

By Lori Pankonin

The Imperial Republican

Jared Knobbe's entrepreneurial spirit started young and continues to grow as he accepts challenges to learn from education, programs and connecting with people.

While on spring break from the University of Nebraska in Lincoln (UNL) this week, he touched base with local entities. Having accepted scholarships from both the Imperial Chamber and the Imperial Community Foundation Fund last year, he made a presentation to each group to share how he has utilized their funds in his education.

And with continued interest in what's transpiring in Imperial, this 2012 Chase County Schools graduate attended the city council meeting and met with Imperial's new economic development director.

Knobbe became a successful entrepreneur when establishing a horseshoeing business while in high school. He spent three weeks of his summer before starting high school with an older cousin, Ryan Knobbe, who operates a successful horseshoeing business and works on the family farm at West Point.

Returning each summer, he gained first-hand experience while helping his cousin as he learned more about the trade. "Every hoof is different," said Knobbe as he explained how experience makes a difference.

By the third summer, he was able to return home where he established his own clients in the surrounding area, thereby forming his business, JK Horseshoeing Service.

He utilized his business as his proficiency project through the FFA organization. After Knobbe's presentation to the Community Foundation Fund Advisory Committee, Dillon Harchelroad said, "Jared is one of those guys who always thinks outside the box." Harchelroad worked with Knobbe's local FFA ag sales team that won a gold at national competition.

Knobbe headed to Texas shortly after his high school graduation to attend the Texas Horseshoeing School where his cousin learned the trade. The six-week program, was funded in part by the Imperial Community Foundation Fund.

So far, his only shoeing teacher had been his cousin and he could see value in getting a different perspective from someone else. Although certification is not required to horseshoe in the United States, he has already confirmed that having the papers that show he is a certified professional farrier is essential for some clients, especially those who don't know him.

Knobbe was happy to share his experience during the Texas schooling. The instructor often times explained what was being done as Knobbe actually did the work. And any of the more challenging jobs came his way.

Lincoln became home to Knobbe when he started classes at the University last fall, majoring in agri business with a minor in entrepreneurship. He said he's seen great benefit from joining the Engler Agribusiness Entrepreneurship Program.

Such program was established in 2010 when UNL received \$20 million from the Paul F. and Virginia J. Engler Foundation. Engler grew up in Nebraska. At age 12, he bought 100 cattle on his own without his parents knowing it, according to a recorded interview with Mark Gustafson, founding director of the UNL program.

Although he's developed the world's largest privately owned cattle feeding operation in Texas, he still remembers his roots in Nebraska. One story shared by UNL stated Engler wants to expose rural Nebraskans who have "fire in the belly" to a curriculum that teaches risk, how to

evaluate it and manage it.

“Because if you do not take risk as an entrepreneur, you are not going to make it,” he said.

What’s next? Knobbe made application with the Nebraska Rural Futures Internship Program which connects students with communities. He and Jeffrey Story were matched with the community of Red Cloud for a summer internship.

The community application focused on the need to work on historic preservation with emphasis on housing preservation, especially related to building within the town’s four historic districts.

Red Cloud is rich with Author Willa Cather history.

Knobbe said they will be developing a plan and executing it.

The Red Cloud Community Foundation Fund spearheaded the town’s application process and will serve as one of the funding partners. The Red Cloud and Imperial foundation funds are both affiliated funds of the Nebraska Community Foundation.

Knobbe said he hopes to someday utilize the experience he gains in Red Cloud to help Imperial.