

**By Carolyn Lee**

***The Imperial Republican***

Mid-Plains Community College and Mid-Plains Center for Enterprise are collaborating to offer a new degree for working students.

For many people, a college degree is necessary to advance their career, yet it is difficult to balance college studies with a career.

Mid-Plains Center for Enterprise at Mid-Plains Community College is helping business meet these challenges with a new degree program that was recently approved by the Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Post-Secondary Education.

The Corporate Academy Certificate, Diploma and Associate of Occupational Studies (AOS) degree programs are customized for each company in order to create a program that adds value to the company, while allowing working adults to earn college credit for various learning experiences, including approved training directly related to their jobs.

In addition to earning credit for relevant training, employees can earn credit for classes delivered in a variety of methods and locations, including at the company location, in classrooms, online and via interactive television.

Cinch Munson, Mid-Plains Center for Enterprise Associate Vice President, said last week that the AOS degree program was initiated in direct response to business, industry and current workforce needs.

“Business and education are working together to improve the work force,” he said. “What this degree comes down to is a flexible degree offering that allows businesses to help their employees to get a college degree while working.”

For companies to stay competitive in today’s ever-changing global business environment, Munson said, it is important that their employees are engaged and that they have the knowledge and skills to create value for customers and thus the company.

Munson said a person can earn either a diploma, an Associate’s degree or a certificate through the program.

Not all of the credit hours need to be taken through Mid-Plains, he said. Credits can be transferred from other schools.

“This lets the corporations help drive what their employees need,” Munson added.

For more information, contact Munson at (308) 535-3678 or (800) 658-4308 Ext. 3678.