

By Jan Schultz

The Imperial Republican

The Imperial Volunteer Fire Department (IVFD) is among the area fire departments that has received a donation from the Southwest Irrigators Association.

Max Hoffmeister of Imperial, secretary/treasurer, said the organization, which formed in 1968, has decided to dissolve. They have not met formally since the mid-1990s.

Hoffmeister noted the Southwest Irrigators Association was established in the early 1970s by farmers and businessmen in southwest Nebraska to promote the wise use of groundwater. It eventually led to the formation of Nebraska's natural resources districts (NRDs).

The board of directors decided to distribute the remaining funds from the organization's treasury to rural fire departments. It was divided up considering where the original members lived, and where those who last paid dues resided, Hoffmeister said.

"We felt the best use of the funds was to the fire departments" that provide service to the areas where the members lived, Hoffmeister said.

He noted the current members had discussed turning over the funds to the NRDs in the area for such items as water purchases, but learned those governmental entities cannot accept such funds.

Original membership in the Southwest Irrigators Association came from Chase, Dundy, Hayes and Hitchcock Counties.

Fire Chief Bryan Dannatt said the IVFD received its donation last week. It is designated for use in the rural fire district.

He said they have not yet determined its use. The donation amount was not given.

Hoffmeister said the organization would like to see the money spent purchasing and updating equipment, "or however the department chooses to spend the donation."