



By Jan Schultz

The Imperial Republican

Spencer Hartman must have a very accurate way of keeping a calendar.

As Nebraska's State FFA President, that has to be vital. A look at Hartman's schedule since early April when he was elected to the post is a bit mind-boggling.

Since his election, the young man from Champion graduated as one of the Class of 2013 valedictorians from Chase County Schools, farms and ranches with his family and has his own tomato-growing greenhouse business.

Plus, he's getting ready to enter the University of Nebraska-Lincoln as a freshman, majoring in ag economics with an option in public policy.

His FFA activities as state president started quickly.

He helped put on the annual Chapter Officer Leadership Training (COLT) conference in Aurora; had a part in the NPower Conference, another FFA leadership event for any FFA member who wants to attend; and has attended numerous summer FFA chapter events across the state.

In late July, he spent a week in Washington D.C., at the National FFA State President's Conference, which drew 102 FFA state officers from every state but Hawaii, in addition to officers from the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

During the week, they discussed delegate issues that will be addressed at October's National FFA Convention. He was also elected national committee chairman for enhancing the FFA Supervised Ag Experience (SAE) program's exposure and involvement.

Hartman and fellow state officer, secretary Bryce Doeschot of Hickman, took time to meet with Nebraska's congressional delegation—U.S. Senators Mike Johanns and Deb Fischer, as well as Third District Congressman Adrian Smith.

They also visited with the Secretary of Agriculture, and with officials in the FSA Administration and Department of Agriculture.

There, Hartman found a familiar face in Bob McGrath, a former Chase County FSA executive director, who now works in the Washington D.C. FSA office in its budget and finance division.

The two Nebraska state officers addressed a group of about 40 FSA employees on partnerships to get more young people into the field of agriculture.

And, he's got a lot of traveling ahead on his well-organized calendar.

He said he's most excited about three things ahead, including next week's business and industry visits across Nebraska where the FFA state officer team will get to meet one-on-one with ag-related business owners.

Then, there will be numerous chapter visits during the school year, when he'll have the chance to visit with individual FFA members across the state.

And, in January, he'll travel to South Africa on a 10-day FFA international trip for state officers across the country.

Yet, as busy as he is, Hartman found time Monday to spend the entire day helping his younger sister, Blair, who was coordinator for the Red Cross Bloodmobile in Imperial. He spent the

entire six hours helping out as an escort for the blood donors.

He said family is important.

"It's always fun to come home to my family and my community family," he said.

"It helps me get rejuvenated for what's ahead."