



By Carolyn Lee

The Imperial Republican

A Topeka, Kan. couple provided some color to an otherwise dreary day last Friday as they biked through Imperial.

Russell and Peggi Gray sported bright lime green vests as they stopped for lunch at Hill's Family Foods.

They left Topeka May 15 and plan to return the end of August, after cycling to Canada and back.

This isn't the retired couple's first bike trip. In 2001 they rode 3,800 miles across Canada from Vancouver to Nova Scotia.

In 2006 they made a huge 7,200 mile loop from Topeka to Phoenix, on to Minnesota and back to Kansas.

Peggi, 62, asked Russell, 70, what he wanted for his birthday this year, and he replied that he wanted a bike trip.

So, Friday they were headed north on Highway 61 on their way to Fort Robinson, then the Black Hills, Great Falls, Mont. and up into Canada again.

Might as well use those passports, Russell laughed.

The couple camps out in parks, cemeteries and fields at night. Sometimes they take people up on the offer of a back yard.

Wind can be a problem. Peggi said the last few days they had a tailwind, but it can be hard peddling into the wind.

They don't care much for storms, either, although they do ride through rain.

The couple finds people in the center of the United States friendly. Canada is rather like Nebraska, they observed, with friendly people everywhere.

They try to ride 50-60 miles per day, and will be meeting with family members in various parts of the country.

They have more than one connection with Nebraska. Peggi retired recently from the Veterans Administration in Lincoln. Russell is also retired from the VA.

And, their next door neighbor in Topeka used to be Nathan Gaswick, a former Imperial resident.