

# Beaver Crossing gets gift

A \$1.8 million gift from the estate the late Leona Mae Ihde of Beaver Crossing will benefit two Nebraska communities. Earnings from endowments established through the Nebraska Community Foundation will provide funding to the communities of Friend and Beaver Crossing.

Ihde, who died in May 2009, had made provisions in her estate plan with the counsel of her attorney, Brad Barrows of Lincoln, to make a gift to the Leona Ihde Fund, an affiliated fund of the Nebraska Community Foundation. Leona's wishes were to establish two permanent endowment accounts within the fund.

In April 2010, the Ihde estate distributed \$1.8 million to the Leona Ihde Fund. The earnings from a \$450,000 endowment are designated to benefit Beaver Crossing and the earnings from \$1.35 million endowment are designated to benefit Friend, where Ihde graduated from high school in 1937.

An endowment is a permanent account whose assets are invested to generate an ongoing source of income year after year. Investment earnings from the endowment are used to support causes that have been designated by the donor. If the donor is deceased, a fund advisory committee determines how the money generated from the endowment will be used to fulfill the donor's charitable intentions.

Endowment account fund advisory committees for each of the communities have been organized. With Ihde's guidance, members of the Friend committee

are Wayne Vossler, Charles Vossler, Jim Vossler and Brandon Vossler.

The account committee for Beaver Crossing includes Wayne Vossler, Charles Vossler, Terry Barth, Mike Stutzman and Larry Paxton. The committees are now beginning to have discussions to set priorities for grant making following Ihde's guidelines.

It is the intent of the donor that the Friend committee will make recommendations to support charitable causes that may include parks, library and other programs and facilities that benefit the residents of Friend and surrounding area.

The Beaver Crossing committee will recommend support for organizations that include the fire department, Seward County Rural Fire Protection District, emergency services, parks, library and other facilities that benefit the community and surrounding area.

Leona Mae (Buckingham) Ihde, widow of Clarence Ihde, was a lifelong resident of the area and a former employee of Alpo Products in Crete.

Ihde was known by friends and family as an avid gardener. According to her attorney, Leona's love for watching things grow played a part in arranging her legacy as an endowment rather than one-time gift through a bequest.

"When considering her options, Leona liked the idea of a permanent endowment because it can grow like her garden," Barrows said. "Leona was a savvy student when it came to investing. Later in life she became very interested in alternative energy sources, especially after the election of Barack Obama. She was like many folks I meet who have either grown their wealth or inherited wealth. They have strong Nebraska values. They don't try to buy

happiness. They appreciate the security that allows you to be free to be happy. They live modestly and they live a long time."

Barrows said that Ihde was one of the brighter spirits he had ever met. She told him that she only had energy for her house or her garden, so she chose her garden. She worked tirelessly even though she suffered from osteoporosis. Barrows remembers on one occasion Ihde turned to him with a wry smile and said, "I can't stand up straight, but it makes it easier to pull weeds!"

Ihde remained eternally grateful to the emergency team from Beaver Crossing who responded to her call when her husband died in her garden many years ago.

Jim Vossler, a cousin of Ihde's, said he hopes that Friend can move forward on projects that Ihde would be proud of. Vossler remembers Leona as a warm and friendly lady who always participated at family gatherings. She was also extremely independent and refused the invitation from relatives to move from her farmhouse into town, at least for the winter.

She was still burning her own wood for heating at age 89 when she died.

The Nebraska Community Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization serving donors and communities across the state through 205 affiliated funds benefiting 227 communities. It is confirmed in compliance with National Standards for U.S. community foundations. For information on how you can make a lasting impression on your hometown through a legacy gift, contact Jim Gustafson at (402) 323-7341 or [jgustafson@nebcommfound.org](mailto:jgustafson@nebcommfound.org) or visit [www.nebcommfound.org](http://www.nebcommfound.org).