By Jan Schultz
The Imperial Republican

Jason Tuller is leaving a job in North Platte to be Imperial's new community development director.

He said Tuesday he decided to resign his position as director of the Nebraska Business Development Center in North Platte for Imperial, where he expects his new job to be "something different and challenging."

As a father of four children, Tuller, 35, said living in a small town was also important to him and his wife, Dawn.

Tuller will start his new duties Monday, Feb. 4. He replaces Leslie Carlholm, who held the position eight years before moving last year to Kansas. She left the end of September.

Tuller, who grew up in McCook and graduated from McCook High School, believes he will contribute some new ideas to the position. He feels his strong background in working with small businesses as director of the center in North Platte will be beneficial in his work here. One of his major responsibilities there was assessing a start-up's business plan.

As soon as possible, Tuller said he plans to meet individually with local business owners. He also has yet to meet all of the city council members.

City Clerk/Administrator Jo Leyland, who narrowed the initial 11 applicants down to two recommendations for the council, said Tuller will bring a lot of good qualities to the position.

"He has a lot of experience helping start-up businesses at the Nebraska Business Development Center," she said.

He holds an MBA, which will serve him well in the position, and already is acquainted with several Imperial business owners through his work in North Platte, she added.

"It will be good to have someone back in the position," she said.

In the four-month interim, the city council appointed West Central Nebraska Development District (WCNDD) to take over the job responsibilities until a new director was hired.

Tuller earned his Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration and French from Doane College in 2000. As part of his education for the French degree, he spent the first semester of his senior year of college in Paris.

He then pursued a Masters in Business Administration (MBA), completing an intense 12-month program at the University of New Brunswick, Saint John, Canada, finishing in October 2001.

Besides his current position, which he has held for seven and a half years, Tuller also worked at Wal-Mart in North Platte as a customer service manager (2010-11), was a production planner at Valmont Industries in McCook (2002-05), which followed a summer 2001 internship at McCain International, Inc., in New Brunswick, Canada as a marketing intern.

The Tullers have three daughters and a son—Amanda, 14; Ashley, 11; JD, eight; and Amber, who is four. Mrs. Tuller home-schools their children.

The family now resides in Curtis, but Tuller said they will be moving to Imperial eventually.

Imperial's new community development director was formally hired for the position at last week's city council meeting when the council approved a wage ordinance, 4-0, adding him to the payroll at $58,000 annually.