



## 521,640 meals will feed 1,427 children one meal every day for a year

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

This year's Feed My Starving Children (FMSC) MobilePack™ event prepared more than 521,000 meals for children during the five-day event held in Imperial last week.

One of the organizers of the event, Dick Banks of Imperial, couldn't say enough good things about all the volunteers and donors who made this another successful event.

This marks the third year the FMSC MobilePack™ has come to Imperial.

The organization that sponsors the event, Southwest Nebraska Meals for God's Children (SNMFGC) committee, crossed a major milestone for the effort, packing their one millionth meal during the week.

Over the past three years, SNMFGC has packed 1,297,920 meals for starving children around the world.

Each meal pack, or manna pack as it's called by FMSC, provides six meals.

It contains a vitamin- and mineral-rich, chicken-flavored powder, vegetable noodles, soy granules and white rice.

Once sealed, the food product inside the bag is good for at least 18 months.

### **1340 volunteer slots**

Banks said they had volunteers from 39 different towns and cities, with nine different states represented.

The states included Nebraska, Colorado, Kansas, Idaho, Florida, California, Georgia, New York and Nevada.

He said they are seeing many of the same people coming back to pack each year, creating a regional-like family that want to help feed kids.

With a total of 18 packing sessions from Tuesday through Saturday, there were a total of 1,340 packing positions that were filled by volunteers.

He said they had a number of volunteers who packed for more than one session, with a pair of Goodland, Kan., girls who helped throughout the whole week.

Banks said during a midnight madness session Friday night, volunteers packed a total of 385 of the 110 boxes packed during a session.

One packing cell, full of experienced volunteers, packed 110 boxes, or 23,760 meals, in a two-hour session. They were turning out a box of 36 meal packets every minute, Banks said.

That set an new all-time record for FMSC of the most boxes packed by one cell during a session.



### **Food headed to Haiti**

Kevin Ewing, an FMSC supervisor at the event, said the food packaged in Imperial will be

headed for Haiti.

Two Convey of Hope semi trailers loaded with the food packed last week headed down to the gulf Saturday. The loads will fill two cargo containers that will be in Haiti within two to three weeks.

Ewing said Haiti is still reeling from the devastating earthquake several years ago.

As a result, food has been scarce for people in the mountain villages of Haiti, which is where much of FMSC's aid to Haiti is targeted.

Right now, Ewing said Haiti is the largest recipient of FMSC food packages, followed by Nicaragua, the Phillipines and the East African state of Kenya.

The demand is so great in Kenya that they can only provide one meal every other day to children there.

Ewing said FMSC conducted their first ever MobilePack™ event in Nicaragua this past year.

He said they were able to buy the rice and soy in country so they were able to reduce the cost since those items didn't have to be shipped there.

He noted FMSC is also sending food to North Korea. He said there is a large Korean population in California that supports their efforts to get food into the communist country.

In the year that ended March 1, 2012, nearly three million meals were sent to North Korea.

### **Tentative dates set for 2014**

Banks said the SNMFGC plans to sponsor another event next year, with tentative dates set for July 22-26, 2014.

He said the committee's goal is to keep holding the event on an annual basis. The goal, he said, may not always be 500,000 meals, which requires about \$110,000 in donations to cover the cost.

He noted they are within close reach of raising the \$115,000 needed to pay for the meals packed last week. He noted any additional donations will gladly be accepted.

For more information on donations or FMSC, people can contact Banks at 308-883-0397 or any of the other committee members: James Marlatt, 308-882-6386; Paul Hickman, 308-414-1407; or Rhonda Hickman, 308-414-1406.