

## 2012 Rush County Survey

### Comments and Suggestions

All comments and suggestions are presented below as written on the original survey forms by residents / former residents of Rush County...

#### 4. Which of the following other community facilities and/or services would be of (1) primary importance, (2) secondary importance, (3) least importance...?

- Parade at fair time
- Youth center
- Grass greens (golf course)
- Nice affordable housing
- Good primary and secondary schools with an above average music fine arts dept.
- Activities for retired people that can't play golf-bike-etc. Activities are limited due to physical limitations.
- Library
- Lake
- Family events
- Skateboarding
- Availability of group transportation to distant activities – skiing, casinos, waterparks, etc.
- Local activities (within 50 miles)
- Concerts, music, tech talks, interesting speakers, car shows

#### 6. What other factors would affect your decision to move to Rush County?

- Youth athletic programs
- Spray weeds in curbs and walks, plant more flowers, \* pride doesn't cost it pays
- Economic viability, ability to make a strong living for myself and family.
- Upkeep of cemeteries – can judge a society by how it takes care of its cemeteries.
- More things for families to do – movies, bowling alley, BBQ in park, band/dances – not in a bar, the craft fair was nice, plays, carnival for kids other than the fair.
- Community activities
- Strong law enforcement one that doesn't just give warnings and get the drugs cleaned up! Quit worrying about what their name is!
- Quality shopping and outlet stores within 50-75 miles

## 7. What do you consider to be the most important assets of our county and its communities?

- Can do lots of things in La Crosse and feel safe in La Crosse
- Safety, R.C. Fair, museums, Barbed Wire weekend
- A few people trying hard to make city better
- Excellent EMS service, law enforcement, fire services
- Its people
- Schools
- Great schools, strong county Economic Development committee, progressive real estate development
- Pride
- Small town atmosphere, low crime, great schools
- Its friendly people
- Friendly, hard-working, honest people
- The volunteers, solid businesses, innovative new businesses like personal fitness in Timken, etc
- History –friendly – most are hard working
- Small town
- Rural Atmosphere, slower paced lifestyle
- Good hospital, eating establishments
- Heartland community, wide open spaces
- People who care – sense of community is greater than in the “city.”
- Court House – Grocery Store – Hardware & Lumber Carpet and other flooring – Churches -schools
- The people...that bring strong work ethic, good neighbor type attitude, all the “small town” qualities that a small town has.
- Hospital, restaurants, it’s people, it’s churches.
- A descent grocery store. A reasonable variety store. Churches, pharmacy.
- The people, libraries, hospital, factories, churches, schools
- Good, solid people
- Schools, parks, pool
- Hospital, Pharmacy, Food Store, General Store
- Community definition
- Medical center, pharmacy, senior activities
- Its schools are good, it is close to Great Bend and Hays
- Our people and their willingness to work together as long as it’s a project THEY want.
- We need to keep the hospital
- Good neighbors
- Space; environmental interests, low traffic
- Peace and quiet, Nature, Space, Affordable, No traffic
- All the little community events; rodeo, St. Patrick’s Day...
- Community pride; special events; parks and museums; shopping and restaurants, hospital, & emergency services.
- Friendly people
- Grocery stores, banks, and employment
- No overcrowding, traffic, more chance of teacher/student caring; same with nursing home & patient care, community activities like St. Pat’s in Rush Center.
- Public schools and annual events
- Small town living

- The location is an important asset. People are another valuable asset.
- Your community seems to have potential if you had people who are not short-sighted and will actually do things to foster growth.
- I have always thought that a big bonus that La Crosse has going for it, is the location between Hays and Great Bend that allows folks to live in small town and have kids attend a good small town school, but still be only 30 minutes from shopping, dining and being able to attend a variety of events that are offered in Great Bend, Hays, or even Larned. You get the advantage of a smaller town, smaller school and less crime issues, but are only 30 minutes away from much of the shopping and other services that Great Bend and Hays have available.
- Having companies like the Furniture Company and other companies employ a good number of people are good assets, as well as having a good high school and medical services.
- People and Good Attitudes, openness and initiative

#### **8. What do you consider to be the biggest current liabilities of our county and its communities?**

- LaX-no shopping - hospital & doctors - high taxes - high utilities inability to work together - clickish
- Dr. who stays
- Too many welfare families
- Parents as teachers
- Lack of services for children ages 0-3 yrs. - Pediatrician
- Not enough quality housing. Business development is limited
- We need housing, duplex, apartments, small houses
- No medical doctors, lack of shopping, lack of jobs
- Lack of good jobs to keep or draw back people to the county
- Lack of amenities and recreational facilities.
- Aging attitudes, good ol' boy clickiness, non business support of new businesses.
- Perhaps too set in old ways.
- Jobs and new business
- The inability to keep a local full-time physician
- Underage drinking, unkept yards and homes, drug use
- Lack of public or private amenities, dining facilities, shopping and other activities due to a small population and lack of economic activity.
- Lack of employment and quality upper employment.
- Poor economy or lack of commerce/jobs
- It's Taxes, It's Taxes, It's Taxes, unaffordable shopping
- County commissioners, less cops running around doing nothing.
- Professional job opportunities to provide careers.
- Taxes
- Lack of winter activity
- Economy, Conservatism
- Unfriendly restaurants, bad police
- High property taxes
- School is run by 1 Family – not good we do not need to make sports #1 – academics, music
- Our people and their selfishness, not wanting someone to have more than they do.

- Lack of jobs with a good pay scale. No clothes/shoes/other items for children in stores. No eye Dr. no place for children – they walk the streets.
- Low employment opportunities
- Bad weather
- Too much talk, not enough action; need more community pride and intra as well as inter action amongst community. A too conservative community becomes too insular.
- Lack of job opportunities in computers/tech industry. Variety of fresh food in close proximity to home.
- Jobs, grocery store
- Negative thinking; poverty without measures to help people in poverty to better manage their resources.
- The towns all appear to be run down – no signs of pride.
- Drugs, property not kept cleaned up, including businesses with supplies left outside and possibility of flooding around the creeks because creek is un-kept in city limits including private property in city limits. The city and county has the equipment to do the work. Offer owners of land, in city limits, a break-even deal to clean up creek on their property to keep water flowing and not backing up causing flood problems. This doesn't need to be a major deal. Two or three swipes down the creek, removing debris and making it deeper again could eliminate a lot of problems. It is filling with dirt, therefore the water doesn't move like it should. Not trying to change flow of water, just making it flow better.
- Lack of shopping variety, entertainment like movies and bowling.
- No jobs to bring younger generations/families back to Rush Co.
- Communities/citizens need to take more pride in the appearance/cleanliness of businesses and homes.
- People in your area don't seem to be very friendly. I got the feeling it was a cliquish town. You have little available housing. No shopping. No commercial properties available. The Main St. in La Crosse looks awful, dirty, and run down.
- Another full-time restaurant option might be good. Small towns even the size of Plainville have a Dairy Queen or Alma, Nebraska (population 1,330) have a Subway and Pizza Hut. It would be nice if La Crosse had another restaurant option. With all of the smaller communities in Rush County, I would say a liability is the appearance in some areas of junkyness and abandoned cars setting on lawns just does not look good. Other than that I can't think of any major liabilities. Of course everyone would like to have more businesses or more retail stores open, but that is the same problem all towns (even Russell and Salina have) that is not unique to La Crosse and is not a problem that is easily solved.
- Selfishness, bad attitudes toward changes – unwillingness to try new projects by current "leadership" in the county.

## 9. Would you be willing to patronize/volunteer at a community-owned drive-in movie theater?

*Yes/no Responses - patronize:*

<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Undecided</i>
20	4	4

*Yes/no Responses – volunteer:*

<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Undecided</i>
1	2	0

*Additional responses and comments not included above:*

- no - because of renting movie rental DVD, VCR
- Drive-In theater would be a good draw for others to come in and grow business in our community
- Yes, lease the property from the present owner or a 10 year lease renewal yearly.
- Sell advertisements
- Have a spring and fall swap meet.
- This has worked in other communities, but it takes a lot of volunteer help.
- We don't drive at night anymore because of our age – We patronize the businesses that are available.
- Not at this point in time – can't remember the last time "Babe" and I went to see a movie anywhere.
- I believe a county-wide band/choir would be a great activity plus a drama club to perform for holiday events—throughout the county.
- I thought about starting the theatre back up since Kanopolis' closed. Fund availability and age worked against me at the time. Very excited about it.
- I think this is a wonderful idea, but I am concerned about the drugs and alcohol that will be used.
- As much as I would like to see the drive-in reopen, somehow opening an indoor theater would benefit more & be usable year round.
- I would very much enjoy a drive-in theatre in La Crosse. However, on a regular basis, I would frequent an indoor theatre more often.
- Yes-if good newer movies were the norm

### **Please comment and make suggestions**

- Need to concentrate on making a retirement community – not concentrate on tourists
- Let new businesses Come In such as Dollar Store – new cafes
- I just believe our Rush Co. Economic Development Committee needs to hire a director and let them get after it. We spin our wheels as it is currently designed.
- Our community and county do a great job making it a good place to live. There are only so many events we can afford to do.
- We need housing!
- I would advise that the communities emphasize cleanliness and neatness in downtown and residential areas. Buildings and house can be old but still neat, well-maintained and attractive. No junk or clutter in yards.
- We moved away because of the unwelcome feeling
- Remember every person you think is "stuck up," "snooty," etc. may only be shy. Welcome newcomers.
- As a former Rush Countian, I do care what happens there. Good luck as the county looks to the future.

- I would consider moving a business to Timken if there were incentives to do so
- Good idea on drive-in but --- no underage drinking and drug use. Keep it family friendly.
- This is my home, I grew up here, but there is nothing here to support my family with. There needs to be not just jobs (that beginning workforce can do), but careers (to keep people here). Who can buy a house if all they have are minimal jobs? Or a car payment? Don't get me wrong, I like the small town, keep it small, but there has to be commerce enough to keep people.
- When you end up paying more for shopping locally than it costs you to shop out of town, even considering fuel, then you shop out of town. It's not fair to local merchants, I know, but neither is it fair to consumers to have to pay 2X or 3X the price just to say they shop locally.
- Nice friendly town- very homey.
- We need things for the children/teenagers to do. A recreation commission would be a great idea.
- Thank you
- Better staff at hospital & clinic, unfriendly pharmacy-rude
- Currently looking for a place to retire to – in local area – property tax and services will be a big factor – grocery and variety store important.
- We need to start working together as a county and not as separate communities.
- Need more people
- A baby swing at the park
- Adult staffed indoor rec. area for children with games, snacks, and activities.
- Indoor recreation/activities for seniors: card games; bingo; pool; shuffleboard; darts
- Do county officials encourage and support by attendance each community's special activities. Can some county activities be moved about so each city/town is included not just La Crosse.
- Lots of business events already in the county that should be capitalized on.
- McCracken community Pride is a gift to the county.
- Linda K. of RCN has done a wonderful job of including the whole county in her contributions to the News. Another great asset to be capitalized on.
- We have already bought the "home place" north of McCracken and plan to move in 3-4 years. We're already in our 50s and worry about finding jobs and the cost of gas to these jobs.
- From what I read about in the Rush County News, the county is moving in the right direction. Maybe use the newspaper more to reach out to alumni.
- When you drive through each town, you get the feeling there in no pride. Too many abandoned buildings or they are run down. Tear them down and replace with a new business or green area. Improve the appearance and vitality of the community.
- I am married and living in Oregon where my family is close by. I do have a sister who lives there and a niece who works there.
- Also, there needs to be more communication to the public – not everyone in the county gets the cable channels than announce what's going on. Also a lot of times info in the Thursday paper that happened the night before. One thing I always heard when I moved here is why do we publish the information. It's the way we always have done it. Well if you're new or new to that certain subject you may not know about what's happening 'till its over.
- City Manager needs to take a more pro-active position in the appearance, cleanliness, and maintenance of property and promote their pride throughout the community. First impressions of a community are lasting impressions.
- You should try to attract businesses to your town. At the very least you could spruce up your Main Street. I can't imagine why your town would allow people to use buildings on Main Street as trash dumps or storage lockers. From the looks of it you probably have a few people that run things and they don't want any change, no outsiders moving in and no new businesses. Until you stop listening

to the status quo, I doubt that you will see any prosperity or measurable growth. Except to those few people in your town that call the shots. I hope I'm wrong and I wish you luck.

- I have often wondered why – and if the facilities at the Rush County Fairgrounds buildings could not be utilized more often than just once or twice a year. Here you have some pretty nice buildings with a good amount of space and a kitchen, restrooms, plenty of parking and good access – and they sit idle 90% of the year. If other activities, events or things went on at the fairgrounds, I think that would be a big bonus for La Crosse and Rush County. We love to come back for the fair and see people and I think compared to some other small towns, La Crosse has some really nice facilities at the fairgrounds.
- It would be nice if like some other towns do, if the high school fall football homecoming also included more of alumni events. Many high schools actually encourage and invite alumni back to town to attend the fall football homecoming, but that is not the case at La Crosse. More alumni coming back for a big homecoming celebration in September would just mean more money spent in La Crosse – more than just the every 5 year reunion. The classes that end in 09 or 01 (such as 69, 71, 89, 91, 99, 2001, etc) always have the dilemma of deciding to have their 20<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup>, 40<sup>th</sup>, etc.... reunion on the year it would normally be held, or move it to the rotation of the all school reunion held every 5 years and have their reunion held during the all-school reunion. I would suggest the all-school reunion be put on a every three year cycle and then at some point in the future, each classes 10<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup>, 40<sup>th</sup>, etc. will rotate to be held in conjunction with the big all school reunion.
- The county seems to be composed of “me vs. them” attitudes between La Crosse and Otis, Bison, McCracken, etc. Many of the local events could be made much better by working together and combining separate events. Old Iron Days and Barbed Wire “Festival” should have been one larger event that encompassed both Otis and La Crosse. A tractor parade from Otis to La Crosse could have merged one celebration into the start of another (Barbed Wire Festival). But one group either didn't want to share the spotlight or was afraid to step on the other's toes (but probably never asked if they could work together). Also, some of the “elders” in the community shot down many new ideas because “we tried that 20 years ago and it didn't work...” Well, it's a new bunch of folks who want Rush County to flourish and maybe we should be more open to new and improved ideas. The county fair has proven this point. Those folks have created a vibrant, fun, and involving community get-together because they worked together, not against each separate community (or in spite of each community). The St. Patrick's Day celebration is another successful event but, it too, is starting to be pulled apart by opposing forces...although they have remained open to changes...They should be able to weather any storm because of their leadership. Old Iron Days has died because no one would listen to suggestions on improving the event. They had none or little entertainment for women and teenagers; two key groups that help bring others with them to these festivals. The exhibits were the same every year, no beer tent (sorry, but it helps bring people into an event). The only real reason to go to Old Iron Days was the free food. Vendors were discouraged from coming by the greed of individuals on the leadership committee. Let this be a lesson to the rest of us – change and grow, or die of boredom.
- Additionally, there are also selfish economic and industrial people and forces who are afraid of new development because they want to protect their cheap labor force. Several enterprises have located elsewhere because existing companies in La Crosse made it difficult for them to locate here due to their fear of losing labor. This has got to change – we should welcome any enterprise, whether it competes with “our” group or not. We must be willing to drop our fears and help new companies locate here, regardless of type of activity/production. They will bring new labor and work to us, not “steal” it.
- It's the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the old guard is changing and we better wake up and forgive and forget as we work together across the county to improve our condition. Otherwise, Rush County will slowly die

into one or two communities with only prairie grass in between. La Crosse, as the largest city and the county seat, must be the “big brother” and mentor to the other communities in the county, instead of just pushing their weight around in county activities. Each community has its jewels and La Crosse should be the “display case and polish” of these different features. Please take these comments as constructive criticism, rather than merely whining commentary. We have lived in the county over 15 years and we have watched it decline in many areas...but, there are bright spots and we need to pull together, forget our differences, and help Rush County be the place we all can “come home to...”