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NORTHWEST STATE SEMINAR
Hidden hardships of immigration explained
By TONI THRASHER
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ARCHBOLD — Napoleon native Sylvia Titgemeyer has made a career for herself as an immigration lawyer in St. Louis, Missouri, where she helps people from other countries come to America to live, study and work.

Titgemeyer was one of several speakers who gathered at Northwest State Community College in Archbold Friday to shed light on immigration, a hot-button issue that has become a central talking point in the political arena and beyond.

The event, which was hosted by NSCC's Center for Lifelong Learning, was designed to show participants some of the hurdles faced by those who are working to become United States citizens. The event was part of an NSCC series aimed at people age 55 and older.

Between sessions, Cecily Rohrs, coordinator for the Center for Lifelong Learning, asked participants to chime in about what they've learned of those hurdles.

"Why don't they come in legally?" she asked the crowd, which responded with, "The cost" and "The years to wait," reaffirming the speakers' message.

During her part of the session, Titgemeyer touched on some other hurdles she has seen personally as an immigration lawyer.

"There's three basic ways to come into the United States: family, employment and asylum, refugee and fear of persecution," she said. People coming to the United States for employment have "the hurdles of time," Titgemeyer said, noting most of them live here on temporary visas. Many come in on B-1 or B-2 visas, which are for business or pleasure, respectively.

What many don't recognize is the amount of scrutiny placed on those who wish to come into the country.

"They have to go through security clearances and they have to show that there aren't reasons they should be prohibited from coming into the United States, that they don't have a criminal record," Titgemeyer said. "All of these people that are coming in on these non-immigrant visas have really been

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St. Louis-based immigration lawyer Sylvia Titgemeyer speaks about the realities of immigration during a seminar at Northwest State Community College Friday morning. TONI THRASHER/Staff

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By RON OSBURN
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