

## Notes from Meeting of 09/27/16

### Connect Communities/First Impressions Committee

The Committee met at the Coffeehouse at Pine and Chestnut on September 27, 2016. The purpose of the meeting was to meet with Kristin Runge from the University of Wisconsin-Extension and to learn about the First Impressions program.

Ms. Runge explained the program in detail. She talked about the process of matching up communities, the importance of involving an economic development specialist such as Tina Chitwood from the Racine County Economic Development Corporation and how to best utilize the results. Ms. Runge explained that the First Impressions program was akin to the well-known "Secret (or Mystery) Shopper" effort. Committee representatives basically would go in different directions when they arrive unannounced in the partner community and then interact, as a customer, with the business or service all the while making notes of strengths and weaknesses, how they were treated and the overall critique of their experience. A final report with findings would then be submitted to the partnering community. The idea is that if the only review or critique of a business's customer effectiveness comes from internal evaluation, that evaluation can suffer from over-familiarization and an unintended lack of honesty, the idea of "not seeing the forest for the trees." Likewise, representatives from the partnering community will do the same in our city.

The Committee expressed enthusiasm about proceeding. Ms. Runge stated that she would go back and find a suitable partnering community and get back to the group.

Tom Lebak mentioned that he had downloaded a copy of the Connect Communities program application and that would be the topic of the group's next meeting on Tuesday October 10<sup>th</sup> at 7:30am at The Coffeehouse at Pine and Chestnut.

Submitted by Tom Lebak,