Family-fun night of basketball just one week away

By Jan Schultz
The Imperial Republican

With the Harlem Ambassadors set to be in Imperial next Thursday, Sept. 20, the local "Imperials" team is gearing up for a fun night of basketball.

There will also be some competitive moments in the game, as well as skilled ball-handling by the visitors, but much of the evening will be family fun.

The Harlem Ambassadors were in Imperial for a contest three years ago, and the Longhorn gym was filled with spectators.

On Sept. 20, the game begins at 7 p.m., and promises to be another night of entertainment.

Imperials Coach Matt Jablonski has a roster of 16 players at this time from Imperial, Wauneta and McCook.

Next week's Harlem Ambassadors/Imperials game is sponsored by the Imperial Chamber of Commerce and the Imperial Lions Club.

Tickets are now on sale at the four banks in Imperial, Fine Things Jewelry & Gifts and The Imperial Republican. Advance prices are $5 (adults) and $3 (students K-12). Preschoolers will be admitted free.

Tickets will also be sold at the door for $6 (adults) and $4 (students).

Today, at any given point in the season, there are two Harlem Ambassadors' units performing in different parts of the country.

The group performing primarily east of the Mississippi is designated as the "Red, White and Blue" unit, while the western touring squad is called the "Stars and Stripes" unit.

Between the two units, the Harlem Ambassadors performed at 219 events during the 2010-11 season.

The team annually holds a two week pre-season training camp in Fort Collins, Colo. Players are selected not only for their basketball skills, but also for their positive lifestyles and ability to truly be "Ambassadors" both on and off the court.

Due to the rigors of the road and the demands of touring, most performers stay with the team for a year or two before moving on to a more sedentary life.

Ladè Majic is the exception, having been on tour with the Ambassadors in each of the team's 14 previous seasons. Other performers who have contributed to the growth of the Ambassadors with multi-year commitments include Bobby "Sugar Bear" Patman, Reggie Robinson, T'Neisha "Lil T" Turner, Jesse "Nephew" Whintly and Ketrick "Jugglin' Jazz" Copeland.

The Imperials team
Derek (Big D.R.) Russell
Matt (Maxwell House-alias “House”) Maxwell
Josh (Pop Up) Keating
Matt (The Machine) Hanna
Brian (Slam Dunkin’ Slim) Strand
Ryan (Cuff ‘em) Wisnieski
Dr. Doug (Doc) Nicholson
Dave (Electric Shock) Parker
Scott (Platinum) Way
Tommy (Turbo) Pribbeno
Nate (Drillin’) Vitosh
Josh (The Ship) Moreno
Joe (Steel) Humphreys
Lance (Laser) Kimble
Jarett (Radar) Finley
Ryan (The Bank) Richmond