

Mid-Plains christens new facility; bachelor degrees now available



Mid-Plains Community College President Dr. Michael Chipps said during remarks at Friday's ribbon cutting ceremony that it's important for community colleges to partner with schools and businesses to promote economic development through education. (Republican photo)

■ Mid-Plains celebrates new location, dedication to education. **PAGE 2.**

Bellevue University offering undergraduate degrees here

By Russ PANKONIN
THE IMPERIAL REPUBLICAN

Imperial's extended campus of Mid-Plains Community College took a giant leap forward last Friday with the opening of their new facility.

The ribbon cutting and open house celebration Friday for the new facility, located at 1324 Broadway, further cements the commitment Mid-Plains has made to its Imperial campus.

The new campus is located in the former Hometown Pharmacy building.

Mid-Plains purchased the building last year and completed a full remodel of the 3,000 square-foot building.

In addition to office and conference space, the facility features classrooms equipped with state-of-the-art distance learning systems.

The entire facility is designed to allow learning in both local face-to-face classes and through virtual technology and distance learning.

Mid-Plains received \$25,000 in economic development money generated by Imperial's one-cent sales tax. This money was used to help pay for remodeling expenses.

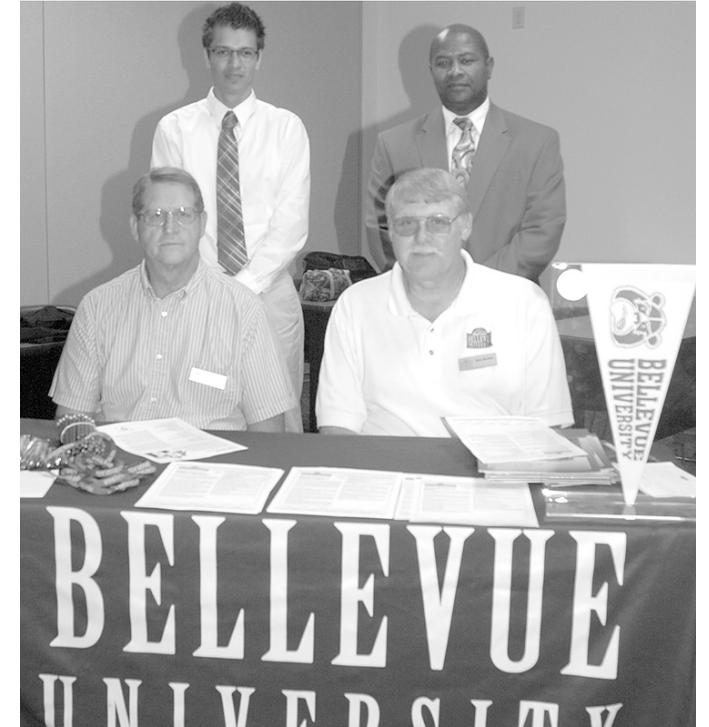
Mid-Plains Community College President Dr. Michael Chipps thanked the Board of Governors for their vision and the community of Imperial for helping fund the purchase and remodel.

"This exciting facility will offer more technology and opportunity to expand the programs previously offered to this area. This is about growing a workforce-growing our own to stay here in Southwest Nebraska," Chipps said.

Brenda Ledall, coordinator of the Imperial extended campus, expressed her excitement about the new facility.

"I am so excited at the educational opportunities we can now offer our youth as well as the rest of our residents in southwest Nebraska," she said.

Please see **MID-PLAINS** Page 2



Bellevue University will now offer bachelor of science degrees through Mid-Plains Community College. Bellevue representatives present Friday in Imperial included, front from left, Dick Thurin and Stan Wudtke, Mid-Plains satellite directors, back, Jose Lemus, Bellevue community outreach partner, and Larry Garnett, director of satellite operations for Bellevue University. (Republican photo)

MID-PLAINS

From Page 1

Part of her excitement is the announcement that Bellevue University has partnered with Mid-Plains to now offer bachelor of science degrees.

That means students finishing an Associate of Arts (AA) degree at Mid-Plains Community College can now receive a bachelor's degree in an accelerated program offered through Bellevue University.

Bachelor degrees now available

This opens up whole new educational possibilities through Imperial's extended campus, Ledall noted.

The first degree program, offering a bachelor's in business will begin Aug. 26. The class will meet on Wednesdays from 5-9 p.m. MT. One student is already enrolled.

Stan Wudtke, manager of the satellite operations at the McCook campus, said this provides a great opportunity for students to get an education without having to leave home.

To earn an AA degree from Mid-Plains, a student must complete 60 hours of course study.

If they are planning to pursue a bachelor's degree, the student is encouraged to add another 22 credits from Mid-Plains.

These 82 hours, coupled with the 45 hours in the Bellevue program, will complete the course work necessary to receive a bachelor's

degree from Bellevue.

Wudtke said students in Chase and surrounding counties can save some travel time by traveling to the Imperial campus instead of North Platte or McCook.

That represents a savings not only in time but in money, as well, he noted.

Another advantage of the joint program, Wudtke said, is that Bellevue accepts all of the credits from Mid-Plains for a 100-level class or higher.

Next step after Career Academy

This year marks the beginning of Career Academy at Chase County Schools, in cooperation with Mid-Plains.

Through the program, juniors and seniors can begin taking dual credit classes that will count towards their high school and Mid-Plains AA degrees.

With a fifth year of school at the extended campus, a student can finish their AA degree.

Depending on the number of college credits the student completes for their AA degree, a bachelor's degree could be obtained through Bellevue in as little as 12 months.

Normally, a student finishes an AA degree with 60 hours. However, if a student is ambitious and completes 82 hours while at Mid-Plains, the Bellevue program can be completed in about 12 months.

Both schools excited

Representatives with both college campuses expressed great enthusiasm and excitement for

this new partnership program.

Larry Garnett, director of satellite operations for Bellevue University, said this presents a great opportunity for the schools and students.

He said they are excited to be able to offer this program in southwest Nebraska.

This allows college students of all ages to get a degree without a lot of travel, he noted. In addition, if a person is working, one can adapt their schedule for just one night of classes per week.

This gives the region new access to higher education degrees without having to relocate in order to do so.

Garnett said this could be an avenue to stem the brain drain, where the students go off to college and never return.

He said this program will raise the education level here and since people don't have to leave to get their degree, they are more likely to stay in this area once they are done.

Ledall says this program opens up the opportunity for students to complete a degree they might not have been able to afford otherwise.

Tuition rates for Mid-Plains are far less than four-year institutions, allowing a student to spread their money out further, Ledall noted.

And with the accelerated program through Bellevue University, they can complete their final two years of college in 12-18 months.

Other degrees available

Garnett said Bellevue will offer several other degrees beginning later this fall.

In October they will offer a degree program in Behavior Science. They also plan to offer a program in Health Care Management beginning in November, depending on interest.

Other degrees available through the program include Management and Leadership, Healthcare Logistics, Computer Systems and Networks, and Computer Information Systems.

Most all of the classes will be delivered by Mid-Plains instructors from either the North Platte or McCook campuses, via distance learning.

In addition to their bachelor's degrees, Bellevue University also offers master's degrees through their satellite program.

For more information on the degree programs, people can contact Dick Thurin, North Platte campus, at 308-534-2359, Stan Wudtke, McCook campus, at 308-345-8118, or Ledall, Imperial extended campus at 308-882-5972.