

## Results of Firth Listening Sessions

### **QUESTION 1: WHAT ARE THE MAJOR PROBLEMS & CHALLENGES IN YOUR COMMUNITY?**

#### **Volunteer Fire Department – April 24, 2006**

- Getting volunteers for the fire department and medical. Gets harder with more people coming out.
- Lots of growth, are they working on making this.
- The coop needs to do something about tires with standing water. Treat.
- Concern about tires
- Water access across the tracks is not available.
- Need more things to do, boring old town. Something for community to come together to get to know each other.
- Get more people involved in serving their community. More people moving here but not getting involved.
- Get rid of favoritism of town board. Some can walk in and get what they want, others have to fight.
- Challenge to continue to provide 24 hr emergency service. Especially during the day.
- Keeping people involved and responding to the number of calls.
- Lack of people during the day.
- Town board shows favoritism. Some can get what they want, others can't.
- Challenge of 80% of downtown is in flood area.
- With building continuing, the community will need something there to attract some of the money as most drive north. Hickman is typical route of travel.
- Grocery store is struggling, can't build building and be sure of it succeeding.
- Business district in small communities have difficulty in surviving. New people don't shop there or volunteer there.
- Most communities in this area are bedroom communities with people working other places, difficult to draw them to a small town.
- Without people supporting the businesses it is hard to stay in business. If we spend a few dollars more we could keep some of these businesses.
- Access on south side of town is becoming an issue as more trains run through.
- Water quality is an issue is concern with above storage of chemicals, petroleum.
- Tires are a fire hazard. Largest business in town has them.
- Intersection at 3<sup>rd</sup> and Main west of here or in front of the coop is very dangerous and labeled poorly.
- Community is land locked as far as buying a lot to build a house on. Some subdivision went north and opened up some growth but may be full. North must grow north, only.

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## **Norris High School Students – April 25, 2006**

Nothing to volunteer for  
More involvement  
Need something to attract people to Firth like café  
Houses more spread apart makes challenge for keeping people close  
Possibly town newsletter  
Like idea of swimming pool and bike and hiking trails  
Maintenance stops just outside of Firth, not taken care of well  
People don't watch speed limits  
I live in Firth but am never there, would rather go to Lincoln.  
People move out as building new houses just outside of town leaving several houses vacant  
Need to be more welcoming to new comers  
Truck traffic can be a problem  
Intersection at gas station needs signs. Street is narrow there.  
Gravel road by railroad crossing in south end by Second Street has no warning, needs bells.  
The gas pumps need replacing  
Roads – looks like we might need repaving of roads – they are getting pretty bad  
There is a part of town that takes care of their yards and it seems that there is a part of town that people don't take care of their things as well ....such as – mowing awns, pick up litter etc.---keep it more clean  
I live on main street – no one drives speed limit – it is too dangerous for children playing  
Need something else to do – for young people  
Firth is based around church a lot – it is great and everything – but we need to have outside activities – outside of the church – for young people especially  
Something to do – it is boring – a swimming pool or something.  
More job opportunities for young people – now all we have is the Coop and Sadie's – need more jobs  
Better ball park – bring it up to par  
Slow down on the streets – and -- something that will get teenagers more involved – something to do  
Community involvement – not a lot of stuff to be involved in – for everyone in general – not just youth. When there are opportunities to be involved – people do not step up to do it

Need something to attract people to – no one wants to go to Firth – possibly a café or something

Firth is growing – houses are getting far apart – to keep the community involves – a monthly bulletin through the church – newsletter of something to be sent to everyone so people know what is going on

Pool for – maybe bike trails –

Once you get outside of town – the maintained roads stop – roads are bad - especially when snowy

Hear people tearing around and early in the morning (4:30 or so)...Nothing basically to do.

A lot of people are moving out of Firth because they want bigger houses – and are building houses outside of Firth – no one is moving back into the empty houses ---if we want to have a stronger community we need to be more welcoming.

Semis are in Firth all the time – have to wait on them – and they don't stop at the stop sign.

Intersection near gas station – it is confusing – need for more guidance, signage – directions -- Streets at that intersection are very narrow – and gas station is there – and when trucks are in the way – you can't see. There are no stop signs anywhere in the town. There are signs in dumb spots – like a pointless yield sign

Yield sign – it is in the exact middle of the corner where you to turn into the school – and the left turn – there is a lot of confusion as to who has to yield?

There is a gravel road -- #96 – it is dangerous – especially at night – no arms – at rail road crossing -- dangerous at night.

Road you go out of Firth – south end of town – 2<sup>nd</sup> street – dangerous

Gravel roads should be paved sometime in the future due to usage.

Gas station pumps – need replacing –

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### **-Norris School Staff - April 25, 2006**

Lack of vision – pretty closed community that is resistant to change...they would like to keep things the way they were 30 years ago – are facing Lancaster county changes – kicking and dragging

I moved into Firth in 70's – and I'm still an outsider....unless you are native born – you are considered an outsider by folks – younger folks that are there now are more open. Older generation – keeps the community as closed as possible....shown as example on town board, fire dept etc...

Moved just outside of Firth – one of the draws is that it is outside of Lincoln – but not too remote – and yet the property is cheaper than around Hickman....we were looking for 20 acres to put horses on....

Major problems and challenge – the lack of planned growth...it looks like it is choppy, unplanned, unpredictable...kids consider themselves as Firth kids – but there is a lack of identity of Firth and the community around the town. In discussion – there is a lot of property on sale in Firth now – it is an implied

criticism about the vacuum in Firth – yet there are a lot of housing development s around it. There needs to be an “anchor” store to build around  
Pond on the east edge of town – is owned privately – it was offered to the town, and the village board didn’t want it due to the liability – they didn’t want to spend any money toward building a park around it.....you need to be prudent, yet you need to provide amenities for young families to move back to the community.  
There is a certain amount of “tradition” in that community – a closed off definition of “who we are as Firth” – there is an illusion – that if we turn our head, development won’t happen.

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## **Businesses Owners – May 8, 2006**

Infrastructure – lagoon – we have reached the maximum level for the lagoon and have had 2 major sewer line failures in the last while. The community is conservative – that no one thought 10 – 15 years ago that we would have grown this big....my concern is infrastructure

We’ve had a town board that has been very conservative – the average age is 70 plus – one of the comments from the board was – they shake their heads NO – when anyone talks about growth. We have 2 openings on town board – one person filling in is 90 years old – doesn’t want growth – GROWTH is going to happen. We need forward thinking people on the board – we need 2 forward thinking people on the board.

One of the problems I see – we only have about 3 – 5 business owners that live within the village limits – the rest of the people who have business in town – really have NO say in what happens in the town because they don’t live in town.

Same concerns – seems like they (town board) don’t want growth....as a business (co-op, or bank) – we won’t have growth in our businesses if we don’t have growth in town.

All of the different developments we have – I’m on NRD – and have concern with water problems. The quantity and quality of water is a concern.

I agree a lot – concern with Village Board – I have a business in Firth proper –and live on edge of Firth proper – when I had a concern and voiced it to the Board –I was told – I didn’t matter --- I would like to see that there would be a Board at large – 1 mile radius – so we can voice our concerns and have some control.

There is a lot of development around town – and NO control...again concerned about so many wells and sewer systems (septic systems)

I live on the outsides – and all my employees live in the town – I have a vested interest – my employees spend most of dollars in town – if we could have more of a say and control of the town. I left PA – because of the same difference there...

We need a plan – the Listening sessions are so needed because it needs to be done – Growth is going to come faster than we realize

I like the mile jurisdiction suggestion – and having a say in what is going on – now – basically we are under the Village Board’s control – but have no say. I’ve heard that there will be a big tax increase on June one

Agree with the jurisdiction – they can tell us what we can and cannot do – and we have absolutely NO say of what direction this town can go. Board is unaware of who own businesses in town (I had bad feeling when in a board meeting one board member said something about Omaha business owners). We would like to see the town grow – but would like it to be in a controlled manner – not uncontrolled.

Board seems to have a lack of vision – we need to have a plan on growth – otherwise, it will be just a bunch of acreages that want to be attached to town. We need to be able to get school busses and fire trucks down the roads to the homes – need to have a plan

Board does what they want – and don't listen to anyone else – they have their own personal agendas.....when it came to the Sewer issues – information was handed out ahead of the meeting – and at the meeting they stated that they hadn't even read it yet – so they couldn't make a decision. We need to campaign for people who care about the town and will make decisions for the town.

Need to have a plan to control growth – I agree with what has been said

What is the general feeling in Washington? – that they want \$5 gas so there will be re-development of the inner-city – Because of the transportation issues – they want to redevelop the down-town. What will that do for us out here? To add to this concern – that if there will be a government policy – to have high gas prices to bring people back into urban area.....do we need to consider those high fuel costs as we plan for this town?

Don't you think it will be in cycles – to fill up the inner city – and \$3 gas and the stock market took a dive – and then next time it goes to \$3 – we get used to it My concern is that we are losing prime agriculture ground....the “Buffalo Commons” – idea – that the policy makers want to make it urban against rural – what should we do as we plan for Firth.

Back to Water – in 10 – 15 years there will be much more concern about the availability of water (and not be so worried about gas ) – there will be much more consumption about water. Will the individual wells as the population grows – will that make a difference? Urban sprawl is going on in Lancaster county – there is a 20 acre minimum on purchasing plots...the majority of the 20 parcels – that have \$1/2 million house on – they aren't taking care of the land...I think the worse thing to happen – is the 20 area minimum

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### **Senior Diners – May 8, 2006**

Water bills too high, go on vacation and still have to pay high water bill

Still pay garbage even when gone for 3 months

Dogs running loose

Barking dogs a real problem

Too many cats running loose

Town is getting too much % of electric bill but don't know where it is being spent

No grocery store, lack of shopping.  
Nursing home not assisted living. People go to other assisted living in the area.  
Nice to have assisted living in town  
No nice restaurants in the area  
Too many barking dogs  
Nice to have café that served more than pizza  
Keep dogs penned up so I don't have to clean up after them  
Grocery store, repeated several times.  
Like to see personal property cleaned up, grocery store and respect for parks and supervised so rest rooms could be kept open  
No body follows stop sign rules. Slow down. By coop, big STOP signs but no one else stops.  
A place for trash like broken down appliances.  
Nice to have more businesses in town since we are growing to help them stay in town.  
More business needs people who will patronize a business.  
Like to see growth but we need to be prepared to handle it. Plan out.  
I think growth is good but we have to prepare for the cost or end up like Hickman. It isn't set up for water or sewer. Our bills will double. They aren't planning far enough ahead for what is happening. Otherwise if seller has land, there will have to be an impact fee to help pay for half mile of water line as town can't afford it.  
I live in area where there is too much junk, limbs laying in yards, so get it cleaned up. A lot of this is in rental property but not all.  
Personal property clean up.  
Signage to indicate dead end streets.  
Dependable mail service.  
Russell St. Need SLOW or STOP Sign.  
Lots of ATV's, 4-wheelers running around town. Not licensed. Brought up to town board but kind of brushed aside.

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### **Nursing Home – May 8, 2006**

Keeping businesses in town.  
Keeping something (businesses going) downtown  
Location – how far out we are from Lincoln or Hwy77 – people traveling this direction....it is too far away – with the price of gas.  
People dedicate self – to put the work in.  
Can't live by myself..  
My husband and I came from Lincoln – daughter moved to Hickman – we wondered where was Hickman –my husband got sick – he couldn't go home anymore due to sickness – they came to this nursing home....someway – to make the town more visible....some people don't know where Firth, NE is .  
Keeping businesses here – it is difficult – and now they have Sadies...

I remember the days when we had all of those businesses...what was different about then – and today – I guess they can't make it to live – we had 2 barber shops, drug store, roller skating rink, movies in the back of the store...people brought in cream and eggs – and brought groceries home. It has really changed...and businesses dwindled...maybe today – it has become a cement jungle.

A trip to Lincoln – was a once-in a while event – and it was an all day event....they shopped late until night. Now – people run into Lincoln a couple of times today

Older homes – instead of being bought by young families – now are being bought by owners and become rental homes – the properties keep getting a little bit less attractive – over time. Buildings downtown has empty building...including brother's...he would park on street – the empty run-down businesses – have a negative impact on those driving through town.

Firth – a community website – don't know if it is up and running...and if people are looking for a place to retire – they look for healthcare. He would like to see Healthcare information tied to Website – it would be nice to have hospital and Drs. Here – possibly a satellite health care facility could be here,

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## **Public Open Meeting in Evening – May 8, 2006**

Should be stoplight or flashing light near Coop – at corner – and by bank area too  
Price of gas now – it does affect the sale of homes in the community...

I live in town --- I have problem with all the acreages ...Lincoln is growing south and Firth needs to address that == so there aren't just acreages.

Need stop signs – Coop – big trucks running round main street and a lot of old people at Post Office – big semi's shouldn't be going through main street – safety  
Coop – needing a stop sign – a little sign that is white or yellow – outsiders don't know that they should stop.

Safety – would like a stop sign – building – we need to look into all of the building outside town. I'd like to have more community involved in growth  
A more cohesive community – we don't do a lot together – we don't mix a lot.  
There aren't a ton of community events that pull us together. Would like to increase the involvement of people living on acreages – they don't feel like they belong – just floating out there.

We just moved there – we like the quiet. We didn't like Lincoln – noisy, drug neighbors – it's a nice place to live and a good school district...we don't want to bring more problems...because it is an attractive area – more will want to move here. People are buying chunks and pieces – if there isn't a plan, there will be a jig saw puzzle laid out. If there is a part time sheriff deputy – there is no one watching trucks – stop sign.

The town is laid out – not very conducive to building communities – 30-40 homes in subdivisions. The only place we can go is north – and right now, the family that owns the land is not interested in selling. There will be small growth – but

nothing big (growth) now....I'm interested in a small town....its too bad we can get a little bit closer together (people who live on acreages and town people.) There is not much business here – there used to be a grocery store, lumber yard, café – now lack of businesses.....WHY did the business close?? The people retired – and everyone works in Lincoln and they shop before they come home. People don't patronage the business – the stores have higher prices here – so people went into Lincoln because it is cheaper.....People are in Lincoln so much of the time. If the grocery doesn't have volume – the wholesale costs are higher. When I moved here – there wasn't even Sadies and Papa Pizza – and this is better than when we first moved here.

Barking dogs – day and night.....it gets sickening....did talk to neighbors.....could muzzle them

One of the things I notice --- what are the people that live in the village of Firth – what is their desire about including us – the rest of the people who live in this zip code – how can that be developed or encouraged – communication with all of the people in the zip code.

I would like to see flowers in flower pots – and the streets look better – and have the empty buildings look better – not have them look run down and empty.

ATV's racing down the street – safety issue....this has been turned in and the sheriff doesn't get here in time.....worried about accident going to happen.

I live on the hill – and there is a stop sign – they have the stop sign on the wrong corners – they will drive from the north 40 mph (on 4<sup>th</sup> and Main) and they get ½ way through intersection – before they realize there is a stop sign – very dangerous....should have stop sign on east and west – not North.

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### **Open Public Meeting – May 8, 2006**

Rental houses – a lot rental houses and empty houses in town....Rentals as a problem...hard to have town stability – with people who rent – because they do not plan to stay ... maybe not negative.....

There are a lot of house for sale this year – 2 years ago...wonder why – a trend? Same is true for Holland.

Lack of places to meet new people in town. If you go to church you know those people – and other church you learn about them. There is nothing to knit the community together – no way to mix the groups together...It is very segregated....not any organization to know together.

Lack of people knowing each other – People are selling their houses so fast – we don't know who lives near you.....People don't know each other.

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### **Youth at Community Center – May 10, 2006**

Nobody on board seems to agree on things from father  
Some kids don't stay in line or create trouble more often

Nothing in town to do. When we do stuff we go to Lincoln  
No activities specially designed for young people  
Nothing to do for teens, etc. so we go to movies, etc. in Lincoln  
We aren't doing as many activities as a community except Fun Days.  
Not at home much because there isn't anything to do here so I go to Lincoln  
There is no activity center to hang out at like in Lincoln. Helps keep us out of trouble  
Basically boring  
We aren't really united, new people move to town and we don't get a chance to meet them and get them to be part of us.  
New people may not feel included. We know the people who go to our church but no opportunity for the rest.

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### **Farmers – May 22, 2006**

- Not much vision for the town – when the lake got away and when the gym/kitchen got away – too tight with our money.
- Nice to have a place to open up for basketball, a gym of some sort...the lake was a big mistake....as we get older we would like to see more in the community – a restaurant, an accountant in the town 1 -2 days a week. (I see what is happening in Adams...a little further from Lincoln), a lot of our people commute...I would like to have 68<sup>th</sup> to be 4 lane instead of 2....driving is difficult when kids are on it – impossible to pass – dangerous road.
- I'm not so sure that we have continuity...so many developments within the earshot in Firth (maybe county – not community)...no continuity in size of lots, a lot of ground is being chewing up.....maybe 12 houses in an acre instead of 12 houses in 20 or so acres.
- Fire department -- not enough personnel during the day time for quick response....need to have more. That building getting out of Firth – no place for kids to do anything.
- Building around – the town has no where to grow – we don't have a comprehensive plan in place – no control of where they can build. No place for kids to go to do things – many kids move out of town – because there is nothing going on – not a whole lot for things to do (no restaurant)
- Town is stressed attention for the older people in town – need to have something for young people to do. We could use good restaurant and things for kids to do.
- Need more vision for the next years in planning – it's going to grow one way or other – keep chopping up the ground with acres – hard to farm around the housing plots – (they have flowers and tomatoes) – hard for farmers
- Acreage owners and development – and people coming out of city don't know what country life is like – water line problems. Need better planning; Our business section is a strong point....and churches are strong...speaks well of the community.

- County should change regulations – they settle estate and sell 3 ½ acres – surrounded with wheat – 20 acres is wrong – too much land/area to keep grass mowed – it is too hard to farm around it.
  - Blacktop the road from Holland to Firth (96<sup>th</sup>) street – it may take away some traffic. This road is too busy...the bus can't get out of the driveway...have to wait for traffic.
  - Don't we have a little lapse in 911 – I live in Gage County – and they will take me to Beatrice first – I want to go to Lincoln. Too many responses – Firth comes first, then Hallam and then Lincoln – too many responses when calling 911.
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### **Spanish-Speaking Community– 11 people – May 22, 2006**

- No stores,
  - No produce store, fresh produce
  - The problem with local store it isn't open on Sunday
  - The gas station takes credit cards but not payment the way we need to pay so we have to go to Hickman
  - Concern with children activities
  - The street she lives on is too dark, pretty much the whole town seems pretty dark. Don't like to go out at night with dark.
  - The store, gas station and activities for kids
  - More activities in park for kids,
  - Bigger store with produce in town would be nice.
  - The activities for the kids and stores
  - The gas station and store closed on Sunday
  - High school students don't obey the speed limits when school lets out. Kids are playing and high school students aren't careful enough
  - Security is concern. At night there are teenagers out on bikes at 2:00 a.m. in the morning on several corners in Firth.
  - The store needs to be open on Sunday
  - We don't get to know the people in town because of the language barrier.
  - We would like to but the language barrier is a problem.
  - A restaurant would be nice. Don't worry about a cook, we can supply.
  - No job opportunities for the moms around here. Jobs close by would be nice. We don't want to go too far.
  - In winter time when going to work at 2:30 a.m. and there is snow, the roads aren't opened to get to work.
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### **Young Family Session – May 22, 2006**

- Keep Firth a small town feeling as the town is growing
- When I lived in a small town in high school it was horrible because there was nothing to do. Don't know if that is the case here but where I grew up it was.
- Kids miss the old swings when the new were added to the park.

- Keeping the environment like it is will be a challenge with growth.
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### **Open Meeting Listening Session – May 22, 2006**

- Getting a lot of community growth around Firth – but not a lot of growth in Firth – no small businesses to draw people into the town....challenge...want to see Firth grow and be the best it can
- Lack of services in Firth – places to eat, places to shop
- Don't really have any problems in mind.....growth around town...a concern...when we moved here there was a grocery store and a café and I saw those things go away when we became a bedroom community. Maybe ¼ of the people worked in Lincoln – now it is the opposite – more than half of people drive out of town to go to work...I also bought groceries in Lincoln so the store went out of business. Expansion of population – there will need to be some changes.
- I wouldn't want to be anywhere else—would like to see a restaurant and more of an Assisted Living place for the older people. Would like to have grocery store for older people – although Hickman does deliver. We need to support the store we do have.
- We need to have growth – or the town won't survive
- I have a small business of my own and work in Lincoln 3 days a week....we haven't really come across any problems or challenges...Husband works in Lincoln all time. We do have a concern watching the two houses on both sides of us up for sale....felt isolated. Now they are starting to fill back up with families with small children. Houses for sale go through cycles.
- Don't know people who live in town....people moving in
- Concerns – kids love to ride bicycles around town....traffic moves too fast in town....Concern – possible train derailment that might hit anhydrous tank....worry about danger....impossible to buy all groceries in this store.
- Second time living here – concern – the traffic that goes too fast by our house. Seems that they run through stop signs...and speed too fast. Do we need more signs,....speed bumps in street....to provide safety for children.
- Concern about speeders past our house – sometimes don't realize that they are speeding. Challenge – food – to get a restaurant in town
- Concern is – growth is going to come – I hope that we are ready for it....Firth is boxed in by acreages...it is tough – there aren't many places for the town to grow – Lincoln is growing south in a hurry – we can see what Hickman is going through. I don't want to stop, discourage growth – but to be able to control the growth.
- Seen changes as stated here this evening....trying to address the problems through the years. Main problem – getting a comprehensive plan for controlled growth – infrastructure to help with the growth....
- Moved here from K.C. – grew up in this area of state – we enjoy Firth – don't mind the travel to Lincoln – would like to see orderly growth the next 15 – 30

- years....so we have an infrastructure and have restaurant. Nice to have something here to go here – orderly growth....enjoy the smallness of the town
- The first challenge – the road coming around Coop – and people are in a hurry – safety issues with children....going through town – and not in such a hurry. Growth – be proactive and have a plan ready....be on the right track.
  - We moved to community to retire....would like to see have restaurant. We eat out a lot. We still go to church in Lincoln so buy groceries there. Rough rail road crossing.....right by the Coop. Glad to see Firth growing...and like to see work toward comprehensive plan.
  - Really concerned about good activities for children – and brightly lighted area for kids – shade, sun--- but safe place for kids. Devil finds work for idle hands – concerned about teens that party out near our place – and leave party droppings and that concerns about unsafe driving. We have a wonderful school with great activity program....but maybe we need an Activity program inside the town for young children. Sometimes a summer playground activity – either 2 – 3 weeks or a couple of days through the week...to have constructive things for children to do....supervised – possibly by college age students – which could be an opportunity for children to get structure and positive activities.
  - One of the problems – corner of 6<sup>th</sup> and May – cars go through it 50 miles per hour....so dangerous...especially one car – every day. No slowing down – so many kids playing and riding bikes in town.....need a rock to slow down traffic. Other thing...town got real divided about issue of alcohol – it is about having some extra money coming to town – it divided the town...something as small as that issue – still is dividing people. We need people to support the grocery store – I'd rather give Firth my money – rather than Hickman, etc.
  - There are gobs of beer cans on our road – long before the alcohol problem.
  - Have we looked about speed bumps in certain areas of this town. In a town I'm familiar with – speed bumps have slowed down traffic quite a bit.....they've been in for a while....speed bump every block or so....has really slowed down the problem
  - Having more law enforcement more prevalent would help slow down speeding....possibility of Firth having their own law enforcement –possibly even part time – and provide a place to have them do paper work.
  - Four-wheelers are not for streets.....I see them in town...who should I call when I see them crashing. In the past if there was a motorcycle in town....someone called the police. Afraid of speeding 4-wheelers....the adult supervision in some of the homes....are not approachable....which is not usual in a small town – sad, but not really true. We need to start thinking about locking our doors – and about whether or not we can approach the adult next door...and what might happen when they answer.

## **QUESTION #2: WHAT ARE THE MAJOR STRENGTHS & ASSETS OF FIRTH?**

## **Volunteer Fire Department – April 24, 2006**

- A safe and clean town
  - I enjoy the quietness
  - Family and friends
  - Can depend on your neighbors if the going gets tough
  - We have a great fire department and can count on your neighbors.
  - I enjoy the rural setting and lots of friends and neighbors.
  - Everyone watches out for everybody. Can let kids play in park without worry. Everyone knows what kid belongs where.
  - Have a new playground in the park and fairly quiet.
  - School system is good. One of the better ones around.
  - Norris school system is good. Good moral and ethical values here that are disappearing in urban areas. People will stand up to do the right thing.
  - The school is why we live here.
  - People are friendly.
  - School system is strong and draws people here.
  - A real young population here and growth has potential if it is unleashed.
  - Great people, clean town, great school system.
  - Family friends, rural area.
  - We live here because of the small town atmosphere where people will help you do something
  - Anything outside of the city of Lincoln is cheaper so you can move into the country as it is more affordable.
  - We have trees and established homes as compared to Hallum.
  - Hallum looks like a subdivision and takes something away from that part of the town.
  - Town has character, homes are older, not moved in on a set of wheels, has a downtown area, trees and atmosphere.
  - Has a quality water system and water tower.
  - Good services, streets are hard surfaced. Good infrastructure
  - Firth is financially stable
  - Majority of population is employed.
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## **High School Students – April 25, 2006**

- Firth is beautiful town with trees, natural environment
- People are really friendly. Everybody's outside and will wave at you.
- Churches in town are close and now and support each other.
- Everyone knows each other
- Nice to have General Store to get stuff you need
- Great to have a little convenience store
- Friendly, family oriented and churches do a lot of volunteering
- Nice to have rest home. Grand parents live there

- Friendly town, close knit but is still growing
  - Really good nursing home. People stay here
  - Firth Fun Day is really good.
  - Like café to order out from
  - Safe town. Kids can be out playing without a lot of supervision
  - Really good rescue and fire department
  - There are no bars
  - Right now if people want to come out to build have respect and don't build close to each other so not really crowded.
  - It would be great to have an ATM
- Beautiful town – with trees – great things to have in town, natural environment  
 People are really friendly – everyone is outside and everyone waves at you  
 People in the community – in churches – are very close...  
 Everyone knows everyone – good  
 General store – convenient – especially when it snows – we can walk there  
 Good to have gas station—gas prices are too high  
 Little convenience store – good  
 Friendly – family oriented – good volunteering. Rest home –is very nice and to have family there  
 Friendly town, close knit – like a small town atmosphere even though it is growing  
 Good nursing home – older people stay in Firth – we take care of our old people  
 Firth Fun Days – is very good for families  
 I like they have a pizza place there – we can order out...good for weekends  
 Safe town – see a lot of little kids playing out – not a lot of crime – feel very safe  
 Good rescue and fire department if there is injury  
 There is not a Bar – no liquor  
 People that want to come out and build near Firth – they find land that is wide open – and are not crowded—houses are not too close  
 ATM – and other conveniences are in town – good

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### **School Staff – April 25, 2006**

There is something to be said about people who see their community – they care about the community – a very clean village –pride in the community – (a closed community) -- can also be a strength – a great place to raise a family due to the community care and pride – and close enough to Lincoln that we could go to if we wanted to – and yet we had the safety of living in Firth.

I am Pro-development – but should be controlled growth...the development in the area is directly related to “who you are” – if you know the right people, it will happen.

Need to Plan for the development – it would be nice if the street lights would work – Firth as a community –has the opportunity for growth – but this can be a challenge – as well as an opportunity

I took a job out here – because I wanted my kids to know the people in the community that we live in – Firth is Norris – it is the identity of the community – as soon as we knew where we were moving – we got kids involved in T ball etc – and we were welcomed. At night when you drive into the community – you see the ball lights – “that is community” you get to know people and stay in touch with them....there is a connection – that is a strength in a community – that you don’t get in a larger town like Lincoln. We all care about one another – that is a huge reason for us to come out here – that is a reason why people move in the communities around Lincoln

So then offer the young people something that will keep them here

After the tornado – people all came – to pull together to pick up the debris.....Firth has a strong church infrastructure – the main social infrastructure or anchor – the Fire Dept is also a strong connector. The ball diamond – is also a strong connector...a major sense of belonging to the community. A unified commitment to the community.....That is what makes Firth special

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## **Business Owners – May 8, 2006**

Strengths and assets are sitting right here in this room – intelligent and capable people – financial assets as well – these are the strengths right here.

School system is strong – that is the draw – that is why people are coming....the small schools that are faced to merge – we don’t have that concern....that’s huge Financially – the community overall is “above average” – we don’t have a real low income community. The people who move out here in this school district – are doing well – and they commute back to Lincoln for work

Firth is very well kept – roads area paved, houses are well kept,....appears nice on the outside

School system – more people next fall will be coming to the school – a big draws We are all hard working American people – we get along well.

The fact that over the past 5 years – what has transformed in the Village --- we’ve added more businesses and the storefronts are being filled (more than 5 years ago)...if that keeps happening – it is strengths

Like to be able to walk downtown from home

Agree 100% of the schools....we have to realize what we are – a bedroom community for Lincoln – keep that in mind. We also have to realize that most of the homes in town area starter homes – they live here 5 years and then move out....they get equity built up and then move into larger house....we need to keep that in mind...

Hard working class – we are in a transitional phase from agriculture – and tax increases – farming is got to go – sell land – upfront money in a dry year, taxes still need to be paid – sell it to acreages

The businesses in town are here – drove by necessity – there a enough people that will start a business when the they see a need – and as the needs change, the

businesses are gone – and change...such as poultry business, salt business,  
...they are here for 20 – 30- years and as things change so do businesses  
Agree with school system as a strong asset -- without that we would be a ghost  
town

A big reason why people move out here – is to bring their children out to Norris  
schools

People here tend to talk their problems out – rather than letting them fester  
More businesses are coming – so we can have more selections – due to school  
I see a lot of little towns are dying – we are on the up and up – and we are  
fortunate – we have opportunities to make things happen.

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### **Senior Diners – May 8, 2006**

Makes me feel good when you meet strangers who are impressed with how clean  
and attractive Firth is. We have such a nice school so people will come here to  
enjoy what we have.

Overall, pretty clean town with pride in their places.

It is a nice town. We enjoy the town. Our biggest asset is the tremendous  
community pride we have in it.

The churches and schools are assets.

Money wasted when Hallam and Lincoln come out. Seems like more  
ambulances come out than necessary. Coordinate and better communication to  
stop this.

Be more conservative about ambulance service.

Somebody wants to start a grocery store and people will need to patronize it.

I think school, churches and rest home are big assets. Repeated several time.

I really appreciate my garbage man and think people are friendly and helpful.

We have community spirit and support. I think our rescue unit is great. The  
senior center is great and the community is a family.

Great leader of senior center to lead us on.

Rural transportation system to take us to Lincoln for \$3 on Tuesday's and  
Thursdays.

Very friendly and made to feel welcome as a new comer.

Friendly people.

Schools and churches, community center and friendly people.

We are just one big happy family.

Enjoyed the senior center since we moved here.

Very neighborly. Moved back after 50 years.

Always somebody here to help you.

Rescue unit was what saved me. I didn't care if there were 50 people there to  
help me.

Great streets in town that were done right.

Good town maintenance person here.

Keep communications open between Lincoln and Hallam 911 for rescues.

Great community cooperation between communities of Hickman, Hallam, Firth and Cortland.

### **Nursing Home – May 8, 2006**

Quick response for people who help (hail storm)

Sense of community – a small town sense (with services.)

Good school nearby –people want to raise their kids in a smaller community.

School – it draws people –it is very good – a good school system

School system and the churches are very active in this area.

People don't see the distance to Lincoln as a problem – travel either way to go to work.

Having a job in Firth.

Lakeview Rest Home – is very resident focused – it is good to see – not so institutional as some places in Lincoln.

Lovely place to live

People are nice –

There is a lot of inter-connection – people are related to others – it is hard for new people to get connected – the school helps with that. Some people complain about everyone knowing your business – that can be an asset too...people care and will help – like farmer needing help – 20 people will be there the next morning/

We are all connected – one big family – no matter what the religion is (3 churches)

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### **Public Open meeting – May 8, 2006**

Since I've lived here 15 years – the community has come together – we put up equipment at the park – fixed up ball field. The 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration –and the town comes together...it doesn't cost us. Likes the neighbors – can send my kids outside – safe place

Like the safety of the town – came from metropolitan area – I like the safety and security

Definitely the safety – Excellent school district – that is one of the reasons why we moved here.

4<sup>th</sup> of July – a place for all ages to come together for the event. Businesses – car wash – new.

Firth is one of the cleanest towns around – can't find houses that are run down.

Like the friendliness of the small town – can leave the doors unlocked when you go uptown.

Friendliness – grandchildren come down – and stay at our house...I don't have to worry so much about them People wave as you drive by....

Friendliness – I live across road from the park – and I like to watch people in the park

I like the peacefulness...Every time I think about moving to Lincoln so I'm closer to things I need – I get anxiety attacks – I feel safe here.

Safe place – one of the better school systems in the country – nice to place to live

Nice place to live – people “police” themselves – people want to move down here – I don't think people realized how much money people will spend to be able to move here for this atmosphere.

Small town – I like it – I like knowing almost everyone. I don't have to worry about children safety.

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### **Open Public Meeting – May 8, 2006**

Positive thing to have 2 churches in such a small town

Community association – small group but have big projects – the only thing that we have to pull things together. A small number of people who work hard. Do things – Firth day – games, parade, food etc, work for Lakeview

Strength that -- so many kids in town.....

People are nosey -- which can be a strength – concerned citizens – nice caring people in the community.

### **Youth at Community Center – May 10, 2006**

- The people that we know. Those we know we can talk and do things with.
  - We need to be united just like our church is.
  - It's very clean, not much crime, great place to raise kids.
  - Started to build more stuff like fix up the park, opened general store. Need to keep working on that.
  - Asset is the people. We need to hang out and spend time with them.
  - All of us live close together and are within biking distance. That is a plus.
  - People are all friendl, we just need to get them more involved. If they were the community would explode.
  - We are growing big time with numbers increasing 20-30 at a time.
  - We see more groups of homes.
  - The school is a big asset. That is why they move here. It's a really great school.
  - We are well rounded school.
  - We are starting to do more things as a community, 4<sup>th</sup> of July, car show, Firth Day to bring in more outside people.
  - I think small is a good thing. People can all have a chance to get involved.
  - The community will help people if they have problems. Always can call upon people to help them.
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- Fund-raisers for people in need.
- I like the fire department. It is important to have.
- Lakeview rest home is an asset. A place for elderly to be taken care of.
- Groups of kids and others go to the rest home to do things like at Christmas, etc.

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### **Farmers –May 22, 2006**

People like the quietness and friendliness of the community – that is why people want to move her. Friends are here and have the same kinds of morals....for a while there were problems with kids/4 wheelers – seems like people are respectable who live here/

Clean community, especially since the hailstorm of 04 – 90% of community is clean and kept up...a flash back to the old days – the way it used to be is a draw....grandparents talk about town where people help each out

Churches are an asset.....recognize that we need to slow it down one day of week. School works well with town on Wednesday night.

Churches – the value system of people – people who move in comment that you don't mow on Sunday s – a value system that is a foundation of the town. It feels like family when you come here

Clean town – not a lot of older rentals in town – and may not have the best quality of people moving in.....Town board is getting better – newer people who aren't so conservative – are better now. (In past town board was a major problem.)

Town is going to have to grow a little bit to be able to support a business. Town board has done a job – but doesn't have the vision for future and growth.

Countryside Coop and Nebraska Tire – has put Firth on the map....people know where Firth is.

Coop and Nebraska Tire has tried to work with the town – but sometimes the town has bulked with them....the businesses have tried

Volunteer Fire department – have been very good volunteers

Echo – individuals that work on Fire department – take pride in it and it takes a lot of time to keep up with the training....Most of them have jobs and it takes time to commit for fire dept.

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Community Association – struggle because you don't have enough support – a good thing but struggling....need more support.

### **Spanish – Speaking Community – May 22, 2006**

Peaceful and people are very kind

It is peaceful but the teen age drivers get a little careless

Peaceful, quiet but the kids and cars are a concern.

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People are very respectful. Can leave toys in yard and no one messes with it.  
IN spite it is a small town, there is gas station, small store and churches.

It is a pretty town

The community works together well and nice place to live and go to work.

Very peaceful. It's nice that even though they don't speak English people still greet them and are nice to them.

Pretty, peaceful, people are friendly, even though they don't speak English.

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### **Young Family Session – May 22, 2006**

- People make an effort to come up to you and introduce themselves
  - A close knit community.
  - People come up to church for first time and we got invited out for lunch.
  - Kids can play outside without us worrying about it safe.
  - Like the trees in the community. Nice and clean
  - Town is clean. Not much trash; looks very attractive.
  - Lakes around here are nice with lots of outdoor activities.
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### **Open Public Meeting Listening Session – May 22, 2006**

- I like being able to walk the street in Firth – or walk around the section...and the safety in doing that. Just an asset to feel that you can do that. Lots and lots of ball games every night from 6 – midnight...positive. Soccer going on at ball diamond too...three different places to play there.
- Smallness and quietness in town – can sit outside and not hear traffic like in Lincoln. Coziness of the small town...that is why we moved here.
- Like the cleanliness – small new families moving to town...
- Hailstorm did a favor for the town. It made everyone clean up, get new roofs etc. Ball Diamonds – great things for kids to do; Play grounds in several places. Recycling is positive. The school attracts young people to come to town.
- Major strength – school district and cleanliness of town and the work that people do to keep it that way ...He hears many comments from out-of-towners on how clean town is. Worked hard to keep streets up – paved
- School is a large asset – hope that in the next 15 – 25 years – there will be controlled growth. In K.C. – it was more risky to have kids ride bikes in town...feel more ease in letting children do that in town.
- Utilize park playground equipment –
- Eight years ago we lived in Lincoln by north Wal-Mart – which was quiet and we decided to move. We drove a circle around Lincoln – and when we came here – I was struck by the cleanliness, how the people kept their yards...and I know we had to have leadership here...people really took good care of this community. We owe all of our thanks to the people who were here before – control the growth

- It struck us to have churches, paved streets, ball park, city park, growing Coop....features we could have in a small town. We didn't have a bar that stays open all night with negatives. School is huge super big plus. Being close enough to Lincoln – this community has a lot of pluses – a “best kept secret” and would like to keep it that way.
- Friendly, small town, enjoy living here.
- Love the small town....love it. I grew up in small town north of here – nice that I can sit out on my swing on the deck....support in this town....a couple of families that have gone through some rough times in this town and the support they received. Happy to have my kids in Norris – great staff, great teachers....love it here.
- Lived in Lincoln – didn't like the too closeness – started looking into schools, and through Norris offered the best benefit – the reason we moved down here
- Schools
- Paved streets – allows the town to stay clean....not dusty with dirt/gravel roads. School is positive. Another positive – is an ethic – they made the community and worked at it – evidence to see how many people showed up at this meeting...don't think this would happen in Lincoln. Safety for children...not a lot of change in the 30 years I've been here – those of you who are concerned about school kids drinking, parties, difficult neighbors – it has always been here....Point is concerns that we have – they are always going to be with us – will try to be eliminated – but small towns have more freedom here. It is a worthwhile thing...a little more risk now days....but when you weigh this in the balance – experiences they have to prepare them for life – and the ability to be more free – has some value – we don't want to put the damper on them so tightly – so we don't become a “gated community” as in Lincoln. Keep a balance between the living we have the opportunities – and the concerns we have for safety.
- We owe a lot of our town to our forefathers – and the churches we have around
- I'm so glad to see former students (I worked in Norris for 25 years) and so nice to see the young families that were students – now moving back to Firth with their families.
- I left and then have come back...and many of my friends are also moving back here too....feel safety in town.
- Grew up in small town – and don't want to go back to live past my own history .....now I can live in a small town and can be my own person. As soon as I saw the town – I wanted to live here – attractive town. We love the grocery store – we try to support it....we buy most of groceries in Lincoln, but try also to support store. I walk, I sketch what I see. I feel perfectly comfortable walking in town at night (in snow). Love parks and playgrounds. My favorite is 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration. Like the whole range of recycling here. When I go someplace else....I miss the trains at night...like coming back.
- Peer pressure – we know our neighbors and kids will respond to peer pressure better...in a small community – keep it that way – learn who your neighbors are – it will help your kids grow up better. Peer pressure can be good in a small town. School – asset.

- Fire and rescue squad is a very big asset. Lot of guys and gals that volunteer – I’m not worried about concerns...we have people that will take care of it.
- Churches have a big plus on the development in town – they were responsible in setting up the nursing home in town. It is a positive effect on the community over the years.
- Need to thank Janet – to get the recycling and park work done....Great job in getting things done.
- Good nursing home – excellent facility that take care of the people in town....that reputation has spread in Lincoln too – people research nursing homes and find this one as very good....
- Norris school district communities – all 7 – each one of those communities in their own right has strong churches – and that shows in the youth in school. Norris has the strongest “Campus Life” outside of Lincoln.

### **QUESTION # 3: WHAT IS YOUR VISION OF FIRTH IN 10-15 YEARS?**

#### **Volunteer Fire Department – April 24, 2006**

- Street dances draw people.
- Like to see go back to 10-15 years ago when there were nice businesses like lumber yard, grocery, and other mom and pop downtown businesses.
- I hate to see the town grow too much with great big developments of 1000 homes at a time.
- Would like to see more business development
- New fire station
- Paid fire fighters!
- To be viable there has to be something here to draw them.
- Like for people to come in from south and drive over train tracks and see the most unsightly part of town. Clean it all up.
- Pro Football team located here.
- See building not empty but filled with businesses.
- Get some of small town businesses back but keep small town atmosphere
- We would get more support from fire department by community and get the equipment to provide the type of care as people expect.
- Strive to provide around the clock services.
- New station with equipment we need.
- Get people to support businesses like grocery store, café, small hardware/convenience for basic stuff needed.
- More community support and don’t want community to turn into a place where parents can’t turn kids out to play.
- Overpass over railroad tracks.
- Nice to see that where you live is a community that needs your support.
- A manned ambulance unit in southeast corner of Lancaster county.  
Nursing home draws ambulance.

- New fire station, as it grows, keep the moral and ethics coming and not become diluted. People will stand up and say something when need be.
  - Nice to have a medical clinic here.
  - At least tertiary care, put in a stitch is most common need in Lincoln.
  - Public transit to get people to places without driving. (Concern for gas prices and affordability.)
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**Norris High School Students – April 25, 2006**

- Have cleanup to eliminate eye sore areas
- Nice houses and more businesses
- Bike trails and paved roads further outside Firth
- Clean and safe
- More trees planted with a new park and new ball field
- See more things come to us like pool, restaurants and fun stuff to bring people to town
- Like to see more businesses
- Improved fire department
- Be bigger with more attractions but still have small town atmosphere
- Brand new Christmas decorations
- More attractions for little kids, like pool
- A concert hall with music
- Like to get to know our neighbors and only know the neighbor right next to me . **We all stick to ourselves**
- Need to keep it clean and more welcome
- Like to see a pool and restaurants
- Need younger people to come to town. Need something to bring families to town
- I want to be able to come from Lincoln and still see small town Firth
- Be able to come home and know the street lights along neighborhoods are working
- Free wireless internet, paved roads, more businesses, jobs, better communications, a theme park, clean community
- No Welcome to Firth sign here since overpass was built
- A cell phone tower, echoes several times when mentioned
- Something to keep people here as when I graduate I will leave.
- No place to work here so no reason to stay
- A race track for all the speed demons
- I grew up here and don't want to leave. If there was a college here, I'd stay.
- You can see the stars.
- Should have a town sheriff to protect local people and businesses.
- Lots of dogs and cats running around so we need enforcement of pets.
- A place with equipment to work out, rec area.
- A sign up for activities of the month like sledding activity when fire department ices down a hill. Volleyball, basketball tournament.

- Sign up to help people scoop driveways, and donations etc.
- Fund-raising for community
- Fun Day, short on volunteers. Had fund-raiser for park equipment.
- See small businesses owned by people by a corporation that would be used by more people.
- Be able to rent movies, pick up special things.
- Recycle stuff
- Instead of a pool, you could have a beach.
- Tires are all over town, looks unsightly, should put in a building
- Coop acts like it owns the town and can do whatever they want. We want more diversity of ownership.
- Coop not a very good company, not interested in appearance.
- Should move Coop away from town because of trucks.
- Looks like they are trying to build over the town and it looks like it is the town.
- Need to do improvements besides just the coop.
- Figure out how to hide the coop and tires.
- Need something new. So many houses for sale but no one wants to buy those in town, want to live outside of town.
- Fix up house before selling to get them moving
- Make the lake accessible with a beach. It is privately owned. Could be solution instead of swimming pool
- Like to see individual houses go up rather than big developments
- Create diversity in houses built instead of all looking the same.

Town kept up – do good job in yards –

Kind of like the south part of Lincoln – including mini mall – nice houses – more businesses – nice

Bike trails in the area, paved roads – 5 miles out and around – no litter, clean safe

More trees, flowers planted around town – in park, ball field,

See a lot more things come into town – restaurants, pool etc

More businesses – and job opportunities – improve what is there – including fire dept – more money put there

Get bigger and get more attractions – but remain safe.....Christmas decorations are ugly – they don't even work anymore – but they still put them up – replace bulbs

More attractions for younger kids – pool

Have a concert hall – I like music and have a band

I probably won't be in Firth – I like to get to know our neighbors – we all stick to ourselves – get to know more

Pool, restaurants – and we need to keep it clean – and be more welcoming

Have younger people – everyone is the same now – we need more diverse people—more to bring people to be in town

Want community identity – separate from Lincoln – like small town atmosphere – need to have all the street lights working

Hover cars, free wireless internet, growing in size/more businesses and jobs, basketball stadium and a theme park

Welcome to Firth Sign – where is the sign on the Road – need better entrance sign...bring it back

Cell phone tower

Something that will keep people in town – something that will keep people wanting to stay in town...no jobs.....general store is expensive – different jobs

Race track for all the speed demons – and they won't race on roads

If you grow up in Firth – I'd don't want to leave – I love Firth – it is quiet – you can see the stars...I'd stay here if there was a college (need a college)

Back to the speeding and cops issue – we need a cop in town – a town sheriff – like Sadie's was robbed – if we had cop protection – Firth is safe – but could have more law enforcement presence

Have buildings a little more spread out – not so close together

Missile tower – so we can defend missile attacks

Problem with dogs and cats now – enforcement of animal regulations

Basketball – an area to play basketball, baseball, softball (they are all YMCA teams) fix up the park areas – they are deteriorating

A center – for working out – a recreation area – where you can have different things going on

Place by fire dept – where kids can ride bikes down hills – sledding down the hill – when they rope off the street.

Community involvement – a sign up and a newsletter where activities can be listed.....schedule of events – like fire department – put ice down hill and you can sled

Volunteer to help older people scoop sidewalks – volunteer opportunities – such as ways to get donations for third/forth world countries...or to fight cancer – sponsor a child etc...raise money for the community to use – maybe for the park.

Fun Days – they try to raise money for park – because there aren't enough volunteer for those activities

More small businesses that are actually are owned by people here – updated...maybe a corporation that can put businesses in that can be more useful to everyone

To see a small business make it – like the ice cream shop couldn't make it

Little shops so we don't have to go to Lincoln all the time – like to rent a movie

Know more about where the dump and recycling places are

Pool and a beach area by pool (of by lake/pond)

Clean up – there are tires everywhere in the town...looks unsightly ...clean up the whole town – Coop looks disgusting

Not have the town own by one person – want to see more diversity in ownership

Question about the Grain elevator use...they don't follow safety regulations – smoking by grain elevators

Move the Coop out of the town – too many semis, congested area of town – no where to park

In a span of a year – they went like to having nothing – and now have a lot...it looks like they are trying to build over the town – it looks like the Coop is “the

town” – they need to improve more of town – not just Coop....if they are going to expand it...expand it away from the town.

Somehow – we need something new – we moved into a bigger house – there are so many houses for sale in town – houses are expensive for the size they are.....house for sale are old fashioned....rejuvenate the house before trying to sell the house.

Maybe have a lake instead of a swimming pool – a Firth Lake – with a beach –not a private lake but public lake

People that come out to build in the country – would rather see individual plots of land uses for house – not a big development .... Like Hickman – is getting really bad.....houses are all the same, painted the same....need diversity in the type of houses being built.....

### **Norris School Staff – April 25, 2006**

10 – 15 year fear is – it is really a shell – there is no longer a community – but people living around it – because Firth is NOT proactive now and will not address infrastructure, inconveniences – and the didn’t take advantage of the growth.

Firth is one of the draws now – in 10 – 15 years from now it can be strong and solid – that growth must be embraced – it is going to happen – Firth might as well get their arms around it and shape it for the future. Possibly a Hardees in Firth – that shouldn’t be a hallucination – It might be sheer hell for an investors to come to the town to try to build a business --- there would be all kinds of resistance to this.

A housing development south of town – the comments heard – well that would require digging a new well and new septic/sewer system.

You can become this bigger community with an anchor in the center – or perhaps ignore it like Holland – no direction – just houses on a main street. Development needs to be platted out – like the Hickman development and build the infrastructure to make it a nice development – we will charge the fees to build the infrastructure of the growth that will happen. There are a lot of people with their heads in the sand – thinking that growth will go away.....need some planned growth.

We need to entice businesses to come to town. 15 years from now – Firth can be a nice, tight-knit community – maybe not 500 people – but 1500 people all tight – all going the same direction

Need business opportunities – unless they begin dozing buildings – there is not much land available for business. Firth is landlocked for new businesses....can’t annex due to lack of places to grow.

Firth has to get away from being seen as a totally agricultural community....that attitude is changing some—as the Coop is changing and growing – we are not a farming community anymore – we have residential developments all around the town. Reality is that it is happening.....When farmers can get \$40,000-\$50,000

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an acre for development – and I’m struggling to farm...and I’m getting close to retirement – they make the decision to sell.

Possibly a fast-food place —the first one (like in Hickman)— will make a killing in business profits. The same thing can happen in Firth – but it needs to be accessible –and something to draw people back in town...the town can only support a small quick-shop type grocery in today’s world....it is hard to have a larger store – because 90% of the people living in Firth work outside – in Lincoln and they shop in Lincoln for groceries.

Firth is far enough of the beaten path – they won’t pull in a large company like Waverly – not enough infrastructure ..... there will be more service type businesses in Firth...there is no incentive to stay in Firth –.

In the past – the cabinet shop – would have done better in Lincoln – due to more people seeing the shop – and at that time Firth was long distance – (now it is different now with cell phones.)

(Discussion ---) With vision there are possibilities – if people can work together – envision what you want and then plan backwards toward that goal....

A suggested vision of ice and sledding down the street and get snow making machines – and the possibility of 12 weeks during the year bringing in people for business.....can flood a skating rink – a warming house so people can get warm.....the old line Firth folks will say – we don’t want the riff-raff from Lincoln out here.

There is a lot of potential – what it will take is someone that has the strength to have a vision and take it on – to be successful.

I’m afraid that what you will have is – the information gathered -- it will fall on deaf ears – you will have a lot of good feedback – but with the politics of the town – you will not have anything happen. Several years ago – we’ve done this before – and nothing happened. Possibly – with new elections, other people can become part of the decision makers.....like when Norris was built 30 years ago – there are still hard feelings over this.

Now you have parents that came here as students – that are now sending their children here to Norris.....In the past – Lincoln Public Schools – wanted one school district for Lancaster county – now people want to move out to Norris to get their kids out of Lincoln district, the northern edge of the district is being tugged at now.

Need younger people involved in planning for the future – Those kids care about Firth – they may not be able to make the distinction clearly....they don’t want to stay in Firth now while in high school.....but when they are a bit older – that Firth would be the kind of the community that kids would want to live in.....when they become married and have children....I want those kids that we were talking to today....to be able to come back and have Firth as a viable community...and they will want to come back – and become involved.

20 years ago – driving from Firth to work in Lincoln was very unusual...now with good infrastructure...it is no big deal....they can live in Firth.

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## Business Owners – May 8, 2006

Two fold – 1<sup>st</sup> – we do not have a town that is committed to the outside peripheral area...and communications with the people on the outside – to communicate a “unity”...there is no reason why all people can express their opinions.

We need to be able to grow – we don’t have any land – we need to move the park or the ball park --- we need to put land up to be able to put businesses in ....we are land locked.

The hill to the north of town will be filled with houses. The area south of town will be developed...we need to have infrastructure to make that happen...which will help create the demand for more businesses in town. Is the sewer system ready for it?

We need to plan the growth – we need to be forward thinking...need to talk to the farmers around about planned growth so they can be connected.

More events – like car shows – that will bring more people to our town...it will bring more Lincoln folks – and which will bring more communication...and how will we be able to handle the growth. As long as people get together like this (listening session) – to keep ahead of the game.

Growth – we have acreages all around us – how can we grow – we will have to grow north and east...Growth will happen – we need to figure out which way to go...need a larger sewer system – it will be a lot bigger.

I moved here 26 years ago – a time frame for a vision – I felt like I was the only person who wasn’t from here – from a vision standpoint – the community was an aging community were drifting off – I’ve seen a younger more vibrant community grow in the last 26 years – even through it is a bedroom community – we will be having the starter families – need to get those people on board – and maintain and culture the assets that area already here.

The is a bedroom community – we will see more small service businesses (like Subway in Hickman) – we need to plan and control of where those businesses will develop – and those people will have to have a say so on the town board – need good communication.

Firth can’t support the sewer system by itself – need outside help.

The ball association – is great – we have to engage the parents to get them on board – a great thing to bring the community together – I’ve seen other communities – let it die – it is a strength -- but we need to engage the families that move here – not just the same volunteers that always do it.

Housing developments – we need to allow spaces for business growth and development – and leave space for commercial (businesses).

WE sit on an aquifer of water – it doesn’t go very far in other directions...like at Hickman – what is that water both – will there be wells for Hickman or Lincoln...we maybe need limits on who can get the water from our aquifer....and good water.

Growth aspect – as the town grows – you will eventually have more business and infrastructure – as there is demand. After reading the survey sent out – you won’t

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be able to get all the desires stated in the surveys – you will need growth – businesses are willing to expand.

I'm hoping in 15 years down the road – it will be a **Planned Growth** – not a hodge-podge as now.

Growth is good for businesses – I see more people moving from Lincoln down to this area.

I'd like to see Firth more attractable so families will remain – not just buy a house and then move out in 4 – 5 years. Possibly a wind generator for power...and have Firth as self-sustainable – to help increase money in our coffers. I'd like to see the Community Association in town – does well...but maybe as a Business Association we can take it a step further...have the strong minds in this room – we can build event to attract people down here – keep people here and bring others with events.

When you go to see the older generation in our town – they will say “to keep it the same” – what we need to do is to change the dynamics of our board.

A lot of people are close minded – and are scared of the change...it is going to happen....people are going to have to realize that there is a changing world....we are growing....Board needs to be more opened minded – we need a more diverse board.

Only 2 people in this room can be on the board – in this room others live on the outside. It is up to us – to get a forward thinking people to run for the board – that would talk to potential candidates...those that are on there will remain for their lives...if we don't go out to get folks rounded up NOW...we will be in the same situation for 4 more years. Need to get names of people – that the older people will vote for...the Dutch name will get votes. It will be up to the businesses folks to get those names on the ballot.

Concerns me – that we are going through the planning process...we have a dairy that smells sometimes – and chicken house that has houses next to it – what is the buffer zone – smell can be a huge problem...has to be something in laws/regulation.

Zoning should be set...sometimes it take education for the folks moving in ...that when you move near a large livestock operation – zoning and education needs to happen.

I love the idea of having Firth self sustaining

Use methane gas to help fuel

Use wind generator – and be able to sell power into the grid...maybe have a wind generator for Firth – and then sell to power grid later. RED TAPE locks you up pretty tight,

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## Senior Diners – May 8, 2006

Another service station for better fuel price communications.

A medical facility of some kind

Grocery store

A medical facility

Be sure that it is better than it is now.

The medical center. We will have more people to patronize this. Dental, Eye and Medical.

We need to have something that no one else has.

Condos, swimming pool

Assisted living

Everyone wants things but will they patronize it? The convenience store that we now have. Some say they won't go in there, so if they won't go in there, how can it survive.

More options of businesses.

A planned structure of where houses vs. businesses and industry planned.

Coop is biggest place in town. If they can't make it, how would someone else.

Need our own law enforcement.

Grocery store

Assisted living

Got to have someone willing to work at a good quality eating established.

Medical center combined with assisted living.

Low income housing for elderly.

See it grow and see our young people stick around. Lots of kids for children's sermons, how can we keep them here?

We need to encourage more people to help build business infrastructure.

We need to keep young people coming back here. Med center, economic development plan to encourage jobs.

Seem to be using up our farmlands for developments. When that is done what will we have.

There is a lot of negativity in this room. Everyone was against liquor store and we lost it. We need to have an attitude change.

There will need to be improvements but it will take cooperation and time.

Set up Medical Center like Norris Schools with communities together.

The retirement town is going and younger families coming to town and we need to change our thoughts that don't just concern our age group.

There should be another school but tax structure won't support another school.

Movie or entertainment complex

Can we have a set up like Adams with doctor, chiropractor, dentist, eye doctor, etc?

Dry Goods such as thread and needles available locally.

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## **Nursing Home – May 8, 2006**

Get a Menards here – so I don't have to travel to Lincoln to get things.

Possible a Doctor Clinic – a very reasonable dream.....it might be even different health care professional sharing the same office.

Have a larger nursing home...downtown businesses and a clinic – something to keep people here./...it would take money to make that happen...it will take time and energetic people to make it work. It will take people who have the skills – will need to give time.

Pass your dreams to your children and grandchildren – a big nursing home and Dr. and nurses

I was a farmer's wife – in 10 – 15 years – there won't be much farming....everything will be together.

The farmers won't have a lot ...farms are getting much smaller – land is going into development.

Maybe we will start our own ethanol plant here –a wind generator would be nice too....

You can see what path people are taking – we can see –but we don't know where it will end...it will take a lot of work – and the willingness to work. It also takes personal planning.

The reason folks come with children –kids can walk down to the store – and nothing will happen to them----safely

The nursing home is a strength – it is the largest employer in the community....think about compounding the wages – by the time it goes out to the county....we support Sadies with lunches and supper.

School staff brings in educated people into the community.

The Nursing home also gives back to this community....as the community gives back to Nursing home.

Kids want a beach on the lake. The lake is underdeveloped – no store for snacks....Indications – are that the community is going to grow – what will it take to handle the things needed for that growth.

We need to promote our community – people don't know where Firth is.

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## **Public Open Meeting – evening – May 8, 2006**

- Create a central place for families to meet and be together...a swimming pool – there isn't any other small town that has a pool – I think it would be a good investment for the community...people will come.
- All of the different cultural backgrounds that are coming together – in the past, people that have shown respect and welcoming – they will continue to do so with new families that come here to live.
- I want a steak house – that has a good steak.....the smaller places – if they can have a steakhouse – a little business area...it may be a franchise to get it started – sandwich shop, Mr. Goodsense etc.
- Used to have a roller skating rink, places to have for kids ....we have a lot of money moving in around Firth – that maybe we could tap....Organized youth events – like roller skating.
- Things for the kids – from small through teenagers – pool, intramural sports,...all we have now is softball....more activities for kids.

- As the town gets bigger it brings more competition and problems...you have to realize it. It seems that we are slowly growing.
- More businesses in town – swimming pool – all ages can use it...now we have to go to Lincoln – and it is an all day event.
- Swimming pool – and also happy to have a café/restaurant...it is a gathering place – for coffee, play cards etc....a vision for me.
- Swimming pool – library and more businesses....library on wheels now but would like to see something more permanent.
- Pool businesses, library etc.
- A Rec. center – where there is organized sports year round – and can tap into other activities around sports...and have after-school things...girl scouts etc can meet there -- a central place to meet and gather.
- Viaduct over the rail road tracks.....Like in Missouri – a pool hall – no alcohol, no smoking....the teen boys like to meet there and they all meet and have something to do ...pool table.
- I'd like to see it look “uniform” and an attractive town. Fix that window...shutter is falling off...The Coop is spread out all over the place and a huge field of tires.
- I don't necessarily want it to grow – I like having the young people and families move in – but I honestly – I don't want it to become Hickman – I don't want the sewer problems...I'm ok with paved streets – it is clean....my vision includes – a Rec. center is great....something for activities - (like Hickman has) where junior high or high school kids planned summer activities – balloon tosses etc....some structure.
- One of the biggest problems I've seen in some homes in Lincoln...(Russian bottoms in Lincoln)..renters don't care...and homes are beautiful wood – and renters (college kids) are trashing it....and the people that continue living there – have nothing but problems there....Village have control over who and how houses re rented in Firth – if not controlled – will have problems.
- Having a central location so families can get together. I want it that if they see my child see him/her misbehaving....I want them to correct it – or call me....I want it that – that happens only comes when we all know each other.
- Like Bakery in Bloomfield – the stories got told when kids misbehaved – builds self-control for kids – they have to be good.
- Community building – why isn't this place used for Girl Scouts?
- We have a real strength – the older folks that can help folks in Nursing home....we need to have more development/help with other end of spectrum (children)

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**Open Public Meeting – May 8, 2006**

I'd like to see Firth – more beautiful like when we moved here – 10 years go – the yards are beautiful, houses painted and kept up – yards are beautiful...OK now – compared to other towns – but not like we moved her 10 years ago

Organized planning – need planning and zoning – now a building goes up anywhere --getting permits depends on whether town board likes you – they do know their ordinances – because the have been typed up – that is progress, but we have a ways to go...

IT is difficult for me to have visions and changes – I've grown up here and I like it “little” and have no fear. I don't want massive things being accomplished...change is inevitable – so it is nice to have Listen sessions so hopefully change can be positive.....was a grocery store, Fitness center is new – playground equip at park is much better

As a small child – I had no fear because I new everyone – now when I walk through town – I carry my cell phone....although I've never had a reason to use it The dogs –I'm more afraid of dogs attacking than fear of people

Nice to get the sidewalks fixed in town – they are awful – children have to walk down the street – or there are no sidewalks at all in places -- not that safe to walk on street.

Pool – cost of maintained – Beatrice struggles to keep life guards...how will we keep them in Firth if there is a pool.

Nice to have something more for the teenagers to do. Hickman has a summer program (summer rec. center) – would nice to have that here.....maybe it would be nice to have more organized activities for teens.

The sledding and snowmaking machine – would apply to all ages.....and other small businesses that go along with it.

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## Youth at Community Center – May 10, 2006

Town kept up – do good job in yards –

Kind of like the south part of Lincoln – including mini mall – nice houses – more businesses – nice

Bike trails in the area, paved roads – 5 miles out and around – no litter, clean safe More trees, flowers planted around town – in park, ball field,

See a lot more things come into town – restaurants, pool etc

More businesses – and job opportunities – improve what is there – including fire dept – more money put there

Get bigger and get more attractions – but remain safe.....Christmas decorations are ugly – they don't even work anymore – but they still put them up – replace bulbs

More attractions for younger kids – pool

Have a concert hall – I like music and have a band

I probably won't be in Firth – I like to get to know our neighbors – we all stick to ourselves – get to know more

Pool, restaurants – and we need to keep it clean – and be more welcoming  
Have younger people – everyone is the same now – we need more diverse people—more to bring people to be in town  
Want community identity – separate from Lincoln – like small town atmosphere – need to have all the street lights working  
Hover cars, free wireless internet, growing in size/more businesses and jobs, basketball stadium and a theme park  
Welcome to Firth Sign – where is the sign on the Road – need better entrance sign....bring it back  
Cell phone tower  
Something that will keep people in town – something that will keep people wanting to stay in town...no jobs.....general store is expensive – different jobs  
Race track for all the speed demons – and they won't race on roads  
If you grow up in Firth – I'd don't want to leave – I love Firth – it is quiet – you can see the stars....I'd stay here if there was a college (need a college)  
Back to the speeding and cops issue – we need a cop in town – a town sheriff – like Sadie's was robbed – if we had cop protection – Firth is safe – but could have more law enforcement presence  
Have buildings a little more spread out – not so close together  
Missile tower – so we can defend missile attacks  
Problem with dogs and cats now – enforcement of animal regulations  
Basketball – an area to play basketball, baseball, softball (they are all YMCA teams) fix up the park areas – they are deteriorating  
A center – for working out – a recreation area – where you can have different things going on  
Place by fire dept – where kids can ride bikes down hills – sledding down the hill – when they rope off the street.  
Community involvement – a sign up and a newsletter where activities can be listed.....schedule of events – like fire department – put ice down hill and you can sled  
Volunteer to help older people scoop sidewalks – volunteer opportunities – such as ways to get donations for third/forth world countries...or to fight cancer – sponsor a child etc...raise money for the community to use – maybe for the park.

Fun Days – they try to raise money for park – because there aren't enough volunteer for those activities  
More small businesses that are actually are owned by people here – updated...maybe a corporation that can put businesses in that can be more useful to everyone  
To see a small business make it – like the ice cream shop couldn't make it  
Little shops so we don't have to go to Lincoln all the time – like to rent a movie  
Know more about where the dump and recycling places are  
Pool and a beach area by pool (of by lake/pond)  
Clean up – there are tires everywhere in the town...looks unsightly ...clean up the whole town – Coop looks disgusting

Not have the town own by one person – want to see more diversity in ownership  
Question about the Grain elevator use...they don't follow safety regulations –  
smoking by grain elevators

Move the Coop out of the town – too many semis, congested area of town – no  
where to park

In a span of a year – they went like to having nothing – and now have a lot...it  
looks like they are trying to build over the town – it looks like the Coop is “the  
town” – they need to improve more of town – not just Coop...if they are going to  
expand it...expand it away from the town.

Somehow – we need something new – we moved into a bigger house – there are  
so many houses for sale in town – houses are expensive for the size they  
are....house for sale are old fashioned...rejuvenate the house before trying to  
sell the house.

Maybe have a lake instead of a swimming pool – a Firth Lake – with a beach –not  
a private lake but public lake

People that come out to build in the country – would rather see individual plots of  
land uses for house – not a big development .... Like Hickman – is getting really  
bad.....houses are all the same, painted the same....need diversity in the type of  
houses being built.....

## **Farmers – May 22, 2006**

(Solid houses from Lincoln to Beatrice) non-green space from here to Lincoln  
–outside of the 15 acres between houses...housing up every highway – if  
everyone can get water (may get rural water dist)...may not be what I want to  
see...but realistic – and will happen fast too.

I think they need to look at expanding Firth somehow – expand the town so that  
we can consolidate and condense...need to look at doing something for business  
attraction...may not have control over some of it...get vet, dentist, -- businesses  
that you can do some of that locally. If the beltway comes in.....it will jump the  
beltway

Town will expand – town board doesn't support growth...get younger ones on  
there with for sight...Town had restaurant and it wasn't supported...need that.  
Our town lies pretty good between Lincoln and Beatrice – growth will happen.  
Realistically – population explosion – Would love to have the town stay quaint  
and old time feeling – be self supporting and grow – one thing we need to do is to  
get the village board changed – bring in some younger blood. Keep the quaint  
town with values – and bring in the people that live around the outside...and  
incorporate them into the town.

Need better roads, there will be more people – 68<sup>th</sup> street from Firth Road to  
Lincoln – it is now bumper to bumper – will need 4 lane road from Firth to  
Lincoln. If we have as much growth in the next 10 years as the last 10 years – it  
will be “full”. Gas price won't make much difference – whether they move out or  
not

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If they want businesses grow – have buildings and rent out the space – and people can come here a day or two a week. (like Dr, dentist etc.) Driving out some little towns – and there is not much left – broken windows == no one fixes it....no one is looking for the future.

Growth may slow down a little due to gas prices and increase in interest rates....but I think we are growing. Would like to have incentive of getting more businesses in town.

Some complain about Coop – but need to work with them. Town board has made some good decisions....very conservative...but have good water system and good roads.

Adams – has great support from their own bank....getting businesses into town I don't know if our bank has that support. Adams is planning on making a library in combination with the school....good. We have a mobile library. They are doing a lot of things over there – that we could do here.

I like to drive and see what other towns are doing....I like to see the old buildings and see paintings/writing on walls. I see how businesses can be filled. We could do that too. And have 4 lane highway between Firth and Lincoln. I can see more houses north of town – but not in 20 acres increments.

It is now making a three lane – it should be making a four lane without much more expense and planning.

Like to keep the small town atmosphere – Beatrice has skate board park....need something for kids to do things in town during the summer. They have done a super job with the ball park....we have a lot of teams...I'd like to see more put in for kids. It is dangerous to do things on street. Swimming pool is big bucks – but could. We could have soccer – all our kids travel to Lincoln for soccer. I don't know why we couldn't support something – there needs to be a lot of background support/search....and get a Dr. and dentist, accountant, pet groomer – to come to town 1 – 2 days a week. I'd like to see assisted living in town...

In defense of farmers selling off lots – you can't farm for the price that they are getting. I don't like it, but you can't blame farmers. I'd like to keep it small, but that isn't going to happen. People are moving in from out of state – KS and CO – CA...they think this is cheap to live here...some came from jobs.

Businesses in town will also give kids jobs – there is nothing here in town for children to earn money....would like to have them stay in the community to be able to get a job.

If swimming pool – put into the school -- there is a lot of cost with a pool....maintenance and liability costs.

Are we in any danger of losing the nursing home? Good Samaritan is taking it over and manager is now working in Auburn too....probably need to raise money – possibly assisted living...Biggest drawback is that the rooms are too small. It is outdated – but what can you do? IT is running better now – of the three churches – only one offered money. (You don't want to throw money away if it is going down....) It may be time to remodel it.

A good thing would be a library....and a museum would be good. People have many old things and they would be willing to give to that too...

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To look into getting business – such as the Adams ethanol plant...a good business going. Even having developments – would like to see some type of “low” housing that will go down hill – would like to see how tax distribution can be leveled – something that keeps the tax level up to keep the town...not to develop low housing....People need to know what is going on. Level of building should be kept “up” to keep taxing ...not to increase so much on the houses already here.

We need to keep the tax level....I fear that Lincoln will come out and take the \$300,000 or \$400,000 homes and take the taxes back to Lincoln. Don’t want to see Low income housing. (There was some research done in Seward – taxes on a house – would not pay for the school, fire department etc.)

A nice restaurant and a nice gym...we’d have it made. There was talk about a soybean processing plant...maybe town should help push that forward.

(Dennis - Community jurisdiction is quite small....there are not a lot of people that are eligible to serve on town board...People outside of town can’t vote....need leadership that has vision for the “community”...not just the village – and the respect that the community can go forward...the ideas from the “whole” community is helpful...but the decisions for infrastructure all comes down from the tax base... Needs a lot of education, and cooperation.) and -- Everyone wants stuff to happen...but no one wants to do it.... Would like to keep these Vision sessions going – come back to do this in another year.

We need to look at the 20 acres increments – is now behind the times – it may have been to slow growth....now in today’s world, the 20 acres purchased in the rural area...is cheaper than buying a lot in Lincoln. After people have been here for a while....and then they don’t mow it and keep it up....it is too much.

Businesses in town does increase tax base...NEED to think deeper in planning ahead....than I see some thinking when planning (town board).

(Several different times “county” has been mentioned....maybe it is time that it is time to have the county planning board re-think about the size of land that is needed to be purchased for new homes.....maybe there will need to be discussion from several towns around Lincoln – to vision what you want – and then talk to the county/Lincoln planning commission....Possibly hiring someone to help make it happen....it will take a big effort to get this to happen....it may require more than one town working alone – Kid do comment that they like Firth – but there isn’t much to do here...kids realize pool is expensive....why can’t we put a beach on the lake...Snow on hill....Dutch capital of NE...fast food.)

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## **Spanish – Speaking Community – May 22, 2006**

- More stores
- If we are still here at this time we are speaking English and more stores
- More jobs
- More jobs for the wives
- More stores, if here at this time, there will be more speaking English and more communications.
- More people as Lincoln is coming out to the small communities.

- More people, more security.
- We are really excited because tomorrow we start taking English classes in Hickman in a church.
- The only bad thing is classes only available during summer time.
- The problem too is if classes were all year, if they could provide babysitting services.
- A bigger park and swimming pool.
- More jobs close by as our kids grow up they will be looking for work too.
- God willing we are all here, it would be nice if we can understand each other better as we are speaking English.
- We would see more stores
- The outskirts of Firth growing bigger and would see that another park would be established within walking distance.
- More Spanish population.
- Make baseball park bigger and expand it.
- The parks are very important and the community will always have young children playing.
- Schools have been great to kids. Like the school but only one teacher able to communicate a little bit of Spanish. Would be helpful to have another teacher with Spanish.
- Would like it if Head Start were available in Norris School District.
- In Lincoln Head Start teachers were available. Lady has child who would qualify if they lived in Lincoln.
- There are lots of young children here who may qualify.
- The best way to communicate with us would be via postal mail at dairy or at home addresses. At dairy we can have it translated.
- Best time would be 2:00 and a second evening at 6:00 or 7:00. 2:00 p.m. is shift change.
- Soccer would be great to have a Firth team to play Lincoln teams.
- A Wal-Mart close by.
- The store is very important as in winter you have to drive way into Lincoln.

### **Young Families – May 22, 2006**

- I want it to be a small town with Lincoln still separated.
  - I want the small town feeling. If it doesn't have it I'll probably move further south.
  - Has a lot of the amenities close by.
  - A great park but could develop it even more. My friends went to the park when I was in high school.
  - Buy some green space for parks. Reserve for parks, not homes.
  - Continue to maintain the streets and roads of Firth in winter. Was impressed this past winter.
  - It is a very inviting town and I want it to continue to be that way.
  - Any type of community involvement will help keep it going.
  - People still need to involve themselves and have pride in it.
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- The school is major part of this town. Many people say it is the number one school in the state with superb teachers. Keep it a high quality school.
  - Great to have a café. A place to get together and have coffee in the mornings.
  - Have a great ball park with youth activities.
  - Public restroom is available all year round in the future.
  - Some of the streets will be paved with sidewalks.
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## **Open Public Meeting Listening Session – May 22, 2006**

- I see 10 – 15 years from now I see the south bypass in Lincoln and see more growth coming to Firth – I want to see a city planning for infrastructure that will come to town. I want the people that move here to have a strong work ethic to keep working to make the town better. There is a slower pace in town, and with growth inevitable – I hope there will be proper type of growth – a little bit more commercial – that will cater to a larger population base. Properly plan the residential and the commercial sides of Firth – to keep atmosphere we have now.
- Hickman has exploded – a lot of things have happened on the north side of town. I hope Firth can manage that – to manage traffic – if we open it up to 50 – 60 – 70 – 80 housing units – it will create more traffic concerns. I can see growth happening north and south of town.
- The older we get – the less we like to drive – especially at night....would like to see grocery store. Keep good nursing home.
- As long as some of the regular old-time families – in younger version of those families – that continue with those old values – Firth will be a good place to live.
- I'd love to see more profitable businesses – broke my heart to see Creamery go out of business.....to have them be successful.....and not be gone in 1 – 2 years. Would love to see “unity”—would love to see a lot of community involvement and people want to get their hands dirty – and see more volunteers who want to make a difference.
- When looking at Hickman and Lincoln – there has been an explosion of growth. Firth has to have a plan....to develop the plan is to plan for and/or put the infrastructure in place. Population is coming out...school is expanding....and will have to expand some more...There may have to be a small business district in Firth when town expands. This needs to be planned for (may not be located in current downtown.) Bypass is coming.....
- Would like to see town grow enough so children can have their activities here – and not have to drive to Beatrice or Lincoln for pool etc.
- I don't see activities happen – I see the business area that we have now – continue to disappear – I see a strip mall at 68yh & Firth Road – and also at 43 and Adams – they want to go to a chain restaurant. We have to support Mick and when people see that Mick can be successful – then another one may come. Mick had a restaurant – didn't support it....they traveled to Lincoln. So Creamery and restaurant disappeared.....I don't see businesses will be on Hwy 77 and on 68<sup>th</sup> street. I do not see a retail area in Firth. It will continue a sleepy little town and a

- “best kept secret”...I don't advertise that fact anymore. I think it will be a good place – churches, fire station – having a “sense of place.”
- There are other businesses in town that is growing – Coop, mechanic, etc....when town grows then percentages will support other businesses.
  - **To grow some that will support other businesses – to get younger families around. Possibly a dentist or Dr. here a few days a week....Place for Assisted Living.**  
Home care service. Maid service
  - I want to see it grow – but not be huge. People who are moving back – know what they want.
  - Half of me thinks we need change, diversity, etc. The other half says keep it the way it is....keep the water, sewer etc – quality services to the houses in town that we have now. Think about environmental impact – that we consider the housing density will have on the piece of land – what it will mean with runoff and other pollution. As we watched houses vacate – are there federal programs to help offer incentives for the town – to offer people to move into town. Can we create incentives for people to move into town.
  - Don't see big growth – hope it comes in small increments....it will more or less take care of itself.
  - Would like to see swimming pool – in the summer – they need to keep busy...kids need to have things to do. I see half of Main Street to be town down to get a new business to move in....there is no place for them to go into...Firth can support the businesses (heating and air conditioning)...needs to go into Lincoln to get parts. There are a lot of businesses in town – in our houses (home businesses)...not on main street – but tucked into corners. **WE NEED SOMETHING THAT WILL LET PEOPLE KNOW WHAT IS REALLY IN TOWN – Voice newspaper or a Website – to let people know what businesses are in town. Have website – needs updating.**
  - Would like to see Firth to become a stable community....a stable neighborhood...not houses purchased for rentals...and people moving in an out.
  - Would like to see a sidewalk system for kids to ride bikes on....will be expensive...also consider in acreage developments –how about a walking trail system throughout the acreages (Like Highlands)...walking trails directly connected to town that you can walk outside of town.
  - I want to have it stay friendly, family oriented....would like to see a pool to draw kids together.
  - Residential growth is going to hit us....there are too many people that want it to stay the way it is....but when you consider the whole package – they don't want it to change --- it will change and it will grow – but it will be met by opposition.
  - See controlled growth...the plan has to be in place. Would like to see business community revitalized – situation now where the roof is falling in – has to be worked on. It all takes money. Small businesses that have a niche –you need to have a different mindset for management – that will have to be learned. Small businesses (former café) had a different mind set – it will take a lot of work – they won't get rich – but could be good business. Can have small businesses – another ice cream store, small clothing store – husband/wife team....husband will have to have job and woman run the business – would be a service to community.

- Farmers don't move into town – in the past, when people retired – some other family member would move into the town....town was full of old retired farmers...they were meat and potatoes eating families – that is why it kept in business. Now we live in a different society – we run to Lincoln to get a burger. I don't know how these small businesses can make it in this town – Mick – has to have 3-4 businesses to make it work – have to diversify to make it work. Old days, cards/snooker was the way it was.
- We are extremely fortunate that we don't have a highway running down through it....look at how they are diminishing....and highway cuts town in half.
- In driving around NE when we looked for places to live – swimming pool – Exeter – we need entertain how other communities our size – are able to keep it growing. Our Norris area is full of acreages...we are right in the middle and other towns don't have it. The timing might be right to have a pool put in—not only the town will have to support it – possibly it could be put a pool into the school and have it open in the summer for kids.....(others think it would be better inside town proper.) Expensive to maintain – and need to think about liability.
- Seinfeld -- have everyone around town would have name tags – to help break the ice.....we need to learn about each other.