

City of Black River Falls
BRANDING COMMITTEE – AGENDA

Monday – May 5, 2025 – 2:00 PM
City Hall – 101 S. Second Street, Black River Falls, WI

1. Call to Order
2. Review survey results
3. Discuss next steps
4. Set next meeting date and time – Action
5. Adjourn

Posted: April 30, 2025

Black River Falls Community Perspectives Survey

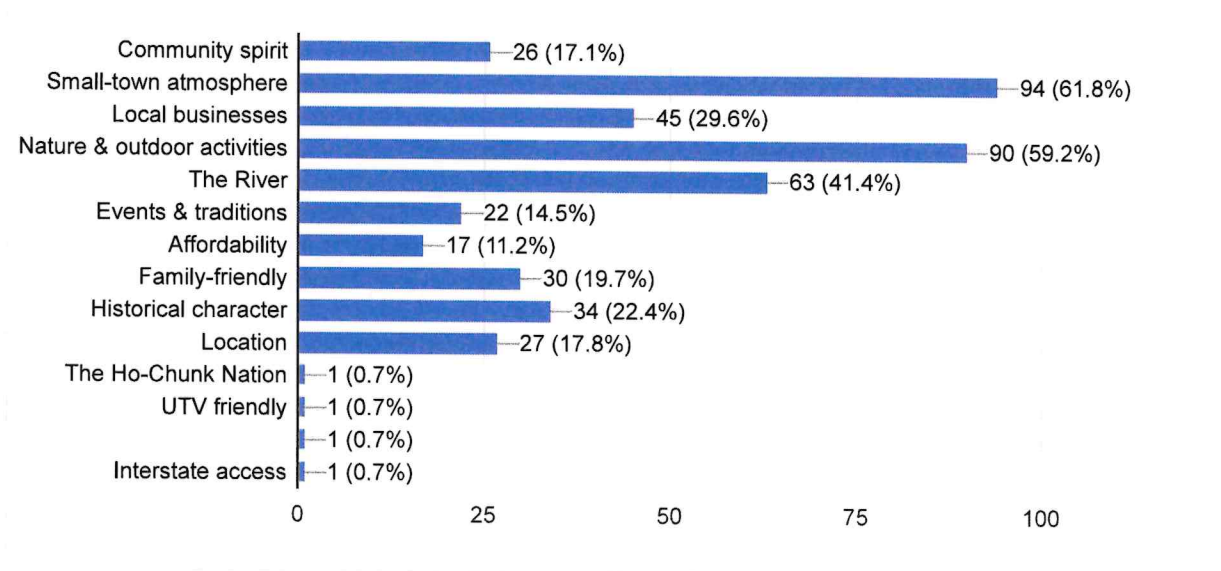
152 responses

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What do you love most about Black River Falls? (Choose up to three)

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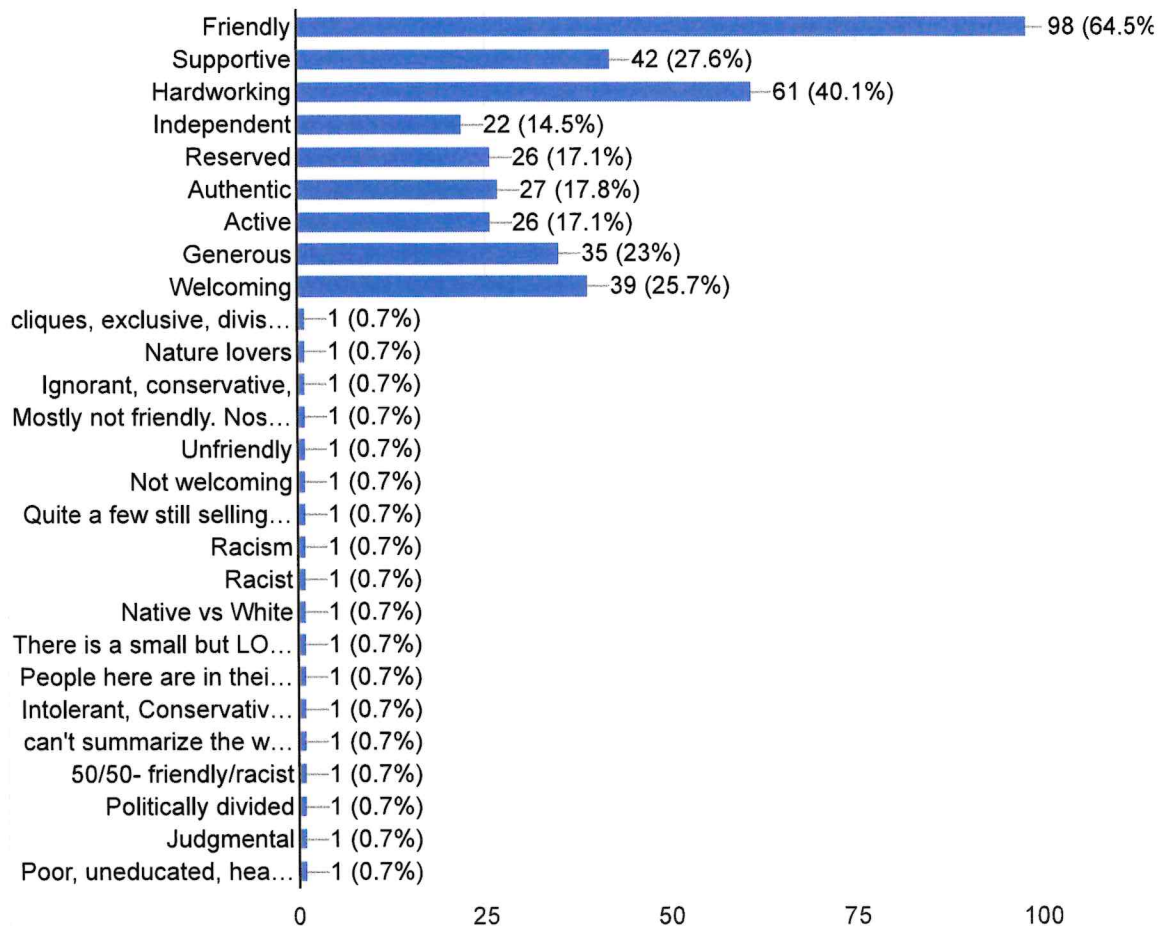
152 responses



How would you describe the people here? (Choose up to three)

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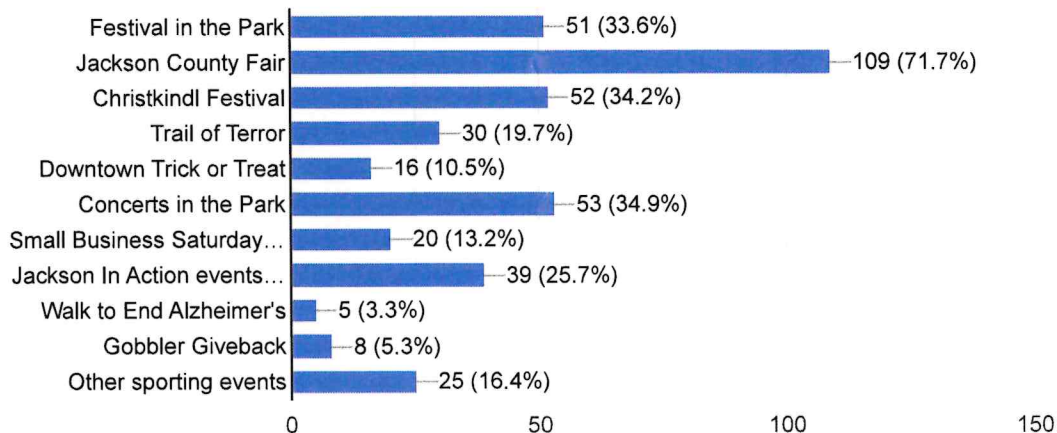
152 responses



Which local events and traditions do you enjoy most? (Choose up to three)

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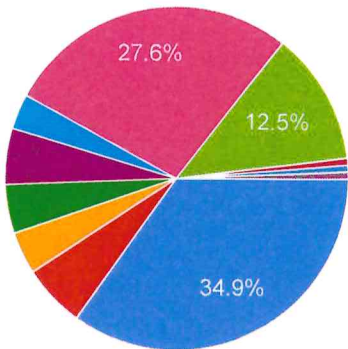
152 responses



What's one thing you would **never** change about Black River Falls?
(Choose one)

 Copy

152 responses



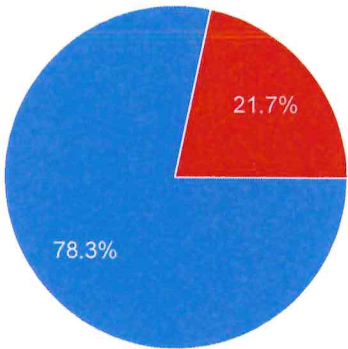
-  The scenery
-  The events & traditions
-  The local businesses
-  The people
-  The pace of life
-  The affordability
-  The small-town character
-  The historical preservation

▲ 1/2 ▼

Would you recommend living here to others?

 Copy

152 responses



-  Yes
-  No



If you said no to the question above, why would you not recommend living here to others?

41 responses

I would definitely recommend living here for sure 🍷

there's not a whole lot to do other than bars and hikes

I have friends who won't live here because their family member was murdered and the Sheriff's Dept. didn't do their job.

High tax

Needs to be a third option, i would recommend fir sime, no for others. The republicans make it less bearable.

Long ride to Madison

Drug issues and mental health issues and homelessness

We have a lot to work on as a community and have a lot of cleaning up to do.

Great place but at times very challenging.

To expensive in prices, taxes, and not enough businesses to shop and work.

Not a lot of choices to eat, shop

I didnt say no, but worring too much about the other guy. Nosey.

high taxes and not alot of industry for jobs

Drug addicts roaming town, schools less than par, main Street is mainly lawyer's bars and tattoo shops.

I don't live here, but I work here everyday.

There is no growth

Lack of businesses, schools, people arnt very friendly, high people walking the street (safety)friendly



Because there is way to much meth use no justice sanctions, probation, or jails that effectively stopping what is going on. In fact, its horrible that we have 3 meth houses within walking distance of the scools..

Too much drugs and alcohol

Lack of diversity in food, community, and people.

Incompetent law enforcement and drugs

The crime rate has gone up, specifically drugs, and the number of sex offenders that are in residence here is growing all the time.

I would recommend, but with a warning at the cost of property taxes.

Unless you are an avid outdoorsperson, there isn't much to do in BRF. Limited businesses downtown w/ limited hours. One Saturday I drove through downtown on my way to Sparta about 11a, hardly anyone out, not many businesses open. When I got to Sparta, there were all sorts of people downtown walking to restaurants and businesses. It was quite a contrast with these two downtown areas.

Not enough good housing, events falling off due to being run by gauche individuals

Too much crime and drugs. Nothing constructive for young people. No movie theatres arcades or anything like that. Too many bars. Lack of controlling sexual predators.

The people running the streets/the drug and crime issues/we have been robbed 5 times and have had 3 cars stolen. My son's car was hit by a hit and run driver and the cops did nothing! His car was totaled and they didn't care!!!

Housing affordability

There is drugs in this community and there are individuals who are not right in the head

Too many drug dealers in every neighborhood that the police do nothing about. Too many mini junkyards that are never cleaned up especially in Brockway. Black River has no growth. Businesses try to start and fail all the time. Ugly painted buildings on mainstreet. There are no houses to rent or buy. There are no real jobs.

Lack of good paying jobs (70k+ year). We lack in professional jobs that pay higher wages. We will never get people to move here if we don't have higher paying jobs.

too many addicts and unhomed

Politics within City Hall, BRF School Board, and Library.



Lack of housing choices

School district is questionable for children; too distant from arts-activities (or I'm not in the right networks); still a prevalent attitude that Ho-Chunk is separate from the BRF community.

Property taxes are too high and the school district is undesirable if you don't fit in.

Crime, lack of things to do that aren't kid or outdoor direct

Too politically divided. Community has so many knowledgeable outdoor folks. Many locals so hardened they can't see the great opportunities in the area.

There is no affordable housing and a severe lack of progress. This doesn't feel like a charming small town anymore and instead feels like a business solely focused on appearing successful.

N/A

Walk ability and bikability lacking. Lunda trail not maintained. Affordable housing options are lacking, not a lot to do outside of drinking. The dynamic of the Ho-Chunk nation. Poor enforcement of the law (no one charged in elementary vandalism and other cases)



What's one thing you wished more people knew about Black River Falls?

152 responses

History

the history

The history

Na

How great the forest is

Lunda center

The outdoor activity that is available to us

All the small businesses

How beautiful the scenery is and how many assets we have

Although BRF doesn't have some of the more "exciting" amenities that a larger city may have, there are lots of little hole in the wall places in and around Black River Falls that are unique and worth exploring; restaurants, antiques, boutiques, scenery.

The Native way of life (I'm white but work for the Ho-Chunk Nation).

Its a great small town

State park

How much infrastructure there is for a small town. (Library, dog park, parks, food banks, foundation trail)

Beauty

How passionate and giving our community is.

Great local businesses

Our scenic beauty

Pj's bar!



It is known for mining to visit nearby mined

We are home to beautiful cranberry marshes

We're not all doing meth.

That the river offers more than just fishing, tubing, canoeing and gold mining are just a few that come to mind.

Not sure.

About our Native American history and tradition as well as our Amish history and traditions

Just what a great community it is

History of Black River Falls

Small town living but within arms reach for bigger cities.

That there is not technically a "Falls"

How lucky we are to have such a great opportunities here

It's safe

How beautiful the city is

Opportunities for business growth especially in the trades. Could ne successful as there are needs for many contractors

It's many resources available.

The scenery. Maybe have canoe or some boat trips for people.

the kindness of the people

History and the beauty of the black River

It's home to Lake Wazee

We are a very giving community

There's a pet park



We have a very generous community that pulls together when someone is in need and for our youth sports

How beautiful it is.

The diversity of the community

The Local, Small Businesses

The atmosphere of the friendly people and things to do here.

All of the outdoor recreation it has to offer

Recreational Opportunities

The dark side of it

The people are very friendly and helpful

That government is accessible.

For a small town there is so much to offer in terms of a high quality school system (with public support to fund that system), businesses, events, farmers market, extracurriculars, and amenities (eg lunda center, Hoffman aquatic, ice rink, foundation trail, hospitals)

How welcoming it is when you are new here.

Scenery

How supportive the small community can be

It used to be a nice, close knit community...

Nature/scenery

I wish the doj and thier special agents knew how much meth is here. Someone needs to help clean up Black River Falls.

It's a great in-between place to live between LaCrosse and Eau Claire to get out of the bigger cities and enjoy the small town life.

Community connections and opportunities

how fun the river is to kayak or float



How kind and helpful everyone is.

Several opportunity to be active

lots of job opportunities

There are opportunities to engage in outdoor activities less than 5 minutes from town. Actually in town if you count fishing by Al Young Park, and the foundation trail.

It is fun to live here.

That we have great outdoor activities

The affordability and the Lunda center

Local businesses

City administrator is an arrogant fool who is unqualified for the job.

Not sure

The amount of time and heart that the community members put into youth sports/clubs/activities in order to keep our children active, safe and healthy.

That it really is a good place and some people put a LOT of effort into the community for events that are well worth attending.

I don't know

IDK

The opportunity we have to grow

Ho-Chunk History

Ho-Chunk history

The upper and lower Black River are easily accessible

we care

The scenery

The homeless and drug population is out of control.



When you get plugged in you'll meet the most incredibly kind, generous and genuine people here. I'd also like to highlight just how many outdoor activities there are to do here!

All that it has to offer in nature

the town is more than just a good place to ride ATVs near

local businesses

Great customer service at the local businesses

that we are one of the biggest little cities in Wisconsin.

The history

So many activities to offer, indoors and out!

Good place to live

All the activities we have going on

I wish more people knew the history of the town.

Restaurant

Native culture

There's decent restaurants that don't have bars.

that we are a very diverse community and makes that work to our advantage.

for a small town the amazing facilities it has

The stores.

not sure

47 more responses are hidden



What do you consider as Black River Falls' most valuable community assets?

152 responses

Lunda center

the people

Lunda Community Center

Lunda Center

The river

Lunda Community Center

The people

The people

Jackson county forest

City Hall, Parks & Rec, Library, Fire department, Local Banks

Small town character

culture, waking trails

The local businesses

That it's a quaint riverside community with a plethora of outdoor recreational activities around every bend.

The people at the food pantries and our churches.

The river is beautiful

River

Library, dog park, foundation trail, lunds park abd center

It's people.

It's History



Recreational activities

The variety of community activities

Outdoor activities. ATV trails

Small town atmosphere

Affordable

Our facilities that have been donated by our generous local families including the Lunda Park, Hoffman Aquatic Center, Foundation Trail and the Lunda Community Center!

Trails, parks, giving

Small businesses

The foundation trail and the river

Walking trail, Lunda Community Center

It's historic downtown riverfront and falls. Its trails and stores to shop at and great restaurants to dine out at. The casino and hotels are great too.

The generous people

Nature, river, and concerts in the park.

Krohn Clinic

The generosity of some of the residents

Lunda center, park and ice arena

Traditional values

The generous people, coming together for a cause

The recreation. Unfortunate though that the roads are not all open to UTV traffic as that is a downfall for increasing tourism and the flow of money coming to local businesses/restaurants, etc

It's people and welcoming atmosphere.



Small town atmosphere.

The Black River, Lunda center

Our coalitions

Lunda park

Lake Wazee

Fairgrounds, LCC, hiking, our people

Foundation Trail

Volunteer workers

Willingness to try change/new things

Small business'

The river, Wazee Lake

Generous, Supportive, and Giving Community

The River

The parks and river

The schools, hospitals/clinics, rec center, ice rink, aquatic center, trails, festivals, and the people who help make those resources flourish

Lunda Center, Walmart, fair grounds, walking trails

Small-Town Character

The outdoor activities such as the walking trail, Lunda park, etc.

Small community look

The people in the community

I am seriously starting to wonder. Sure has changed for the worst since we moved here 20 years ago.



We have "big city" vibes and small town charm

Lunda center, Lunda park, healthcare opportunities local

historic downtown area. I like that feel. however it seems like some rough looking people hang downtown at times.

Historical buildings and the Black River

Nursing homes, clinic, hospital

lots of job opportunities

Our plethora of recreational activities

Outdoor activities

the river

Library 100%

Downtown

The community members.

The small business and volunteer involvements and opportunities.

The river, the casino

The many parks.

Beautiful scenery walking trails

Indigenous Community

Natural resources

Lunda Community Park

small town atmosphere

Ho-Chunk nation



The River and the State Forest

Our children

Lunda Center, Lunda Park, the chamber of commerce's event organization

Community Events, specifically outdoor events that encourage being active

our public spaces, the community center, the farmers market

Parks

downtown

Nature

outdoor recreation

So many groups constantly working to make it a better place for everyone!

It's people

Linda Center and Park

I believe the Karner Blue Club is such an asset to our community. They beautify our town.

Rivrr

Community resources

The foundation trail, the public library

BRF being the central point of Jackson County's natural beauty.

44 more responses are hidden



When you think of Black River Falls, what comes to mind as its most recognizable or iconic feature?

152 responses

River

The river

the river

The River

The Black River

The Dam

The dam

Lake Wazee

Lunda center

Dam

The orange moose

the dam

The Catholic church

The dam.

Main Street driving into the Catholic Church 🇺🇸

Main Street

cute downtown

Saddle Mound, Bell Mound, Castle Mound

The dam



Falls

View from the bridge of the small downtown and church

Historic Downtown

Murals

Charm and scenery

The BRF Tigers!!!!

Lunda community

Meth

The catholic church on the hill.

The river and dam.

The Orange Moose and its haunting 1890's history. The states very first public library.

River, trails, atving, nature, and bridge to downtown.

Main Street looking from the bridge to the Catholic Church

St. Joseph parish at the top of the hill

Downtown area, old buildings and the river/dam

The Black River

Lunda Park

Historical murals

Dam/ river

The river, the orange moose (although it needs repainting), the forest, the fairgrounds, and the Tigers

The Mighty Black River!



The Catholic Church & The Dam/River (tie)

Wazee Lake

Hydroelectric Dam/River

Casino

The River

Historical Town

River, Catholic Church at the top of the hill

Bridge walkers on meth, dirty needles at the skate park, coolers of needles at elderly ladies house, and more drugs than ever around here.

The downtown aka Main Street

Lunda park

falls by the dam

Historic Buildings

Clocks and the downtown area. Especially the view from the bottom of the bridge at the intersection.

Incompetent city administrator

The Orange Moose

Historic downtown

The Bridge

The courthouse is iconic. The river is obvious. The forest. The dam.

ATV trails

Ho-Chunk Nation

The river, Ho-Chunk the construction companies



Not what it use to be

The dam at the bridge

the river, the hill on main street

Church

small businesses

Dam and bridge

Deer hunting capital of America banner that use to span main street

Something to do every season

The river and dam or the view going up main street

The river and the summer flowers.

The black river obviously

The River, most of the time serene and sometimes wild.

Lunda Park

How beautiful the town is.

Lunda community center

Main street view looking downtown from the bridge

Dam, downtown hill, Ho-Chunk culture

The river.

Wazee

Orange moose off the interstate

The bridge coming in to the downtown area.



The black river - the church heading up main street

Nature

river and Lunda Center

Rough streets

Ho-Chunk people

Church on the hill

Dairy Way

The dam and tiver

River and the dam. Hiking/water/biking/ATV recreation. (That's because I know what we have) from an outside perspective I feel it's seen by many as very rural with many farmers markets, hunting, Amish stands, and farm to table type restaurants. The average person driving through might also feel it's a poor area because some of our larger facilities are hidden off the main highways and not marketed at all.

The falls

Downtown

The Black River River and Falls

Dairy Way, historic downtown, the river

The large amount of county/state land for recreation.

The Catholic Church, and downtown view.

The Black and white pictures of downtown

Lunda Center

8 more responses are hidden



If you have any other feedback you would like to share, please do so below.

55 responses

I think the lunda center has become the biggest thing in black river falls for the community.

Get the drugs and sex offenders out! Stop allowing placement after incarceration

Need more support group meetings for people trying to live a clean sober life.

It is a shame there are so many homeless and the foundation trail is dangerous now

We need lto help the homeless more to keep them off the street and in our public places, for their safety and to protect our small towns image. Everyone needs to feel safe.

I do not live in Black River Falls, but I work here and have visited often over the years.

No

I would love to see downtown picked up

I wish we had some mountain biking trails as there are prime spots for it

I wish the city would keep up the walking trail and the beauty it originally had from becoming so run down.

If there is away to mail out a copy of recycling and garbage pickup. Need a new sheet calendar for this year. Do not have a printer.

I would use Black River Falls as a Bridge to tomorrow's future. (Rebecca Franks)

Love what Vinny is doing with downtown. We are very lucky to have him and his business ideas.

Have places for people to do along the river. Tours in boats...

Need more stores downtown that attract people not lawyers, tattoo shops and bars. In the summer pull or spray weeds growing along buildings, repair and clean up buildings, make sure people mow their yards and don't have trash laying around, get the homeless drug user's off the streets, as it is right now there simply is nothing in town to draw in people to want to walk our downtown streets.

Clean up the streets so people can feel safe again



You need to bring new things if you want people stay here.

Would like to see more drug busts.

We are not Wisconsin natives. We moved to BRF over ten years ago from bigger cities (over 100,000 in the smallest) for work. We fell in love with the scenery. It took having kids to start meeting people and then we began feeling such a connection to the community and spirit of BRF. There aren't easy ways to connect outside of all of the kiddo sports and activities. The game night at Lunda helped us meet other professionals. As professionals a high quality school system that is supported by the community kept us here. That and the many opportunities for connection (ice fishing at the pond at Lunda park, concerts in the park, Christkindl, figure skating club, game night at Lunda, farmers market) make BRF our forever home.

Downtown clean up...weeds next to buildings in between sidewalks, etc. Safety concerns with some of the folks walking around, miss the tent at Christkindl...no longer go because of that, lack of downtown business

Please make it a nice place to live before thinking about a logo. Spend money to make it nice, not picture that's it's nice when clearly there's a huge problem here nobody seems to do much about. 1 drug house raided and owner not even charged with selling, just possession and maintaining a drug house, which eh will most likely be dropped

This city needs a comeback! We need to start promoting our town to encourage visitors to come here and there needs to be more commercial/business opportunities in the downtown area. We need some good growth instead of stagnant buildings that aren't serving an actual purpose. Yes, we have ATV trails, wazee, the casino, etc, but people get bored and need/want things to do on rainy days or just in general. We need to show that people should invest in our community so we can grow and thrive.

Community focused

encourage more youth sports

The court house and the old library

Invest in the unique and amplify the conversation about individuality and expression. AI techs will provide us with "perfect" as we go forward. We need unique and human. More murals, more local funded adverts for small businesses, more reason to make BRF the place to be for your next affordable vacation to remember with a ton of cute photos of you and your friends.

For the local events and traditions, there were some I've never heard of

Very telling that you left off the Labor Day Pow Wow at the Andrew Blackhawk Pow Wow Grounds in the "Events and TRADITIONS" part of your survey. It is literally THE event I think of



when I think of Black River Falls.

Native American culture

Under events & Traditions nothing mentioned about the HCN community events

More bike paths. Better school district.

With this location, these outdoor activities, and more opportunities to work remotely, this is the perfect place to live!

When I tell people I live in Black River Falls they respond with "oh I hear the drug issue is really bad there"

Restaurant/dining options on the river or with a scenic river view

Preserving BRF history and Ho-Chunk culture is also highly important

there should be more active integration between the non-hochunk and hochunk peoples. We have such rich culture surrounding us, but so little cross-over between groups aside from in the school

Need more businesses

Really need to promote recognizing different cultures to recruit families to our area.

Although the area Elk have gotten some bad PR lately, most still are thrilled to occasionally see them.

We have great medical facilities, library, gym choices, fairgrounds, restaurants and lots of great choices for volunteering opportunities. Love BRF!

Remember we're on Native land

The city is so focused on spending millions we can't afford building new bridges we don't need, new apartment buildings no one can afford, logging off tons of trees, allowing 4 wheelers to drive on our streets in the middle of the night that you have lost sight of what normal people need. On the east side it would be nice to have drinkable water but we have to have a filter. It would have been nice to not be harrassed by a drug dealer for 5 years with no help from the police. Thank goodness they moved to a different neighborhood. This town used to be a nice place to live decades ago. Everyone knew all their neighbors. Not anymore. Every time a house is up for sale here a flipper or corp buys it, fixes it and rents it out. No families anymore. The only jobs here are factory, retail, fast food. Black River wants to be a big city, but thinks like a small town. You change all our resources to focus on small specific groups of people (like divers, tourists and atv riders) rather than making it appealing to all people. I'm no expert. But the first thing I would do is focus on fixing the downtown. Bring business that are appealing to



everyone not just yuppies. Moes is a good example of an enduring successful business. Pass a rule what color a business can paint a building. That one on the corner is so ugly and cheapens the whole downtown - not to mention that car painting has nothing to do with Black River. With a good, revived downtown more people will want to create jobs and more people will eventually move here. That's all I have to say. Good luck to you.

Would love to see a technical atv utv area even if it's a pay to play. Less speed on the trails that are becoming raceways and more dangerous.

BRF SCHOOL DISTRICT NEEDS TO IMPROVE

Deal with the problem of homeless persons that don't cost the taxpayers any money

Niioxawani loosely translates to Black River Falls. This campaign needs to include Ho-Chunk culture. Black River Falls is aboriginal territory to the Ho-Chunk people. They were forcefully removed numerous times, and came back home every time.

I feel something needs to be done about the eyesore houses. We should not have to live next to hoarders and take away our peace. A county ordinance should be passed and enforced.

We need more marketing on the highway to attract people to pull off the highway and visit a playground/park or recreation center. We need to update hotel accommodations (I have an idea for this out by the comfort inn) we need better market our downtown to be a place people can spend an afternoon visiting shops, eating, going to farmers markets etc. we need a good website for finding what there is in BRF and have short clips or images with descriptions and up to date maps of trails, kayaking, ATV trails, if we only keep a few up to date it isn't helpful. I think of our marketing and website like a save the date and an invitation to a wedding.. it sets the tone and experience for what to expect and the caliber of the event. Let's make our marketing, ads, and website be a good first impression that gets people excited for what's to come. Adventure Awaits! Come shop, play, dine, and relax when you visit Black River Falls. We should make a viewing spot or something over by the city boat launch by the dam or maybe a historic thing to read with images and some picnic tables with a covering?

These were some tough questions... very hard to narrow things down to just 1 or even 3 things, lol

More communication since we are in a journalistic desert.

We have to figure out how to better embrace tourists, make them feel welcome, share more of our hidden gems. Hiking trails, canoe/kayak launches, and ATV/snowmobile trails need to be better marked on google maps.

We have a beautiful river and creeks. We have wonderful schools and many volunteer opportunities. Love our Lunda Center and tennis courts. Many opportunities for exercise.



When elections over-take down the signs as they serve no purpose. Democrat office is at least a little classy-Republican office an embarrassment and makes BRF look totally backward as one drives by. More outdoor events to highlight natural areas would be nice.

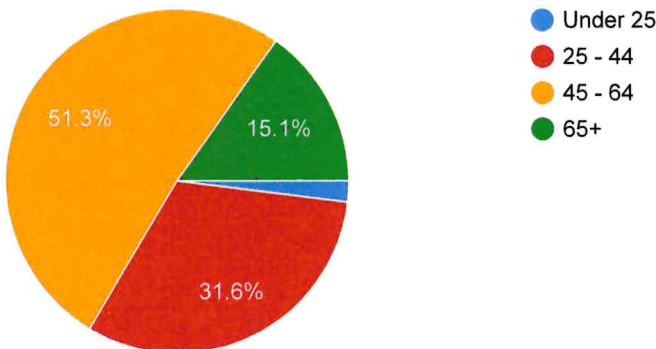
We need to stop pretending that our issue with homelessness will just solve itself. We can't keep passing it off between county and city. We need to solve this as a community. We need actual affordable housing. I urge you all to look at Green Bay and how they have responded to this issue. When they were asked why they took the steps they did to solve these issues their response was simply, "There was a need". I spoke with city officials in Green Bay, and they also ran into the same issue of the city passing it off to the county and vice versa with nothing being solved. It wasn't until they came together as a community that anything changed. I strongly encourage every city official to google, "How did Finland solve homelessness". The result is simple, we need houses. Many were excited about SCS coming only to find out that majority of citizens were priced out. As a city employee I couldn't afford housing and would have been sleeping in my car if I wouldn't have found a roommate. I have a clean record and no evictions. This was a result of a lack of affordable housing and a non-livable wage.

N/A

What is your age group?

 Copy

152 responses



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