



# FIRST IMPRESSIONS

## WOODFORD COUNTY COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT REPORT

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE OF KENTUCKY

 University of  
**Kentucky**  
College of Agriculture,  
Food and Environment



# INTRODUCTION

## PURPOSE

The First Impressions Program is a service offered through the Community and Economic Development Initiative of Kentucky (CEDIK). First Impressions was developed by Andy Lewis, University of Wisconsin Extension Associate Professor, and James Schneider, Grant County (WI) Economic Development Director, and conducted in over 1,000 communities across the US and Canada. Dr. Dan Kahl with CEDIK has adapted the First Impressions Program to meet the need of Kentucky communities. The program coordinates anonymous visits to your community by professionals in community and economic development, small business owners, community leaders and more, depending upon your specific community assessment needs. Visitors document their experience and interactions with community members. Their responses are then compiled and presented back to the community by a CEDIK representative. In addition, the program will offer suggestions and resources to address the areas identified for potential improvement.

For further information about this report or additional questions, please contact:

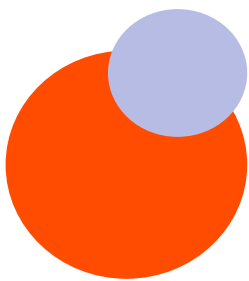
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## CONDITIONS OF VISIT

Visits to Woodford County were conducted by 11 team members throughout the months of June to November. One team reported sunny and clear weather conditions, and another experienced warm and mid-70s temperatures. Visits were conducted on both weekdays and weekends to capture a variety of activity within the community. Overall, conditions were favorable for visiting and exploring the roads, small communities, parks, and businesses within Woodford County.

## TEAM MEMBERS

Adult ages ranged from 20 to 60 years, with a mix of small business owners, young professionals, traveling retirees and community development professionals. Assessors are from both rural and urban areas. Assessments were completed at an individual pace, allowing personal life experiences to shape participants' impressions. While quotations in this report should not be considered true for all individuals of these demographics, they do provide a valuable snapshot of visitors from a variety of ages, life experiences, and interests.



# BACKGROUND

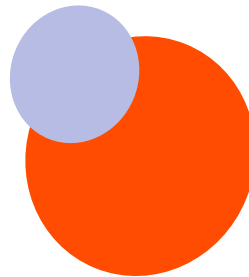
## PROCESS

Team members began by reviewing the Assessors' Guide with the coordinator and clarifying the purpose of their visit and geographic location from which they would enter Woodford County, in order to ensure that major entrances were explored. Assessors also identified past perceptions of Woodford County to establish a baseline of familiarity to ensure they had only a general knowledge of the community prior to visiting.

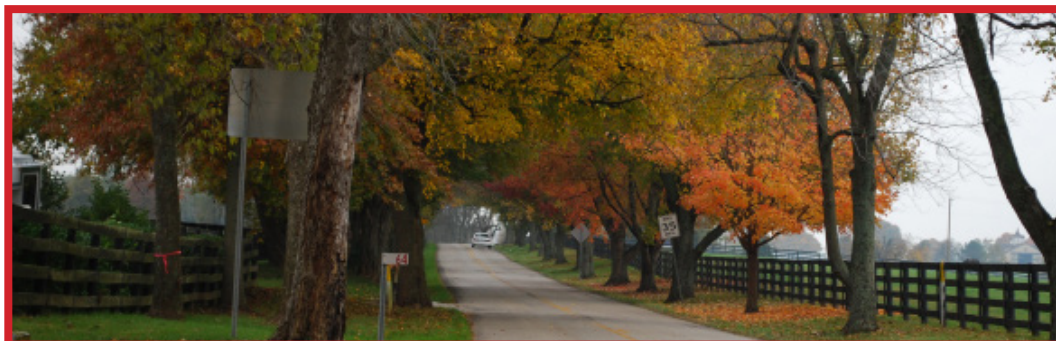
Then, assessors researched the community on the internet: visited official and non-official sites from search engines, restaurant and hotel reviews, and even school and newspaper outlets. After completing this "Pre-Visit" phase, your team began their time in Woodford County by doing a Quick Pass Impression: driving through the community quickly without stopping to create an instinctual impression without focusing too much on detail.

After completing the Quick Pass, Assessors returned to locations that caught their attention and began detailed exploration and documentation of the following:

**EDUCATIONAL**  
**RESIDENTIAL**  
**HEALTHCARE**  
**ARTS & CULTURE**  
**CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**  
**PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE**  
**DOWNTOWNS**  
**RECREATION & TOURISM**  
**RESTAURANTS & LODGING**



After several hours exploring Woodford County, assessors document their Lasting Impressions on assets, challenges and opportunities they envision for the community, and make recommendations for further appeal to visitors that travel to the area.



WE ENTERED FROM PISGAH PIKE WHICH IS BREATHTAKINGLY BEAUTIFUL AND SET THE SCENE FOR THE QUAIN T RAILROAD TOWN.

## COMMUNITY ENTRANCES

The road from Versailles to Midway is a KY Scenic Highway and very beautiful with horse farms, ponds, and stone walls.

There was consistency in the signage throughout Midway and Versailles. I liked how Versailles had horses painted on and Midway had trains. It gave the county a unified feel.

From what I gathered talking to friends of this adventure, they are known as wealthy horse and bourbon people. It is considered a small town of wealth.

The primary entrances off the parkway/highway are not attractive and do not convey the charm of the downtown communities.

We also entered Versailles from Millville, Hwy 1959. This route eventually leads to Main Street. This entrance is ok but not engaging.

From the Bluegrass Parkway heading west, the Welcome to Versailles water tower is beautiful! It really feels like you're arriving somewhere.

I didn't get a good impression of the communities based on entering from HWY 60 both ways. They were pretty bland with fast food lining the road on all sides. There is nothing distinctive about it.

We entered from Pisgah Pike which is breathtakingly beautiful and set the scene for the quaint railroad town. Some of the most famous and attractive horse farms in all of Kentucky are on this entrance. It was gorgeous even on an overcast Fall day.

Coming into Versailles via Hwy 1859 from Midway is much more pleasant. The neighborhoods are much more genteel and look friendly.

Signage for Versailles was scattered in every entrance we used. The official welcome sign was too small for where it was placed. Signs on Main Street for local attractions were clear and helpful.

Getting off the Midway exit, it felt like an easy exit, traffic was not too hectic. As we traveled the short way from the interstate to the town, it was a pretty drive with expansive natural beauty, didn't feel "too developed."

We entered from Old Frankfort Pike which is nice, rural and attractive. The entrance from I-64 is the least attractive of the entrances to Midway but still ok.

The Versailles welcome sign was attractive, well lit, and I liked the horse paintings.

Midway's Historic District designation sign is well marked and easy to see.

## EDUCATIONAL

There is only one high school in Woodford. It is not very attractive, but residents said the programming and teachers are very good. The middle school seems well-kept.

The high school looks like it needs improved. It was a big contrast between the level of care in the community and the appearance of the high school.

Northside Elem school had a really nice playground! It was attractive but I didn't see anything about the status of the school outside or on the sign.

We noticed the adult education facility and safe harbor academy. They seemed to be repurposed buildings. Also saw free ESL classes being offered.

There are four elementary schools in Woodford County. We were quite impressed that the library told us they have a visiting staff person who goes into the schools for programming.

We saw the Woodford County high school in Versailles and the Midway University in Midway. There were a number of signage pointing out these locations. A permanent electronic display on the street displayed the school mascot for the high school along with other school related information. No awards were mentioned.

I found a sign on the school stating their high achievement in education. I did not find print information in the community to determine the quality of schools. This would be helpful for those visiting who might love the area so much they consider moving!

Southside Elementary is an attractive school facility. I would send my children there. The LCD at the High School was informative; good visibility and the grounds seemed well maintained.

Head Start program is located right by the park, in fact, while I was there, they were using the park as their playground.

I saw a Head Start that seemed to be dated and run-down, a middle school that looked new and with very nice facilities, a community college that also seemed newer, and a high school that appeared a bit older and more dated.

I saw Midway University and a couple elementary schools in Midway. There was quite a range of condition. One seemed very nice and inviting. Another one further outside of town seemed very run down.

I never found print information in the community about the schools, though there was some advertisement about Midway University (on streets in Midway).

When we went to the public library, we found a couple of flyers with information on the educational system of the county.

**SOUTHSIDE  
ELEMENTARY IS AN  
ATTRACTIVE SCHOOL  
FACILITY. I WOULD  
SEND MY CHILDREN  
THERE.**

## RESIDENTIAL

I WAS SURPRISED AT THE RANGE OF HOUSING AVAILABLE- FROM STARTER HOMES, TO HISTORIC, TO LARGE AND SPRAWLING FARMS.

Midway homes were beautiful, with a wide street and lots of sidewalks.

The houses were well decorated at Halloween and it seemed to have a strong community spirit.

I observed several single family ranch style homes for rent. Clean and manicured lawns.

Midway had some nice subdivisions with a range of housing, but we did not observe rental properties.

There were lots of ranch style homes heading into downtown Versailles, with a long rock wall that adds character to the community. The older homes were nice and well maintained. There seems to be a lot of pride in the homes in Versailles.

There is a lot of subdivision development from Bluegrass Parkway entrance. Seems like there are houses in a large variety of sizes. I saw some apartment buildings but they were not appealing.

The addition of sidewalks in some neighborhoods would be a good use of funds.

The Midway School apartments were a great repurposing of an old school building. The bakery attached was an asset to residents living there.

Midway has a variety of housing. The big historic houses as you come into town on Pisgah Pike are quite impressive and well cared for. The smaller brick houses in the neighborhood near Midway University are very accessible to lower income folks.

There seemed to be many residential areas with small and medium size houses. There were also some big houses. All houses looked suitable for various income ranges. A quick search on zillow.com showed there were decent looking houses in the area ranging from as cheap as \$80,000 to mansions that go into several millions.

Housing in Versailles is quite mixed. From great mansions to simple small homes in interesting proximity.



I found residential areas more suited for middle income range people. In many residential areas, there were individual houses, front yards and backyards. I saw a 'Sale' by owners boards in front of couple of houses.

In the apartment complexes that we came across, for example, Parkplace (next to Big Springs Park), the apartments seemed to be suitable for middle to high income range people.

I was surprised at the range of housing available, from starter homes, to historic, to large and sprawling.

There seemed to be a wide range of housing available, from original historic mansions to older smaller homes, to lots of new construction and family neighborhoods of varying ages.

I mostly observed housing that I assume would be for upper middle class families in the downtown area. Outside of downtown I observed homes that I felt sure would be for extremely wealthy families. Lots of really nice neighborhoods in both towns. I didn't see much that seemed affordable for lower income families except for a few apartment complexes that did not seem very nice compared to the surrounding area.

We were quite impressed that apartments seem to be available above the storefronts on Main Street in Versailles. I would assume these are rental properties but maybe some are resident owned. And, of course, the affordable house building is rental also.

There were some apartment blocks in the city. These were probably not suited for someone with low income. Apartment buildings, such as those on Spring Run Street, were in well-organized blocks with clean streets and ample parking space.

## HEALTHCARE

There is a hospital, a rehab facility and seem to be plenty of available doctors, chiropractors, etc.

The agility fitness academy seemed like a great place for families to take their children. I noticed a workout anytime facility which is an asset for local residents.

We went to Bluegrass Community Hospital in Versailles. The parking lot was empty and we couldn't find anyone to talk to inside. There didn't seem to be much going on there on a Sunday. There were signs for emergency services though.

Bluegrass community hospital is situated in Versailles. It has several facilities

THERE IS A HOSPITAL,  
A REHAB FACILITY  
AND SEEM TO BE  
PLENTY OF DOCTORS,  
CHIROPRACTORS, ETC.

including 24-Hour Emergency room, lab services and nutritional services. When we entered the hospital, we did not find anyone at the reception. We found many flyers (free to visitors) related to health services provided around county.

The main hospital had signage giving directions. It is located not far from downtown. Reviews on Google are not favorable.

There were not many obvious health services. There was a billboard about hospital ER services in Frankfort, so I assumed that was the closest medical center. Yet later, when searching online, it appeared that there was one right in Versailles that we completely missed.

These communities didn't leave an impression of the level of health care I might expect in prosperous county like Woodford.

There was no hospital or urgent care facility that I observed in Midway or Versailles.

All healthcare providers seem represented in the town.

There are over 8 different dentist offices to choose from, all located within about 10 minutes of each other.

I did see some smaller private practice facilities with nice, prominent, appealing signage. I didn't notice any long term care facilities.

Midway had just a few small medical facilities that were located in what used to be private homes.

There was a walk-in clinic located inside the Versailles Kroger. Facility was clean, colorful and welcoming.

I couldn't see any long-term care services or nursing facilities in the areas we visited. Even in the flyers we picked up at the hospital, we didn't see anything related to these services.

There was one impressive facility just outside of downtown, Daisy Hill, that seemed very clean and modern. Another place directly downtown seemed like it might be senior apartments but it wasn't well marked.



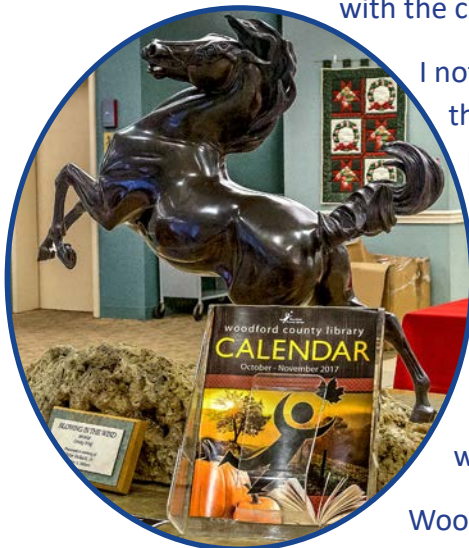
## ARTS & CULTURE

There were several historic churches downtown that would make for great photographs!

We noticed nice signs for the toy and train museum---I imagine it is well traveled for that demographic. It is not our interest so we did not visit but the signage was well marked.

There was a nice public space with garbage can and picnic tables with a large coca cola sign.

I wasn't aware of public art or murals, but Midway seemed like it was thriving with the charm of culture and heritage.



I noticed a memorial for the Woodford County veterans at the Woodford County courthouse. It was attractive and prominently displayed.

Janes School of Dance seemed to be a good opportunity for youth to have a dance venue.

We did not get to go in the Jack Jouett House because it was closed both days that we were in Woodford County. It is an example of heritage that we would like to have seen.

Woodford County as a whole seems to do well with embracing and celebrating their heritage and culture.

The Bluegrass Scenic Railroad Museum is a unique attraction. We enjoyed a short ride with grandchildren. It could be promoted even more than it is.

We read about The Glitz, the Jack Jouett House and Buckley Wildlife Sanctuary. We just didn't have time to see them all. The Glitz and Jack Jouett House were closed on both days we were there.

Midway is a gem of small town arts and culture. The KennyDid Gallery is particularly attractive.

Happy Chandler's grave and story is less prominent than it should be given his state and national prominence as Major League Baseball Commissioner. He was an icon in baseball circles.

The public identity of the county is intimately related to the historic distilleries and to horse farms.

WOODFORD COUNTY AS A WHOLE SEEMS TO DO WELL WITH EMBRACING AND CELEBRATING THEIR HERITAGE AND CULTURE.

"MEET ME IN MIDWAY" IS A WELL CONCEIVED PROGRAM WITH GOOD MATERIALS TO PROMOTE THE COMMUNITY.

**PARKING WAS  
EASY, FREE, AND  
ACCESSIBLE IN BOTH  
TOWNS WE VISITED.**

We did see several things devoted to the historical aspect, and the webpage said that there were several festivals for art-typed activities, but there wasn't a big presence evident of art during our visit.

I saw a couple of signs for upcoming festivals. I think this town has a lot of upcoming events and I didn't see those posted anywhere. I think they should have more signs or announcements for upcoming events.

Midway is known for its art festival and Fall festival.

We found little evidence of public art. There are some nice pieces in the library but not out in the public environment.

We stopped in the paint your own pottery place in downtown. That was very cool.

## **CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

We did not observe any non-profits or civic organizations in either town. There may have been signs of Rotary, Kiwanis, etc but we did not see them. We saw no signs of "Shop Local."

While there were quite a few local stores both in Versailles and Midway, there was no particular campaign to encourage people to shop local. There were a couple of signs advertising a few local products though, such as honey (in Midway) and the produce at farmer's market (in Versailles).

A "Versailles needs" mural on one of the downtown buildings seemed to offer a place for people to add their own thoughts and ideas for improvement.

In Versailles, I observed that there were numerous small businesses downtown but I didn't have a strong impression about whether they seemed successful.

"Meet Me in Midway" is a well-conceived program with good materials to promote the community.

There was a sign for a relay for life team. There didn't seem to be any non-profits advertising need for support or activities.

There were a few public events going on in Versailles (as advertised in the tourism office), but none of them seem to relate to civic activity, leadership, or involvement.

I had a strong impression that Midway has numerous thriving small businesses.

There were a lot of churches and there seemed to be a very strong emphasis on Christian churches. My impression is that the town, as a whole, is fairly religious and conservative.

The civic activity and promotion of library events is a cornerstone for the community.

## PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Some neighborhoods needed some care and attention to sidewalks.

Off the parkway there are brown signs for the Visitors Center, Woodford Reserve, and the Historic District. These are well marked. We also saw signs for Buckley Wildlife, the park and fairgrounds, and the Jack Jouett house.

There's a walking bridge from the high school to a residential area. It could use some sprucing up and TLC.

The town and homes have a very historical feel. Several roads seemed recently paved and wide.

Some of the sidewalks on Lexington Street in Versailles needed repair.

I like the way they transformed a generic suburban "Kroger" area to make it attractive with landscaping, fences, etc. I would have liked more directional signage where to find the public parking and visitor's center downtown Versailles.

Parking was easy, free, and accessible in both towns we visited.

There is plenty of industry nearby to provide employment. I imagine it is easy to find a job here and quite a bit of variety.

The city of Versailles public parking lot was well-marked, easy to find, and useful.

The county vehicles we saw (schoolbus, police, fire truck) all seemed in good condition and fairly new. It seems like the county has support for strong infrastructure.

The Midway branch of the Woodford County Library seemed newly built and a nice park in the back. Good for serving the Midway community.

Midway had public parking signs readily visible. The library was impressive.

The City Hall was being worked on and was surrounded by scaffolding both days we were there. It appeared to be quite functional while work was being done.

I was surprised at how much industry was out on Highway 60. I wouldn't have realized there were so many factories until driving by them.

There was a lot of construction and development near where the Kroger is. The community seems like it is growing really fast.

WALKING AROUND  
IN DOWNTOWN  
VERSAILLES ON A  
SUNNY DAY WAS A  
TREAT!

I FOUND A GREAT ASSORTMENT OF COMMUNITY BROCHURES IN THE RESTAURANTS WE VISITED. THEY ARE DOING WELL AT HIGHLIGHTING IN LOCAL RESTAURANTS AND SHOPS.

## DOWNTOWNS

There were bike lanes heading into downtown Versailles. To me, this was an amenity.

Downtown Versailles seemed pretty busy at noon on a weekday—it seems well trafficked.

I am surprised at how full the storefronts are. There are a few that could be spruced a bit more—but they were still attractive enough.

There were a LOT of lawyer offices downtown. But I did notice community services available too.

The Methodist Church in downtown Versailles is a striking image as you approach from Lexington to Main.

I didn't see a lot of empty store fronts in the community. This makes me think Midway and Versailles are doing well!

Walking around in downtown Versailles on a sunny day was a treat! There were several shops to stop in, open places to eat, and the charm of the area was inviting.

I liked that even the Dollar General on Lexington street looked like it was a repurposed building instead of the metal-type buildings they usually are. It made it look like it was part of the community, not an eyesore.

There were so many cute antique shops in downtown Midway. A lot of variety to spark interest and keep you entertained!

I fell in love with Midway on the first drive through town! The downtown felt like one of the most charming towns I've ever visited. So beautiful and quaint. The areas just beyond downtown also felt quaint and welcoming.

I visited Kennydid and the clerk was very nice...he told us all we should visit and check out while in town and was very accommodating.

Market on Main looks very cute!

Overall, the town of Versailles seemed to be clean and well-kept. Street signs were frequent and easy to read, landscaping was nice, and there was a lot of historic charm especially on the main areas.

On South Main St. and North Main St. there were broad sidewalks, good number of street parking, lamps, and the clean streets. The area looked pretty and was probably the best kept in the city.

## RECREATION & TOURISM

The visitor's center was nice and attractive. There was a lot to see there.

Equus Run Vineyard had a well marked sign pointing toward its road. If it weren't for that sign, we would have been worried we were going the wrong way. It might be helpful to have another sign halfway down the curvy backroad just to reassure first-time visitors they are going the right way.

Signage in Midway is effective but minimal. The historic plaques are informative and attractive.

MacDougals garden center had nice landscaping and seemed to be a great place to stop and get plants.

My first stop was to the Visitor Center. There were brown signs leading the way with free parking and one parking spot specifically reserved for someone going in the Visitor Center or Chamber of Commerce. The woman manning the office was very helpful, giving me plenty of information and pamphlets and helping me plan my day. Although she claimed to be new, she was great.

There is a visitor's center right on the corner as soon as you get into Midway. I was struck by what a cool beautiful brick building it was on right on the corner. I had the impression that it was closed as it was Saturday.

I found a great assortment of community brochures in the restaurants we visited. They are doing well at highlighting in local restaurants and shops.

Wiesenberger Mills is both a business and a tourist attraction. The road to get there was blocked. I saw the mill stones built into the stone walk but could go no further. It's a fascinating photo on foot at the closed road/bridge.

Cultural events were advertised in the tourism office in both Versailles and Midway. There were signs to the historical Woodford Reserve distillery in Versailles and the historic railway station in Midway.

The official logo for the county has a picture of a horse and a barrel. The accompanying slogan is "Uniquely Woodford," which has a nice ring, but doesn't capture anything particular in the county.

Equus Run had good staff, but the front office building (looks like a house?) could be spruced up. The paint was chipped and there were bars on the windows—made us feel like it was an unsecure area and affected the atmosphere of an otherwise beautiful, charming property.

THE COMMUNITY'S  
IDENTITY SEEMS TO  
BE HORSE FARMS,  
BOURBON AND  
WINERIES. THE LOGO  
OF THE HORSE IS  
QUITE ATTRACTIVE.

WE WERE ABLE TO EXPERIENCE BOTH [OUITA MICHEL'S] MIDWAY BAKERY AND WALLACE STATION RESTAURANT. BOTH LIVED UP TO HER STELLAR CULINARY REPUTATION.

Both cities had visitor centers but they were not open on Sundays and Saturdays. Since I went on a Sunday, I did not have access to them. This, I think, is an inconvenience for visitors.

The Offutt-Cole House near Midway adds a fascinating twist to Woodford County history with the connection to Jesse James. Explore how this site might be promoted.

We visited Buckley Wildlife Sanctuary and spent some time hiking. It was very beautiful and pleasant but it was surprising that it felt very deserted on a beautiful fall weekend. It seems the community could really work to draw more people to this area.

There were many events taking place to appeal to visitors! Woodford Reserve tours, winery tours, horse farm tours, shopping and lunch on Railroad Street, multiple programs and exhibits at the library.

It was very difficult to find the visitor's center. We passed them several times downtown without seeing their storefront. We called the number and nobody answered. There were no hours listed online, and once we finally did see their office, they had a "closed" sign in the window. It was disappointing that they weren't open later on a busy Saturday afternoon.

The community's identity seems to be horse farms, bourbon and wineries. The logo of the horse is quite attractive. We did not see evidence of the horse farms being open to tourists.

I did not observe any particular logo for the community but Woodford county, as a whole, has a logo. The Uniquely Woodford logo symbolizes the things Woodford is famous for and sets it apart from other counties.

The palisades and Kentucky River are not far from Versailles, less than 20 minutes. I feel they could do more with this natural area.

We enjoyed our tasting at Equus Run. The entrance with the bridge crossing over the rushing river was beautiful. It would be a great place to stop and take a photo.

There were many flyers in the Versailles tourism office advertising events like horse farm tours, community garden, and some summer festivals. In Midway, there were flyers advertising events like "Sparks in the Park."

Woodford Reserve is exquisitely beautiful in many ways. A horse sculpture greets you at the entrance and even in late Fall the flowers were lovely.

## RESTAURANTS & LODGING

BBQ Wagon Bones looked like a quirky local spot to stop for bbq.

I was surprised by the lack of lodging variety. I saw many bed and breakfasts, but they were all the same style (formal, traditional, stuffy.) As a parent with a family, I didn't see any options that would meet my needs for a weekend.

Ricardos was very busy at lunchtime! I enjoyed my meal. They had a good menu with a large variety.

We stopped by Rabbit Creek Inn and were not greeted very warmly. We asked for some information about the area and were treated like we were imposing on the owners—they abruptly told us they hoped we didn't want to see any rooms because they didn't have one to show us. It made us feel like they didn't want us to stay at any time in the future, either.

Napa Prime had a mobile kitchen—that seems to be an asset for the area. There is a LOT of fast food or quick options for dining.

Our research indicates there are no hotels in Versailles or Midway. There are plenty of hotels close to Versailles in nearby Lexington. There are Bed and Breakfast options in Versailles. Someone told us they were building a new Holiday Inn. That will be great for the community!

We went to a coffee shop in Versailles that was also a gift/florist shop. They had just opened. I thought it was a great addition to downtown.

The Woodford Inn was a nice property with friendly staff. It had a great location and ambiance. It could use a little bit of updating---and could not accommodate family trips or folks who need separate beds.

We ate at Heirloom and loved the atmosphere and meal. It was a relaxing, high quality meal with great cocktails.

We ate at Melissa's Cottage Café after walking around downtown Versailles. It was very busy! It had a true 'local' feel. We ordered salad plates and they were enjoyable quality for the price. We noticed a big range of ages and demographics in the restaurant, so it seems to appeal to a wide variety of customers.

It was a sunny day, so we ate outside at Wallace Station at the picnic table. There were lots of people, families with kids running around and playing. It was a nice,

I WILL DEFINITELY  
REMEMBER  
WOODFORD COUNTY  
AND WILL RETURN TO  
DO THE FULL TOUR OF  
WOODFORD RESERVE.

THERE IS  
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family friendly environment. The food was delicious and families seemed to enjoy being there.

The Subway on 60 is very, very yellow.

We had read about Holly Hill Inn and were excited to go for dinner. It surpassed expectations. The staff were friendly, the food was high-quality and unique, and the atmosphere was absolutely beautiful. We are planning to return for special events!

There are no large hotels in Woodford County or Versailles. There is one Inn with 10 rooms, several bed and breakfasts and a very sketchy campground by the river.

So many accessible, quality restaurants to choose from, and great variety!

Most lodging options were for couples or singles. If I wanted to go on a girls' weekend I would prefer to share a room without sharing a bed.

The pet hotel is good asset. They should advertise this in tourism packets for individuals that travel with pets but want to do the bourbon trail for a day.

The Midway Bakery was very cool. You could tell it had probably been the school cafeteria. There were old pictures telling the story and tables to sit at. The staff was friendly and knowledgeable about the products. I bought several pastries and they were fantastic. I wish I had one in my hometown!

There is a great bakery and good restaurants in Midway. Ouita Michel is a prominent restaurateur and we were able to experience both her Midway Bakery and Wallace Station restaurant. Both lived up to her stellar culinary reputation. Heirloom in Midway is another favorite.

I wanted to go to the coffee shop on Main in Midway but it was closed mid-day on a weekday, which surprised me.

After reading on tripadvisor, we went to Addie's for lunch. It had good food and a nice touch of local KY food. I was surprised at the lack of a small coffee shop and/or sweet shop in the main area of downtown Versailles.



## LASTING IMPRESSIONS: ASSETS

I will remember looking at the horse farms throughout the county and stopping at the historic railroad station (and that area in general) in Midway.

I was really impressed with downtown Versailles. I was so surprised at how active it was and how successful it seems to be. I believe the horses, bourbon, and wine pull people in from other areas, but if I lived there, it would be the downtown I would enjoy the most.

Beautiful location and scenery, mostly clean and well-maintained, interesting history, bourbon and horse farm tours, fun things like “The Castle”.

Winding beautiful drives in the Bluegrass are in the fore of my memory. The beautiful downtown and the short drive to the country.

A person can live in Versailles, have access to a large city, and still have the wonder of a small town and a farming community. I could see this town as the perfect place to settle after children are out of the home.

I would come back to attend plays at Woodford Theater and I will always watch for exhibits and programs at the library. There are many restaurants that I would visit. I will remember the horse farms.

Simply the beauty and charm of downtown Midway. I really fell in love with it in a remarkable way.

The overall beauty and rolling fields stand out the most in a positive way.

I will definitely remember Woodford County and will return to do the full tour of Woodford Reserve. I would like to visit several wineries.

There is a rich store of places and attractions for tourists and residents. There is unparalleled natural beauty. There is so much to do we could not see and do everything even in two days.

The natural beauty of the county, open fields, grazing horses, secluded distilleries, and clean and quite city centers were all positive assets.

The clear signage everywhere, the wonderful horse farms, and bourbon distillery were the ones that I was most impressed with.

I fell in love with the charm of Midway. I've told many folks about the charm and really hope to go back. The beautiful vibrant colors of the downtown were very memorable, welcoming, and just made it so pleasant simply to be there.

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## LASTING IMPRESSIONS: CHALLENGES

The “fast food alley” entrance along 60 is bland and looks like every other community. This seems to be a real challenge to improve since it is a highway.

There were not many gas stations. I remember stopping at one in Midway where they did not accept the credit card.

The City Employees were just not very friendly. Some customer service training could help. The accommodation issues seem to be a negative to me.

Overall we had the subtle impression that there was “enough” tourism already in Woodford, and there isn’t motivation to reach out and seek new visitors or to really encourage existing visitors to extend their stay. I encourage them to think about new audiences they can market to.

The major highway entrances are a huge challenge to me. There weren’t any especially pretty ‘gateways’ to the community. Most had chains and fast food restaurants and could use some investment in beautification.

## LASTING IMPRESSIONS: OPPORTUNITIES

Add fall decorations. Provide training on customer service expectations to town employees.

There are not a lot of things to do with children in Versailles. Parents need things that are low-cost or free because if we are coming to a town, we are already spending money on food and other things. Promote things to do with children to convince us we should visit as well!

Promote the parks and make them more visible and accessible. The park between the Methodist Church in Versailles is in dire need of a ramp and railings so families can access the park on foot from the Main Street.

The park in Midway has potential. Clean it up and promote it.

The industrial and business development web sites have superb information. But they could be much more visible through links and social media.

They need more flexible, less ‘stuffy’ accommodations.

The “Uniquely Woodford” is a very good logo. Use it over all Woodford County materials. It communicates the special nature of Woodford County, the only county entirely within the Bluegrass!

Aggregate the information on the many historic churches. Assemble a county wide virtual driving tour of those sites and lay it out on visitor/tourism sites.

Promote the legacy of Happy Chandler to baseball fans. There are a few plaques honoring him and it's known where his grave is located. Serious followers of baseball history would be interested.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the feedback compiled from visits to Woodford County, the following suggestions are recommended for future opportunities:

### **SUPPORT SMALL BUSINESS WEB PRESENCE DEVELOPMENT**

*Assessors noticed high quality websites and favorable presence for county and city led sites, but noted a disconnect for individual businesses. Consider hosting small business trainings, workshops, or resources to improve the overall web presence of the county through supporting individual business web development.*

### **INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT**

*Visitors noted an opportunity to further include local residents in the charming, quaint "brand" of Woodford County. By selling the community to locals as well as tourists, both audiences can benefit. By increasing broad citizen engagement opportunities and individual investment in the community, the overall impression of Woodford will improve even further.*

### **DEVELOP A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR EMERGING DEMOGRAPHICS**

*Generational differences had a distinct impact on visitor observations and experiences. Consider highlighting more family-inclusive opportunities as well as multi-generational experiences to broaden the scope of visitors looking to spend a weekend getaway in Woodford County.*



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