

By Russ Pankonin, The Imperial Republican Co-Publisher

This weekend's dedication and grand opening of the new pool complex will go down as a big milestone in the history of the Imperial community and Chase County Schools.

The completed project will serve as a shining example of what can be accomplished in a community when people and its governmental entities work together.

What started as a vision for a new pool in the mid 1990s developed into a greater vision to better serve the futures of both the community and the school.

Through a cooperative agreement between the school and the city, Imperial now has a sports complex facility that is second to none. This accomplishment epitomizes the kind of progressive forward thinking that has set Imperial apart from many other communities.

By working together, the school was able to complete their seating, lighting and shared locker room/bath house/concession complex for less than it would have originally cost to just build a locker room facility.

Taxpayers appreciate this kind of cooperation because Superintendent Matt Fisher estimates the school alone saved at least a \$500,000 through the cooperative agreement.

The realization of a new pool for the community culminates an effort that began with a failed bond issue election in 1996.

While that was a disappointment then, I believe we have a far better result. Mayor Annie Longan told patrons Sunday that had that bond issue passed, the pool likely would not have been part of a larger sports complex dedicated Sunday.

Another aspect of the forward thinking in the community occurred when Imperial voters adopted a 1-cent sales tax, with half of the proceed being dedicated for community improvement projects.

Without those funds, the reality of a new pool would have never been achieved.

Imperial continues to benefit from the sales tax which will help fund more community improvement projects, as well as fund economic development activities with the other half of the proceeds.

It's this kind of cooperation amongst residents and local entities that will chart the road map for our community in the years to come. This project serves as a shining example to follow into the future.