

City sales tax proceeds starting to pay dividends

By Russ PANKONIN, THE IMPERIAL REPUBLICAN CO-PUBLISHER

Less than a year after the city of Imperial began collecting a one-cent sales tax, the dividends of the program can already be seen in the community.

Of course, the most noticeable project is the new swimming pool and locker room complex under construction just south of the school.

One half of the funds collected from the city sales tax will be used to repay the bonds to pay for the new swimming pool complex. The other half of the money will be used for economic development purposes.

Sales tax receipts now total about \$20,000 per month, meaning that about \$120,000 annually will be available for community development purposes, ie the pool, and another \$120,000 per year for economic development.

This week, the Citizens' Advisory Board (CAB), of which I am a member, approved a request of up to \$20,000 per year for three years to assist the hospital with student loan repayment for doctor recruits.

This money will be used as a match to obtain an additional \$60,000 in funds from the Nebraska Office of Rural Health for the same purpose.

In today's world of doctor recruitment, paying off student loans is a requisite of a recruiting package if a hospital expects to land a doctor.

During the discussion on whether or not to approve the request, several CAB members noted there has been some dissatisfaction

that the hospital has lost medical staff during the past year.

To their credit, the CAB decided that recruiting new doctors and other medical staff and moving forward was much more important for the economic viability of the hospital, the community and the county than rehashing past medical staffing issues that they had no control over anyway.

During Monday's council meeting, Councilman Doug Gaswick noted the purpose of the economic development funds derived from sales tax revenues was intended for just such projects. He made the motion to approve the funds, which the council approved. This will be a big step in helping doctor recruitment move forward in Chase County.

We are just beginning to see the dividends that have resulted from the implementation of the city sales tax and I predict we will see many more returns in the future as well.

**WE ARE JUST
BEGINNING TO SEE
THE DIVIDENDS
THAT HAVE
RESULTED FROM THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE CITY SALES
TAX . . .**

