

By Jan Schultz

The Imperial Republican

Preston Smith of Nunn, Colo., remains in the running for the world champion auctioneer, after making it through the regional qualifying contest Sept. 25 in Billings, Mont.

The former Imperial resident is now one of 33 contenders who'll be at the 2010 World Livestock Auctioneer Championship in Oklahoma City next June.

A champion, reserve champion and runner-up were named at the Billings regional last month, in addition to the next five highest scorers. Smith was among those next five highest in the scoring tallies.

Eight from each of four regionals plus the reigning champion, Paul Ramirez of Tucson, will make up the field of 33 for next year's world championship.

Billings was the first of the four regionals. Others are set for Oct. 9 in Crawford, Neb., Oct. 15 in Calhoun, Ga., and Dec. 2 in Parsons, Kan.

At the world championship, three top auctioneers will be selected and the winners will take home thousands of dollars in cash and prizes.

The Livestock Marketing Association (LMA) conducts the world championship each year to put the focus on competitive livestock marketing and the continuing vital role of the auctioneer.

Smith, who's qualified in the past for the world title event, is a son of former Imperial residents Stan and Vicky Smith, now of Hickman, Neb.