

By Jan Schultz

The Imperial Republican

Kent Pribbeno, a businessman in Imperial for 40 years, died Monday.

Members of his family said Pribbeno, 75, owner of Pribbeno Construction, was life-flighted to Kearney's Good Samaritan Hospital on Sunday after suffering from a short illness.

A public viewing will be held at Liewer Funeral Home in Imperial on Friday from 2 to 6 p.m.

Funeral services will be held Saturday at 2 p.m. at Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church in Imperial. Private inurnment will be held at a later date.

Prior to starting his own business in the early 1970s, Pribbeno worked in construction in the area.

He was an avid Longhorn fan. He served as a timer and picker at the high school's home meets for decades and, for many years, never missed a home football game.

Fred Bessler, former head football and boys' track coach at Chase County Schools, said Pribbeno was "a great fan."

When Bessler came to Imperial in 1975, he was told Pribbeno was the one he should contact about being the head timer and picker for the home track meets.

Pribbeno agreed, he said, and served as head timer and picker every year until Bessler retired in 2001, and continued after that.

"He never missed a year," Bessler said.

And, Bessler recalled, Pribbeno always wanted to pick the winner of the races, evidenced by the large number "1" on the vest Pribbeno wore at the finish line. Most of the time, he both timed and picked the first place athlete, Bessler said, when volunteers were scarce.

According to the former coach, Pribbeno didn't just keep up with the local track athletes, but was very knowledgeable about the top track and field athletes in the area and state, as well.

"It was the same with football," he said.

Bessler said Pribbeno became a true friend of his through the years.

"He helped me out so many times," he said.

Pribbeno was also an avid golfer and ice fisherman, and was a member of the Imperial Eagles Club.

He is survived by his wife, Donita; son, Michael and wife, Jana; son, Douglas and wife, Tracy; daughter, Ann Smith and husband, Mike, all of Imperial; daughter, Karla Bauman and husband, Andrew, of Parker, Colo.; 10 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren; sisters, Jackie Claus of Imperial, and Scharlie Faubion and husband, Gaylord, of Lakewood, Colo.