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Press Release:

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Have you ever wondered how the Village of Campbellsport is perceived by visitors from other communities? What do people see and think when they visit our town for the first time? Do we make a good first impression?

The Campbellsport Area Chamber of Commerce wondered too, so we decided to find out.

“First Impressions” is a program originally developed by Andrew Lewis and James Schneider of the University of Wisconsin Extension. They realized that it can be difficult for a community to evaluate itself objectively. As stated in the program’s manual, “Our views are skewed by over familiarization, lack of differing perspectives and expectations, and a reluctance to be completely honest with our neighbors when dealing with issues (i.e. the appearance of buildings, customer service, and maintenance of public facilities).”

The solution is to match up a pair of communities of roughly similar size and demographics, and have them give each other an unbiased outsider’s perspective on what’s good and bad.

In May of this year, the Village of Campbellsport was visited by a team of “secret shoppers” from the City of Brillion, Wisconsin. Five visitors spent a day touring our town and making an assessment of everything. At the same time, a team from Campbellsport went to Brillion and recorded what they saw. The final reports have now been completed.

At 6:00 PM on Wednesday, July 14<sup>th</sup>, the entire community is invited to attend a ‘town meeting’ at the Campbellsport Public Library. Copies of the twenty-two page report completed by the team from Brillion will be provided for those in attendance. A presentation will then be made by the Campbellsport Area Chamber of Commerce about what the team from Brillion found.

The presentation will include photographs taken by the visiting team. There will be an opportunity for everyone to discuss the report findings, and to talk about how we, as a community, can use the information provided. How might we improve on the things that the visiting team thought were bad, and how can we build on the things that were good? Where should we go from here?

The Campbellsport Area Chamber of Commerce has undergone an ambitious transformation during the past two years. We’re more dedicated than ever to developing and promoting our community’s assets. Hopefully, “First Impressions” will be valuable

in helping the chamber achieve its goals by encouraging us to consider the perceptions of others.

Perhaps more importantly, the Village of Campbellsport is about to begin its official comprehensive planning. That process is going to require considerable input from our citizens. The “First Impressions” presentation could serve as a way of initiating the public into that process.

The Chamber of Commerce encourages everyone who is curious about this unique outside perspective to attend the meeting on July 14<sup>th</sup>. We’re anxious to see the public’s reaction, and to get the community’s feedback.

Contact Information:

Dean Uelmen

Email: [hjweld@charter.net](mailto:hjweld@charter.net)

Home: (920) 533-5114

Office: (920) 533-8212