

Say thanks by including your community

By Russ Pankonin, THE IMPERIAL REPUBLICAN CO-PUBLISHER

I had to think of the Imperial community when I read an article recently in the Omaha World-Herald about the future of rural communities and how people are working with community foundations to invest in a community's future.

In the small ranching town of Hyannis, community leaders have set up an endowment to provide for their community in the years to come.

Delores Brennemann, one of the community leaders there, has the perfect response when she hears people say they can't give back to the community because they have to provide for their heirs.

... SHE JUST INSISTS THAT PEOPLE THINK OF THE COMMUNITY AS ONE OF THEIR HEIRS.

She doesn't argue that, she just insists that people think of the community as one of their heirs.

If you have four children, then divide things up by five instead of four and both the kids and our hometowns benefit—it's a win-win situation.

This method of "counting the community in" recognizes the significance the local hometown community and values

play in our lives. Plus, the gifter knows that not only are they helping their children, but they are saying thanks to the community that has been so much a part of their lives.

The Hyannis example is but one way to remind people to include their community when they do their estate planning and charitable giving.

On the local level, members of the Imperial Community Foundation are seeking to do the same thing.

One needn't look any farther than this week's front page which features a story on Kermit Karns, who has led by example, establishing a number of endowments for the benefit of people in the community.

During the next 50 years or so, there's going to be a tremendous wealth transfer from one generation to the next throughout our Nebraska communities. In Chase County, that figure is expected to total nearly \$700 million. Of that \$700 million, an estimated 10 percent, or \$70 million, will transfer in the next five years.

Imagine the impact that could be made over the years, if the community was included as one of the heirs in this transfer of wealth.

Assuming that if just 5 percent of that \$70 million were gifted locally, endowments totalling \$3.5 million could be built to benefit the local community and county.

With a return of 5 percent on those gifts, \$175,000 would be available each and every year to enhance betterment projects here. Can you imagine what kind of progress could be made locally with that kind of money?

That's why the Imperial Community Foundation exists—to provide a tax-deductible vehicle in which people could reinvest in their community for the future.

Giving back to the community is a way of saying thanks for the kind of lifestyle we enjoy here. Remember—"count your community in."