

One of the pinnacles of the year for an FFA member is State FFA Convention.

This week, Imperial FFA members are in Lincoln for the 86th Nebraska State FFA Convention where they will compete in contests, receive degrees and interview for various honors.

It will also be the close of FFA State President Spencer Hartman's year at the helm of the organization.

One of the top honors an FFA member can receive on the state level is the State FFA Degree.

This degree requires membership in FFA for two consecutive years, earn or invest \$3,500 in an agriculturally-related job, earn 500 points, 150 of which must be above the chapter level, and complete 25 hours of community service.

FFA members must also complete a minimum of two years of record books, fill out the State FFA Degree application, pass the State FFA Degree test and complete an interview.

This year, Imperial FFA will have 11 seniors receiving the State FFA Degree at the final session of the convention Friday night. Imperial tied for having the most state degrees of any chapter in the state.

Members who will be receiving their degree include, Ashlin Bussell, Sam Haarberg, Kelsey Wood, Jordyn Doetker, Tyler Oxford, Blair Hartman, Elizabeth Tomky, Bailey Springer, Andrea Hogsett, Derek Schilke and Mallory Coleman.

Also interviewing for a top honor in FFA is Derek Schilke. Schilke was selected as one of the STAR Farmer finalist in the area of placement.

To be selected for STAR Farmer in placement, FFA members must submit three years of financial records, complete a STAR Farmer application, have three letters of recommendation and complete an interview. Schilke will be interviewing at state convention, and one STAR Farmer in placement will be selected and announced Friday night.

Three Imperial FFA members have also been selected as finalists in their proficiency area—Callin Ledall in Turf/Grass Management, Derek Schilke in Grain Production Placement and Sam Haarberg in Diversified Crop Production Placement.

Proficiency Awards are first reviewed on a district level. If selected as one of the top three district Golds, applications move on to the state level. At the state level the top three state finalist applications are selected. The state finalists move on the State FFA Convention where they will interview to determine who has the top proficiency in the state in the respective proficiency areas.

If an FFA member's proficiency application is selected as a state champion application, it will then move on to the National FFA Review Board and be judged against all the other state winners in each proficiency area.

An honor that the entire Imperial FFA chapter will receive while at state convention this week is being a premier chapter in the state.

The Chapter Rating Award application is submitted by chapters across the state in early March. The award focuses on three areas—student development, chapter development and community development. The applications are reviewed by a committee and the top 15 chapters in the state are selected as premier chapters.

Senior Blair Hartman will be interviewing to further her FFA career as a Nebraska State FFA Officer.

In March, 31 FFA members took part in preliminary state officer interviews in Kearney. Hartman was one of 17 selected to move on to the final round of interviews at the state convention.

Candidates take part in three-day interviews that last throughout the whole convention.

From the 17 finalists, seven will be selected to serve Nebraska FFA members as state officers to be announced Friday night.

Thirty-one Imperial FFA members and 12 junior high students will be at the convention this week to compete in 17 different events.

Members will be vying for state championship honors in Leadership Skills Events (LSE's), Career Development Events (CDE's) and Junior High Quiz Bowl throughout the three days of convention.

There will be a live internet stream of evening sessions where the proficiency awards ceremony, state degree ceremony, State President Hartman's retiring address and LSE results can be watched.

The link to this live stream can be found on <http://www.neaged.org>. The state convention schedule can also be found on the NEAGED.org website.