

Off-road accident near Lava

Three females survived a close call on Friday afternoon after crashing a UTV into a tree.

A3

Fatal accident in Power County

A man died in a one-vehicle rollover on Interstate 86.

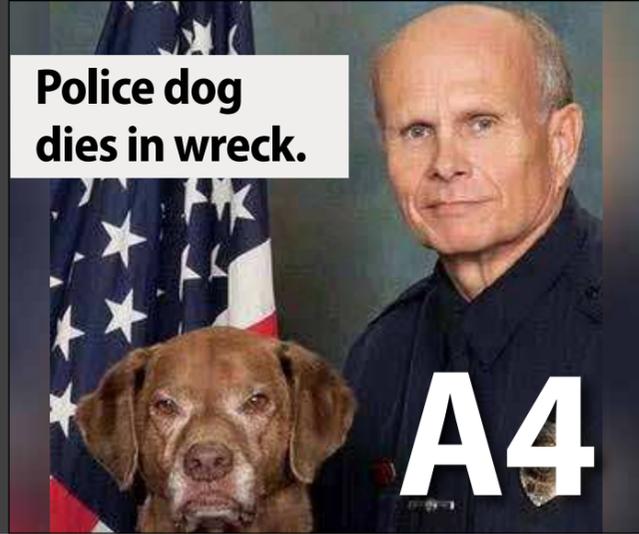
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SATURDAY, JULY 2, 2016

Police dog dies in wreck.



A4

TOP SELLER



CYDNEY MCFARLAND/FOR THE JOURNAL

Award-winning local real estate agent Greg Johnston has added another accolade to an already long list. Johnston ranks in the top 200 individual real estate agents in the country, according to the Wall Street Journal.

Local Realtor ranked among top 200 agents in the US

By CYDNEY MCFARLAND cmcfarland@journalnet.com

POCATELLO — Local real estate agent Greg Johnston was ranked in the top 1,000 individual real estate agents in the country based on sales. Johnston ranked 161st out of nearly 1.9 million real estate agents across the U.S. with 153 close transactions in 2015, according to the Wall Street Journal.

"It's kind of a big deal," Johnston said. "It speaks to how good our market is here that an agent from tiny Pocatello ranked in the top 1,000."

Johnston received his Realtors' license 17 years ago in 1999. His father — Jim, who is also a real estate agent — asked Johnston if he would want to help out with the work load, giving his son only a day to decide before classes started.

Johnston, who was studying business at Idaho State University at the time, agreed and took his real estate classes on top of his college course load.

"The final test even lined up with finals week, which was no fun," Johnston said.

According to Johnston, working with his father allowed him to learn from the best. His father Jim had been the No. 1 agent in the Pocatello area for many years — a title Johnston now holds.

"Like father like son, I guess," Johnston said. "He knows what he's doing, and he trained me well."

Johnston also holds the title of No. 1 individual real estate agent in the northwest region for Keller Williams, the agency he works for.

According to Johnston, Keller Williams in one of the largest and fastest growing real estate agencies in the

ONLINE

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U.S. Their northwest region encompasses Idaho along with Alaska, Washington, Oregon and Montana.

Johnston said he credits most of his success to his 17 years of experience and a focus on customer service.

"I think if people know you have their best interest in mind, they'll come back again and refer you to friends," Johnston.

However, he also said Pocatello's surprisingly robust market also helps when it comes to getting homes sold. Johnston said employers such as the FBI, ON Semiconductor and Idaho State University consistently bring in new people looking for homes.

More REALTOR | A2

Pocatello's oldest firefighter to celebrate 98th birthday

By ALESSANDRA TOSCANELLI For the Journal

POCATELLO — Back when John Farnsworth joined the Pocatello Fire Department several decades ago, firefighters didn't wear oxygen masks during blazes and their fire trucks had exposed cabs that provided no protection from the snow, rain and cold.

One of the fire engines Farnsworth drove, a 1916 American LaFrance, will be on hand for his 98th birthday party set for 6 p.m. Saturday at the Bannock County Historical Museum at Ross Park.

More B-DAY | A5

Fire officials brace for early wildfire season

By DEBBIE BRYCE For the Journal

State, federal and local fire agencies are bracing for what looks to be an early wildfire season in Idaho. Burn bans and fireworks restrictions are in effect, and Fourth of July celebrators are urged to obey the law.

Two fires are currently burning in the region.

The lightning-caused Lane Creek fire was reported and confirmed Thursday afternoon about 10 miles northwest of Thayne, Wyoming, which is just across the Idaho-Wyoming border.

Lynn Ballard with the US Forest Service said the potential for the fire to grow is moderate to high. Currently 1.5 acres has burned, and the fire is spreading by spotting and by large, downed fuels.

The Yale Fire was located by fire crews early Thursday morning about one mile southwest of Sawtell Peak at the head of Hell Roaring Canyon near Island Park. The fire is burning in a small group of white bark pine and subalpine fir trees.

More FIRE | A5

Local family lost everything in devastating house fire

By DEBBIE BRYCE For the Journal

A couple who already weathered Hurricane Katrina lost all of their personal belongings and several beloved pets in a house fire last week.

In about 20 minutes, the blaze destroyed Eric and Dianne Christiansen's Downey home where Eric and his seven siblings were raised.

Eric is still healing up after sustaining second-degree burns to his head and face. He sustained the injuries when he tried to return to the house to rescue one of two dogs that were lost in the fire, along with

a number of cats.

"We had just gone to bed," Eric said. "I thought I smelled smoke, and when I opened the door, I saw the garage already burning. Flames were shooting 30 feet in the air."

He tried to rescue a dog that was in a pen between the detached garage and the house, but intense heat kept him at bay.

"I just hate to think about my poor dog, about the way he went," Eric said. "It was just terrible."

High winds quickly accelerated the flames.

The cause of the blaze is not yet known, but it started in a detached garage. The fast-moving fire destroyed

the house, the garage, an outside building and both of their vehicles.

Their son, Matt Christiansen of Soda Springs, said his parents were lucky to get out with their lives.

"They literally got out with the clothes on their backs and one dog," Matt said.

The house, located on 3rd North in Downey, was built in the 1940s by Matt's grandparents, John and Lena Christiansen. The couple raised eight children in the home.

"This house was a landmark in Downey," Matt said. "A lot of people have fond memories of that house."



PHOTO COURTESY OF GOFUNDME.COM

More FAMILY | A5 Eric and Dianne Christiansen.

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Faith A7 Horoscopes B4

Today: Thunderstorm in the area. High 92 | Low 57 | More weather A5

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