



By Russ Pankonin

The Imperial Republican

Imperial's Chamber of Commerce honored local businesses and members for their contribution to the community during a Chamber gathering last Tuesday.

The presentations were made as part of a Chamber mixer held at Pinnacle Bank.

Leslie Carlholm, economic development director for Imperial, told the crowd that last year's business retention survey indicated businesses' contributions to the community need to be recognized.

The Chamber's promotion committee selected this year's recipients.

The recognition program was boosted by a \$2,000 contribution from the economic development funds generated by the city sales tax.

Chamber member Russ Pankonin presented the awards which included the Rising Star Award, Special Recognition Award, Partners in Success Award, Good Neighbor Award, Customer Service Award, Best Store Front Award and Chamber Hall of Fame.

Rising Star Award

The Rising Star Award went to Imperial's Alco store for the 2006 investment in a new store here.

Pankonin noted the new store filled a significant retailing gap in the business district.

The new store at the Hwys. 6/61 junction made a big improvement to the east entrance of Imperial as well.

Pankonin said the new store has helped Imperial's regional retail shopping pull as well as keeping local shopping dollars at home.

Special Recognition Award

Harchelroad Motors received the Special Recognition Award for the addition of their new vehicle storage building west of the dealership.

The building stores the dealer's new vehicles along with the large inventory of Corvettes.

In addition to enhancing Imperial's downtown, the award also recognized Harchelroads for their promotion of the Imperial area through their annual Corvette Classic.

The event draws hundreds of Corvette enthusiasts from Nebraska and many other surrounding states. This has been a key promotion in spotlighting the Imperial community and the Chase County Fair.

Partners in Success

The Partners in Success Award recognized four local businesses that are normally competitors.

First Bank and Trust Company, Adams Bank and Trust, Pinnacle Bank and the Imperial Credit Union are great supporters of the community, its youth and service organizations.

Through their collaborative support and the sponsorship of the First Bank and Trust Company, the Imperial Housing Authority was successful in applying to the Federal Home Loan Bank of Topeka for rehabilitation grant funds for the Sunrise Apartment Complex.

The funds are for the completion of a window and shingle replacement project.

Without their combined and unselfish support, this project would not have been possible.

Good Neighbor Award

The Chamber recognized Jill Moline as the recipient of the Good Neighbor Award.

Pankonin asked what person consistently attends football games, basketball games, baseball games, or any event in Imperial for that matter. The answer—Jill Moline.

Pankonin said she's a person so full of energy that she is truly an asset to the community. In addition to her daily duties at Imperial Super Foods, she has been instrumental in organizing the Chase County Fair Run, the Pumpkin Run and the Celebration on the Square.

She also contributes time to a variety of youth sports leagues.

Pankonin thanked her for her commitment to Imperial and for her efforts that have helped bring visitors to Imperial, while providing recreational opportunities for area residents.

Customer Service Award

KADL was recognized for the service to the community for their broadcasts of Longhorn sports, their morning call-in show, KADL Call and for their severe weather coverage.

KADL went on the air in 2003 under the ownership of the McCook Radio Group.

Owners Dave and Connie Stout said the purpose was to give Imperial and Chase County their own "hometown" radio station.

They broadcast Longhorn sports and cover a variety of local events with their broadcasts.

When threatening weather approaches, they broadcast live to keep listeners apprised of current conditions.

In October, 2007, the station was sold to Armada Media Corporation of Fon d'lac, Wisconsin. However, the local purpose of the station has remained the same.

Best Store Fronts

Two businesses were recognized for the appearance of their storefronts—Adams Drug and Fine Things Jewelry and Gifts.

This past year, Adams Drug updated their store front for a new modern look by putting in the new double doors and installing the new awning.

Adams Drug has been a stalwart member of the business district since 1950 and serves the area with a full-service pharmacy, drug store and gift shop.

In addition to their lighted evergreen trees or potted blooming plants, Fine Things Jewelry and Gifts may be the company most recognized by their signature blue lighted awning, installed five years ago.

The outward appearance reflects a professional impression for the store and adds a unique look to the downtown business district, Pankonin said.

The store opened in September, 1999 and offers a full line of fine gifts and jewelry.

Hall of Fame

Pankonin said he couldn't recall a Chamber Hall of Fame during his past 10 years with the Chamber, but noted one now exists with the induction of Don Newman.

Pankonin said Newman serves as a fine example of a Hall of Fame inductee.

Newman and his wife, Melody, moved to Imperial in 1981 where he joined Melody's parents, Bert and Esther Arnison, in running Arnison's clothing store on Broadway. He later purchased the business from them.

Don joined the Chamber of Commerce in 1981 and has been active in the Chamber ever since. He was president in 1991 and again in 2005.

His service includes 28 years, both as an owner of Arnison's Clothing and for the past 12 years as the Chamber representative for Adams Drug.

He is active in the community in other roles such as Rotary, the Imperial United Methodist

Church and the Lied Imperial Public Library Board of Trustees.

He has also been active in the arts in Imperial through the Imperial Players and the Chase County Arts Council.