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• Special to the Leader & Times The 2010 Seward County United Way Campaign is currently \$32,000 above its \$320,000 goal but that is not the final total for the campaign, according to Kay Burtzloff, executive director. The local United Way currently has donations and pledges totaling \$352,001. “We still don’t have final results on a couple of campaigns but I am hoping to have everything in by our Campaign Celebration on Wednesday, Jan. 26, so I can announce it then,” she said.

“We have had a very successful campaign this year thanks to some hardworking volunteers. Michele Gillispie, my 2011 chair, was great at helping at all the special events and presentations,” Burtzloff said. “However, the bulk of the work is really done by our campaign coordinators at the individual businesses and organizations. They are the unsung heroes that truly make a campaign successful.”

Burtzloff said, however, that this year’s campaign really benefited from some significant increases in key payroll deduction campaigns. The campaigns that showed the biggest increases this year were National Beef, USD 480, and First National Bank. “National Beef employees have increased their giving by a phenomenal \$21,106 from the previous year. They have really worked hard on their campaign this year. They’ve just contributed 61 percent of our total campaign. I would hate to imagine what we would do without the National Beef employees,” Burtzloff said.. “We appreciate the hard work that it takes to run such a large campaign. I’ll be truthful, I was not really confident that we were going to be able to reach our goal this year but a strong National Beef campaign made a tremendous difference.”

The USD 480 campaign increased its giving by \$3,600 for a new high of \$14,611. “I have to give a lot of credit to Bonnie Raff, a retired teacher who does most of the work on the campaign for me. She sets up the schedule and did most of the presentations this year at every school.”

“I’m really proud to announce that First National Bank set a record of 100 percent participation for 20 years as of this campaign and they also reached a new high in giving. Last year, they have \$12,000 and this year they moved up to \$15,000,” Burtzloff said.

“We won’t announce our final total until our campaign celebration on Jan. 26 because we have not received final figures on a couple of our payroll campaigns,” Burtzloff said. “We want people to know that it’s not too late to still give and have it count on this year’s campaign.”

The Seward County United Way will host its annual meeting and celebration on Wednesday, Jan. 26, at the First National Bank Community Room, 1700 N. Lincoln. The Community Room is located in the bank's basement and the elevator is located at the bank's east entrance. The buffet will open at 11:30 a.m., the annual meeting will be held at 12:10 and the recognition of donors and volunteers will start at 12:20 p.m.

"The event is open to all Seward County United Way donors and volunteers," Burtzloff said. The Stepping Stone Shelter staff is serving as the caterer for the event. She promises a great lunch and a short event with everything wrapped up before 1 p.m.

Burtzloff also credits the special events that the United Way has had this year with getting people involved with United Way as well as raising significant funds for the campaign. "We really have to thank McDonald's, Vargas Restaurant, Ruffino's Italian Restaurant and Pizza Hut for kicking things off with the Eat Out for United Way special event. It gave people a fun way to help out the United Way."

Other special events have included the ExxonMobil Golf Tournament for United Way, the EPIC PCS Goofy Golf Tournament, and Trick or Treat for United Way at the Southgate Mall. All of these special events not only raised money but I think it helped to remind people what a vital role United Way and its agencies plays in our community," Burtzloff said..

"Every year, the Seward County United Way board has raised my goal and I've always had to have faith that our community will come through for me," Burtzloff said. "So far, they have never let me down."

In 2011, the Seward County United Way will fund funded 28 agencies, including

American Red Cross, Arthritis Foundation, Big Brother/Big Sister, Boy Scouts, Crossroads, Girl Scouts, Homecare, Inc. (Liberal Food Cupboard), Kansas Children's Service League, Kansas Legal Services, KIDS Inc., Liberal Area Rape Crisis & Domestic Violence Services, LINK, Liberal Care Center, Liberal Latchkey, Liberal Weissel Boxing Club, Parents and Children Together (PACT), Salvation Army, Senior Citizen Friendship Meals, Seward County Safety Council, Seward County Senior Care, Seward County Veterans Services, SKADAF (Drug and Alcohol Treatment), Smart Start Grant, Stepping Stone Shelter, Southwest Aquatics Team, Southwest Guidance Center, United Cerebral Palsy and the Whirlwind Career Counseling and Guidance Center for Veteran's and First Responders.

For more information about the Seward County United Way, contact Burtzloff at 624-5400 or e-mail scunitedway@sbcglobal.net. Donations may be mailed to P.O. 273, Liberal KS, 67905.

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