

*Hundreds attend events throughout Fourth of July weekend*

**By Jan Schultz**

***The Imperial Republican***

While rain dampened some of Friday's opening events, the enthusiasm remained high as Imperial celebrated its 125th anniversary last weekend.

Scheduled on the nation's most historic Fourth of July holiday weekend, Imperial's history was in the spotlight as people visited displays and took part in events many of Imperial's forefathers likely enjoyed 125 years earlier.

Commenting on Friday's downpour that sent the cake decorating contest indoors, Imperial Mayor Annie Longan noted how everyone adapted.

Probably a lot like Imperial's founders and first residents were forced to adapt to a spot in the prairie they called their new home.

And, 125 years after its founding in 1885, Mayor Longan said, "We're still here."

In her visits to other communities and for out-of-town meetings, Mayor Longan noted that Imperial is known as a "model town" for its progressiveness.

As she spoke, the mayor pointed out the welcome flag that hung on the podium, an important piece of history to Imperial residents.

Flags, including that one, hung along Imperial's streets in the mid-1940s as local veterans returned home from WWII.

After the posting of colors by Imperial's VFW 4688 Color Guard and Pledge of Allegiance, Mayor Longan introduced Mark Mercier Jr., and his wife, Sherie, who attended the 125th celebration weekend from Spring Valley, Ariz.

Mark's great grandfather, Thomas Mercier, was Imperial's co-founder in 1885 with Melville Goodrich.

Mrs. Mercier noted they first learned about Mark's family's tie to Imperial when a granddaughter of Mark's uncle, Bob Mercier of Lincoln, did a genealogy search for a paper.



Bob and Marilyn Mercier then came to Imperial in 1994, and spread the word among their family about this community in southwest Nebraska.

That led Mark Jr., and Sherie to change their wedding plans, and instead, get married in Imperial on June 29, 1995.

They arrived last week for the festivities on Tuesday, June 29, and were able to celebrate their 15th anniversary here.

With only a few days in town, Sherie remarked, "The hospitality here is great!"

She added, "As I understand it, Thomas and Mary Jane (Mercier) did a lot here. We are glad to be part of the heritage."

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