



Republican co-publisher, Russ Pankonin, right, accepts his first place editorial award from outgoing National Newspaper Association President Liz Parker of New Jersey. (Johnson Publications photo)

Republican earns awards in national newspaper contest

By **Russ PANKONIN**
THE IMPERIAL REPUBLICAN

The Imperial Republican received a pair of awards in this year's National Newspaper Association (NNA) Better Newspaper Contest.

The awards were presented during NNA's national convention held Sept. 22-24 in Albuquerque, N.M.

Russ Pankonin, co-publisher of the paper, won first place for the best editorial in the non-daily division with circulation less than 3,000.

The winning editorial, published June 17, 2010, addressed the costs required for a hospital district.

The judges noted the high-profile issue was explained "with thoughtful insight and with no condescending tone. It hits the proverbial nail squarely on the head."

The Republican's editorial page also received third place in the same division.

Two other Johnson Publications, Inc., newspapers received award recognition in the contest.

The Holyoke Enterprise won two third place awards and one honorable mention.

Imperial native Chris Lee won third for best sports feature story; the staff received third for best local news coverage; and Darci Tomky received honorable mention in the best feature category.

The Wauneta Breeze won an honorable mention for best sports photo.

All three papers compete in the same division.

Republican co-publishers Russ and Lori Pankonin and Enterprise publisher Brenda Brandt attended the convention.

The Pankonins serve as co-state chairs representing the Nebraska Press Association.

Brandt serves as the Colorado Press Association (CPA) state chair.

Brandt will become president of CPA Oct. 1 following the resignation of their current president who moved from the state.

She was slated to take over in February as state president so will serve for 17 months rather than 12.

She and the Pankonins are co-owners of Johnson Publications, Inc.

