

By Russ Pankonin

The Imperial Republican

For the third consecutive year, Imperial will play host to a mobile packing event for Feed My Starving Children.

This year's five-day event will be held July 23-27 at the Crossroads Wesleyan Church. The event is organized by the Southwest Nebraska Meals for God's Children (SNMFGC) committee.

The first event held here in 2011 packaged 227,646 meals. In 2012, the committee increased their goal to 500,000 meals and have set 500,000 meals as their goal again this year.

Volunteers taking part in last year's event packaged a total of 520,992 meals. That equates to providing 1,427 children one meal a day for a year.

Dick Banks of Imperial, committee chair, said the support for the project has been outstanding, both in the form of financial contribution and volunteerism.

In 2012, the committee raised more than \$110,000 to cover the cost of the meals. During the five-day event, more than 1,500 people volunteered to pack the meals. They will seek to raise another \$110,000 again this year.

Banks said the FMSC project provides the opportunity for people to help others less fortunate as well as a way of giving back.

\$30,000 matching grant

Last year, the committee got a commitment of a \$30,000 \$1-for-\$1 matching challenge grant to assist in fundraising efforts.

Banks said they have received the same commitment for another \$30,000 matching grant this year. The matching grant will only be available on donations made no later than July 14 or before if the grant is matched. The cost for each meal is 22 cents.

More events spawned

Since SNMFGC held their the first FMSC event, volunteers who came to Imperial have organized FMSC events in six other communities. These towns include McCook, Oxford, Kearney, North Platte, Holdrege and Goodland, Kan.

Banks said the Goodland event was started by four high school girls who had first volunteered in Imperial.

People wanting to make donations to the Imperial event can send them to FMSC, PO Box 91, Imperial, NE 69033. Checks should be made out to FMSC and should include the event No. 1307-39 on the check.

For more information, to volunteer or inquire about donations, people can contact Banks at 308-883-0397 or any of the other committee members.

They include James Marlatt at 308-882-6386, Paul Hickman at 308-414-1407 or Rhonda Hickman at 308-414-1406.

People can also go the MobilePack tab on the FMSC website at www.fmsc.org for more information or to make donations. If donations are made on the web site, donors should note event No. 1307-39 to insure donations go to the Imperial event.