

# Newman, cathedral to launch English as Second Language program

**By David Myers**

Tom Heydman, Director of Newman University Western Kansas in Dodge City, recently announced the formation of a pilot program to be offered in partnership between Newman and the Cathedral of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Dodge City.

“We are in partnership with the cathedral to provide a basic ESL (English as a Second Language) instruction program in English and math for immigrants and others who speak very little English,” Heydman said.

“We are always looking for ways to work with the Catholic Diocese of Dodge City to carry out our mission to provide educational services for the people of Southwest Kansas,” said Heydman. The pilot program will kick-off in July at the Dodge City Campus at Hennessy Hall. Heydman hopes that it will grow to be offered at several sites throughout the diocese.

While there will be a cost involved, Heydman said they are working to make it very affordable by making scholarships available.

“It’s not just for Spanish speakers from Mexico,” he said. “We have immigrants from Guatemala, Somalia, Burma, and several Asian countries.”

Eventually, Heydman hopes to offer a U.S. citizenship preparation program as well. “With our Newman/Diocese interactive television system, we can offer programs to people throughout southwest Kansas,” he said.

Through classes presented on site and through interactive television at 10 locations throughout the diocese, people can take courses, with or without college credit, near where they live.

Through the partnership, the diocese offers pastoral ministry classes and catechist formation classes, among others, throughout the year both for credit and personal enrichment.

Newman opened its Western Kansas office at Hennessy Hall on the old St. Mary of the Plains campus in Dodge City in 1992 following the closing of the college. Since then, 637 teachers have received their certification through Newman’s western campus.

“We are the primary suppliers of teachers in Western Kansas since the closing of St. Mary of the Plains,” Heydman said.

Besides offering an elementary, middle school, and secondary teacher completion program, the university offers four graduate programs. They also offer a quickly-growing ESL (English as

a Second Language) endorsement program for licensed teachers.

While not officially required by schools in Western Kansas, Heydman said that with current demographics, the endorsement is so strongly needed that nearly all schools pay for their teachers to complete the 15-hour program.

More than 200 teachers are involved in the program right now, taking classes at any one of the 10 sites throughout the diocese.

On Jan. 27, a USD 443 Dodge City bond issue was defeated that would have converted Hennessy Hall into a middle school.

“Newman was founded in the late 1800’s for the purpose of educating teachers for rural Kansas, and we have continued that mission in Western Kansas since 1992,” Heydman said. “We were making plans to move if the bond passed, but we are very happy to be here at Hennessy carrying on the Newman/St. Mary of the Plains spirit for the foreseeable future.”