

COMING BACK HOME



On a recent spring evening, Sam, Aliana and Abby McNair, in background, watch as Aria and Ava dig into their gardening duties. (Republican photo)

Sam McNairs spend more family time in smaller town

■ **Editor's note:** This is one in a series of feature stories about people who have returned with their families to their hometown of Imperial, after living and working in other communities.

BY CAROLYN LEE
THE IMPERIAL REPUBLICAN

On a sunny Monday three little blond girls were busy watering emerging spring plants in the yard of their new house. Ava McNair, 4, was pretty sure they were going to be rose bushes.

The girls are the daughters of Sam and Abby McNair, who moved to Imperial in February, 2009. Sam grew up here, but is now gaining a perspective of the town as a parent and not a child.

He is getting to know people outside of his high school group, as he is an agent with McNair Agency, Inc., a family business.

The couple met at Nebraska Wesleyan University. Following their marriage on June 28, 2003, they lived in Lincoln, where Sam was an underwriter with Allied Insurance and Abby stayed home with Aliana, 5, Ava and Aria, 2.

They moved back to Sam's hometown for three reasons. The first and biggest, they said, was family. Sam has a number of relatives living in town.

Abby said that while living in Lincoln

it wasn't unusual for Sam to be gone from home from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., leaving him little time with the girls.

"We see him more and do more now," she said. "It's a slower lifestyle."

And, there's time left over in the evening to be a family.

Sam agreed. "It's easier to do lots of different things (in one day) rather than driving all over town to do one thing," he noted.

Working with the family insurance company was another draw for the couple.

Sam said the benefits of living in Imperial include more of an opportunity to be involved in the community.

"It's nice to know you can be involved if there's something you want to improve or make better. You know the people you need to talk to. People are accessible and friendly."

Abby added that distances in a small town are attractive after living in a city.

"He can come home for lunch, or we can walk and see him, and it's not a big loading up of the car to go see Dad."

She also likes the fact that the school is just down the street from the house, and she'll know the teachers and students when Aliana is a kindergarten student next year.

The couple had to think a bit when asked what the drawbacks of living in

Imperial were.

Sam would like being able to see a movie during the week, and misses the Nebraska Cornhusker basketball and football games.

Abby said that shopping can sometimes be an inconvenience, but hastened to add that the stores are accommodating to the needs of the public.

She misses being closer to family in Hastings and friends in Lincoln. Moving anywhere can present that loss, however.

The family attends Imperial Bible Church. Sam is a member of the Chase County Community Hospital Foundation, and is considering other areas in which to volunteer.

Abby coaches soccer, which the girls enjoy playing.

If they were asked to sell Imperial to other young couples, Sam said he's impressed with the number of young families in town.

"People say there's not much to do in a small town, but I do more here than when we were in Lincoln. Organizations are looking for younger people to do stuff," he said.

Abby added that because of the large number of young families in Imperial, there are many more social opportunities than she expected.

Ease of life and convenience are also big pluses, according to the McNairs.