

## CodeRED issued to warn city residents

**By Jan Schultz**

***The Imperial Republican***

Three juveniles who apparently escaped from The Boys and Girls Home of Nebraska in North Platte last week ended up in custody of law officers in Imperial.

After the trio had allegedly stolen two vehicles, one in North Platte and another in Madrid, the Imperial Police Department was notified they were headed this way.

It was a night of one incident after another, leading to a citywide search here for the two 15-year-olds and a 16-year-old before all three were captured.

A CodeRED warning was issued within the city and a small area surrounding it, as officers searched for the youths, one eventually found hiding under a camper and two more in a Chase County Schools' bus.

According to a report from Police Chief Larry Browning and Sgt. Rob Browning, here is how last week's events unfolded.

It started about 8:20 p.m. CT, last Wednesday, June 24, when Patrick Alhers and William Gregory, both 15, and 16-year-old Brian Valdez reportedly escaped from the boys' home in North Platte.

They went to the North Platte Wal-mart, where they allegedly stole clothes, then a late model Olds 88 sedan from the parking lot.

They drove to Madrid, abandoned the vehicle and allegedly stole a pickup, continuing on southwest to Imperial.

Surveillance tapes at the Imperial Kwik Stop show the three youths there about 1:15 a.m. last Thursday, where one of them is clearly shown shoplifting a package of cigars.

They returned to the pickup, and reportedly drove back to Madrid, concerned that they hadn't hidden the stolen car very well, Chief Browning said.

After moving the car in Madrid, the trio was leaving town when the owner of the stolen pickup, Dalton Zimmerman, spotted it pass by about 2:30 a.m. MT. He is a truck driver and was in his rig warming it up when he saw it.

Zimmerman got into another vehicle and a chase ensued, west of Madrid and into Chase County. Enroute, Zimmerman contacted Perkins County law officers, who then alerted Chase County of the vehicles heading their way.

Police Officer Kyle Hansen was on duty, and started pursuit after the pickup turned onto East 12th St. from Highway 61.

The youths abandoned the pickup a few blocks later, at the East 12th St. and Chase St. intersection, fleeing from the scene on foot.

However, the driver didn't put the pickup in park, so it was moving in reverse across the intersection. Hansen was forced to abandon the chase and get out of his police car to get the pickup stopped.

By then the youths had disappeared, but Hansen resumed his search while calling for assistance. He found Alhers hiding under a camper at the Dan Garrison home on East 12th St. By that time, Perkins County Deputy Mike Young had arrived on the scene, and took Alhers

into custody.

Additional officers had arrived to aid in the search for the other two juveniles, including Chief Browning, Sgt. Browning, Chase County Sheriff Tim Sutherland, and Deputies Bill Whitlow and Vince Lopez.

After searching several areas and deciding to expand the search citywide, Chief Browning said they felt a CodeRED alert was warranted to notify the public of what was happening so they could secure their vehicles and other property.

Gregory and Valdez were eventually found hiding in a school bus near the bus barn on Park St. about 6 a.m., Chief Browning said.

They were taken into custody without incident.

All three were returned to North Platte last Thursday by authorities.

No information on whether charges would be filed against the youths was available on Wednesday morning. Chief Browning said it was unlikely charges would be filed in Chase County.