

# Pheasants Forever dream of building, park now a reality

By Russ Pankonin  
The Imperial Republican

A longtime dream of the Southwest Nebraska Pheasants Forever Chapter to create a youth park and build a clubhouse became a reality this month.

In the last several weeks, the chapter completed construction of a 24- by 24-foot building on a one-acre plot of ground west of Champion.

The chapter obtained a 20-year lease from Dan, Jan and Shona Heim on family ground located about a mile west of Champion Lake near the Frenchman Creek.

In addition, they have full access to two adjoining 80-acre tracts that includes CRP and pasture. One tract is owned by the Heim family. The other tract is owned by John Flood.

Chapter President Joel Gockley and annual banquet chair Joe Weiss, both of Imperial, said the chapter has been working towards this goal for nearly 20 years.

The intent is to create a Youth Memorial Park that will be open for youth activities including hunting exclusively for hunters ages 15 and younger. The young hunters must be accompanied by a non-gun carrying adult.

The building and park will be in memory of three young people, Kenley Cotant, Tyler Heim and Logan Bauman, all who had strong ties to Imperial and Champion.

The chapter announced



Officers of the Southwest Nebraska Pheasants Forever, president Joel Gockley, left, and banquet chair Joe Weiss, stand in front the new building the chapter has built west of Champion as part of a planned youth memorial park. (Republican photo)

their plans for the new area at their annual banquet in February. The chapter received donations from family members of the three young people, along with donations from those at the banquet, specifically for the project.

Proceeds from previous banquets were also used to pay for the construction of the building.

Gockley and Weiss said the building was built by Einspahr Construction of Wauwata with all of the lumber,

concrete and finishing, and supplies were purchased in Chase County.

With the addition of the building, which includes a 15- by 24-foot canopy, the chapter will use the area as its headquarters for youth events.

The first event will be their youth mentor hunt on Saturday, Oct. 18. This is one week ahead of the opening day of pheasant season.

Weiss said electricity and water will be run to the build-

ing and an outdoor toilet installed.

The facility will be available free of charge for youth events on a year-round basis, they said.

The chapter envisions the building and park will be used for a variety of activities, such as SCORE camp and FFA range judging.

Over the winter, the building will also house the chapter's grain drills, which are used for food plot planting and habitat development.