

By Jan Schultz

The Imperial Republican

An instructor planned for a minimum of 12 participants, but found much more interest in a concealed carry class here when 79 men and women took the course in Imperial.

The huge interest grew the class from one to three on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

It was Justin Grusing's first class in western Nebraska for the course, which is required for Nebraskans to carry a concealed weapon.

The instructor from Firth, Neb., said he had concentrated his teaching around the Lincoln area the past three years since starting his business, Nebraska Shooters.

"I said I'd come out for at least 12 people," he said.

A growing interest in his firearm classes is being seen, he said.

"Absolutely. I've probably taught more classes in the last six weeks than in three years," he said Tuesday.

"I'm sure it has a lot to do with the political climate," he said.

"People have a strong interest in securing firearms and once they have them" are interested in the concealed carry classes, he said.

The instructor also noted more women took the course here compared to classes in the eastern part of the state.

Women usually make up 10 to 15 percent of the students, but Imperial's classes drew 25 percent women, he said.

Participants ranged from the mid-20s to mid-60s in age.

Training, such as Grusing offers, is the first step in acquiring a concealed carry permit in Nebraska from the Nebraska State Patrol.

Once the class is successfully completed, the participant gets a certificate, which should then be submitted to the State Patrol. That agency then takes fingerprints, does a background check and, if the person is cleared, a concealed carry permit is issued.

About 75 percent of Grusing's class is in the classroom where subjects such as avoiding a criminal attack, safe gun and ammunition handling, proper storage, shooting fundamentals and the law are reviewed.

He also discussed the gun laws in other states, and rules about carrying weapons across state lines.

Outdoor practice that covered handling and target shooting, firing drills and decision-making drills were also part of the course.

Shooting drills were held south of the transfer station, and the classroom part of the course here was held at the library.

Chris Tomky of Lamar coordinated the classes. Her interest in scheduling a class locally rose from the 4-H shooting sports in which she and her children are involved.

She and some of the other parents were interested in learning more about gun safety, she noted.

Tomky did some research online, and found Grusing.

Tomky said everyone who took the class was very interested in safety and the laws regarding guns.

Some taking the course here also took the NRA basic pistol exam, she noted.

Police Chief Rob Browning served as safety officer at the shooting range, and Grusing was

assisted during the courses by two other instructors.

Due to continued interest, Tomky said she is already working on scheduling another class here in April. She already has five people signed up.

There is also some interest here for an advanced training course, which may also be scheduled later this year.