By Jan Schultz
The Imperial Republican

A report to the Chase County, Neb. Sheriff's Office regarding the unlawful use of a semi-truck and trailer last month has led to a number of charges against an alleged thief.

Justin Lundgren, 33, was arrested by Haxtun police on Saturday, Feb. 21 on warrants from Chase County that charge him with felony burglary and two counts of criminal mischief.

John Arterburn of Imperial, Neb. contacted the Chase County Sheriff's Office in Imperial Jan. 20 with a report that his semi truck and trailer may have been stolen.

The semi and trailer had been parked inside his locked shop building in Lamar, Neb., but it was discovered parked outside on Jan. 20, said Chase County Deputy Bill Whitlow.

Arterburn also discovered that the semi's transmission had been damaged and he believed about a quarter tank of fuel had been burned, Whitlow said.

After Whitlow had gone to the scene and investigated, they found burglars had gained entry on the east side of the building.

Further investigation led to the discovery of a theft of wheat in the Phillips County area, Whitlow said. Then, a description that matched photos of Arterburn's semi-trailer was confirmed by employees at Yuma County Grain, who reported the truck had delivered a large load of wheat there, Whitlow said.

Lundgren was turned over to the Phillips County Sheriff's Department by the Haxtun police, and he was jailed in Yuma County on a bond of $100,000. He was to be transferred back to Chase County Tuesday, Feb. 24.

The Chase County charges against him are for class 3 felony burglary, felony criminal mischief and one count of misdemeanor criminal mischief.

Deputy District Attorney Elizabeth Sexton of Sterling said Tuesday an investigation is ongoing with this case.

Phillips County also has additional charges against Lundgren from an unrelated incident Dec. 23, 2008, at a family home in Haxtun, according to a Phillips County deputy.

Those include assault against the elderly, felony firearm possession, theft of a financial transaction device (credit card) and felony menacing.

Lundgren's address on his driver's license lists Haxtun, but Phillips County authorities said that is not his residence.