

**By Russ Pankonin**

***The Imperial Republican***

For the second time in four years, The Imperial Republican has earned recognition as one of the best weekly newspapers in America.

On Saturday, the Imperial Republican received second place in the National Newspaper Association's General Excellence category in the 2012 Better Newspapers Contest.

The award came in the division of weekly newspapers with circulation under 3,000.

The award was presented during the National Newspaper Association's 2012 Annual Convention & Trade Show held in Charleston, S.C., Oct. 4-6.

The General Excellence award recognizes member newspapers that achieve excellence in the following areas: quality of writing; headline language; use of photos and art work; mechanical—evidence of craftsmanship and skill in composition, reproduction and presswork; Editorial page(s); front page; family life/living page(s); sports page(s); advertising design and layout, quality and technique of writing copy, handling of classified and/or reader ads and taste; and treatment of public notices.

Issues of the Republican submitted for judging included the weeks of June 16, Nov. 3 and Nov. 10, 2011.

Judges praised the community coverage of the paper, as well as its reader-friendly design.

In 2009, the Imperial Republican claimed first place in the General Excellence competition.

This year's first place winner of the 3,000 and under weekly division was another Nebraska newspaper—The West Point News.

In three of the last four years, the division has been won by a Nebraska weekly, with the Gothenburg Times adding their name to the list of winners in 2010.

The Republican also earned Honorable Mention for its editorial page in the Daily and Non-daily Division with circulation of less than 6,000.

Co-Publisher of The Republican, Russ Pankonin, said it's the paper's privilege to serve as the primary source of news for Imperial and local area.

He credited his entire staff for their dedicated work and desire to strive for excellence each week as the primary reason for the paper's success.