

By Jan Schultz, The Imperial Republican News Editor

You'll find this week's issue of The Imperial Republican a little larger than our average weekly newspaper.

It's our annual Progress Issue, in which much of the edition is devoted to the area's growth the past year, in addition to other notables in 2008.

Despite a lagging economy, building permits for physical improvements within the city totaled over \$3.5 million the past year. That's just slightly under the figure for 2007.

It's important to note that many of the individual homeowner remodeling projects or businesses improvements that didn't create additional square footage or structural changes don't require building permits.

So, attitudes about continuing to improve the community and individuals' own property likely totaled more than the \$3.5 million gleaned from the city building permits.

This time of year is all about the future, as well.

You received some information in your December city utility bills that told of an upcoming city attitude survey.

The actual survey will be in your January bills, so make sure to watch for it.

If you want to have a say in what direction your community takes, make sure to complete the survey. Much of it centers on housing needs and city services, but there are also some interesting questions to which you can respond.

One asks, "What business would you like to see opened in Imperial in the next five years?"

Another queries, "Is there any way the city could do a better job serving its citizens and community?"

City officials will use those survey responses as Imperial's Community Development Strategic Plan is developed for the next three to five years.

After the survey information is tabulated, there will be community input meetings in March where residents can give input in building that Strategic Plan.

Some say our area lags behind what the economy is doing in larger cities and states in the U.S. That's probably so, which means maybe things will tighten up in the coming year.

□ However, Imperial residents have always found ways to be positive about the future. Let's hold onto that idea in 2009!