First Impressions:
A Visit to Ashland, WI
Friday, May 2
Team Orientation

Site Visit Orientation:
First Impressions:
A program for Community Assessment & Improvement
Participants:

John Doe

Andy Taylor

XXX

YYY

ZZZ

VVV
Final Plans

Who is driving?

When are we leaving & returning (3 hour drive time)?

Where will we meet (Do you have phone numbers)?

How will we handle incidental expenses?

Who can bring a digital camera (The more the better)?
Things to Remember...

Look for things to implement in your own community

Take notes...don’t wait until after the visit (The site coordinator will be collecting your completed guide with notes at the end of the day)!

Take discrete photos

Be discrete with your note taking (don’t display your guide booklet)

Role play
Site Visit
Orientation:
First
Impressions:
A program for
Community
Assessment
&
Improvement

Role Playing...
Let’s Get Our Stories Straight…

- If you are just passing through town, where are you from and where are you going?

- If you are playing the role of a business person, what kind of a business do you run and where are you from?

- If you are a retiree, what is it you used to do, and where are you from?

- Do you have a youth member on the team? Who’s son or daughter is this?
Questions to ask...

- I’m on my way to a conference and have not been here before. What is there to do for recreation?

- Are there any good restaurants in this town? Where would be a good place for lunch?

- I might bring my family here on our way to a wedding next month. Are there any good places to stay?

- I am considering moving to this area. Are the schools good here? Where is the best place to look for housing?

- Where can I get information on commercial/retail space to buy or lease in this community?

- Other Questions: List additional suggested questions, and assign to team members
Site Visit Orientation:  
First Impressions: A program for Community Assessment & Improvement

Exchange Team Member’s Guide Booklet

Hand out copies of booklet
Pre-Visit Perceptions

Turn to page 5 of your booklet and record your thoughts…

- What is your perception of Ashland today?
- What are you expecting to see?
- What do you know about this community?

*Quickly go through the other sections in the guide….*
Site Visit
Orientation: First
Impressions: A program for Community Assessment & Improvement

Divide Up Responsibilities...

Mapquest says...

• Hwy 31 from the south
• Hwy 2 from the east
• Hwy 2 from the west
• Hwy 112 from the south
• Hwy 137 from the west
• Bike trails, boat landings, train stations, ATV trails, etc.?

Note: If you have one car, do all of these as a group
Divide Up Responsibilities...

Site Visit Orientation:
First Impressions:
A program for Community Assessment & Improvement

Note: If you have one car, take turns walking and driving. Try to break up the team to visit two restaurants for lunch. For a community of less than 10,000 the entire team should have time to evaluate all of these categories.

Everyone:

- Visiting Team Member Info Sheet
- Prior To Your Visit
- The Five Minute Impression
- Community Entrances
- Housing and Residential Areas
- Education, Health, Social and Emergency Services
- Local Economy
- Government/Public Services
- Recreation, Faith, Culture and Heritage

General Observations
Information from Community Residents
Wrap-up
First Impressions Community Exchange Photo Log
Remember:

• We'll get better information if residents do not know we are there to assess the community.

• Try to discover not only their warts, but also the ways in which they shine!

• Feel free to record additional community strengths and weaknesses not included in this guide.

• Appear to be shopping, conducting business, or making a social visit.
Remember:

• Strike up casual conversations with residents and be interactive.
• Be observant.
• Be sure to circle a ranking score for the questions which request this, but also take the time to include comments. The comments are more useful than the ranking.
• Have a good time!
Remember:

• Try to provide a balanced assessment. Share both constructive criticism and praise when it is appropriate. The community you are visiting is not expecting you to sugar coat your comments or to simply be a critic.
Site Visit
Orientation:
First Impressions:
A program for Community Assessment & Improvement

Using Your Senses
Site Coordinator

- Who will be collecting the completed booklets with notes at the end of the day to compile the final report?
- Who needs to get a copy of the digital photos and by when?
- When does the final report and photos need to be shared with Ashland?
- Who will receive a copy of the final report for Merrill?
Site Visit Orientation: First Impressions: A program for Community Assessment & Improvement

- Who will request information by mail & telephone prior to the visit (Can you use a different community for your address)?
- Who will do a web search of the on-line materials for this community?
1. Welcome and introduction to the First Impressions Program (Who, What, When, Where, and How).

2. Distribution of final report from the exchange community (Make note of the availability of press releases for the media).

3. Review of major points found in the final report. These points should be covered along with images from the community (This list should be formulated with input from the group of volunteers who participated in the exchange. You might want to have this list as a handout).

4. Review of things learned from the exchange community visit (What did you see and learn from your visit to the other community?).

5. Action Planning session. Break up into small groups to begin addressing some of the issues found in the final report.
6. Establish a follow-up meeting date to track progress.

7. Report results from the meeting to the local media and invite additional public participation in the solutions.

8. Consider additional educational programs that might address some of the deficiencies or assets identified as a result of the First Impressions program.
When & Where

- When and where should we hold a “Town Meeting”?
- Who needs to be invited?
- Who from our team might be available to assist with a presentation of our findings to the City of Ashland (Have they agreed to assist with ours?)
- Who from our team could present on what we learned from Ashland?
Insert your contact information here

Contact Information:
Community Development Specialist
Center for Community & Economic Development
University of Wisconsin Extension
610 Langdon St., Room 334
Madison, WI 53703
(608) 263-1432, (608) 263-4999 fax
andy.lewis@uwex.edu
http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cced

For a copy of today’s presentation:
http://www.