

By Jan Schultz

The Imperial Republican

The Duysen brothers, Clair of Imperial and Robert of North Platte, watched last Thursday as their childhood home came down at 1023 Court Street.

The home, built in 1915, is the first of several former residences in Imperial that will be removed with Community Development Block Grant funds through the Nebraska Dept. of Economic Development's Neighborhood Stabilization Program.

Imperial and Ogallala applied jointly for the funds, and were awarded a \$210,000 grant to remove four homes in Imperial and six in Ogallala.

Those funds not only pay for the contractor's work in removing the homes, but also for other program requirements including environmental reviews, testing for asbestos, asbestos abatement if needed and administration.

West Central Nebraska Development District (WCNDD), headquartered in Ogallala, is overseeing the home removal project.

C J Poltack, WCNDD's community economic development specialist, said there is no cost to the property owner, who then retains ownership of the land after the home is gone.



Before they were even considered for demolition, homes had to be determined as "blighted," she said, after an examination of the roofs, interiors and foundations, among other areas.

It also had to be determined that there was no historical significance to the structure.

"We basically are looking for structures that are uninhabitable," Poltack said.

"If you can save a home, that's great. But if they are too far gone and no longer safe this program allows its demolition if it really needs to come down," she said.

Scott England of Ogallala has the contract to take down all four homes in Imperial. The others are located at 1234 Grant, 1015 Chase and 1107 Douglas.

There's a good chance a fifth home will also be approved in Imperial, Poltack said.

As the dust was flying last Thursday at his boyhood residence, Robert Duysen noted there had been only two owners of that home at 1023 Court, his family and the original occupants who built it, the Satchell family.

He recalled some of the other structures in the neighborhood when he was a boy, which are no longer standing, either.

England made quick work of the demolition of the small Duysen home. The dirt is filled back to grade and he will be back to reseed it later on.

Poltack said the other three homes in Imperial that will come down are going through asbestos abatement this week. She expected the demo work on them to start in early July.

More funds likely

Poltack said she heard from the Department of Economic Development three weeks ago that it intends to award additional grant funds for a second phase of the Neighborhood Stabilization Program here.

With that in mind, she said any homeowners in the Imperial city limits with an uninhabitable

home can talk to her about having it demolished.

It must have been vacant for at least 90 days, there can be no liens or encumbrances against the property, and all real estate taxes have to be paid.

Those interested can contact her at 308-284-6077.

All contracts for the demolition of a home must be signed by July 31, so Poltack encouraged people to visit with her as soon as possible.

Commercial properties are not eligible.