

By Jan Schultz

The Imperial Republican

A Chase County Schools eighth grader will be traveling to St. Louis this weekend in hopes of earning a place on the Midwest Regional USA Baseball Team.

Jorge Cervantes, 13, attended a July 13 tryout and selection event in Omaha and was picked for the 14U Team Nebraska as a pitcher/outfielder.

He was notified last week that he was one of 18 selected for the team, and now has the chance to make the regional team this weekend.

Along with Nebraska's 16U and 17U baseball teams, the 14U Nebraska team Cervantes is on will compete against teams from Kansas, Oklahoma, Missouri and Arkansas at the Aug. 9-11 Midwest Region event in St. Louis.

During those games, college coaches and coaches from the Midwest area will evaluate the players to help determine who will make the three Midwest Regional Teams.

Those three regional teams will travel to Cary, N.C. later in August to play against other teams from across the country at the USA Baseball National Training Complex.

Cervantes, son of Jorge and Olga Cervantes of Imperial, played on Imperial's Pee Wee team this summer which won the league tournament for the first time since 1998.

He said he loves everything about baseball, and learned of the selection event in July from a coach in Paxton. Cervantes said he favors playing in the outfield.

Young Cervantes will leave today (Thursday) with his mother and sister, Valeria, for St. Louis.

According to Hallie Talley of the USA Nebraska Baseball organization, "The whole concept is a development program and to identify those players who may go further with baseball."

In St. Louis this weekend, the players will be constantly evaluated by the coaches, and if selected for the regional team, and then travel to North Carolina, there will be hundreds of coaches and pro scouts there evaluating the players.

The goal is to help improve the players' game, Talley said, which can also lead to college baseball scholarships.