

Endowment fund vital to Brown County's future

The Brown County Foundation Fund is proud of the fact that over the past 14 years they have awarded \$47,700.00 in Project Grants to local groups for the betterment of Brown County. The grants have ranged from \$50.00 to \$2,000.00 with the average being approximately \$500.00. These grants have been made possible with a capital base of approximately \$73,000.00 each year. The Brown County Foundation Fund is an affiliate of the Nebraska Community Foundation and as such receives professional investment, accounting, and training support from its staff and volunteers.



A grant from the Brown County Foundation Fund assisted in funding Biz Kidz, an entrepreneurship camp. The future of Brown County lies in young people developing and maintaining successful businesses in this area when they reach adulthood.

During the last year, the Advisory Board of the Brown County Foundation Fund has decided to embark on a fund raising campaign to establish a permanent, unrestricted endowment from which 5% of the annual earnings are used to meet our county's highest priority needs. The annual investment earnings above 5% are added to the endowment principal to insure that the capital base of the endowment maintains its value against the forces of inflation. As the endowment grows, so will the quality of life for Brown County families today and the opportunities for future generations. That means all donations to the Endowment Fund will go on giving forever.

The Brown County Foundation has set a goal to raise the Endowment Fund principal to \$500,000.00. At this level, total grant funds available each year could reach \$25,000.00 compared to the current average of \$3,370.00 per year. Increasing individual grant amounts from \$500.00 to \$5,000.00 or more will have a profound impact on community projects. Past Foundation grant recipients have included the Brown County Hospital, Ainsworth Public Li-

brary, Ainsworth Fire Department, Brown County Arts Council, Brown County Historical Society, Elks/Legion Baseball program, Brown County Agriculture Society, Sandhills Entertainment Corp. and most of the cemeteries in the county as well as many other groups.

Examples of other communities that have set similar goals for their endowment fund include Shickley, Newman Grove, and Imperial. Shickley is a community of approximately 337 residents. The Shickley Community Foundation has a goal of raising their endowment fund principal to \$1 million in the near future. The Shickley Community Foundation has awarded \$95,000.00 in community grants over the past 17 years. In recent years, the total amount awarded has averaged \$14,000.00. Newman Grove, with a population of approximately 734, is also building their endowment fund. In 2008

a group of individuals donated \$50,000.00 as a matching challenge to the Newman Grove Community Fund. In 2010 and thereafter, the goal of their Foundation is to raise an additional \$100,000 each year for their endowment fund. Imperial's population is approximately 1,760. In 2007, after 20 months of raising funds, the Imperial Foundation had raised \$150,000.00. This was 16 months ahead of their target date. As of June 30, 2008, their fund had \$485,000.00 in endowed assets and nearly \$30,000.00 in expectancies. Imperial is now focusing on their long-term goal of raising \$1 million by 2015 for their endowment fund.

Be watching in the coming weeks for more information and ways that you can be involved in making an impact on Brown County's future. Next week - the goals and objectives for the Brown County Endowment Campaign and the plan to make them a reality.