

Have you ever driven past our Chanute or Ottawa campuses, seen a bunch of cars or things in the parking lot and thought, “What in the world is going on at the College today?” Just last week at Chanute we had lots of heavy equipment in our lots. I’m sure it looked like we just struck oil (I sure wish! Goodbye dwindling State aid!), as there were many drilling rigs and oil tanks filling the parking spots.

NCCC was hosting the Eastern Kansas Oil and Gas Association meeting, as we do every year. Giving a quality place for people to meet, especially non-profit organizations, is another important way Neosho County helps enrich our communities. In fact about 50 different groups use our College facilities in Chanute and 8 in Ottawa to hold their meetings or events.

There are small group meetings such as the Ministerial Alliance, Chanute Cub Scouts, Neosho County Emergency Planning Committee, or Franklin County Economic Development Group at Ottawa, where a small group books one of our conference rooms or classrooms for a gathering.

Then there are large meetings and events, such as the High School Regional Music Festival, the Kansas Bar Association meeting, Relay for Life, youth soccer put on by the Chanute Recreation Commission, and the Chanute Expo for the Chanute Chamber. These big events bring hundreds of people to our host communities and to campus. It draws people to town to hopefully stay a while (and spend a little money).

We are the regular meeting spot for Chanute Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, Chamber Ambassadors, St. Cecilia Music Club and many, many others. Our food service, Great Western Dining, often caters these events. I have never heard a complaint about the food or service – in fact, just the opposite!

The College also provides office space to Kansas Works, the Kansas Small Business Development Center, and the Office of Rural Opportunity. Hosting these important state offices not only saves taxpayer dollars, it allows for cooperative partnerships in many different ways. For instance, when folks come to Tom Byler and the Small Business Development Center to perhaps start their own business, they may lack the bookkeeping skills to be effective. So Tom walks them across the hall to Linda Jones, who teaches accounting for NCCC, and gets them signed up for a class. Folks looking for employment at Kansas Works may need a little more training or a certificate to get the job they want. Kansas Works is just across the hall from the admissions department at the College, so folks can get started changing their professional life, all in the same place.

We even have people getting married on campus. No kidding! NCCC-Chanute has the Snyder Memorial Chapel and every year a few couples rent that facility to tie the knot. It is a beautiful little chapel that we have recently remodeled. It seats only about 45, which sometimes is just the right amount for some weddings. And it’s a lot more romantic than the drive thru chapel in Las Vegas. (I wanted to go to Vegas and get married at the Excalibur dressed as a knight. Jen wanted a church wedding. Guess who won. I still say mine would have been more fun.)

NCCC is happy to utilize its 150,000 sq. ft. at Chanute and 52,000 sq. ft. at Ottawa to enrich the community. For non-profit organizations it is usually free to use our space, and for others, we charge a very reasonable fee for preparation and clean up. If you are interested in using our space call Terri Dale

(extension 211) at the Chanute campus and Paulette Parriott at the Ottawa Campus. We are happy to serve!

As always, I welcome your thoughts and questions at binbody@neosho.edu.