li>El Paso Avenue</li> <li>Outdoor opportunities</li> <li>Nightlife</li> <li>Synergy between town and gown</li> <li>More local businesses</li> </ul>
<p><b>CHALLENGES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nuclear One in 2035</li> <li>Keeping college kids in Russellville on weekends</li> <li>Traditional reputation of a divided county; older community vs. younger community</li> <li>Industry dominated by “old economy”</li> <li>Too many train tracks</li> <li>Parking</li> <li>Rendering plant</li> <li>Keeping people motivated to keep moving forward</li> </ul>	



## COMMUNITY ENTRANCES

Regarding the two major entrances to Russellville on Highway 7 and Highway 64, comments were mixed with an average rating of 6.38. Participants' experiences met but did not exceed their expectations. Positive comments mentioned the cleanliness of the community's major entrance near the interstate and the appearance of well-maintained sidewalks. Most of the negative comments were related to the lack of "Welcome to Russellville" or to difficulty finding or reading existing signage. Participants suggested providing wayfinding signage downtown as well as sprucing up greenspaces along major interchanges.

**Approach the community from two major entrances. Grade and comment on each entrance. While there may be an obvious main entrance, there are typically multiple ways to enter a community.**

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<p style="text-align: center;"><i>"Clean, attractive signage."</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>"Signage and greenspaces are well-maintained and very clean."</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>"Approaching from the interstate on Highway 7 looks great. Pottsville and Dover entrances look fine."</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>"No noticeable "Welcome to Russellville" signs."</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>"No directional signs downtown."</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>"Industrial sign was not attractive and greenspaces need to be cleaned up."</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>"From interstate - clean but from other entrances, the city looks sketchy."</i></p>



## DOWNTOWN

The majority of the tour was spent in the downtown area, where participants walked from Depot Park to the Old Bank Building on West Main Street/Highway 64. The average rating for Downtown was an 8.00, in which participants’ experiences were better than their expectations.

The majority of participants’ comments were positive regarding the historic buildings, the amphitheater and the vibrancy of the area as participants noted “downtown will bring me back to Russellville.” Participants were also impressed with the number of improvements to downtown and the enthusiasm about downtown among residents and city leaders. The new fire station downtown was also highlighted in the majority of the participants’ positive responses.

Several participants commented on the picture alley area downtown and recommended expanding this idea by improving the alleys downtown. Other recommendations included adding wayfinding signage downtown, activating empty lots by making them into pocket parks, and creating parking spaces for larger vehicles to alleviate parking issues along West Main Street.

**Comment on the overall appearance of the buildings, displays, signage and streetscape. Is the downtown walkable and accessible? Comment on the quality, availability or necessity for parking in the downtown. Does the downtown play a role in tourism? Is there potential for it to play a greater role?**

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<p><i>“Love the downtown area. Love being able to walk the main downtown area along with the streets being clean and a safe feel.”</i></p> <p><i>“Attractive and clean.”</i></p> <p><i>“Nice art and culture.”</i></p> <p><i>“Fast improvements downtown.”</i></p> <p><i>“Historic District regulations.”</i></p>	<p><i>“Some places looked rough. I wish there was a better way than painting to make old brick buildings look nice.”</i></p> <p><i>“Parking Issues.”</i></p> <p><i>“Vacant buildings.”</i></p> <p><i>“Still need some work.”</i></p>



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<p><i>“Solid improvement and enthusiasm in downtown Russellville, congratulations.”</i></p> <p><i>“So much better - no real ‘bad areas’ - but too many bad buildings.”</i></p> <p><i>“Wow!”</i></p> <p><i>“Picture Alley.”</i></p> <p><i>“Vibrant downtown.”</i></p> <p><i>“Depot area.”</i></p> <p><i>“Growing.”</i></p> <p><i>“It looks like it’s a very busy place and well maintained for the businesses that are open.”</i></p> <p><i>“Great use of incorporating the art community.”</i></p> <p><i>“Train Depot and Old Bank building rehab is nicely done.”</i></p> <p><i>“Seemed welcoming - probably due to number of businesses and level of activity around town.”</i></p> <p><i>“Developing downtown areas has come back to life!”</i></p>	



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<p><i>“Encouraged about downtown amenities growth, especially from young millennials.”</i></p> <p><i>“Downtown statues.”</i></p> <p><i>“Catherine, from Catherine Cakes came out to see what our group was - she was very welcoming.”</i></p>	

## **TOURISM**

Russellville has some wonderful assets including Lake Dardanelle, the Depot, historic buildings and close proximity to fishing, hiking and biking, as well as a downtown summer outdoor concert series and festivals. The city has also done a good job of capitalizing on Lake Dardanelle State Park as a major tourist attraction, as the majority of participants were aware of the bass fishing tournaments and amenities at the park.

On the other hand, some participants commented that information about the city’s tourist amenities wasn’t as readily as available as it could be. Participants recommended the city and maybe the region work together to create a comprehensive brand and marketing campaign that is shared among all of the organizations that have a stake in Russellville’s tourism industry.

Russellville may be a long way from becoming a tourist destination, but these are assets that can be further developed into making Russellville a statewide draw for tourists alike. Overall, participants rated Tourism in Russellville 7.73 in which participants’ experience was better than expected.



**Does the community appear to have a strong tourism sector? Why or why not? What have you seen that could be developed into a tourist attraction (natural or man-made)? Comment on the quality and appearance of existing tourist attractions.**

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<p><i>“Lake Dardanelle State Park.”</i></p> <p><i>“Bass tournament infrastructure.”</i></p> <p><i>“Vast amount of lodging available.”</i></p> <p><i>“Close proximity to Petit Jean Mountain, Mt. Nebo and Old Post Park.”</i></p> <p><i>“Russellville always has entertainment/events.”</i></p> <p><i>“Good park system.”</i></p> <p><i>“Lots of outdoor recreational opportunities.”</i></p> <p><i>“First-rate tourism marketing.”</i></p> <p><i>“Disc golf courses.”</i></p> <p><i>“Great restaurant options.”</i></p>	<p><i>“With the college, should have more bike lanes.”</i></p> <p><i>“Not much marketing.”</i></p> <p><i>“Lacks cohesiveness.”</i></p> <p><i>“Great lake, river and mountains but not enough clear linkages - every brochure should be at every tourism site - too many tourist silos - but improving.”</i></p>



**HOUSING**

Comments regarding Russellville’s existing housing stock were overwhelmingly positive, reflecting a diverse mix of housing options including mixed-use development downtown. The average rating for Housing was 7.25. Participants recommended the city encourage more housing options for seniors and provide incentives for absentee landowners to rehab vacant property.

**Describe the residential housing mix in the community (apartment, townhouses, single-family, multi-family, etc.).**

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<p><i>“Homes located on Hilltop Drive off Skyline Drive overlooking Lake Dardanelle were very attractive.”</i></p> <p><i>“Lots of housing options for any price range from what we observed.”</i></p> <p><i>“Strong upper-middle class homes - not sure about apartments.”</i></p> <p><i>“Neighborhoods seemed to be well-maintained.”</i></p>	<p><i>“Did not hear mention about senior housing. Do you have assisted living or special housing for seniors?”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“Some vacant lots need attention.”</i></p>



## BUSINESS AND ECONOMY

Russellville has two visible industrial parks with several big-box retailers and shopping malls with ample signage. There seems to be room for expansion of small industries in the industrial park located near the interstate. While the Chamber of Commerce website lists current businesses, some participants recommended that the chamber also list available sites in the area for business development.

Participants were also concerned with Russellville’s current strong manufacturing base in the “old economy” and Arkansas Nuclear One. Participants suggested Russellville develop a plan to determine how it might prosper in a knowledge-based global economy. Overall, Business and Economy received an average rating of 8.36.

**Is there a well-maintained industrial park? Why or why not? Would this community be an attractive location for small businesses/entrepreneurs? Why or why not?**

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<p><i>“Plenty of open places for folks to work and also looks like there is a large variety of businesses.”</i></p> <p><i>“Work at Arkansas Tech University Small Business and Technology Development Center seems to be promising.”</i></p> <p><i>“Has a well-maintained industrial park.”</i></p> <p><i>“Lots of small businesses.”</i></p> <p><i>“Russellville is united to move forward in industry.”</i></p> <p><i>“Outstanding.”</i></p> <p><i>“Significant industrial base.”</i></p>	<p><i>“Could possibly have more family-oriented businesses.”</i></p> <p><i>“Strong on industry although dependence on ‘old economy’ jobs - small business economy really improving - connection of high-tech education and schools with Arkansas Tech ‘developing’.”</i></p> <p><i>“Airport dissuades potential business owners from putting in warehouses.”</i></p>



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<p><i>“Strong industrial park with many active business.”</i></p> <p><i>“Nice industrial park with airport and room to grow.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“Saw a wide variety of businesses.”</i></p> <p><i>“Huge industrial park that was very well kept.”</i></p>	

## EDUCATION

Education was the highest-scored aspect with an average rating of 8.64. Participants were impressed with Arkansas Tech University’s campus and Russellville High School’s facilities including its performing arts center. One participant said, “Russellville offers several educational opportunities including preschool, public and private schools with a great connection to the college.”

### **Comment on the availability and quality of schools (pre-school/kindergarten/Headstart, primary/elementary/middle schools, high schools, colleges/universities).**

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<p style="text-align: center;"><i>“Arkansas Tech University.”</i></p> <p><i>“ATU is a tremendous asset, high school looks nice and VoTech is a great program.”</i></p> <p><i>“Good looking campuses with a very impressive performing arts center at the high school.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“New school businesses.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“Very nice addition at high school.”</i></p> <p><i>“Arkansas Tech new facilities looked promising.”</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>“Online classes.”</i></p> <p><i>“New theater building at high school doesn’t get used as much as community had hoped.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“Does ATU draw international staff/faculty?”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“No trade school visible.”</i></p>



**HEALTH, SOCIAL AND EMERGENCY SERVICES**

The fire station downtown received rave reviews, and participants observed that there were ample health care clinics and services surrounding the hospital. One said, “With St. Mary’s being a Level 3 Trauma Center, it is good and easily accessible to the region and to major centers and health facilities in Little Rock.” A few participants recommended the city expand its brand as a “healthy community.” The availability of healthcare facilities seemed to be adequate for a community the size of Russellville. The average rating for Health, Social and Emergency Services was 7.00.

**Comment on the availability of health care facilities (hospitals, physicians, dentists, optometrists, or other medical offices and clinics, long-term care or assisted living, and other health services such as chiropractic, mental health, yoga, massage); community gardens, the availability of civic organizations and fitness centers; emergency shelters and services.**

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<p style="text-align: center;"><i>“New fire station downtown.”</i></p> <p><i>“We saw lots of doctor’s offices and a hospital.”</i></p> <p><i>“River Valley has great medical services - fitness centers, yoga.”</i></p> <p><i>“Worked to create temporary warming centers.”</i></p> <p><i>“Fire station looked impressive.”</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>“911 issues.”</i></p> <p><i>“Not a lot of emphasis on health and fitness but with a city this large I’m sure you have them but they weren’t highlighted.”</i></p> <p><i>“From living and being born here, I know Russellville has struggled with the reputation of St. Mary’s and finding a good doctor in the River Valley.”</i></p>



## PARKS, STREETSCAPES AND BEAUTIFICATION

Participants were impressed with the city’s park system, which encompasses more than 700 acres of parkland with ample public access.

The city’s signage—including signage at the state park and downtown banners—was in good condition and made participants feel welcomed.

While the city park had several public amenities available with drinking fountains, public restrooms and park benches, the downtown area lacked such amenities. Participants encouraged putting these amenities in place to encourage visitors to stay and linger downtown. Participants also recommended the city provide more opportunities for kids to engage in outdoor activities. Participants’ average rating of Parks, Streetscapes and Beautifications was 8.27.

**Do areas of the community appear to be developing or declining? Comment on how effectively the community appears to be managing this. Does the community have historic buildings or places? Are they well maintained? What recreational activities or facilities seemed to be missing? Does the community appear welcoming to a diverse range of residents? Why or why not?**

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<p><i>“Love, love, love the many parks! State park is amazing and we’ll come back!”</i></p> <p><i>“Disc golf and mountain bike trail.”</i></p> <p><i>“Old Post Park.”</i></p> <p><i>“Great group of volunteers that have worked to upkeep the Old Post Park.”</i></p> <p><i>“Banners, concert area and historic areas in downtown are well-maintained.”</i></p> <p><i>“Landscaping was good.”</i></p>	<p><i>“You should utilize the stage at the state park with spring and summer concerts by utilizing A&amp;P funds.”</i></p> <p><i>“Parking lots need repairing.”</i></p> <p><i>“Need more activities for K-12 students.”</i></p> <p><i>“Corp of engineers’ lack of upkeep at Old Post Park.”</i></p> <p><i>“Didn’t see any water features.”</i></p>



**USING YOUR SENSES**

Participants toured the community on a sunny, warm day between 1:15 p.m. and 2:15 p.m. The average rating for Using Your Senses was 5.50, lowest among the 10 aspects participants rated. Negative comments centered on the reputation of several industries for offensive smells, particularly the rendering plant off Highway 7. Participants also commented on the loudness of traffic, but it did not seem to have a negative effect on their overall impression of the community.

**What did the community taste like? Was there any specialty food item, bakery, restaurant or other food store that you will remember? What did the community smell like? Were there any offensive smells? What about pleasant odors (flowers, food, etc.)? What sounds did you hear? Please comment on the level of noise in the community (traffic, industrial noises, birds singing, water fountains, music on the streets, trains, clock chimes). How would you describe the overall environmental health of the community (air quality, litter, noise pollution, etc.)?**

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<p style="text-align: center;"><i>“Good food and refreshments.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“Looked and sounded like a very busy city.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“Traffic was loud but not unpleasant.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“Today was a good smell day!”</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>“Rendering plant.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“Frequent train traffic.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“Nothing stood out as a good smell. Being from the area and close by, I know there are smells at times that aren’t pleasant.”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“Only offensive smell is rendering plant but most of Highway 7 is depressing - lots of marginal businesses.”</i></p>

**Did you experience anything that had strongly negative or positive impact on the way the community felt to you (children playing, hateful or angry responses, crowded or deserted streets and safety issues, smiling faces)? Do you think your impression would be different if your visit occurred during a different time of day or at a different time of year?**

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<p><i>“Overall, this was the best! This is a lot larger place than where I came from but it has all of the amenities to keep young families happy, working and busy. You have a college close that needs things to do.”</i></p> <p><i>“Today was a good day, Friday afternoon – busy traffic – sun shining after a few days of rain.”</i></p> <p><i>“I felt very positive about the town.”</i></p> <p><i>“Everyone is friendly.”</i></p>	<p><i>“Nothing negative but I saw college students on campus but not downtown.”</i></p> <p><i>“You have a college close that needs more things to do, going “wet” would seriously change this.”</i></p>

## REFLECTIONS

**At the end of the tour, participants were asked to reflect and create their own list of positive features about the Russellville community. There were two major themes regarding the community: The town is attractive with lots of opportunities.**

**What local restaurant, specialty shop, or attraction would bring you back to this community in the future?**

*“Wouldn’t mind spending the day shopping and dining. SO much to see but would love a day on the lake.”*

*“Downtown will bring me back for food and restaurants.”*

*“Unique local restaurants and shops downtown.”*

*“A Beautiful Mess”*

*“Stoby’s”*

*“Pasta Grill”*

*“Old Bank Sports Bar and Grill”*

*“T.J. Maxx”*

*“Downtown, parks, lake, home with beautiful views”*

*“Vaqueras”*

*“Have been to state and corps parks before and will be coming back.”*

*“Picwood”*

*“ATU Alumni”*

**Would you consider locating a retail, professional, or nonprofit business here? Why or why not?**

*“Possibly because Russellville certainly has the population to support a small business.”*

*“Yes, shopping area has a huge regional draw.”*

*“Yes, this would be a good location to open a business with the college here. Plus. I have family that lives here.”*

*“Yes, money is being spent in Russellville. If you can provide a service or a need – people will buy.”*



*"Yes, possibly open a nonprofit organization."*

*"Yes, great opportunity from appearances. And, there is money here. Businesses and charity requires money."*

*"Yes, lot of people. Seemed to have good services and lots of activity."*

*"Yes, but only an untapped market, micro-brewery, perhaps. I've intended on this since graduation!!!"*

**Would you consider living here? Why or why not?**

*"Yes, if I was younger."*

*"Not really, I'm more of a country girl."*

*"Probably not, but only because I prefer smaller towns. Very nice for its size. Only detraction is traffic."*

*"Yes, family in the area."*

*"Yes, job opportunities, entertainment, social, and medical."*

*"Too far from the grand kids - but nice town to visit."*

*"Yes, appears to be a very active community."*

*"Yes, Quality of Life."*

*"Yes, and have for college but would only raise a family here if I had a business."*

**WRAP UP**

**What is the most outstanding feature of this community?**

*"Depot and Depot Park"*

*"Lake Dardanelle"*

*"Positive attitude by community leaders"*

*"It's a bustling city. Has room for improvement but really liked what I saw."*

*"Arkansas Tech University - college students will always keep your community young."*

*"The Russellville area has groups working together to get projects completed along with the population to support the projects. At least in the last few years."*

*"Skyline view at Lake Dardanelle"*

*"Good town and gown relationship"*

*"Recreation amenities"*

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

*"It is always "home." Not everyone knows where our little towns are, but they know Russellville."*

*"Shopping"*

*"Lake Dardanelle"*

*"Industrial parks - I've seen lots of them - unlike Russellville, most are empty and un-kept."*

*"Loved all the parks."*

*"The fun contagious atmosphere the leadership is projecting."*

*"Excellent hospitality, food, vibrant downtown"*

*"The lake, the skyline"*

*"The downtown and how good it looks today."*

*"Depot area and downtown"*

**What have you learned that has changed your impression of your own community?**

*"That we aren't doing enough."*

*"We have to work together to move forward no matter our different beliefs/or opinion."*

*"Lake and skyline"*

*"We could borrow some of the things they have downtown to bring people to our town."*

**Has this experience given you any new ideas about what is needed in your own community?**

*"Yes, we need better leadership."*

*"Improve tax base"*

*"Yes, more help pulling groups together to really improve the county."*

*"Keep developing our downtown as a destination."*

*"People equals growing community."*

**Describe one idea that you will borrow for use in your own community and describe how you will implement it.**

*"Picture Alley idea"*

*"Stronger regulations on upkeep of private buildings."*

*"You don't need grants or buildings to start entrepreneurship."*

**Additional Comments:**

*"Be a regional leader for other counties."*

*"Having been here off and on over the years, I haven't bothered looking at the town. Tech has a beautiful campus."*

*"Hope facilitating strip malls and sprawl is not a detriment to downtown. Russellville is a major progressive force uplifting our entire region."*





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