



FIRST IMPRESSIONS

A program for Community Improvement

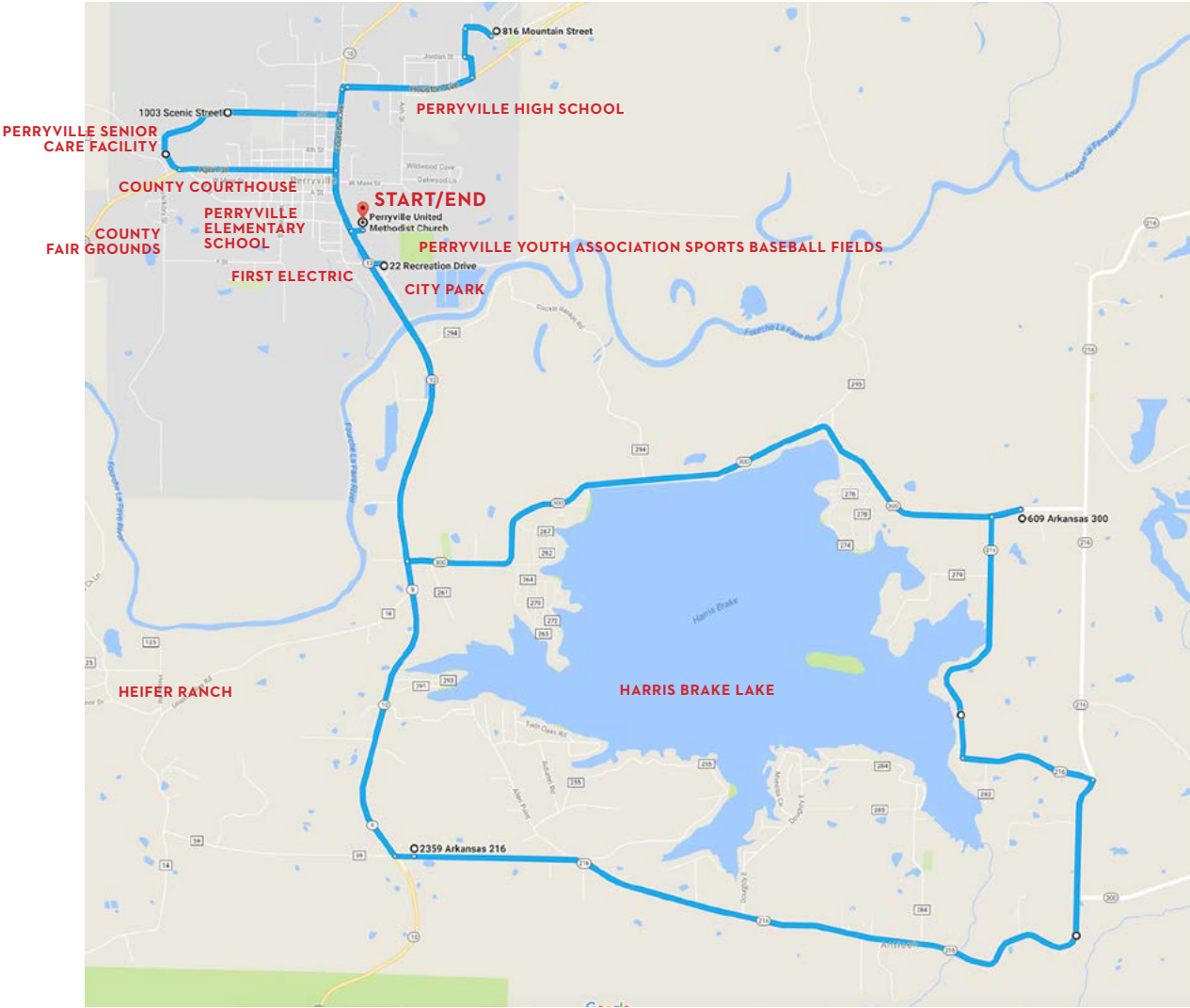
Perryville Community Report

UNCOMMON  COMMUNITIES

making our own future

A WINTHROP ROCKEFELLER INSTITUTE PROGRAM

PERRYVILLE VISIT ROUTE





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Natural State Investigations

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River Town Bank

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Other members present were:

Dr. Mark Peterson

Dr. Roby Robertson

Dr. Vaughn Grisham

Michael Roetzle

Sarah French

Samantha Evans

INTRODUCTION

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

The assessment is modeled after the Connecticut First Impressions program developed by Laura Brown with 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 community assessment program that enables communities to learn about the first impression they convey to outsiders.

On October 27, 2017, 20 community leaders from Conway, Perry, Pope, Van Buren and Yell counties participated in a First Impression Tour of the city of Perryville 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 at 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 Perryville participated in a facilitated discussion led by the Winthrop Rockefeller Institute staff to gather their thoughts, feelings and perceptions of both positive assets and opportunities for improvement in Perryville. Information contained in this report is a compilation of observations by these participants.

In addition to their observations, many questions in the guidebook asked for participants to use the following grade scale to grade various aspects of the community based on what they experienced:

9 - 10 = What I experienced far exceeded my expectations.

7 - 8 = What I experienced was better than my expectations.

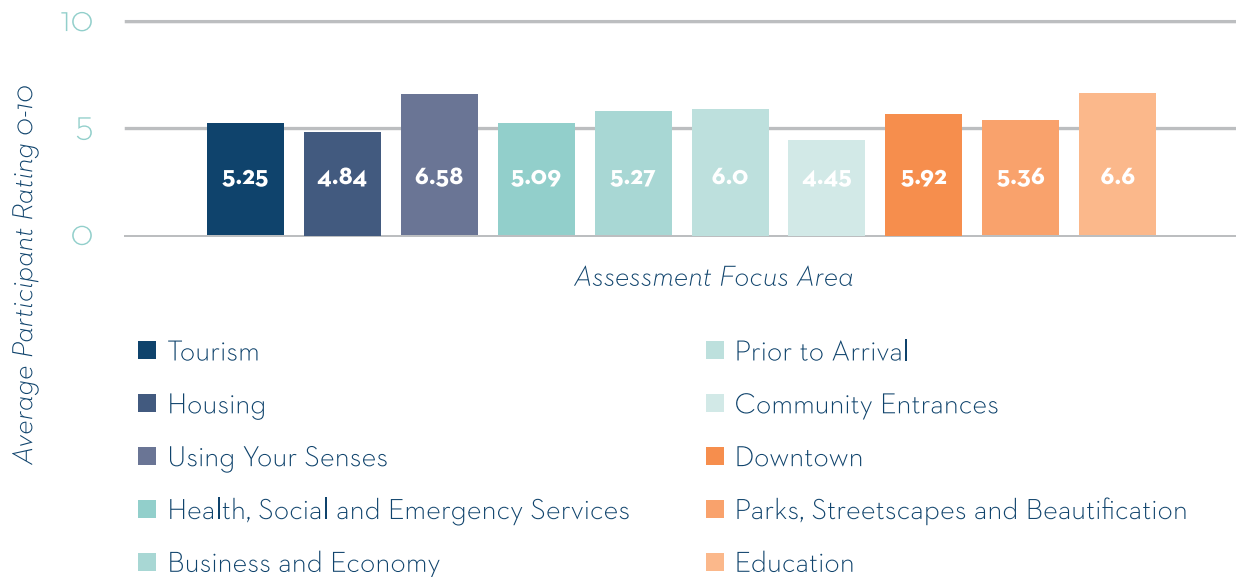
5 - 6 = What I experienced met (but did not exceed) my expectations.

3 - 4 = What I experienced did not meet my expectations.

1 - 2 = What I experienced was far worse than my expectations.



PERRYVILLE AREA FIRST IMPRESSIONS RATING



The graph above provides their average score for each section of the community observed. As noted, community entrances received the lowest average score of 4.45, in which participants' experiences did not meet their expectations; while education received the highest average rating of 6.6, in which participants' experiences were met and likely was better than their expectations.

Overall, the first impression of Perryville was mixed. While some participants were pleasantly surprised about many things they discovered in Perryville, other participants noted the absence of foot traffic and acknowledged the weather as a factor in their impression. Some participants were pleasantly surprised by the very nice historic downtown area near the courthouse but noted the un-kept and vacant buildings as one enters downtown. Other participants noted the well-kept commercial areas on Highway 10 and emergency services near the high school on Highway 60. Participants encouraged Perryville to continue to build on its assets such as Heifer Ranch, Harris Brake and the City Park. These areas were mentioned as the city's most outstanding features and cited as opportunities to grow the county's tourism sector. As one participant noted, "There are a lot of proactive people looking to make good changes, that's great for such a small population."

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, but rather the goal is to inform a community action plan.

PRIOR TO ARRIVAL

The past perceptions of the Perryville community were mixed. Most of the participants were familiar with the Perryville area either by participating in a local event, such as the Goat Festival, or had driven through the community on their way to somewhere else and cited both negative and positive perceptions.

What is your impression of the community before your upcoming visit? What are you expecting to see?

"Perry County is striving to make improvements since Uncommon Communities. The city park is a good family/asset. Several of my "teacher" friends have told me the Perryville library is excellent as it partners with the Little Rock Library System."



"My first impression based on internet search and attendance at goat festival was that Perryville was just another small Ozark Mountain River Town barely surviving. Town was full of nice folk. But like other small towns facing severe problems to barriers of growth."

"A city of necessities - provides all basic necessities for living, country life, I lived here as a child - not much has changed except Dollar General, Family Dollar and Sonic."

"I have only ever driven through Perryville while traveling to other locations. I have stopped at the grocery store and Sonic since this is the only community that really has places to stop when on Highway 9."

"It was a very small town and not a lot of shopping and restaurants or hotels, but the natural resources surrounding it are beautiful. Would love to hike in Ouachita National Forest and explore. It looks like it would be a welcoming town from the photos on Facebook. It seems community-oriented."

Identify the sense of the community you have from the online research ONLY. What is your gut reaction? Would you want to visit there with family or friends? Does the community seem to welcome you or others to visit or live there? Why or why not? Consider your income, age, interests, hobbies, family, health/disabilities, race and ethnicity in your response.

In conducting a web search, the first item to appear under a "Perryville, Arkansas" search was a link to Wikipedia followed by MapQuest. While the information provided by these sites were good information, participants suggested adding more information to these public websites to include "Things to do" and "History." The MapQuest website layers do not include local retail but only shopping establishments in Little Rock.

Trip Advisor is another national website in which many tourists and potential residents search before arriving in a community. Participants suggested to update this website also with local restaurants, lodging and retail shops. As one participant stated, "Trip Advisor did not do the city justice. No Mexican restaurant listed. Wikipedia was very helpful but did not present the quality of this town enough. Trip Advisor refers to Little Rock hotels; things to do shows Heifer Ranch, but not photos. Arkansas website for Perryville has a photo of Heifer Ranch but only list things to do in Little Rock and North Little Rock."

The Perryville Chamber of Commerce website is mobile-friendly and has good information and does a good job of promoting local events; however, it does not appear until page four on a basic Google search. Participants suggest investing in Search Engine Optimization (SEO) to get on the first page or perhaps consolidating several of the local websites into one site.

<p>EXPECTATIONS</p> <p>Rural, few hotels or restaurants People committed to community growth Pass through, few stops, older buildings Friendly Pass through, few stores, but provides basic needs</p>	<p>WHAT YOU SAW</p> <p>Small but thriving, live community, online tie-ins, back streets, fishing and one hour to anything Visible splash pad Flourishing small town Involved community leaders</p>
<p>POSITIVES</p> <p>Sidewalks from rehab to school Impressed by nursing home, clean and modern Downtown historic feel Community garden Airbnb options available Heifer Ranch Mustang Sally's outdoor patio Logo and Branding Camper Resort Harris Brake</p>	<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <p>Need continual development More sidewalks Goat Festival Visible attractive trash cans downtown Clean up area around park and bus barn Extend walking trail between the city park and baseball fields Design a permanent Goat Festival sign Improve public access to river and parks Renovate properties at Harris Brake Capture biking enthusiasts to increase tourism</p>
<p>CHALLENGES</p> <p>Signage Flooding issues near ball fields Small population Geographic development hurdles due to 70 percent of the county is covered in protected forest land and also due to flood plain Refuse located by park Detention center next to library</p>	



COMMUNITY ENTRANCES

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

For the two major entrances on Highway 10 and Highway 60, the majority of the comments revealed the city did not have a distinctive way to mark you had entered the community. Overall, participants rated community entrance as a 4.45, receiving the lowest average rating in which participants' experience did not meet their expectations. Participants suggested building a distinctive welcoming sign highlighting the Goat Festival or other local community brands along Highway 10 to signify entrance and identity of the community.

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<p><i>"Scenic and beautiful"</i></p> <p><i>"Highway 10 is a constant flow of traffic and the city uses this as main platform for entrances."</i></p> <p><i>"Highway 60 - Pleasant"</i></p> <p><i>"Hwy 10: love the park beside road, concrete waterway loved it since I was a kid."</i></p> <p><i>"There might be a little clean up around the entrance to wonderful park. Very nice - both sides"</i></p> <p><i>Coming from the south you see park on right. You are doing a great job developing this area.</i></p>	<p><i>"No welcome signs, didn't notice when I entered"</i></p> <p><i>"No indication that one was entering a city."</i></p> <p><i>"No big welcoming signs showing you have reached the town."</i></p> <p><i>"Just past the park you see large piles of dirt and gravel and a poorly maintained self-storage business. Might want to ask Highway Department to relocate piles and help the business clean-up the area."</i></p> <p><i>"Nothing distinctive or welcoming"</i></p> <p><i>"Didn't see anything that stood out."</i></p>



DOWNTOWN

Observations about the general appearance of the downtown area:

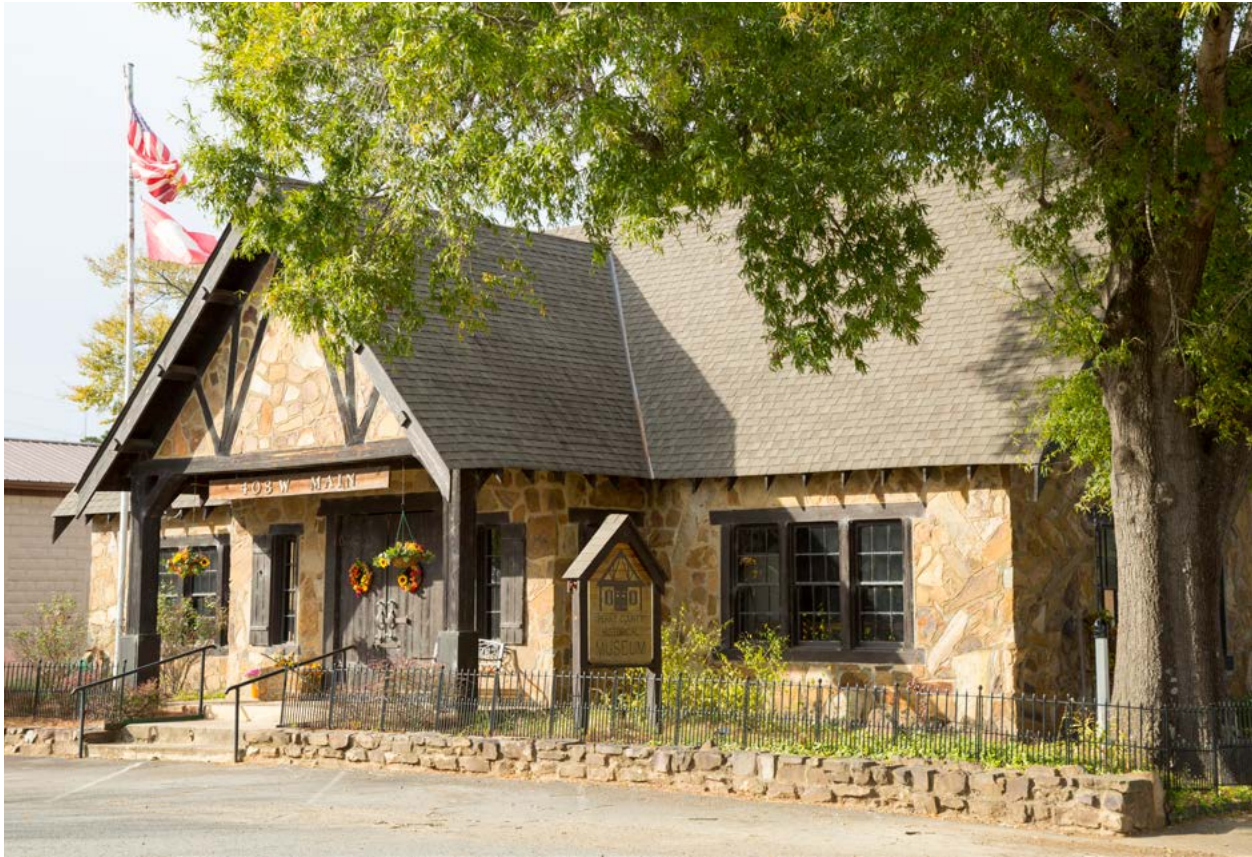
The majority of our time was spent in downtown Perryville with residents being able to get off the bus and walk around to nearby shops and businesses on the courthouse square. Participants' comments were mixed with an average rating of 5.92, in which participants' experiences met but did not exceed their expectations. Positive comments related to the downtown being visually appealing and walkable with the potential to add more shops and expand offerings for both tourists and local residents. Most of the negative comments were in regards to the signage and vacancies. For instance, the signage below is not inviting and seems to suggest that young people are not welcomed in your community. Participants suggest adding a skate park in your community to alleviate such activity in your downtown and updating the sidewalks to make them more accessible.

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>"Good signage on businesses, nice landscaping at courthouse"</i></p> <p><i>"Yes, very walkable. All businesses were in clear view. Yards are improving."</i></p> <p><i>"Loved the old looking buildings - very classic. Advice: keep the old buildings if at all possible. The Courthouse lawn was excellent! Love the tree with sit down over picnic tables."</i></p>	<p><i>"Needs some updating, play up the nostalgia"</i></p> <p><i>"Vacant buildings, lots of "junk" and gas stations. The CBD seems not inviting"</i></p> <p><i>"No sense of common connection or downtown theme. Can see the beautiful museum cause tree trimmed. Consider trimming courthouse trees real high to reveal the full building (trees are everywhere - there's only one county courthouse. Sidewalks could use upgrade. Need trash cans downtown"</i></p>



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<p><i>"The downtown was a lot more visually appealing and fun than I was expecting. I loved the outdoor patio of the restaurant on the square."</i></p> <p><i>"Cute little shop, nice sidewalk around the courthouse. Need continuous sidewalk. Turquoise Turtle employee/owner very friendly. Mustang Sally's very appealing on the outside."</i></p> <p><i>"Great outdoor seating at Mustang Sally's! Perfect square for events and having the museum downtown is an asset."</i></p> <p><i>"So much improvement here. I enjoyed small shops. Love the courtyard at Mustang Sally's. Good walkability, potential to add more shops, expand offerings."</i></p> <p><i>"Clean. Uncluttered"</i></p> <p><i>"Looks like there has been some growth. Restaurant with patio is nice."</i></p>	<p><i>"Parking is very limited to access stores."</i></p> <p><i>"The signage was fairly absent, or didn't notice it"</i></p> <p><i>"Many vacant buildings that could be wonderful small businesses"</i></p> <p><i>"Needs more color, fresh paint."</i></p> <p><i>"Sand blaster and paint will do a lot of good."</i></p>



TOURISM

The city of Perryville has a lot of opportunities in the tourism sector with several amenities and appealing landscapes that have the potential to attract tourists both near and far. Many of our participants were familiar with the Goat Festival that has attracted more than 4,000 people to the area in the last two years and also with Heifer Ranch that brings 20,000 visitors each year to the area; but were unfamiliar with Harris Brake, Coffee Creek that provides lodging, the Fourche River that has boat access and the Splash Pad in the City Park. Participants recommended building on these local assets and cross-promoting local events to have tourists expand their stay from a few hours to a full weekend.

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>"Heifer Ranch is very unique with 20,000 visitors each year. Develop a bike trail ride around Harris Brake."</i></p> <p><i>"Heifer Ranch - Looks very good - know that work has been done"</i></p> <p><i>"Good parks"</i></p>	<p><i>"Most tourism seems to be located near river on edge of town. Did not sense cohesive attempts for city and county to develop and capitalize on river bank. No municipal boat launch or marina activity noted."</i></p> <p><i>"Harris Brake could use some lake renovations"</i></p> <p><i>"I didn't notice many hotels or places to stay in town other than by the lake."</i></p>

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<p><i>"People come just for free views and you have dozens of places to enhance and publicize for 'Kodak Moments' Viewscapes could be easy to do: Approach from south to Fourche would be bottom cropped (trees) and clean underbrush to show river and park. Do a river walk trail. Clear both sides up and down river of underbrush and low limbs. Canoeing? Kayaking?"</i></p> <p><i>"Flat land perfect for cycling, encourage tent camping"</i></p> <p><i>"Heifer Ranch adds so much in this aspect. Harris Brake Lake adds water recreation sports, boat ramp looked well built."</i></p> <p><i>"The lake with rental properties is great for bringing in tourists."</i></p> <p><i>"Goat Festival seems amazing, but will need to figure out how to accommodate bigger crowds."</i></p> <p><i>"Develop the 11 mile loop around Harris Brake for cyclists/possibly a bike ride/route in conjunction with the goat festival."</i></p> <p><i>"Always enjoy seeing Heifer Ranch, need to play up this role. Harris Brake is lovely but neighborhoods need clean-up, ball fields are well used."</i></p> <p><i>"Active restaurants and ball fields"</i></p> <p><i>"I have studied this city/county for an extensive amount of time - It needs marketing!!! I had no idea what all the town offered till I visited today, I always just pass through. However, I will now come visit the stores and eat in restaurants. Market this town!!!"</i></p> <p><i>"Goat Festival awesome"</i></p>	<p><i>"Did not notice accommodations for big groups."</i></p> <p><i>"Heifer Ranch signed need cleaning and paint"</i></p> <p><i>"Clean-up at Harris Brake (neighborhoods and housing)"</i></p> <p><i>"Don't seem to take advantage of Heifer Ranch in town, no cross-promotion."</i></p> <p><i>"Might want to create a walking trail from ball park to city park."</i></p> <p><i>"Didn't see much info online for places to stay"</i></p> <p><i>"Seems like there could be more focus on developing opportunities for outdoor recreation, camp sites, and river access - just a gravel patch off the beaten path."</i></p>

HOUSING

The housing stock in Perryville seemed to be dominated by single-family housing and scattered throughout the community. We must note the tour did not include viewing housing south of the high school; although a few participants did view the neighborhood near the school on their own and stated, "Unfortunate that we weren't shown neighborhood south of high school. I happened on to it and went back and it totally changed my image of Perryville." The average rating for housing was 4.84. Participants recommended adding a new housing development and include multi-family housing; perhaps in the downtown buildings that are currently vacant, and to continue yard-of-the-month program.



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

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<p><i>"City as a whole appears clean, not scary as many small rural towns do. Clean equates to pride which visitors sense as trustworthy, honest and friendly."</i></p> <p><i>"From very nice to needs TLC. Most are well-kept. Nice apartment complex and VERY nice nursing home."</i></p> <p><i>"Mixture of homes. Homes by the lake are appealing"</i></p> <p><i>"A few nice neighborhoods exist throughout town. Very random though."</i></p> <p><i>"Perryville has some very nice houses. Loved the nursing home and rehab very homey!"</i></p> <p><i>"Some pretty homes."</i></p> <p><i>"I did see some nice apartments"</i></p> <p><i>"Homes seem to be off the beaten path but there are a lot of them."</i></p>	<p><i>"Mixed - good and bad; interesting, lovely with some needed clean-ups in places."</i></p> <p><i>"Not a lot of modern or new homes. Did not see a lot of apartments or multifamily housing. Some neighborhoods marked with abandoned or neglected homes."</i></p> <p><i>"Some very run down especially by Harris Break"</i></p> <p><i>"Seems to be dominated by single family homes."</i></p> <p><i>"The houses around the lake are declining; the 'neighborhood' seems to be hurting."</i></p> <p><i>"I didn't notice much housing or any neighborhood."</i></p> <p><i>"Most that I saw were run down. Not aesthetically pleasing. I didn't see many apartments. Others at my table said there are two very nice neighborhoods that we didn't get to see."</i></p>



BUSINESS AND ECONOMY

Perryville’s industrial or business areas are unclear and not marked on maps or signage, and it was difficult to determine the area’s major industry. Participants learned on the tour about Deltic Timber and the area being 70 percent covered in forested land, but would not have known about it unless someone told them. Overall, business and economy received an average rating of 5.27. Participants suggested the area might be a great asset to attract small businesses and entrepreneurs rather than large industry due to land prices and location near larger regions.

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>“Park is awesome! I think would be great for new businesses. Perry County/Perryville is a city of necessities – anything a person needs can probably be purchased in Perryville from lumber to gas and food.”</i></p> <p><i>“There is an industrial park or sorts near trash recycling place. Attempts have been made to attract industry.”</i></p> <p><i>“Deltic Timber – potential community involvement”</i></p> <p><i>“It seems to be a town that embraces small businesses but a smaller population would be a challenge for those businesses.”</i></p>	<p><i>“No industrial park”</i></p> <p><i>“Entrepreneurs should be interested because of land prices and relatively close location to Morrilton, Little Rock but not much evidence or interest.”</i></p> <p><i>“Sod farms seem to be declining. Lack of planting.”</i></p> <p><i>“There was a lack of businesses and variety in the community.”</i></p>



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<p><i>“Smart to not be throwing resources at industrial recruitment.”</i></p> <p><i>“Leaders seem open to developing leads with interested industries”</i></p> <p><i>“Great addition of Casey’s”</i></p>	<p><i>“Access might be a challenge in this rural community.”</i></p> <p><i>“High Property Taxes”</i></p> <p><i>“I didn’t see a well-developed industrial park.”</i></p>

EDUCATION

Education rated the highest with an average grade of 6.6. The school facilities from K-12 were well-maintained and looked up-to-date including current construction of adding a cafeteria/auditorium and safe room to the high school. Participants commented on the recent bond issue passed to improve facilities, which signaled to them community buy-in and support for the school system. During the facilitated discussion, participants suggested the city of Perryville create a youth center for after-school and summer programs. The comments were mostly all positive.

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><i>“Their High School counselor and Parent Teacher Association is a huge asset!”</i></p> <p><i>“Nice looking buildings, heard good things about the schools.”</i></p> <p><i>“Nice additions being built”</i></p>	<p><i>“Schools appeared older but well-kept”</i></p> <p><i>“Library is adjacent to the detention center. That seems like bad planning.”</i></p>



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<p><i>"Schools appear to be good. Recent bond issue passed to improve High School campus."</i></p> <p><i>"Preschool and high school look modern and have good location off the busy streets."</i></p> <p><i>"Everything but colleges were available for kids"</i></p> <p><i>"Good school system. Access for higher education 20 minutes away at UACCM and ATU one hour."</i></p> <p><i>"Nice schools facilities, cafetorium (safe room)."</i></p> <p><i>"Impressive that they passed an increase in millage. This shows a progressive attitude!"</i></p> <p><i>"Looks good, clean."</i></p> <p><i>"Library is great"</i></p> <p><i>"Schools are well maintained"</i></p>	



HEALTH, SOCIAL AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

While the city of Perryville did have a Baptist Health Family Clinic and Emergency Management Service available, the city seemed to have limited health care and preventive care services. The average rating for these services received a 5.09. The nursing home in town appeared well maintained and has a good reputation. The nonprofit services available in a community of this size seemed to be adequate.

Comment on the availability of healthcare 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><i>"The Baptist partnership is a plus. Excellent nursing/rehab that we experienced with my 100 year old mother-in-law."</i></p> <p><i>"Noted ambulance company very large nursing/rehab home"</i></p> <p><i>"Baptist Clinic, okay."</i></p> <p><i>"Good for a community this size"</i></p>	<p><i>"No hospital"</i></p> <p><i>"Did not see hospital, did not see sign or indication that health services and providers were available."</i></p> <p><i>"Limited on healthcare services."</i></p> <p><i>"Dental?"</i></p>



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<p><i>"Very nice library"</i></p> <p><i>"Food pantry sounds really good. The nursing home has good reputation."</i></p>	<p><i>"Didn't see a lot of clinics"</i></p> <p><i>"No available preventative care locally"</i></p>

PARKS, STREETSCAPES AND BEAUTIFICATION

Streets near the elementary school looked new and well maintained. The city park and splash pad on Highway 10 received a lot of positive comments. Participants recommended the city work with the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission to determine the feasibility of turning the wildlife management area into a tourist location for bird watchers and nature trail enthusiasts. Another recommendation including creating more curb appeal in downtown area. Participants' average rating for this section was a 5.36.

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>"An asset is their wildlife management area that borders Perryville. Their community garden."</i></p>	<p><i>"Historic buildings not well maintained"</i></p>



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<p><i>“Convenient parking in CBD some “Historic” type building in CBD. Courthouse. Appears to be some efforts to manage decline. Ball Park and Municipal park”</i></p> <p><i>“Awesome Park with splash pad, plenty of room and activities. Would love to see the addition of a disc golf course to promote healthy active living.”</i></p> <p><i>“Developing. Love the historic buildings!”</i></p> <p><i>“New sidewalks by schools were nice”</i></p> <p><i>“The parks were nice”</i></p> <p><i>“Continue working on the city park. Good splash pad”</i></p> <p><i>“City Park very nice. Like the plantings. New sidewalks a great start! Hope will do more.”</i></p> <p><i>“Park is nice and well kept, splash pad is awesome and shows activity and commitment to improvements.”</i></p>	<p><i>“Streets in CBD seemed narrow with lots of encroachment by parking places. Community appeared to be declining. No evidence appeared of events to welcome into community.”</i></p> <p><i>“Need something to do when it is wet or cold!”</i></p> <p><i>“Many of the streets could have better curb appeal.”</i></p> <p><i>“Park looked grown up”</i></p> <p><i>“Courthouse has had some work but needs more”</i></p> <p><i>“Entrance to city park and ball fields was not well kept; Ball Park could use some work, location of parks not ideal; no river access or camping.”</i></p>

USING YOUR SENSES

Participants toured the community on a rainy day between 10:15 am and 11:45 am. Participants' average rating for senses was 6.58. Several participants commented on the great air quality. The city did not have any offensive odors nor noise pollution.

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><i>"No complimentary or offensive smells. Very quiet CBD - seems like sleepy little town. Few folks walking around or in businesses. Air quality very good. Very little noise or litter - clean downtown."</i></p> <p><i>"Tasted very old fashioned, down home cooking. Smelled pleasant, no factories."</i></p> <p><i>"No smell, low noise - just traffic, good air quality."</i></p> <p><i>"Nothing really stood out positive or negative in this community. It was very quiet with no smells."</i></p> <p><i>"Air quality was fine, nice crisp air, no noticed litter, No noise pollution. Didn't smell any of the food being prepared downtown. It was pretty quit but it seemed more like because it was empty."</i></p> <p><i>"Enjoyed walking downtown. This area was cute. Quiet area with nice gift shop. I really enjoy eating at Mustang Sally's. Smelled like the country. Very nice."</i></p> <p><i>"Heard the fountain at courthouse"</i></p> <p><i>"Mustang Sally, Loved the piglets at Heifer, good level of noise, overall - good smell, wooded, calm."</i></p>	<p><i>"It was cold so there wasn't much activity outdoors. Quiet and a little gloomy. No notable sounds. The shop we visited downtown was bright and warm and very welcoming on the inside - seemed out of place on the dark street."</i></p> <p><i>"Things seemed very deserted for a Friday at noon. I loved the feel of the downtown area, but nothing much was happening."</i></p> <p><i>"Things seemed very deserted for a Friday at noon. I loved the feel of the downtown area, but nothing much was happening."</i></p> <p><i>"It seemed deserted and not very welcoming."</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>"Positive impact - just a nice community! Different time of year?"</i></p> <p><i>"Everyone was friendly!"</i></p> <p><i>"Busy time of day, but saw plenty of kids at school, gas stations were full."</i></p> <p><i>"Friendly, smiling faces. Helpful. Judge Davis at the courthouse very friendly and approachable."</i></p> <p><i>Lots of smiling faces!</i></p>	<p><i>"It seemed out of place for Library to be located so close to the Detention Center. Large piles of gravel and dirt near park was negative."</i></p> <p><i>"Pretty bland today. Nothing positive or negative. Today was very disappointing from previous visits to town which were extremely positive. Town needs to try to create a "Festive" Town" persona year round if possible not just for special occasions."</i></p> <p><i>"It seemed deserted and not very welcoming."</i></p> <p><i>"Having the great library next to detention center."</i></p> <p><i>"Didn't see people anywhere except in cars and at gas station but nothing seen that gave me negative vibes, other than occasional junk and trash particularly in the county."</i></p> <p><i>"I think the weather hurt today because it was cold and rainy - not much activity."</i></p>



REFLECTIONS

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

- Mustang Sally's
- Daylight Donuts
- Turquoise Turtle Boutique
- Heifer Ranch
- St. Boniface Church
- Steak house – Mustang Sally's – city park for goat festival
- Resale Shop!
- Goat Festival
- Incredible viewscapes that are friendly and easily accessible.
- I was really impressed with the beautiful patio right on the downtown square. What a fun place to relax after a stressful work day or week!

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

"Certainly would!"

"No, Not interested in living anywhere else."

"No, property taxes are double what they are in Yell County."

"Probably not – location – availability of city services. Modern housing is problematic – proximity to Morrilton would be problem for most small businesses unless some sort of niche businesses could be developed."



"No, very limited opportunity, the market is pretty much taken up."

"No! Seems like a poor city and county overall."

"No, not enough people coming through downtown."

"Maybe a smaller scale of a bigger store. Maybe flea market type."

"Yes, but it would be a challenge because of population base."

"Not me personally, but think Perryville has much to offer an entrepreneur."

"Yes. I think there are gaps in services and plenty of opportunity to fill these gaps."

Would you consider living here? Why or why not?

"Yes, it is so pleasant - and I'm close to large area."

"Not enough retail - too rural."

"Yes, but only if I had the opportunity that placed me here. Either work or owning property."

"No, lifelong resident of Yell. However, after today, I will visit more!"

"I enjoy a little more to do in a town."

"No, I like more restaurants. But I love the rural atmosphere."

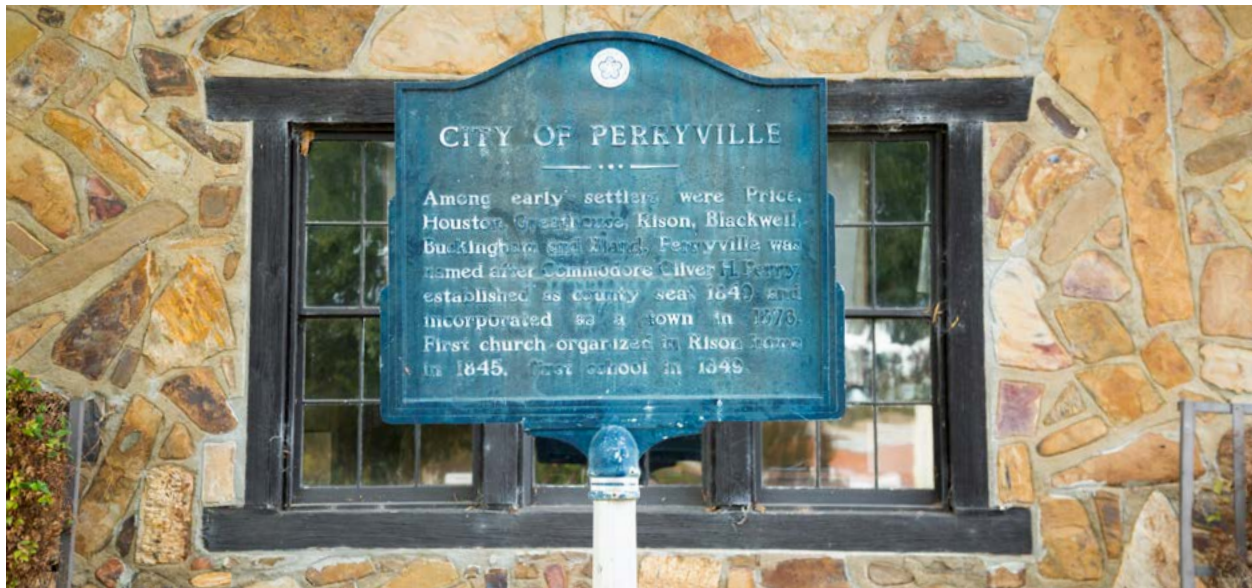
"Not really. Seems like a ghost town."

"Yes, have some family heritage."

"Yes. Lovely place that has made great improvement."

"Yes, but not likely. If younger and working in Conway or Little Rock, yes, definitely would."

"No. Not looking to relocate. Too secluded."



WRAP UP

What is the most outstanding feature of this community?

- Heifer Ranch - you need to use it to encourage tourism
- Historical St. Boniface Church
- Small town, rural
- City Park
- The town square was really fun. I liked the restaurant and shop
- Lake beautiful
- Downtown
- The people. There are a lot of proactive people looking to make good changes that's great for such a small population.

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

- The Perryville Methodist Church's Connection Center
- Turquoise Turtle Boutique,
- Mustang Sally's,
- Downtown appearance - positive, positive
- Harris Brake
- Heifer Ranch
- Goat Festival (brilliant)! Would be even bigger if it wasn't held week before State Fair
- Positive leadership
- Empty downtown
- Beautiful courtyard and old courthouse, natural resources, improvement downtown
- Probably producing above your pay grade - getting a lot out of human assets you have.

- The lake community. That's a huge asset that I wasn't aware of. I also like how they are embracing their rural culture.

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

- Look for positives, Our people!, Build on what "grows" (our strengths)
- How much is going on and how people are working together. New enthusiasm
- We need to do better
- I see some of the same problems we have but have addressed in the past several years. Pleases me that our community is taking steps to correct problems and turning challenges into opportunity to grow and prosper.
- It helps point out the same negatives, lack of modernization, etc.
- As a team and vision we can accomplish much to create a positive impact on our community and county
- First Impressions are everything!
- We could do a better job of embracing our culture rather than trying to "build a brand." We could go with what we've got.

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

- Yes, "idea" fair
- Workforce education
- Yes
- Not exactly, I know a lot of our faults again, this could be Danville's sister city.
- We need great entrances
- Working through the First Impressions actually made me look at our digital presence and downtown. We need to improve them.
- Underscored our weakness in not connecting visitors/tourists to downtown.
- Splash pad. Use events to promote things that are unique to our community.

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

- Build on our strengths, festival type raised on "Petit Jean Meats" cute name
- People working together - leadership/community development classes
- Would love to steal kid and city friendly park that Perryville has - will add to our loss community projects for renters.
- Splash Pad - work with community to get it done. Hopefully by 2018.
- The goat festival sounds great!
- Reach outside normal events for ideas to set your community apart (Goat Festival).
- Embracing our story and promoting how we are unique.

**Additional Comments:**

Learn everything that you can about how the Central Arkansas Library System can help you with free research - They have great resources much of which are available remotely. Signage: Two really stood out - Heifer and Methodist Church - Do lots more. Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AGFC) should be approached to develop a partnership allowing Perryville/Perry County to do maintenance and upgrading of AGFC properties/assets. Very impressed with realization have/should focus events on kids precisely because of dry county issue. Entrances say a lot, much of which is subtle or unconscious: make entrances to the ball park reflect the pride you actually have - it's pitiful right now.



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