

By Russ Pankonin, The Imperial Republican Co-Publisher

They say adversity, disasters and tragedies really bring a community together. Last week's storms can't truly be called disasters and, thank God, there were no real tragedies. But the aftermath of Friday's storm and strong winds rallied our friends and neighbors in the community as they gathered to help each other out.

As our family drove around town with me as I assessed the damage and took pictures, it was truly amazing how everyone united forces with their neighbors and friends to help clean up the damage left behind by 80 mph winds.

People grabbed chain saws and began sawing up damaged trees that had fallen on their neighbor's lot; they went across the street to help pick up downed branches in their neighbor's yard; or, as several young men did, they hooked on to a trailer and went around town picking up branches from other peoples' yards.

It warmed my heart to see people going above and beyond to help their friends and neighbors. It epitomizes the kinds of values that make our small communities such wonderful places to call home.

Yes, indeed—our comm“unity” spirit is alive and well.

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This weekend marks the Fourth of July when we celebrate our country's independence and the freedoms we enjoy, and often take for granted, as Americans.

We urge you to have a safe Fourth of July, especially when handling fireworks.

Speaking of fireworks, plan to attend Imperial's show on Friday, July 3rd, beginning at dark. The firemen have another great show planned. As in the past, the show is supported by a \$1,500 contribution from the city and donations from you.

Receipt of donations has been a little slower this year than in the past. As of Wednesday, we're only \$1,700 towards our goal of \$4,000. We have never missed hitting our goal and I'm sure we will again this year. So, if you haven't made your donation, you can do so at the Imperial city office or the Imperial Republican.

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And while we are on the topic of firemen, don't forget the Firemen's Fun Day on July 4th. This year's event will be held at the Wellington School football field but arrangements have already been made to return the event to the fairgrounds next year.

This annual event is free for the whole family and is how the fire department and EMS say thanks for the support they receive from the community all year long.