



# Energy grant helps upgrade college buildings

NORTH PLATTE, Nebraska — Mid-Plains Community College is nearing completion on upgrades to the mechanical system at the McDonald-Belton building on North Platte Community College's South Campus.

A total of six projects involving repair or renovation the college's 37-year-old heating and cooling system were paid for with \$450,000 in grant money made available by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. An additional \$21,071 was provided by college to cover contractor bids.

According to Angela Raby, MPCC Area Grant Writer, the college submitted an application to participate in the Nebraska Energy Office's Building Energy Efficiency Retrofit for State Colleges and Community Colleges program in

2010. The three main goals were to reduce the college's emissions into the environment, save dollars spent on energy costs by increasing efficiency of systems and create local jobs to make improvements.

"The Nebraska Energy Office's Retrofit program presents an incredible opportunity for our college and the communities it serves," said Dr. Michael Chipps, President of Mid-Plains Community College. "This funding will allow us to reduce annual energy expenditures as well as the footprint we leave on the environment. Once completed, these projects will allow the college to ensure that its facilities are sustainable into the foreseeable future."

Raby noted the estimated annual energy savings for the college is \$ 23,522. She said

the Facilities Team at NPCC has worked diligently with engineers from Farris Engineering in Omaha to determine how the college could make improvements to the existing facilities that would provide the best reductions in emissions and the fastest return on investment. After an energy audit was completed by Farris Engineering, the college chose six key projects from a nine□project list of improvements.

The projects include converting the chilled and hot water systems from constant flow to variable flow; providing a new pump for the condenser water system; replacing the existing standard efficiency boilers with new, energy efficient condensing boilers; converting old pneumatic controls to state-of-the-art DDC controls; and replacing

the existing hot water heater with a new water-to-water heat exchanger which utilizes hot water produced by the new condensing boiler.

Ron Axtell, Director of Physical Resources at NPCC, was heavily involved in various phases of the process, including planning, bidding, and the awarding of contracts to local businesses. Contractors selected include Charlie's North Platte Plumbing, A J Sheet Metal Inc. Heating and Air Conditioning, Rod Christmann Electric Solutions and Control Services.

Axtell said work on the six projects began in June. The heating portion of the project is expected to be complete by the end of October and the cooling portion will be complete by the end of 2011.