

**By Carolyn Lee**

***The Imperial Republican***

Imperial residents may see some house demolition projects beginning after the first of the year.

Under a grant provided by Title III of Division B of the Housing and Economic Recovery Act, the communities of Imperial and Ogallala were awarded \$200,000 to demolish dilapidated housing structures.

The grant is administered through the West Central Nebraska Development District (WCNDD) of Ogallala.

Community Economic Development Specialist CJ Poltack said Monday that homeowners in the two communities are being contacted to see if they wish to participate in the project.

Homes had previously been identified as possible candidates for demolition. The property owner retains ownership of the land.

“There’s no cost to the property owner,” Poltack said, “and the city doesn’t take over the property. We want those property taxes to continue into the community.”

She said WCNDD has chosen to spread the \$200,000 over 10 houses total in the two communities.

Once all potential house owners have been contacted, those buildings will be prioritized according to the highest need for demolition.

The Department of Economic Development and WCNDD will then give final approval to the list. Next, city/homeowner contracts will be signed.

Proper lead/asbestos testing will be administered at each property selected and the abatement for the same will be governed by the Department of Environmental Quality.

All structures to be demolished will be vacant and dilapidated.

Poltack said bids will then be let, with a list of each property address. Contractors may bid on one or all addresses, separately, she added.

“It’s our intention to begin demolition early in 2010,” she noted.

Imperial City Clerk/Administrator Jo Leyland said she has received affirmation from five owners of six homes that they wish to participate in the program. She is waiting to hear from three more.

Leyland said earlier that the properties chosen in Imperial were done so when she had to list dilapidated houses for a housing study.