By Jan Schultz
The Imperial Republican

Holiday Farms of Imperial received a $34,300 state grant that will help the business reopen and expand its services in the area.

The grant received by Holiday Farms was the seventh largest of the 22 projects receiving funds from the Nebraska Rural Development Commission and the Nebraska Department of Economic Development.

This year's 22 "value-added" agricultural grants, up to $75,000 each, totaled $658,277.

Matt Vlasin of Imperial said the family-operated Holiday Farms is reopening this spring and will again sell bedding plants, perennials, trees and shrubs as it has in the past.

The business operated for 11 years, but closed in 2006. This past holiday season, the business sold Christmas trees.

This spring, Holiday Farms will reopen on a smaller scale, but plans are to build the business to where it was in the past and even larger, Vlasin said.

In addition, Vlasin said there will be an expansion of his landscaping business and will offer services not currently provided in the community.

The Vlasins will also start up a Farmer's Market at their business site on East 5th Street, he said. Youths in the FFA programs will be invited to sell their produce, as well as other growers in the area.

The Vlasins will also be growing some vegetables of their own to include in the Farmer's Market.

Vlasin said it's their goal to create some additional jobs with the expansion of the business.

The state grants were awarded for research, educational training and market development costs related to value-added products sold by Nebraska producers.

The Governor had to approve each project, based on recommendations from the Rural Development Commission and Department of Economic Development.

Projects in Curtis, Paxton and Holbrook also received grants from this program.