Maintaining Small Town Character Through Adaptive Rural Communities
Depew, Oklahoma Pilot Community

A Professional Project submitted to the Graduate Faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of

Master of Science in Architectural Urban Studies

by
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Tulsa, Oklahoma
2012

Approved for the Urban Design Studio
of
The College of Architecture

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Master of Science in Architectural Urban Studies  

Urban Design Studio  
University of Oklahoma  
College of Architecture  

Acknowledgements  
Many people have been instrumental to the success of this project. In May 2011, I assembled a group of five mentors, this group has continued to grow and are listed as follows.

Shawn Schaefer, Director of the Urban Design Studio. I have met with him nearly every week for the past year and he has provided a great deal of advice throughout. Also my fellow students at the Urban Design Studio, Mthabisi Masilela, Alexis Shahadi, Larry Curtis, Kurt D’Amour, and Rebecca Caldwell.

Through Shawn I found out about the Institute for Quality Communities and once a director was appointed he also put me in touch with him. Blair Humphreys, the Director of the Institute for Quality Communities (IQC), has been influential in this process as well. It is though Blair that many of my ideas have been challenged or given further investigation. It is my hope that this project will be of use in his future endeavors at the IQC.

Ron Frantz, Director of the Small Town Studio at the IQC has not only been a large help to the project, but a daily inspiration of what I would like to do with my degree once completed. I first came into contact with Ron the summer of 2011, when he was still at the Oklahoma Department of Commerce as the Main Street Architect. Ron was interested in my project originally and ended up being part of the team at OU which helped to shape the project further. Ron is an expert at small towns, with over twenty years experience working in them, I have learned a large amount from him in a short period of time.

(Acknowledgements continued on next page)
Ron Frantz is also responsible for the idea of the DesignWorks Team visit in Depew. The DesignWorks team consisted of thirteen people: from The University of Oklahoma Blair Humphreys, Ron Frantz, Shane Hampton, Justin Malloy, and Caitlin Cadieux, Shawn Schafer, Showa Omahegeo, Mithbi Masilela, and myself; from Indian Nations Councils of Government (INCOG), Barbara Albritton, Matthew Ryan, Steve Boettcher, and Easton Miller. This group of people dedicated two days to the development of Project Postcard and are the inspiration of the pew installation.

Last year I interned at Indian Nations Councils of Government, INCOG. Through INCOG I met Barbara Albritton, the Rural Development Coordinator. I was inspired by Barbara and her team to pursue the project. Someone who has been active in my education for the past six years and another project mentor is Gary Moeller, Department Head of the Fine Arts Program at Rogers State University in Claremore. Gary advised me throughout my undergraduate and has continued to give me advice from a different perspective on this project as well.

Depew Public Schools have been highly involved from the beginning especially: Mr. Leon Hiett, Superintendent and Mr. Tony Martin, Elementary Principal. Also cafeteria staff, Lisa Vandecar, Brenda Tyler, Marla Wright, and Sherry White, who graciously made Thanksgiving lunch for the DesignWorks team during their November visit.

The Town of Depew consisting of Mayor Robert Talley, and trustees Mylora Tuttle, Janet Jones, Hoyt Beasley, and Randy Campbell have been helpful in taking the lead in the implementation of this project. They have unanimously approved many resolutions and supported all progress of the project. City Clerk, Susan Case, has provided unsurpassed assistance and put in many extra hours for the project. Depew Fest would have not been possible without her. Depew Public Works Department have been extremely involved in the operation and function of all things which have happened on Main Street. Depew police were also instrumental in the operation of Depew Fest and keeping things orderly.

A large amount of history connections have been made at the Senior Citizens Center including Pat Mayberry and Carolyn Mercer. The center also provided lunch for the DesignWorks team on their visit to Depew. Jack Lane, who I met at the center provided around twenty historical newspapers from Depew.

For the project a steering committee was formed, they are mentioned in detail later in the report. This group consists of Johnnie and Karla Wright, Judy McGuire, Pat Mayberry, Leon Hiett, and Tony Martin. This group of people are true leaders of the community.

Depew Church of Christ might have been one of the largest components for the project in that they donated the pew for Depew Fest. Although Judy McGuire is listed above it is also necessary to mention her sister, Jan Christenson who owns Jan’s Sandwich Shop and also her daughter Lisa Cossey who is in charge of Kohler Villa. Judy, Jan, and Lisa have been my constant go to people. They have provided meeting space for every occasion. Also Kohler Villa hosted a craft fair on the day of Depew Fest as well as Jan’s bringing in outside food vendors and staying open late. The McGuire family is instrumental in the success of Depew as they own several businesses and are extremely involved.

Near the end of the project I came in touch with Brandy Valenzuela, a resident of Depew. Brandy was my partner in Depew Fest and single handedly ran the Miss Depew Pageant. Her family was also instrumental in helping whenever needed. Through Brandy I have formed a great partnership and we will continue to work together to better Depew.

I owe a special thanks to Mr. Danny Hoggatt and his digital imaging and printing class in Drumright. I was through the hard work of Mr. Hoggatt and his students that the pew received its vinyl wrap. This class is also responsible for printing Depew Fest T-shirts.

Another group which was helpful to the success of Depew Fest was Bristow Garden Shoppe. Owners Ted and Melinda Smith along with employee Debbie were responsible for staging the beautiful arrangement around the pew. This arrangement helped people to view the pew as what it eventually will be.

Most importantly I must thank my family. My parents, Mike and Debbie Edmonds, for inspiring me to pursue my education and attending several meetings in Depew despite the two-hour commute. My inherited family which I became part of less than two years ago. The Vandecar family is quite extensive in Depew and have faithfully attended every meeting and voluntarily spent a large amount of time on this project: my father and mother-in-law, Troy and Lisa Vandecar; my sister-in-law, Dana Vandecar; my Auntie Amanda Vandecar and cousin Hannah Vandecar.

Finally I must thank the person whom which I would not be here without, my husband, Ryan Vandecar. Ryan and I married two months after I started at the Urban Design Studio. He has graciously worked full time plus so I would be able to attend graduate school and not work. We often joke in the truth that every time my tuition came due several of his cows were taken to the sale barn. Ryan has been supportive throughout my two year career at the studio when I often had to let our personal life take the back burner to my academic pursuits. Thank you for your dedication to our relationship and never giving up on me!

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Introduction

Maintaining Small Town Character Through Adaptive Rural Communities

Thesis Statement:

I am studying small rural communities, because I want to create a curriculum for the University of Oklahoma’s Institute for Quality Communities Small Town Studio, in order to stimulate and assist communities and find possible strategies for improvement. So that small town character and rural communities are maintained into the future.

Depew, Oklahoma will be used as a pilot community, serving as an example for other rural communities.

In order to better understand Maintaining Small Town Character Through Adaptive Rural Communities, a little background information on myself and the project is necessary. The following demonstrates my interest and specialization in small towns and the reasoning behind my professional project choice.

As a child I grew up in a rural town 40 miles east of Tulsa, Chouteau, Oklahoma, with a population of around two thousand people. I have never lived in a large city except for my four year span of undergraduate studies at Rogers State University in Claremore, Oklahoma. In 2010, I received my Bachelor of Fine Art in Studio Art and found myself searching for graduate programs of interest. When I came across urban design it seemed interesting and it had design in the title; maybe I could be an urban designer? Eventually I enrolled at the Urban Design Studio, got married and moved to Depew, Oklahoma, another small town with less than five hundred residents 40 miles west of Tulsa.

Things quickly picked up at the studio and I really enjoyed the classes and our projects centered in urban areas. At the same time I became more familiar with my new town and quickly noticed some of the great aspects of the community such as the neighborly attitude of most people. I also noticed some things which were lacking, such as the upkeep of some structures especially along Main Street. Something needed to be done in Depew, but how to do it?

A little over a year ago I mentioned to my program director, Shawn Schaefer, my interest in small communities. Shawn told me about a new program at The University of Oklahoma, The Institute for Quality Communities with a branch called the Small Town Studio. At that time the institute was still in development, but it looked to have a promising future. I also started an internship with Indian Nations Council of Government, INCOG, at that time. I found that INCOG had an economic development sub-department with a rural development department, something I had no idea existed. These two connections, along with my experience in small towns, led me to my professional project and a true niche in the planning of small towns.

Now that you understand the reasoning of the project it is time to focus on the content of the project. I hope through the project you might be able to learn a little about small towns and their importance in the overall structure of Oklahoma. After all, Oklahoma started as a rural state and without all these great little small towns we might not be sitting where we are today.
Create a curriculum for the Institute for Quality Communities, Small Town Studio
Work with the director of the Institute for Quality Communities
Create a work-study program with the University of Oklahoma
Generate a scale to measure the quality of a community
Form a partnership with high school students
Partner with Depew as a pilot community

Study how to improve the quality of the community of Depew
Create a local economy
Provide citizens with local options
Spark vitality throughout
Preserve historic buildings
Create jobs for locals

Encourage community involvement
Create social media website
Create community service opportunities
Establish a town square/gathering area
Hold community events

Create a shop local campaign, invest in local branding
Encourage businesses to offer coupons or daily specials
Implement advertising strategies through social media or other creative campaigns
Update the town website

Devise ways to attract new residents to Depew
Create quality housing options
Promote tourism
Introduce the idea of providing incentives for new residents
Inform the population of possible educational opportunities

Revitalize Main Street
Attract new businesses
Encourage relocation of current businesses to Main Street
Urge the city to implement Code Enforcement
Implement creative landscaping/parks
Recruit sponsorship for beauty improvements

*Blue highlighted goals have been met as of 4-2-12
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>January</td>
<td>Project Selection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>February</td>
<td>Established Mentors</td>
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<td></td>
<td>March</td>
<td>Meetings with mentors</td>
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<td></td>
<td>April</td>
<td>Creation of Facebook group 8-22</td>
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<td></td>
<td>May</td>
<td>Photo Survey completed 8-24</td>
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<td>June</td>
<td>Submittal of abstract 7-26</td>
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<td></td>
<td>July</td>
<td>Presentation to Town Board 9-12</td>
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<td></td>
<td>August</td>
<td>Senior Citizens Center meeting 9-14</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>September</td>
<td>Creation of project blog</td>
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<td></td>
<td>October</td>
<td>Establishment of steering committee</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>November</td>
<td>Bristow Area Chamber Meeting 9-28</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>December</td>
<td>Ron Frantz, director of Small Town Studio, meeting 10-4</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>January</td>
<td>Community DesignBook introduction</td>
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<td></td>
<td>February</td>
<td>Steering Committee Meeting 10-8</td>
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<td></td>
<td>March</td>
<td>Professional Project Jury 10-15</td>
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<td></td>
<td>April</td>
<td>Depew Fest approved 2-13</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>May</td>
<td>Depew Fest meeting 2-14</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>June</td>
<td>Meeting with Central-Tech 2-28</td>
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<td></td>
<td>July</td>
<td>Depew Fest meeting 2-29</td>
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<td>August</td>
<td>Brick &amp; T-shirt sales commence 3-1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>September</td>
<td>Deliver pew to Central-Tech 3-5</td>
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<td></td>
<td>October</td>
<td>Depew Fest meeting 4-14</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>December</td>
<td>Depew Fest meeting 4-4</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>January</td>
<td>Depew Fest meeting 4-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>February</td>
<td>Pick up pew &amp; T-shirts 4-12</td>
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<td></td>
<td>March</td>
<td>Miss Depew Pageant 4-13</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>April</td>
<td>Depew Fest 4-14</td>
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<td>2012</td>
<td>January</td>
<td>Steering Committee Meeting 11-9</td>
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<td></td>
<td>February</td>
<td>Interview Bristow New Record 11-14</td>
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<td></td>
<td>March</td>
<td>DesignWorks 11-16 &amp; 17</td>
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<td>April</td>
<td>CDBG Certification 11-30 through 12-2</td>
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<td></td>
<td>May</td>
<td>Professional Project Jury 12-3</td>
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<td></td>
<td>June</td>
<td>Depew adoption of Project Postcard 12-12</td>
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<td></td>
<td>July</td>
<td>Historic Rt. 66 signage installed</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>August</td>
<td>Education Foundation meeting 3-3</td>
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<td>Bristow Rotary meeting 2-9</td>
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<td></td>
<td>January</td>
<td>Research Day abstracts due 2-14</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Research day 4-2</td>
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<td></td>
<td>March</td>
<td>Reading copy due 4-7</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>April</td>
<td>Final defense 4-28</td>
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</table>
Maintaining Small Town Character Through Adaptive Rural Communities, has received a large amount of media attention. Social Media was also a large asset to the project, reaching individuals who would otherwise never have heard of the project.

To begin the project I started a Facebook page and currently have 112 members. We have used Facebook to communicate everything from meetings to events. I have created event pages for things such as the festival. Vendors are able to visit the page and talk to possible customers advertising their product and attracting people to the event.

I also created a project blog which was used throughout the fall for class credit. The blog has had a total of 778 page views. Many of these views were due to links posted on Facebook. The project was also covered on The Institute for Quality Communities blog several times.

The Bristow News Record was a great help to the project. Our local newspaper covered the project six times as of April 2012. Despite the slow down in printed media, Depew is a small rural area and not all people have internet access, this coverage in the paper was extremely important to the project.

At DesignWorks in the fall several members of the design team were approached by community member Hoyt Beasley. Mr. Beasley once was in charge of a one page news circulation in Depew. Through DesignWorks Mr. Beasley was inspired to get the paper back into circulation. Good News in Depew is now back in print and has graciously covered every aspect of the project and Depew Fest. The paper itself now uses the De Pew logo created at DesignWorks on all of its papers.

Newspaper Coverage Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9-14-11</td>
<td>Coverage on Town meeting (Bristow News 9/14/11, 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-11-11</td>
<td>DesignWorks in Community Calendar (Record Citizen 11/11/11, 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-16-11</td>
<td>“A Town for the Next 100 Years” (Brabham 11/16/11, 1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11-18-11</td>
<td>“Depew Meets with City Planners &amp; Designers from OU”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-14-11</td>
<td>“Have a Seat in Depew” (Bristow News 12/14/11, 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-10-12</td>
<td>“DesignWorks meets to discuss plans for proposed Depew pew” (Brabham 2/10/12, 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-11-12</td>
<td>“First annual Depew Fest on April 14 to celebrate unveiling of roadside pew” (Brabham 4/11/12, 1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To see full newspaper articles see Appendix A
Because of my interest in the STS I decided to base my professional project around it. Due to interest from Blair Humphreys and Ron Frantz along with the newness of the program, I decided to work with them on a curriculum for the STS. In order to better understand the functions of a possible small town studio I researched other similar programs including; The University of Minnesota Morris Center for Small Towns, Mount Allison University Rural & Small Town Programme, and North Carolina Small Towns Economic Prosperity Program.

Of the three programs researched the one which is most parallel with the goals of the IQC is the Center for Small Towns (CST). CST is a program within the University of Minnesota which serves small towns, local units of government, schools, and non-profit organizations. Similar to the idea of the STS this program is utilized by small units for assistance on research or projects which the entity would typically not be able to afford or provide for themselves. One of the aspects of this program which most agrees with the STS agenda is the fact that “students are central to all Center for Small Towns’ programs...Students are involved through paid employment, internships, directed studies, or by volunteering” (The University of Minnesota Morris “Center for Small Towns” http://www.morris.umn.edu/cst/).

Another program which could be valuable to the STS is the Rural & Small Town Programme. This program has been a large asset to rural Canada, but was closed in June of 2011. This program focused on teaching people and organizations about change and adaptation which in a rural area is necessary in order to compete with urban cities. Instead of work being done solely by the program an emphasis was put on self-help (Mount Allison University “Rural & Small Town Programme” http://www.mta.ca/research/rstp/rstpmain.html).

Finally N.C. Small Towns Economic Prosperity Program (STEP) differs in that it is a non-profit organization. STEP plays a major role in many small towns for a variety of reasons more recently due to economic hardships and natural disasters. For over two decades STEP has worked with communities through capacity building, investments, and scholarships. STEP like the Small Town Programme focuses on educating more so than hands on implementation (N.C. Rural Economic Development Center, INC. “Restoring vitality to North Carolina small towns” http://www.nccruralcenter.org/community-programs/small-towns.html).

The Institute for Quality Communities within the College of Architecture at the University of Oklahoma (OUIQC), is a forum for researchers, students and Oklahoma community leaders to collaborate in an effort to enhance Oklahoma communities. The Institute provides assistance and expertise on the forces of community growth and decline with a specific focus on improving the practice of community planning, design and governance.

The Institute for Quality Communities is committed to creating cities and towns that are:

- Socially Connected
- Contextual & Sustainable
- Healthy & Safe
- Engaged & Collaborative
- Accessible
- Thriving & Prosperous

(The Institute for Quality Communities “What we do” http://iqc.ou.edu/what-we-do/)

Finding inspiration from The Institute for Quality Communities (IQC) and The Small Town Studio (STS), led me to my current path in my professional project. IQC Director, Blair Humphreys, and STS Director, Ron Frantz, are invaluable in the operation and success of the institute. Having professionals interested in not only the improvement of our state, but the improvement of the quality of life for residents is very important. Both are exceptional in working with students and transferring the significance to a younger generation.

Preservation of the rich history of small Oklahoma communities is going to be extremely important to the future. Programs such as IQC Small Town Studio are taking the first step in the right direction and breathing life into some of these small communities, including Depew, Oklahoma. Often people forget that Oklahoma was founded on the ingenuity of these townspeople, if we lose these communities we lose our rich history as well. It is necessary to train young professionals who are interested in small communities as these communities are unlike any other. The IQC is going to provide assistance to these communities which for so long has been lacking, if not completely unavailable.
Once the literature review was complete it was time to create an original curriculum for the Small Town Studio. In order to start this curriculum it was necessary to understand the mission and objectives of the University of Oklahoma as a whole. Also the mission and objectives from several different university programs were studied for comparison.

The University of Oklahoma Mission
The mission of the University of Oklahoma is to provide the best possible educational experience for our students through excellence in teaching, research and creative activity, and service to the state and society.
(The University of Oklahoma “Academic Departments” http://www.ou.edu/web/landing/academic_departments.html)

Small Town Studio Objectives
These objectives were shaped by the three part mission listed above by the University of Oklahoma. In this way they reflect not only the Small Town Studio, but the university as well.

1. Educational experience – educate students on the structure of small towns through practical application creating professionals who will adeptly work with rural communities supplying needed resources and tools to improve quality of small communities.
2. Research and creative activity – Advance the understanding of small communities and their importance in the overall structure of Oklahoma through creative activity and research.
3. Service to the state – Engage students with small rural communities to benefit these communities and improve the quality of life for residents statewide.

One area which I was instructed to focus in the collaboration of the STS and communities was to designate what the community could expect to receive from the university and also what the university would be expecting from these small communities.

When it comes to projects, participation from the community along with resources from the community are extremely important. Resources could include money, but also would include things such as a steering committee, historic resources, volunteers, and even community interest. Also necessary from the community would be some sort of housing for students however before discussed, partnerships, and possible part-time employment for students. Communities should expect a base charge for all services of the university which would previously be negotiated.

From the university communities should expect many things. One of these things would be extensive research and hard work from students and professors working on the project. These findings and work would be documented in several ways including but not limited to: a bound book, a presentation, a poster, project renderings, etc. These documents would be invaluable resources to small communities in order to continue progress once the STS was no longer integral in the community.
Experimental Curriculum
Living & Working in a small town, Oklahoma
Summer studio program, 8 weeks
10 Students, 4959 level

How to teach (educators)
The eight week course could consist of one weekly meeting with a professor; this professor could travel to the site on one day only. A graduate assistant could be housed with the students full time in order for students to have leadership while the professor is away. Other alternatives could be daily discussions with the students through an online structure, possibly using Skype.

Class credits
Students could receive more credit hours for their summer course. Along with the studio credit, a course on historical preservation could be taught using the local environment. Other classes could include landscape architecture, or electives which were related to the location on hand. Architecture students could easily work on other small projects focusing on one building or a small block in the town.

Housing
Students will live in a small town in Oklahoma for the duration of the eight week class. Several different housing opportunities exist. Historic locations such as a hotel would be interesting for students, but also a great way to immerse students into the town. Other options could include Mountain View Motel or Secret Garden Cottages, both of which are located near Turner Falls and have weekly & monthly rates.

A different approach would be finding host homes in which students could stay for the eight week course. This might be the best way to instantly immerse students in the culture and experience of Sulphur. This host homes could work in the same way exchange students do in high school. Host families could quickly introduce students and provide valuable insight.

Grant opportunities such as HOPE VI provides for the help of changing Main Street Buildings into low cost housing. These buildings would be occupied by students for the entirety of a year and then could be used by the community as low cost housing therefore leaving the community with a larger economic base.

Churches or community centers could be utilized and transformed into temporary housing. The idea of a hostel or something similar could work.
Depew, Oklahoma, a small town in Creek County, was established in 1901, four years after the St. Louis & San Francisco Railroad was constructed through the area. Named after Chauncey Depew, a US Senator from New York, the town site of Depew is located on the original 1920s alignment of Route 66. An alignment which originally shared Main Street with Route 66.

By 1911, Depew was steadily growing and had a total of fourteen businesses. During the oil boom of the 1920s which boosted local economies Depew had over 30 businesses including; two banks, three service stations, a car dealership, four hotels, two indoor theaters, and several cotton gins. Like many other towns Depew’s economy rose and fell on the fortunes of the oil industry. The small community of Depew has slowly declined and weathered with age over the past few decades. Not only has the population declined, but so has business, leaving Depew today with less than ten businesses.

Like many other struggling small towns the challenge for Depew is how be self-sufficient. How is it that Depew can compete with growing suburbs of the metro areas of Tulsa and Oklahoma City? 476 people call Depew home, the question might be why? At what point do residents decide it is time to leave? Do they ever?

Depew is a proud town, one which generations of families call home. The school system is excellent and one of the things that attracts people to move to Depew. The real challenge is how to create a local economy in Depew. One of the largest goals is to improve the quality of life for residents of all ages in Depew. To gain community support and to raise community spirit. After all if these small towns are going to continue to exist isn’t it the small town spirit that attracts us all there?

As we used Depew as a pilot community we also shared a learning experience with the community. Several of the questions addressed above became apparent. Many people live in Depew because it is their home, the place they were born and raised. Others live in Depew because other members of their family who lived in town needed care. Still others like myself live in Depew because of the things a community like Depew offers; friendship, trust, nostalgia, room to grow, and a great place to raise a family. I have come to realize that people who live in Depew don’t feel like they’re missing out on something because they don’t have the amenities urban areas offer. The Friday night athletic event is as much fun as going to the movies and much more rewarding when it comes to supporting the people you care about. This project is not a much about small towns as one would think, but about the amazing character of people who live there.
Depew is located to the south of current Route 66 designated in red. The blue designation travels through town on what was the original 1920s Route 66 also known as Main Street. Burlington Northern Railroad which is now owned by the State of Oklahoma is situated between Route 66 and Main Street. Outside of the map a few miles to the North is the Turner Turnpike running between Tulsa and Oklahoma City.

(Oklahoma Map IBTTA “Information and Resources” http://www.ibtta.org/information/content.cfm?ItemNumber=5658&RDtoken=16215&userID=1)
Close-up view of the town of Depew. As depicted Depew has two main entrances into town, Flynn Avenue on the east and Ladd Avenue on the west. Main Street is takes the place of where Fourth Street would be. The town itself is situated on an elevated plane which will be shown on the topographic map.

Main entrances into Depew
This image clearly shows the corner curves at the ends of Main Street where Route 66 previously traveled through town. Also shown are building footprints and impermeable ground cover. Some of the oldest buildings on Main Street are located between Malley Avenue and Purdy Avenue. Several other historic buildings were lost to fire or tornado many decades ago between Pate Avenue and Malley Avenue.
This United States Geological Survey topographic map demonstrates the large difference in elevation from Route 66 to Main Street in Depew. Each contour line represents a difference of ten feet. According to this map Route 66 has an elevation of 818 feet whereas portions of Main Street are at elevations of 880 feet. Depew itself has a unique location on this elevated platform. For this reason, the water tower, located slightly north of Main Street, is visible not only from Route 66, but also from the Turner Turnpike to the North. This elevation gives Depew natural visibility and presence.

(USGS Topographic map Depew, OK store.usgs.gov/b2c_usgs/catalog/setCurrentItem/isQuery=yes&xcm=r3standardpitrex_prd&query="Depew"&layout=6_1_61_58&uiarea=2&ctype=areaDetails&next=seeItem&carea=%24ROOT&citem=00000012350000000058)
In September 2011, a steering committee for the project was formed. As a new resident of Depew, it was necessary to find people within the community who had experience and expertise in the structure of the town.

One of most involved institutions in the community of Depew is the school. For that reason and the fact I worked at Depew Elementary for the school year 2010-2011, I recruited members for the steering committee. Mr. Tony Martin, Elementary Principal, along with Superintendent, Mr. Leon Hiett, have been highly active with the project. Not only have they added opinions and provided advice, but they let us use the school as a meeting place and also fed the DesignWorks team voluntarily. Both Mr. Martin and Mr. Hiett portray the small town hospitality and get it done attitude of Depew for all to see.

Another large supporter of the project is the Senior Citizens Center. The group itself has been highly supportive and friendly. I have gained irreplaceable knowledge of Depew history and charm. I have also shared many informative, yet fun conversations with elderly pillars of the community. My visits to the center are always enjoyable, it reminds me of visiting with family, somewhat of a family reunion when everyone gets involved. Two of those people would be Pat Mayberry and Carolyn Mercer. They have dutifully attended all my meetings, and also feed the DesignWorks team during Thanksgiving lunch.

Two strengths to not only myself, but the town as a whole are Johnnie and Karla Wright. Both are retired from the school system and moved here 52 years ago, “just to stay for a year” they loved it so much they couldn’t leave. Karla has also become a mentor for myself, showing what it is to live a life of faith and always putting others first. I truly believe she would give the shirt off her back to a stranger. Johnnie and Karla are living examples of what small town living is all about; knowing your neighbors, caring about them, and making sure you do all that is possible to help.

The last member of the steering committee and a large supporter of downtown Depew is Judy McGuire and her family. Judy owns Main Street Floral, Kohler Villa, and her sister owns Jan’z Sandwich Shop, all on Main Street. Judy has other family members involved in Depew Business as well including Rainbow Oil Well Service and True Colors Salon. Judy has been very supportive in all endeavors of the project as well as cooperating as far as extending business hours to help out. As a business owner she is very interested in progress on Main Street and is very excited about new things to come.

At the first steering committee meeting on October 8, 2011, the committee completed several tasks. The first task completed was a SWOT analysis. Several items were also brought to attention as things the project should focus on. One of these was community involvement and getting people motivated. Once the meeting adjourned it was confirmed that the committee was excited about initiative action being taken in Depew.

The steering committee was also instrumental in bringing the DesignWorks team to Depew. Pat Mayberry, Tony Martin, and Leon Hiett all volunteered to feed the crew. Judy McGuire donated the Kohler Villa as meeting space. Without the hard work and dedication of the steering committee DesignWorks would not have happened.

As the project progressed the steering committee transitioned into the Depew Fest Committee. This committee met multiple times and created a successful festival for the community of Depew.

To see steering committee letters, agendas, sign-in-sheets, and SWOT analysis see Appendix C.
DesignWorks Team Visit, Depew, Oklahoma
November 16-17, 2011

As I found myself sitting in Ron Frantz’s office mid October, discussing Depew and what we could do there Ron brought up DesignWorks, a program I’d never heard of. Little did I know about a month later a DesignWorks would conduct a two day charrette in Depew.

The DesignWorks crew consisted of a team of 12 individuals. From OUUDS Tulsa; Director, Shawn Schaefer, Professor Showa Omabegho, myself, and fellow classmate Mthabisliso Masilela. From OU Norman; IQC Director, Blair Humphreys, STS Director, Ron Frantz, Professor Justin Molloy, and Graduate Assistant, Shane Hampton. From INCOG; Barbara Albritton, Matthew Ryan, Steve Boettcher, & Easton Miller.

On November 16, 2011, Depew welcomed the DesignWorks team to town. The team received a warm welcome and a surprising amount of participation, over 40 town residents for the two day period. When discussing the issues with Depew citizens it became apparent that Depew was somewhat transparent to people outside Creek County. It was also apparent that in the realm of Route 66 Depew was almost nonexistent. It quickly became obvious that the town wanted to focus on Route 66 as an attractant into town and a way to slowly boost the economy.

At the end of the two day program the design team presented the town with “Project Postcard”. This simple town branding activity urged the creation of a memorable place on Route 66 in Depew, giving the town recognition and getting into tourist guides. This postcard moment simply states, “Have a seat in Depew on Route 66” capitalizing on the uniqueness of Depew’s name. Depew is currently in the implementation stage of putting a church pew in the center of Main Street and Sims Avenue, creating their photo opportunity.

Several other branding opportunities were addressed as well, such as repainting the water tower in town. This water tower as mentioned before is a landmark to the local community and also is visible from the turnpike. In this way the tower can serve as a billboard.

Another important aspect in the process was the need for directional signage in Depew, especially off Route 66, where people often drive straight by. Since DesignWorks Depew has received four new Historic Route 66 signs at key entry point into town.

For DesignWorks itinerary & sign-in-sheets see Appendix D
For the Depew Report see Appendix E

History of DesignWorks

In 1990, the State Arts council of Oklahoma (now the Oklahoma Arts Council) brought together a number of state agencies to discuss the arts and design professions in Oklahoma. At the time, Oklahoma continued to languish in an almost decade-old oil bust cycle that had left many thinking that any and all things to do with the arts were simply frivolous matters.

Some 200 people attended the conference. From this energy of “finding others out there who were concerned, too,” about two dozen people from state agencies, private firms, and individual studios stepped forward to further discuss the arts needs in the state. From surveys, meetings, and conversations, the group learned that rural Oklahoma needed access to design professionals and resources.

Originally, the Oklahoma Arts Council was the home for the DesignWorks program. About ten years later, the program shifted to the Oklahoma Main Street Center. In the fall of 2011, the program transferred to the Institute for Quality Communities at The University of Oklahoma.

As of the Fall of 2011, sixty communities hosted a DesignWorks Team visit in their community.

(The Depew Report 2012, 2)
Implementation Schedule

November 2011
- 16th & 17th DesignWorks Presentation of Project Postcard
- Donation of pew

December 2011
- 12th Town Board presentation of project postcard
- Signing of resolution
- Acceptance of Meagan Vandecar as intern and project administrator
- 31st submittals of pew renderings and logistics
- Complete inventory of town signage
- Order Main Street signage
- Contact Route 66 for scenic byways signage opportunities

January 2012
- Explore opportunities for funding
- 1st opening of bids and quotes for pew
- Create partnerships with local agencies for implementation and publicity

February 2012
- 15th pew bid finalized
- Implementation begins
- Contact route 66 associations for publicity on project postcard
- Research into billboards

March 2012
- Creation of T-shirts
- Bollards poured and secured
- Footing poured for pew base

April 2012
- Pew finished and installed on base
- 14th Pew reveal & community festival
- Selling of T-shirts for benefit of community

May 2012 and beyond
- Painting of water tower
- Pew signage and publicity on larger scale
- Directory of town for tourists
- Installation of historical plaques on buildings
- Repair/fund raiser of bricks on main street
- Purchase and installation of street banners

In December the town accepted the project and signed a resolution to help in any way possible. Inventory of town signage is still in the process. Since DesignWorks the town has received four new Historical Route 66 Designation signs through the Oklahoma Department of Commerce.

As of April 2012, implementation of Project Postcard is well under way. A pew has been donated at it is currently at Central-Tech in Drumright receiving a vinyl wrap to make it weatherproof.

In order to fund the pew I have been selling engraved bricks, currently around 50 bricks have been sold. The bollards which are to surround the pew are also being sold for sponsorship. Out of the nine bollards all are sold and four have been paid for currently at $200 each. The Society of Urban Design Students or SUDS has graciously donated $1,000 to help purchase blank bricks. Depew Fest, April 14, will be the last day to purchase bricks and around 10 weeks later will be the beginning of pew install. The pew should easily pay for itself with fund-raising going the way it has.

As part of Project Postcard the town has decided to hold a festival on April 14, 2012. This festival is the first event to be held in order boost town moral and inspire people to get involved. Several Route 66 organizations have been contacted and are advertising Depew Fest. Local organizations have also been very involved in the promotion of Depew Fest, and are looking forward to a eventful festival.

A pre-order of T-shirts was made on March 26, 2012. Forty-three T-shirts were sold at that time. T-shirts will also be sold at the festival in order to raise more funds.

Many different grant opportunities have been explored, although Depew was not able to receive a Rural Economic Action Program (REAP) grant this year, they will be at the top of the list next year. REAP grants are used to help small rural areas such as community development and transportation. Depew is hoping to apply for this and receive help with sidewalk repairs, signage, and street banners.
One way in which the community of Depew decided to further promote the town was through a community festival. This festival came to be known as Depew Fest, the first inauguration celebration of community spirit in Depew.

Depew Fest took place on April 14, 2012, on Main Street in Depew. The highlight of the festival was the reveal of De Pew. This reveal also helped gain support from community members who could finally visualize the pew on Main Street.

Depew Fest spanned an entire day with varied events for family fun. The festival itself kicked off at 10:00 AM with an official welcome and introduction at 11:30 AM. At this time around 100 people had gathered on Main Street and the excitement of the day commenced.

Miss Depew, Tatum Mills, Junior Miss Depew, Josie Morquecho, and Little Miss Depew, Dezirae Brown, were crowned at 2:00 PM. The pageant itself happened the night before at the high school auditorium. Eight girls participated in the pageant showcasing three different areas, casual wear, talent, and formal wear. The night was highly successful with an estimated attendance of sixty to seventy community members. The young competitors did an excellent job and most importantly had fun.

Around 3:00 PM the weather became questionable and the majority of vendors left paving the way for the promenade. The festival also shared the day with Depew High School Prom, attendees promenaded down Main Street at 4:00 PM. A limo, which was to pick up twenty-two of prom attendees, was staged behind the pew. The majority of the high school came to be announced and promenaded in front of family and friends. This event was one of the most successful and attended of the day. It has already been designated as an annual event of which will yearly be expanded.

At 5:00 PM Friends of Depew held their first official meeting discussing the improvement and new found engagement of the community. Friends of Depew decided to have their next meeting during community clean up day, May 5, 2012. The group will then meet and work together cleaning up the main entrances into town.

Because of the impending weather the street dance was moved indoors to Kohler Villa. From 8:00-10:00 PM around fifty community members were entertained by local musical artist, Robert Case. The event was fun for all ages and several dancing pairs lined the floor.

The festival consisted of fifteen vendors and various non-profit organizations. Vendors varied from jewelry and purses to snow cones. There were also attractions for the kids of Depew including an inflatable bounce house and obstacle course, pony rides, face painting and tug-of-war with the Boy Scouts.

Depew Fest had an estimated attendance of 200-300 people, an excellent turnout for a day with questionable weather. Luckily Depew avoided all rain and storms. Out of all the good which came from Depew Fest, the largest impression was teamwork. For such a small community which has had a large amount of turmoil in the past six months it was eye-opening to see groups of people with differing agendas coming together for something positive. Depew fest will hopefully be an annual event of community celebration where people can set aside their differences all for the common good.

Many lessons could be gained from our first year putting on Depew Fest. Weather most definitely is an issue and we are planning to push it back a few months next year. Also were are in discussions with other organizations about making the event parallel with other events in order to share crowds and bring more people to town. Putting on a festival cannot be done by one person and a large committee is necessary in order for things to run smoothly, luckily we had a fairly nice day and a great outcome to the festival, but things could have been more difficult. The biggest lesson learned from Depew Fest is that if you have an idea present it, Depew Fest started as little idea of mine and morphed into a great thing. This festival was a morale booster for Depew and shows that we can still make things happen when we work together.
Debbie & Melinda, vendors from the Bristow Garden Shoppe

De pew at initial setup 7:30 AM

OUUDS crew catching BBQ from Depew FFA for lunch

De pew after staging from Bristow Garden Shoppe

Miss Depew crowning; Dezirae Brown, Josie Morquecho, & Tatum Mills

Ms. Vandecar and middle school English face painting

Pony rides with Abram Vanorsdol

Ryan & Meagan Vandecar; Mike & Debbie Edmonds; Nicki, Riley, & Rob Vanderford

Depew Fest Photos 23
Eleven months later, Maintaining Small Town Character Through Adaptive Rural Communities, is an end. If we were to rewind to May 2011, I could have never expected the outcome presented today. As a goal in life I have always wanted to help people. As the idea of becoming a medical doctor faded, I have no tolerance for the sight of blood, I found myself searching for a career in which I could reach out to people. I can truly say that through the University of Oklahoma Urban Design Studio and The Institute for Quality Communities I have found my role within the community, small communities that is.

Through my professional project I have found my passion for small towns. I have also found my possible career path with the Institute for Quality Communities. The curriculum which I have created will hopefully serve as an example when the IQC begins the summer studio program. In this way the curriculum will have a lasting impact statewide. It is my hope to someday work with the IQC on this exact curriculum which I helped to create.

On a smaller scale, but a large impact itself, are the affects this project has had on the small town of Depew, Oklahoma. A small town which seemed to be slowly fading has now been given a new reason to regroup. As a resident of Depew I am amazed at the change in town morale. The community itself has been revitalized, talk of the pew is immense, and people are volunteering their time and effort to better Depew.

Brick sales to help fund the pew installation will end May 1, 2012. Hopefully enough funding will have been raised in order to have the pew installed. Fund-raising efforts are still underway and we are nearing $3,000 raised. Our community goal is to have the pew installed by summer 2012. Things are not always what they seem, in fall 2011, many people questioned the reasoning and even feasibility of my project in Depew. I even recall being told the community was too small and lacked resources needed to be successful. We pushed forward and it is amazing what we have discovered. The most important resource in any community are the people who live there. Population, age, gender and income all have important roles in the success of a community, but often the underlying factor in the success or failure of a community is the desire to do something. The desire of the people to see change and adaptation as a positive thing. Too often small communities are close-minded and want to see things the way they have always been. Often these communities would like to see things happen, but don’t have the motivation or as some might say energy to get things started.

Depew is an excellent example of a small struggling community which had a large amount of talent and desire for good things to happen, but needed a catalyst to get things going. In a few months Depew will be changing the landscape of Main Street for the first time in over fifty years, by installing a pew in the middle of Main Street. Although this pew will not solve everything in Depew, it is the first step in the right direction for what some people have designated a ghost town. Depew is adapting and in that way capitalizing on its distinctive name and also location on Historic Route 66. If nothing else the pew will help people to remember the town of Depew when they look back on a summer vacation and hopefully will want to come back again. The pew itself gives the town something to have pride in and something that no other nearby community has. Often when things start to slide negatively people forget what it is that attracted them to something originally. The pew and all that comes with it, such as Depew Fest, are a great reminder to the residents of Depew that we have something to treasure in our little community. It also helps to remind us that if we want things to happen and change for the better it is up to us to make the first step in that right direction. In Depew I was the catalyst that started things moving. Although I was somewhat new to the community my family was known and people trusted me. It will be more difficult for the IQC to recreate this in that it won’t necessarily have familiar faces to lean on. One advantage the IQC will have is a highly motivated community, a community which will have sought the expertise of the institute.

Since the development project has started in Depew several exciting things have happened. Depew has received new signage, four Historic Route 66 designations. Two new business are also soon to open, a restaurant and an antique shop. A new civic organization, Friends of Depew, are now working together as a team picking up where this project has ended. Also a new website which is accurate and up to date is in operation. As my friend and mentor Ron Frantz said in the Depew Report, “The non-textbook lesson to be learned here: ‘It only takes one person to pursue design dreams. All else is simply contagious.’”
Appendix A
Newspaper Articles

Appendix A-1
Coverage of initial presentation to the Town Board of Trustees, Bristow News Record

Highway Department approves Depew annexation; Feds require $4,000 bait traps to insure burying beetles safety
If it didn't cost $4,000, the discussion about Depew having to save the American Burrowing Beetle might have been humorous. However, the land recently purchased by the town for expansion of its wastewater treatment plant apparently has the potential to astring the beetle and in order to obtain funding from the federal government, the town is required to put out bait to attempt to discourage the beetle from settling on the property.
The baiting process must take place by Sept. 30 or the town will have to delay construction until the baiting is done next year because no funding requests will be considered until it is completed. That would mean the town would have to forgo a major grant for building the irrigation system for the land.
So it was a unanimous vote Monday, but not one supported with much enthusiasm.
The American Burrowing Beetle is the largest species of its genus in North America, measuring 0.89-1.4 inches in length. It was formerly known as the pilot cartoon beetle. The body of the American burrowing beetle is shiny black and has hardened protective wing covers (elytra) that meet in a straight line down the back. It has two oval-shaped orange-red markings. It is nocturnal (active at night), lives for only one year, and typically reproduces only once. They are carnivorous, dependent on carrion for food and reproduction. They play an important role in breaking down decaying matter and recycling it back into the ecosystem.

See Depew page 5

Appendix A-2
Short biography on myself covered in my hometown newspaper, The Paper.

Vandecar, a second-year graduate student at the University of Oklahoma Urban Design Studio in Tulsa, has taken special interest in how rural and small-town development can proceed in a world where the economy is always changing and increasingly competitive.
With the support of the Institute of Quality Communities, Meagin is working on a project titled, "Maintaining Small Town Character Through Adaptive Rural Communities."

Her work will serve as an experimental curriculum for the Small Town Studio, using her own town of Depew as a pilot.

Vandecar, a 2006 graduate of Chouteau High, presented her project to Depew community leaders in September, and her ideas have attracted considerable interest from locals, as well as the local chamber of commerce from neighboring Bristow.

This month, she started holding steering committee meetings to move the project forward.

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Appendix A-3
In depth interview about Maintaining Small Town Character Through Adaptive rural communities. Introduces DesignWorks and when the team will be coming to Depew, Bristow News Record.

RURAL STUDIES
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A town for the next 100 years

By Caleb Bloodman
Like any graduate student at the University of Oklahoma, Megan Vandecar, an Oklahomana native, picked her professional project, the equivalent to a master’s thesis.

Unlike many, however, she chose the city of Oklahoma City as her subject.

Megan Vandecar’s thesis project focuses on the city’s growing population and the need to maintain its small-town character.

"The town of Oklahoma City is a great place to live, work, and play," says Vandecar.

"It’s a place that has the ability to adapt and change with the times."

For her project, Vandecar is working with a team of graduate students and professional designers to come up with ideas to enhance the city’s character and quality of life.

"The goal is to create a plan that not only addresses the needs of today, but also sets a foundation for the future," says Vandecar.

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“A simple plan to describe it would be a city planning. I’ve met with the mayor and our 15 person steering committee made up of different DesignWorks organizations including the Senior Citizens Center and the School, and our initial focus will be on placing signs off site, that tells people about the buildings, planning events, etc.”

See Vandecar page 8
Appendix A-4
Advertisement in the Community Calendar for DesignWorks, Bristow News Record.

Appendix A-5
Coverage on the first day of DesignWorks in Depew, Oklahoma, Bristow News Record.

Depew meets with city planners and designers from OU

By Caleb Brabham

Wednesday and Thursday, the Design Works team of ten made up of members of the Institute for Quality Communities and the OU school of Urban Design met at Kohler Villa to discuss how to better preserve the character of Depew.

Ron Franz, of the Design Works team set the tone for the team’s sessions with the town, saying, “We don’t have all the answers, we don’t want all the answers. What we want is to meet you, talk and get your feedback.”

Depew is the first town the Design Works team has worked on, working as the model for the team’s vision of breathe new life into some of the forgotten towns of Old 66. The team is lead by project head and town resident, Meagan Vandecar, but the rest of the team are architects, urban planning and graphic design specialists from Oklahoma City. “For some this will even be their first time on Route 66,” says Franz. “It gives the project a fresh perspective. They come and meet the town without any preconceived notions of whether Depew is this or that.”

Among some of the ideas the team came up with through the sessions were signage ideas to notify drivers on 66 of Depew, even incorporating Depew’s water tower, giving passersby to Main Street where another sign would mark the street’s location. In addition, ways would be created to turn driving through Depew into a photo opportunity for tourists. Once in Depew, tourists could be persuaded to spend more time, and money, in the town. “The next thing to figure out is after we attract people, how do we get them to stay?” said Shawna Schaefer, Urban Design School Director. Citizens of Depew were instrumental in the workshop, as they were asked what makes back from the town, the Design Works Team will release their final report in the coming weeks. “Depew is such a cute little town,” Franz said. “You just want to put your arm around it, take care of it, and save everything you can.”
Appendix A
Newspaper Articles

Appendix A-6
Reveal of DesignWorks presentation. Official launch of Project Postcard and De Pew, Bristow News Record

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Bristow News

Wednesday

December 14, 2011

Vol. MMXIV No. 55
Covering Bristow and Creek County Oklahoma

Have a seat in “De Pew”

Depew Football players chosen for All District, All State teams.

By Caleb Broshar

Five players in Depew Football were named All District, Robert Lane, Ray Lewis, Sade Murrill, Sonny Stafford, and Makena Willerson. Of these players, none. Lance, Lewis, and Stafford will represent Depew when the All-Star team assemble in June to play in the Northeastern Oklahoma (NEO) of Miami.

Lance was chosen as the offensive MVP for his 1227 rushing yards, passing for 990 yards and 30 touchdowns. Lance started for three years as quarterback for the Hornets, averaging 450 yards rushing, quarterback sacks, 11 tackles for loss, one interception, averaging four yards per reception. Their offense added 7086 rushing yards, 1706 passing yards, and 992 yards.

Willerson was named one of the all-state receivers, caught 14 passes for 414 yards and 6 TD’s. Football has a

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The proposed signage to go along Route 66, encouraging passing motorists to visit Depew

Depew, continued from page 1

already been donated for the project.

Vandecar said that she would continue to work with the town until May when she will complete her master’s program. In the meantime, she plans to help organize a festival in the spring to help attract visitors and to inaugurate the idea.
First annual Depew fest on April 14 to celebrate unveiling of roadside pew

By Caleb Brabham

On Saturday April 14, Depew residents will have their first chance to sit in the Depew pew, crafted as a part of the Depew Works Committee as a draw for tourists traveling Route 66. The reveal of the pew will be the highlight of the day’s first annual Depew Fest, lasting from 10am until 10pm.

“The pew (donated by Church of Christ) has had the finishing touches laid upon it,” says Megan VandeCar, “The digital imaging department at OU has vinyl wrapped the pew for us. We will reveal it, shaking it in its location, but it will not be a permanent fixture until some time in June.”

Among the events scheduled during the Depew Fest will be a Miss Depew Pageant held on Friday night for elementary aged girls, with Miss Depew being crowned on Saturday. In addition there will be a craft fair held at Kohler Villa, a small classic car show, inflatables and a real obstacle course and bounce houses for kids, and an estimated 15 vendors.

“I was really shocked by how many people wanted to participate and just called me up to get involved,” said VandeCar.

VandeCar and the Depew Works Committee have raised approximately $2,500 for the funding of more projects, such as building the Depew water tower with a Route 66 logo.

See DepewFest page 8

Depew, from page 1

and a Depew label, and plan on applying for a transportation grant for additional funds. “We have a timeline; things that are expensive are going to take more work. We will continue working with people in the community (on these projects) from May and beyond.”
Appendix B
Original Small Town Studio Curriculum which covers a two semester studio class with week to week schedule.

The University of Oklahoma Mission
The mission of the University of Oklahoma is to provide the best possible educational experience for our students through excellence in teaching, research and creative activity, and service to the state and society.

The Institute for Quality Communities
The Institute for Quality Communities within the College of Architecture at the University of Oklahoma (肇IQC), is a forum for researchers, students and Oklahoma community leaders to collaborate in an effort to enhance Oklahoma communities. The Institute provides assistance and expertise on the forces of community growth and decline with a specific focus on improving the practice of community planning, design and governance.

Small Town Studio Curriculum per
The Small Town Studio will be offered as an elective course to the five different divisions of the College of Architecture. The student population will target 4th and 5th year undergraduate students as well as graduate students. The studio will aim at 15-25 students as a starting point and will possibly start the beginnings of their career as an introduction to historic preservation. Ron and Blair are discussing the day and time of the class and working with students to find what times will work best.

Small Town Studio Objectives
(These objectives unlike the above statements, are mine alone. In coming up with curriculum I felt it was very important to address the mission of OU as a whole, which is where I based my three point approach.

1. Educational experience – educate students on the structure of small towns through practical application creating professionals who will adequately work with rural communities supplying needed resources and tools to improve quality of small communities
2. Service to the state – Engage students with small rural communities to benefit these communities and improve the quality of life for residents statewide
3. Research and creative activity – Advance the understanding of small communities and their importance in the overall structure of Oklahoma through creative activity and research

Student Makeup
The makeup of the Small Town Studio will target mature students who are nearing a bachelor’s degree or working on their masters or Ph. D. from the University of Oklahoma. One way in which to broaden the studio with diversity would be to also include students from other disciplines, not only the College of Architecture. This would also add more interest in the studio and more participatory research from other areas of the college (also funding). Experimenting with specialty projects for a student’s focus area would be rewarding and also allow for the studio to have a broader range of expertise.

For example other areas of interest could include Master of Arts students majoring in Journalism and Mass Communication, History, Economics, or even Spanish. Master of Science students focusing on Civil Engineering, Botany, Engineering, Geology, Health and Exercise Science, or Psychology. Master of Specialty could include Accounting, Art History, Fine Arts, Business Administration, Education, Environmental Engineering, Public Administration, or Social Work.

Class Structure
There are several different structural ideas in which the class could be designed. It is very important to immerse the students into the fabric of small towns in order to wholly understand the makeup of the community; the following are possibilities of how to submerge the students.

1. The best and possibly most difficult opportunity would be to temporarily relocate students and have them live in the community in which they are studying for the semester. This would be somewhat like a studies abroad experience. In order to keep the class load up to par students could take online courses also, or possibly have a visiting professor come once weekly to direct the students in their studies.
2. Another possibility would be to bus students to and from the location several times weekly. This option would limit locations due to distance, cost, and time spent. It would be counterproductive to spend too much time in the car and less time working on the actual project.
3. Another option would to have the class take part on a Saturday; this would make for a long day, but a possible productive solution. Time could then be spent during the week working at the studio on the information which was gathered on a weekly basis.
4. Another option would be to immerse students and have them live in the town, but only for a short period. Possibly two weeks per semester. More than likely several day trips would also be necessary in order to complete the research.

Housing Options
If the idea of keeping students off the road is wanted, housing would be a necessity and very important to focus on. Below are several housing opportunities which could be further developed

1. Students could live with “host homes” becoming part of the community at a low cost.
2. Students could stay in local housing, low cost apartments, or rental homes with a community feeling where students would live together creating their own internal community as well.
3. Students could live in hotel/motel arrangements.
4. OU could repurpose some of the local buildings which need attention into dormitories. Grant opportunities such as HOPE VI provides for the help of changing Main Street Buildings into low cost housing. These buildings would be occupied by students for the entirety of a year and then could be used by the community as low cost housing therefore leaving the community with a larger economic base.
5. OU could repurpose an old RV and create a mobile travel unit for the class. This unit would be very versatile and not extremely expensive. This method would limit class size and also could create confrontation with small areas and large amounts of traffic.
6. Churches or community centers could be utilized and transformed into temporary housing.

Ways to attract and maintain enrollment
1. Recruit students who are interested in travel and investigating different lifestyles
2. Offer free/reduced housing while studying upon maintain certain requirements
3. Offer living expense tuition waivers
4. Work with communities to create part-time paid employment for students while there
5. Present class as a cultural exploration of the many different aspects of Oklahoma living
6. Arrange special community events which engage students in unique ways

Appendix B
Appendix B (Continued)

Semester Outline
These objectives will be achieved through class activities, below is a possible fall 16 week semester outline for the Small Town Studio working in a particular community. The large class project would resemble something of a town plan for the community; this project should last the duration of two semesters or one entire year. The small projects would be smaller projects that students would work on their own or with a small team, these projects should be developed in the fall semester, the spring semester then should be dedicated to implementation and capacity building. Students would actually learn how to implement projects and experiment on ways to procure funding, resources, etc.

Fall Semester
Week 1
The first task which students should accomplish is familiarizing themselves with the community in which they will be working. The first day on site should consist entirely of exploration and discussion of possible projects within the community. Preferably some ground work could be completed by a GA such as some basic maps and history compilation.
  - Establish work location, where students will be able to work and also house and showcase the progress of the project
  - Photo survey of the area divided among students
  - Students should take notes on areas of interest for their own possible small project and develop this to present to the rest of the class on a rough-draft basis (more possible class credit for small project)
  - Students should introduce themselves to the community possibly an informal gathering such as a meet and greet. This would also be a good way to get a handle of the community and their interests as well.

Week 2
Students should further familiarize themselves with community members. This could consist of finding stakeholders and understanding the undercurrent of the operation of local affairs. Class projects should also be discussed in this stage
  - Discuss large class project and possibilities there
  - Create project schedule
  - Meet with the local government and school system to establish partnerships
  - Establish a group of stakeholders

Week 3
Documentation will be extremely important to the project this week will focus highly on information management and documentation.
  - Establish what the large class project will be and divide tasks
  - Create a project website/blog to document the process (hard copy prints of this will be needed as well in small communities which do not have internet access)
  - Start mapping the area, divide maps along areas of interest and specialty.
  - Set up documentation folders in order to keep things neat and orderly

Week 4
This week will focus on small project development. Revisions will be necessary in order for students to present small project ideas to the community the next week. Production of maps and documentation for the community meeting will also need to be finished this week
  - Individual students present small project idea to class with feedback
  - Conduct informal meetings with people of interest
  - Divide tasks and create outline for community workshop making sure all students know their assigned projects and needed research

Week 5
The community workshop will be necessary in gaining community involvement and also support for the project. The workshop will also give students areas on which to focus their interests and studies.
  - Hold community workshop (DesignWorks)
  - Large class project as well as small projects will be presented to community for feedback, students will also receive new ideas for small projects from community
  - Document workshop and begin compiling the event into an understandable document

Week 6
Analyzing the workshop and ways to improve it will be ever important to the studio. Different communities will have different ways on participating and also understanding the way in which ideas are presented.
  - Reflect on community workshop, document successes and ways of improvement
  - Continue community involvement, meeting with stakeholders and residents
  - Finalize direction of small projects making revisions where necessary

Week 7
Documentation will be very important, it is often difficult to look back months later and document an event, this is why the period for documentation is short.
  - Finish documentation of DesignWorks
  - Continue to update project website/pages
  - Continue work on large class project along with small projects

Week 8 (halfway through semester)
The large class project should be taking shape and students should understand their role in the project, completing tasks as assigned. Small projects should be halfway complete and the model building process (by hand, computer, or model) should begin taking place.
  - Students present small projects once again to class to document progress and gain feedback on still needed revisions
  - Continue research and documentation needed on community

Week 9
This week focuses on work; students should know their tasks and have plenty which needs to be worked on and nearing completion. This week should also be used for preparation for the mid-semester presentation to the community.
  - Continue working on large class project present updates at Week 10 workshop
  - Further develop small projects for presentation at Week 10 workshop
  - Compile all needed documentation for Week 10 workshop

Week 10
This will be the second community meeting. Students should have recruited a larger number of community members through daily interactions and communications with stakeholders. At this meeting DesignWorks will be summarized and documentation will be available for community members. Student will present their small project development thus far for feedback and presentation at the final workshop.
  - Hold community workshop
  - Present findings from DesignWorks
  - Present updates on large project
  - Present updates on small projects
  - Enlist interested community members with associated projects

Appendix B
Appendix B (Continued)

Week 11
This week onward will focus on a large amount of work generated by the students. Tasks are assigned and students know what will be expected of them at the final workshop.
- Review and summarize community workshop
- Continue to document and update websites/pages
- Continue developing models for small project final presentation on Week 16 workshop
- Begin documentation of fall semester into summarized handout (not all small communities have internet access)
- Small projects can be made into small brochures for easy explanation/resource

Week 12
These weeks (12-13) should mostly focus on the bulk of work which is to be completed by the end of the semester
- Focus on models and documentation

Week 13
These weeks (12-13) should mostly focus on the bulk of work which is to be completed by the end of the semester
- Focus on models and documentation

Week 14
Work should be nearing finished product. Students should work on publicity for the final semester workshop. This could be done through meetings, newspapers, radio, door-to-door, public meetings.
- Continue developing large class project and small projects
- Create flyers and posters to distribute throughout town
- Distribute flyers and with one-on-one contact
- Secure steering committee to provide for final community meeting

Week 15
This week will focus on the compilation of all semester work. By the end of week 15 the students should be finished, work after this will not be accepted and the presentation should also be finalized by a given date.
- Create implementation schedules for small projects in spring
- Work on compiling documentation into presentable format
- Decide on presentation and arrangement

Week 16 (end of fall semester)
- Hold community workshop, end of semester presentation
- Present progress on large class project
- Present finished small projects and schedule for implementation for spring semester on small projects
- Secure community members to lead implementation
Appendix C
Steering Committee Documents

Appendix C-1
Initial steering committee letter inviting community members to join.

September 26, 2011
Dear Community Member,
This letter is to inform you of my interest in you as an informed, responsible, and active community member. The next step in my project progression is the forming of a steering committee. This committee will be formed of community stakeholders who have an interest in the betterment of Depew and who are dedicated to the process. As a steering committee member you will provide me advice about structure in progression of my professional project. I will look to the steering committee first to help lead in community involvement and to participate in community events. The steering committee will not have the final say in project decisions, but all opinions will be highly regarded. You were selected because of your ongoing interest in Depew and the establishments you represent, already making the first step of commitment to Depew’s future. If you so choose to be a member of the committee I would like to meet within the next few weeks, possibly a Saturday morning or weekday evening whichever works best for the majority. This meeting will be the first step towards a better Depew, a meeting in which we will talk about your goals, vision, and interests for the future of Depew. I myself have many ideas I look forward to sharing and look forward to hearing all of your ideas as well. Please let me know of your interest and if you will be able to participate in the committee. If you have any further questions, or would like to talk to my professor at the Urban Design Studio you may contact Shawn Schaefer at (918)660-3493.

I look forward to speaking with you soon,
Meagan Vandecar
(918)855-5982 or (918)324-5595

Appendix C-2
SWOT Analysis from 10-8-11 steering committee meeting

Steering Committee SWOT Analysis
October 8, 2011
Strengths
Business owners
Community kinship
School system (expands rural community)
Naturalist park
Biker rally

Weaknesses
Weak materials in Main Street buildings
Lack of maintenance
Laid back attitudes
One of few towns on Turnpike without Turnpike ramp

Opportunities
Food establishments
New businesses in Mimi’s Cafe
2 Beauty shops
Mifay, Shamrock, & Gypsy
PTA (contact Gypsy for advice)

Threats
Small school closings (Milfay to Stroud)
Possible loss of Post Office
Biker Rally

Appendix C-3
Steering committee meeting agenda 10-8-11

Maintaining Small Town Character through Adaptive Rural Communities
Steering Committee Meeting
October 8, 2011
8:00 AM Depew High School

Agenda
8:00 AM Introductions
8:15 AM Project Overview
8:30 AM SWOT Analysis
9:00 AM Question & Answers
9:15 AM Conclusion

Thank you for your attendance and cooperation. I look forward to more community input and participation in the future. If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions feel free to contact me.

Meagan Vandecar
(918) 855-5982
(918) 324-5595
meaganvandecar@live.com

Facebook: Maintaining Small Town Character through Adaptive Rural Communities
or meaganvandecar.blogspot.com

The University of Oklahoma is an equal opportunity institution. Accommodations for disability or questions, please call (918) 660-3493
Maintaining Small Town Character through Adaptive Rural Communities
Steering Committee Meeting

November 9, 2011
4:00 PM
Depew High School

Agenda
4:00 PM Discussion of DesignWorks event November 16th & 17th
- Introduction of team members
- Discussion of lunch 16th & 17th
- Questions, comments, suggestions

Thank you for your attendance and cooperation. I look forward to more community input and participation in the future. If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions feel free to contact me.

Meagan Vandecar
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### Community Meeting Sign-In Sheet

**February 4, 2012**

**10:00 AM**

Kather Vila

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
<th>Email Address</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lisa Vandecar</td>
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OUUDDS
Appendix D
DesignWorks community of Depew, Oklahoma, team visit

Appendix D-1
DesignWorks proposal

Proposed DesignWorks Team Visit
Spring 2012
Depew, Oklahoma

This is a proposed DesignWorks Team Visit that includes 4 elements:
This is to serve as a test run for the DesignWorks Team Visit as well as a case study for the Tulsa Design Studio.

Meagan M. Vandecar

Meagan is currently a graduate student on scholarships at the Architectural Urban Studies Program at the Tulsa campus. She lives in Depew, Oklahoma, in Creek County. Meagan has a proposal for her thesis titled, “Maintaining Small Town Character through Adaptive Rural Communities.”

Depew, Oklahoma
This is Meagan’s current hometown. Depew has 564 people. It is located 49 miles southwest of Tulsa, Oklahoma. The quality of architecture represents the heyday when historic Route 66 rolled across the hills of this part of Creek County. Currently, many of the buildings are in poor condition. They can be saved, though.

DesignWorks Program
This is a program currently administered by the Oklahoma Main Street Center at the Oklahoma Department of Commerce. This program is for delivering design services to very small towns, such as Depew.

The Proposal
The proposal is to work with Meagan on her thesis by having a DesignWorks Team Visit go to her hometown of Depew, Oklahoma, in the spring of 2012. Along with Meagan, we would include Fred Schmidt and a couple of faculty from the College of Architecture or the Institute for Quality Communities or the Architectural Urban Studies Program. The recommendation is to have no more than 5 people on the team due to costs, logistics, and community reception. (Too many people may overwhelm a town the size of Depew!)

Depew DesignWorks Team
(Frantz, 2011)

Appendix D-2
DesignWorks agenda

Depew DesignWorks Team Visit
Wednesday and Thursday, November 16 & 17, 2011

Institute for Quality Communities
Tulsa Urban Design Studio
The University of Oklahoma
College of Architecture

Wednesday, November 16, 2011
8:30am Arrive in Depew, Oklahoma
Meet at Kohler Villa Event Center, 309 Main Street, Depew, Oklahoma

10:30am Tour downtown Depew and surrounding neighborhoods

Lunch with community leaders and interested citizens
Lunch provided at the Depew Citizens Center, 412 Main Street. (This is within walking distance of Kohler Villa.)

1:30pm Potential tour of Route 66 east to Sapulpa, Oklahoma OR meetings with community leaders

3:00pm Meetings with community leaders
Meet at Kohler Villa Event Center, 309 Main Street, Depew, Oklahoma

4:00pm Meetings with community leaders or site visit of prospective design project
Kohler Villa Event Center, 309 Main Street, Depew, Oklahoma

5:30pm Reception
(targeting commuters who are returning home to Depew)
Kohler Villa Event Center, 309 Main Street, Depew, Oklahoma

6:30pm Team leaves Depew, schedules a quick supper in Stroud with discussion included
Best Western Stroud Motor Lodge, 1200 N. 8th Avenue, Stroud, Oklahoma
918/968-9200
Stroud Exit 179 off I-44

8:00pm Team members work on assigned tasks

Thursday, November 17, 2011
8:00am Team members schedule working breakfast
Restaurant located at Best Western Stroud Motor Lodge

9:30am Team members head to Depew to work (photograph, map, document, etc.) OR team members work on visual presentation as needed.
Kohler Villa Event Center, 309 Main Street, Depew, Oklahoma

12:30pm Lunch
Provided by Depew Elementary School, 500 West 7th Street. This will be their special Thanksgiving Luncheon.
(This is within walking distance of Kohler Villa.)

2:00pm Finalize design recommendations and public presentation
Kohler Villa Event Center, 309 Main Street, Depew, Oklahoma

5:30pm Reception
Kohler Villa Event Center, 309 Main Street, Depew, Oklahoma

6:00pm Public presentation
Kohler Villa Event Center, 309 Main Street, Depew, Oklahoma

7:30pm Team returns to Norman, Oklahoma

Got lost in Depew? Contact information:
Meagan Vandecar  918/855-5982 (cell)
Ron Frantz  405/740-0854 (cell)
Blair Humphreys  405/819-0085 (cell)

Depew DesignWorks Proposed Agenda
(Frantz 2011)

Appendix D
Appendix D-3
DesignWorks community sign-in-sheets, November 16, 2011
Appendix D
DesignWorks community of Depew, Oklahoma, team visit

Appendix D-4
DesignWorks community sign-in-sheets, November 17, 2011

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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The Design team visits your town and works closely with community members to identify local needs and to set goals for improvement.

This on-site visit consists of interviews with community members, historical research and a walking tour to uncover potential design initiatives that could significantly improve the town’s image.

Design Workshop in Depew, Oklahoma
November 16th & 17th 2011
Main Street Depew

For more information on DesignWorks contact:
Ron Frantz (405) 325-3734 or RFrantz@ou.edu

For any local questions about the event contact:
Meagan Vandecar (918) 855-5982 or meaganvandecar@live.com

Wednesday, November 16th
10:30 AM DesignWorks team arrives in Depew
12:00 PM Lunch with community leaders and interested citizens
5:30 PM Reception, Kohler Villa

Thursday, November 17th
5:30 PM Reception, Kohler Villa
6:00 PM Public Presentation of Design Works Plan, Kohler Villa
**The Depew Report**

*The University of Oklahoma Institute for Quality Communities, DesignWorks Team Visit*

**Design Team Focus**

Project goals: Depew, Oklahoma is an existing community that needs improved community design and development. The focus of the DesignWorks Team was to identify and implement design solutions that could improve the community's future. The team worked to create a comprehensive plan for the community's development, from infrastructure improvements to community events. The report includes a detailed analysis of the community's strengths and weaknesses and recommendations for future development.

**Project Postcard**

Depew Community Branding

**Introduction**

The outcome of the DesignWorks Community Workshop is the creation of a brand for Depew that harnesses the city’s heritage, their position in a contemporary context, and the potential for future advancement. This document illustrates the various graphic elements of the Depew brand and how they can be applied to several opportunities at various scales.

**DesignWorks Itinerary**

*The University of Oklahoma Institute for Quality Communities, DesignWorks Team Visit*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>November 15</td>
<td>8am</td>
<td>Welcome from Depew Council of Government</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Welcoming remarks from local leaders and community members</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Depew Community Workshop - Introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10am</td>
<td>DesignWorks Team Presentation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>12pm</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1pm</td>
<td>Depew Community Workshop - Branding Workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4pm</td>
<td>Walkthrough of community facilities</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Discussion with community leaders and stakeholders</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Final preparation of the workshop</td>
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</table>

*Depew, Oklahoma November 16-17, 2011*
Appendix E - The Depew Report

The Depew water tower creates an iconic beacon from afar. Visible from the Turnpike and entry points off I-66, a refresh of the tower with both the Depew brand and the school mascot provides a renewed sense of community pride.

By aligning the graphics to the east and west sides of the water tower (the visibility to those on I-66 will be increased).

The Depew ad campaign billboard creates community identification points for vehicular traffic at the primary east and west entry points off I-66.

The ad campaign is a large scale application of the Depew brand, and provides an identification of the City as a destination through the Pew roadside attraction.

The east ad campaign as indicated from I-66, facing west. A companion version of this ad would also be located at the south entry point from I-66.

Primary entry points to Main St. and Downtown Depew will be marked by a simple post and panel sign system denoted by the brand, accompanied by an arrow directional. Aluminum signage panels with overprinted graphics are an accessible solution to confirming direction to Downtown Depew, and the postcard attraction.

New sign posts along Main Street identifying it as the original Route 66 will complement the entry point signposts.

These elements form an elemental language that extend Depew brand to the Main Street streetscape, while highlighting the postcard attraction and identify the iconic Route.

"Come take a seat in Depew!" The main attraction to the Depew branding project is the signature Pew on Main Street.

A reclined Pew, painted high gloss white with an automotive type paint finish and a classic Route 66 logo painted as the feet of the bench, creates the most see roadside attraction in Downtown Depew.

A series of seasonal banners highlighting the graphic icons of Depew will activate the Main Street corridor streetscape.

Banners can be attached with simple hardware to existing streetscape posts and lamp posts. Graphics can be directly printed to either vinyl or canvas banners. Graphics can be classic Route 66 black and white or the hometown team’s signature blue colors.

(Depew Report, IQC)
The sectional diagram indicates the main streetscape elements including the Banners, and the main postcard attraction.

Brands for communities can scale from super sized monuments to everyday objects like stickers and matchbooks, and of course T-Shirts.

Applying the Depew brand to merchandise provide an opportunity for the showcasing of the Depew brand to objects that will receive visibility outside of the community, and create an instant potential for people to seek out the town as a destination. Products sold in town also provides a great economic incentive to local businesses.

Acknowledgements

Endnote

This is a larger than it seems. However, the three groups each offer different forms of assistance for a project like this. Due to this extensive collaboration of professionals, the implementation of this project is well underway.

Special thanks to Morgan Vandeputte, a graduate student at the University of Idaho and a resident of Depew, Okanogan, in doing research for this graduate project, she contacted many people searching for information that would help her to inspire the Depew community. Her creative, research and writing skills, brought the Depew brand to a higher level. In the last month period, the idea of the Design/Build Team from Vonn developed, the mix of knowledge and efforts among different people, each other and persons of different directions. All of it is simply unique.
Appendix F
Pew Renderings

Appendix F-1
Original rendering of the pew with a circular base and planters in place of bollards for protection

Appendix F-2
Revised circular rendering of the pew with a brick base or with stained concrete and bollards

Appendix F-3
Final pew renderings with a rectangular brick base and also depicted with lighting donated by the Town of Depew