

## **By Russ Pankonin**

### **The Imperial Republican**

Judges from South Dakota selected The Imperial Republican as the winner of nine various awards in the Nebraska Better Newspaper Contest.

The Republican received five first place awards, three second place awards and one third place award in the contest.

The results were announced during the Nebraska Press Association's annual convention held in Grand Island April 11-12.

Two photos by Jan Schultz took first place and another was judged second.

First place photos included her feature photo of Isla Jenkins with Santa Claus and a sports feature photo of the CCS volleyball girls' jubilation after defeating Hershey in the regular season.

Her photo of suspects arrested after a high speed chase that ended outside of Imperial took second.

Editorials by Schultz and Russ Pankonin took first place in that category. Schultz's editorial addressed the new CCS graduation requirement that requires community service hours.

Pankonin's editorials addressed the importance of the augmentation projects at Rock Creek and Lincoln County, and the misconception that lower taxes result from lower mil levy rates due to property valuation increases.

The Republican won first in two page categories. A signature page recognizing veterans, created by Jana Pribbeno, Karen Hayes and Chris Fidler, was judged top in its class, along with the paper's classified page. In the reader interaction category, the same trio took a second for their efforts to involve readers with the paper.

In the prestigious General Excellence category, The Republican took second place.

Judges said the stories, the writing, editorial opinion, layout and design, and excellent photography that permeates the paper show how well the paper serves its community.

The Republican also earned a third place for their editorial page.

#### **Grant and Wauneta**

Two other Johnson Publication papers received awards in the contest as well.

The Wauneta Breeze receive 18 awards, including five first place awards, seven second place awards and six third place awards.

First place awards came in these categories: reader interaction, ad copywriting, special edition for the Breeze's 125th anniversary, web site and front page.

Second place awards came in these categories: classified section, single classified advertising idea, sports feature photo, news photography, personal column, editorial page and general excellence.

Third place categories included advertising campaign, sports feature photo, sports page, youth coverage, specialty pages and editorial.

With 18 awards, The Breeze took second place for Class A weeklies.

The Grant Tribune-Sentinel won seven awards. These included a first for lifestyles section, seconds for classified section and in-depth writing, and thirds for general excellence, editorial page, community promotion advertisement and web site.

The Republican competes in Class C, which includes papers with circulations from 1,500 to

2,499. Wauneta competes in Class A with circulations up to 859 while Grant is in Class B with circulations from 860 to 1,499.

Class D papers includes all weeklies of 2,500 circulation and up.

### **Other honors**

This year's winner of the Loral Johnson Community Newspaper Sweepstakes Award went to the Gering Courier.

The award is made in honor of Loral Johnson, the late co-publisher of The Imperial Republican. The Aurora News-Register, run by Kurt and Paula Johnson, finished atop the Class D category and was second in the running for the sweepstakes award. Johnson is the son of Loral and Elna Johnson.

Gene Morris, former publisher of the Benkelman Post and the McCook Gazette, was honored as this year's Master-Editor Publisher.

Lori Pankonin, co-publisher of The Imperial Republican, was elected to serve on the board of directors of the Nebraska Press Association.