

By Russ Pankonin

The Imperial Republican

The staff of the Imperial Republican earned recognition for their community leadership during the Nebraska Press Association's annual convention last weekend in Kearney.

The paper's staff received the Leadership Nebraska Award which recognizes journalists or newspapers for their contributions to their community.

The award was named in memory of longtime newspaper publisher, Don Harpst, Sr., who published a number of weekly newspapers in southwest Nebraska.

His family established the award in 1998.

During the award presentation by NPA president Ted Gill of the Ravenna News, the Republican and its staff were credited as a team that "seeks to build and foster the community and its leaders" by using its publishing base.

The paper was cited for its support of the \$1.2 million library expansion project, the new \$1.5 million pool/sports complex and downtown sidewalk project.

"The newspaper promoted the worthiness and need of these endeavors and the importance they had on the future and quality of life within the community," Gill said.

With its "Coming Back Home" series, he also noted the paper has highlighted the lives of young people who have returned to Imperial and Chase County to pursue their careers.

In addition to their duties at the paper, Gill said staff members are active in many community organizations and efforts. "They not only 'talk the talk,' but they also 'walk the walk.'"

Republican co-publisher Russ Pankonin expressed his appreciation to the paper's staff.

"They are the people who make this paper what it is and we all share in the belief that we play a key role in the betterment of our community and area," he said.

Paper earns 15 awards

In the 2010 Better Newspaper contest, the Republican brought home a total of 15 awards. This represents the most awards the paper has won in any given year.

The paper won six first place awards, six seconds and three third-place awards.

The Republican finished second in the Best of Class for newspapers with circulation from 1,501 to 2,800.

A list of the awards accompanies this story.

Wauneta Breeze wins

Loral Johnson Award

as top weekly

The Wauneta Breeze won the Loral Johnson Community Weekly Sweepstakes Award for the top weekly in the state.

The award was named after longtime publisher Loral Johnson of Imperial. Johnson and his wife, Elna, published the Imperial Republican, Holyoke Enterprise, Grant Tribune-Sentinel and the Wauneta Breeze for many years.

This marks the first time since the award was established six years ago that it has been won by a Johnson Publications newspaper.

The Breeze captured a total of 34 awards to win the sweepstakes prize.

The Grant Tribune-Sentinel won a first, second and third in the newspaper contest.

NPA Newspaper Contest Awards

1st Place Awards

Signature Page—Veteran’s Day page by Jana Pribbeno, Chris Fidler, Karen Hayes

Editorial Page

Spot News Writing—Harchelroad fire story by Jan Schultz

In-House Computer Graphics—Tax dollar comparison by Chris Fidler

Newspaper Promotion—by Chris Fidler, Jana Pribbeno and Karen Hayes

Feature Photography—Spring planting by Russ Pankonin

2nd Place Awards

Special Section—Hunting Season by staff

Spot News Photography—Harchelroad fire by Jan Schultz

Sports Page

In-House Computer Graphics—Population comparison by Chris Fidler

Sports action photo—Wrestling photo by Alan Carman

Best in Class

3rd Place Awards

Reader Interaction—by Jana Pribbeno, Chris Fidler and Karen Hayes

Editorial Writing—by Russ Pankonin and Jan Schultz

Sports Action Photo—Bull riding photo by Russ Pankonin