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## Shickley Community Foundation leads by example

By GREG SCHELLIN  
Signal Editor

The Village of Shickley is still the bell cow for the Nebraska Community Foundation (NCF).

NCF communications director Reggi Carlson made that point very clear at the Shickley Community Foundation's annual meeting last month in the parish hall at the St. Mary's Catholic Church in Shickley.

"The easiest of stories to write about is Shickley," Carlson said. "The great leadership you have here and generosity is second to none. You are the poster child of the Nebraska Community Foundation.

"You are leading by example. You have gone far and away with this. Other communities in Nebraska are taking note of what you're doing and you're their role model."

Carlson, who was the night's guest speaker, noted more than half the households in the Shickley Public School District have donated or pledged funds to the Shickley Community Foundation. Because of this, she said young people should note the pride citizens have in smaller communities. They should also reconsider the move to the big city, too.

"Small is looking better and better all the time," Carlson said. "Surveys show that more than half the young people who leave small towns want to come back. We just need to give them a reason to move back.

"Start entrepreneurs, things like that, and they'll return home.

Prove to them that small doesn't matter. Show them they have big time opportunities right here."

Richard Walter, who was recently elected secretary of the NCF Executive Committee and has served on the committee since 2008, and Dan Miller gave a report on the activities of the Shickley Community Foundation earlier in the evening.

The foundation's co-chairs informed those in attendance that the Shickley Community Foundation is currently granting over \$14,000 annually to local projects and programs. To date, the foundation has put back nearly \$110,000 into the local community and Fillmore County area. Grant recipients include the local public school, re department, Legion Post, library, etc.

The co-chairs also highlighted several goals for the 19-year-old, tax-deductible unrestricted endowment fund. They announced the short-term goal for the foundation is to add \$3.5 million in assets by December of 2013. A long-term goal is to add \$8 million in assets by 2020. If these levels are achieved, annual grants of \$157,500 could be made.

"These are very lofty goals but we as a board feel these goals are achievable," Walter said. "We have already met some of our short-term goals. We will be continuing to work toward our long-term goals."

Carlson said she doesn't doubt the community's ability to achieve these goals.

"Please keep up your good work so we can keep learning from you," she said.



Signal photo by Greg Scellin

Jim Gustafson, Nebraska Community Foundation gift planning director, presents Marge Swartzendruber a token noting her family's contribution to the Shickley Community Foundation through naming the foundation in a life-insurance policy. "I'm an example that anyone can do something if they would like," said Swartzendruber, who currently has several college students in the family.

Walter also told the group that a committee of Shickley citizens is in the preliminary stages of tackling the idea of building and operating a community center in Shickley. Walter said \$400,000 has already been pledged toward the \$1.5 million project.

"We have a good jump on this," Walter said. "Hopefully, next year at this time, I'll have some more good news for you."

Pledges and funds to be used for the new community center will be funneled through the Shickley Com-

munity Foundation. The account will be noted as: Shickley Community Fund for Community Building.

NCF Gift Planning Director Jim Gustafson likes the community's chances of raising the funds necessary for the community center.

"You are really putting your money where your mouth is," Gustafson said. "We feel that Shickley is close to where the heart of philanthropy and giving back is at in Nebraska."

Photos of this grant cycle's award winners appear inside this edition on page 2A.