

By Carolyn Lee The Imperial Republican

The first week of April, Imperial resident Calen Griffin stepped down from his position as vice president of the Nebraska Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA). His year on the state level ended during the April 3-5 state convention in Omaha.

Griffin, 17, is a member of the Imperial FBLA chapter, under the direction of Chase County Schools business teacher Sandy O'Neil.

When he was a freshman, Griffin said, he thought FBLA was "laid back," and an easy organization to belong to. "Then I learned more about it."

He urges students to take advantage of FBLA. "Don't pass up on opportunities given to you. You can't get back those opportunities," he said.

As a state officer, Griffin traveled all over Nebraska, visiting local chapters. He also participated in leadership conferences on the state and national level, traveling to Dallas and Oklahoma City for national fall leadership conferences, and to Anaheim, Calif., for a summer national leadership conference.

As state vice president, Griffin said he didn't have many specified duties. However, he coordinated social media such as Twitter and Facebook to pass information on to FBLA members. He also helped other officers and was assigned additional duties.

Griffin was elected to his state position by his peers at the 2013 state convention. He had to give a speech before 2,300 students, attend a formal caucus and campaign for the position by handing out brochures, stickers and "freebies."

Griffin decided to run for the state position, he said because "I thought it would help my career goals in the long run. I could also help Nebraska FBLA by bringing different qualities to the table, and to help them achieve different goals."

He first ran for state treasurer his sophomore year, but was unsuccessful. He gained a lot of experience from the effort, especially in the speech-making area.

Even at the beginning of his term last summer, Griffin judged his public speaking as "OK." Now, he's comfortable with making speeches before large audiences.

That's one quality he's improved on as a state officer. He also feels he's obtained a head start on his future by building relationships with people across the state and nation.

Time management has also improved. For instance, last September Griffin was juggling high school classes and assignments, planning the fall FBLA conference and creating an FBLA music program, all at the same time.

He completed his tasks by using his time more wisely.

However, soccer was one of the things he loves that he had to give up this past year. With late night practices and state leadership conference at the same time he had to forego soccer, and participate less in other organizations, too.

FBLA commitments have taken an average of three to four hours of his week for the past year.

Graduating from CCS this spring, Griffin plans to attend the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, probably majoring in finance.

He also hopes to become involved in the FBLA college chapter, Phi Beta Lambda.

Griffin is the son of Marsie Vetter of Imperial and Eddie Griffin of Omaha. He also counts sponsor O'Neil as "a second mom this year, putting up with my after-school hours and early

morning crankiness.”