



**By Russ Pankonin**  
**The Imperial Republican**

Two major building projects totaling nearly \$2.5 million represented the ongoing investment in the future that helps keep the Imperial community strong.

In addition, seven new businesses opened during 2009, signaling that Imperial and Chase County continue to be a strong trade center for the area.

Six new homes went in throughout the county, as well.

This all occurred in a year shadowed by a nationwide economic crisis that started in 2008 and continued into 2009.

Despite this, the rural communities in Nebraska haven't seen the roller coaster shifts experienced in many metropolitan areas of the country.

Agriculture remained strong in 2009. While commodity prices fell below the record levels of 2008, 2009 will still be considered a good year for agriculture.

Cattle feeders will be glad to put 2009 behind them, however, as the red ink flowed for a big share of the year, marking one portion of the ag sector that didn't experience a good year.



**Two new buildings**  
**total \$2.45 million**

Despite all this, the community and county remain resilient, evidenced by the commitment of capital to make needed improvements.

While the dollar value of building permits in Imperial wasn't as high as the past two years, they still totalled \$2.83 million for the year.

Two major improvements to the community represented \$2.45 million of that total.

Frenchman Valley Coop led the way with a new \$1.75 million office building located at the south end of Broadway.

The new building features 7,500 square feet of office space on the main floor, along with 7,500 square feet in the basement, which includes a majority of storage and some office space.

The new facility enabled the coop to move three department heads into the same building and provides three times the space they had in their old facility.

Also included in the building is a 40-person meeting room that also doubles as a board room.

The move to the new offices was made in late May.

Parishioners of St. Patrick Catholic Church saw a long-time dream become a reality in 2009 with the construction and completion of a new parish hall in the 700 block of Broadway.

The 80 x 80-foot facility encompasses a large fellowship area that can seat 200, a large spacious kitchen, three classrooms and a meeting room. The meeting room also doubles as a

classroom for youth Catechism classes during the school year.

Lincoln Bishop Fabian Bruskwicz blessed the hall as part of his visit here Sunday, Oct. 25.

The hall has already seen extensive use for parish events and is also available for public use.

### **Seven new businesses open in 2009**

A total of seven new businesses opened during 2009, five of those in Imperial and one in Champion.

Some of the new businesses reopened businesses that had previously closed.

Jennifer Bell and Jason Faling purchased the previously closed Sweden Creme drive-in at 1134 Broadway and opened JJ's.

The business offers a complete menu for breakfast through supper and also includes an espresso bar.

Jack and Christy Stinnette opened Jack's Steak House and Sandwich Shoppe at 415 Broadway in September after On Broadway closed.

Champion saw its restaurant reopen after last year's closing of The Mill House Restaurant when Cindy Leibhart and Bill Bardsley opened Cindy Lou's BBQ.

Eli Perez added a new business on main street with the opening of a used furniture store, Crazy Jake's, at 527 Broadway.

Holli Purkeypile opened a new hair salon, called Just for Looks, at 816 Douglas.

Attorney Phil Pierce of Ogallala opened a law office in the Service Insurance building at 409 Broadway. The office is open one day per week.

Matt DuPeire started his own carpet cleaning business called Matt's Carpet Cleaning.

### **Ownership changes in 2009**

Several businesses changed hands during the past year.

Aaron and Erica Greene are the new owners of Chase 3000 wireless Internet service. They purchased the business from Steve and Jennifer Smith.

Vanessa Terryberry purchased A Cut Above hair salon from Sandy Browning at 514 Broadway and renamed it the COLOR box.

The children of Lila Prior became the owners of Prior's and Sew Forth following the death of Mrs. Prior in September.

### **Business name changes**

Crop Production Services is the new name for the former UAP on east Highway 6. The change occurred in early 2009.

The health club owned and operated by Steve Grams on Highway 61 is now known as The FarmKID Gym.

### **Business relocations, additions**

In July, Mid-Plains Community College dedicated their new extended campus facility in Imperial.

In 2008, they purchased the former Hometown Pharmacy building at 1324 Broadway and completely renovated it.

They added classrooms, distance learning equipment and offices to accommodate their outreach programs here.

They also announced a cooperative venture with Bellevue University that allows Mid-Plains graduates to obtain a bachelor's degree through Bellevue University right here in Imperial.

In June, the Chase County Extension Office moved from their Douglas Street location into the former NRD building 135 West 5th.

The move provides the agency significantly more space than it had in the Douglas Street office.

Denver Urologist Dr. Rick Schmidt of Denver relocated his urology clinic from North Platte to the Chase County Community Hospital in Imperial.

The hospital and clinic added another full-time doctor when Dr. Jose Garcia joined the staff this year.

The hospital added a new digital mammography machine among other improvements to the facility.

First Insight Eyecare expanded their Imperial schedule following the addition of Optometrists Eric and Tori Gengenbach. They join Dr. Tim Meyer in the practice. Eric Gengenbach is a native of Grant.

Holiday Farms reopened in 2009. They added on to their greenhouse and also offer a landscaping service, a farmer's market in the summer and is the new dealer for K-Lawn.

Lamar Fertilizer expanded their office and storage space with a new addition this year.

The Lighthouse Fellowship now uses the former Imperial Hotel building at the corner of 5th and Broadway for their youth outreach ministry, naming it Area 51.

### **Business closings**

Businesses closing during 2009 included HiTech Computer Solutions, the Flower Cart, Sweden Creme and On Broadway.

### **Six new homes added**

Residents added six new homes in Chase County, including two new homes in Imperial's city limits.

Mitch and Sarah Stretesky built a new home located at 1725 Wesley Drive in Imperial.

Glen and Janet Ashmore have a new home at 1530 Chase Street.

Kelly and Jordan Hammerlun built a new home in the Genesis 2000 addition at the east edge of Imperial at 33397 737 Rd.

Matt and Lindsey Teply own a new home at 74172 330 Avenue, northwest of Imperial.

Cody Hudson has a new home in northeast Chase County at 74561 342 Avenue.

Seth Spicer has a new home located east of Imperial at 34062 738 Road.

Scott and Marcie Kelley moved in a home east of Imperial on 336 Avenue the last of 2008. The home was not included in last year's progress edition.

### **Other notables**

The city held its grand opening of the new pool and locker room facility this summer, capping off a project started during 2008.

The high school also used the new locker room complex for the first time in the spring for track.

The school and city worked together to build a locker room facility that could be used both for the pool and the school.

The city completed the second phase of water main installation along Broadway as well as East 12th Street.

The project also includes the installation of a new lift station at the northeast end of Campbell Park. Work on that project will start the second week of January.

The city will follow this year with an aggressive plan to replace the east portions of 5th and 12th Streets and a portion of 9th Street in front of the school with new concrete paving.

On a not-so-positive note, farmers along the west edge of Chase County, including the Lamar area, experienced some of the most damaging hail seen in several year.

The summer storms decimated corn, wheat and bean fields in the affected area, forcing farmers to rely on their insurance to carry them through the year.

**Wauneta businesses**

Wauneta added two new commercial businesses this past year, with a new auto service business operated by Ross Fanning and a new tattoo shop operated by Christopher Hansen.