

It is Thanksgiving at NCCC for the whole week. A few years ago we changed from three days off for Thanksgiving to the entire week. We had issues with students disappearing from class on the Monday and Tuesday of that week, even though break started on Wednesday. So we got rid of the two days off we used to have in the schedule in October for “fall break” and moved those days to Thanksgiving. It cut down on the disappearing quite a bit, though a few now disappear on the Friday before Thanksgiving week. I know, give an inch... The irony is that many of our students can’t wait to go home, but then they call the day after Thanksgiving wanting to get back in the residence halls before we officially reopen. I guess when you have been used to setting your own rules at college, four or so days at home are enough. Get your laundry done, eat some home cooking, and then get back to college as soon as you can – that’s what I used to do anyway (sorry, Mom).

This Thanksgiving I am very thankful for many of you in the community. Here’s why.

Recently the College cut the ribbon on an \$800,000 renovation to Rowland Hall on the Chanute campus. The renovation features an eleven bed simulated hospital complete with secure medical storage, an operating room, nurses’ station, exam rooms, a bariatric lift, and simulated robotic patients. We also updated our business department with remodeled classrooms and offices. We even added a large “stock ticker” that features live information from the stock exchange. One of my favorite parts of the renovation is a new hallway – no kidding. Before the new hallway the only way to get from one side of the building to the other was to cut through a classroom or exit the building and come in through another door. Not the most convenient, one could argue.

We paid for the renovation with a combination of revenue sources, such as federal and state grants and student fees. It really had a very minimal impact on the “general fund” of the College.

Here is why I am very thankful this year - a significant amount of that renovation was paid for with donations from individuals and businesses in our service area through a state program called “deferred maintenance tax credits.” Individuals and companies gave NCCC monetary gifts to fix up Rowland Hall. The State of Kansas, in turn, gave those folks 54% of their gift back to them as a credit on their state taxes. So in the case of a \$1,000 donation, the College got that \$1,000 for our nursing and business students in Rowland and the person that gave the money got \$540 of it back on their taxes. And it still counts as a donation on your federal taxes. If you are going to give money to NCCC it is certainly the best way to maximize the tax benefit.

The State of Kansas has authorized the program for only two more years – 2011 and 2012. We have a limited amount of the credits, but we still have some left for this year and next. Those tax credit dollars will be spent renovating Stoltz Hall. Stoltz houses many classrooms for liberal arts courses such as English Composition and Psychology. It also contains all of our science labs at Chanute. It has not had a major renovation and is pretty much the same as it was when it was built in 1968. We plan on spending about \$800,000 in this building as well, renovating nearly every room. And we need your help to do it.

If you are thinking of buying a tax credit for 2011 there is still time, although it is rapidly running out. Contact Claudia Christiansen at extension 243 and she will help you.

To all of those who gave to the tax credit program and on behalf of every Allied Health, Nursing, and Business student who will use Rowland for the next 20 years – Thank you, thank you, thank you. You have done a wonderful thing to help those students get the certification they need to get a job and be a productive member of our community.

I hope you have a great Thanksgiving. And to all of the Moms who will soon be greeted with hugs and large bags of dirty laundry – sorry. But the hugs are nice, right?

As always if you have any questions or comments about this article or anything about NCCC please email me directly at binbody@neosho.edu.