

# 40,000 Pounds of Food Delivered to Caldwell as Part of Nationwide America250 and JustServe Effort

by Kelli G. Jenkins, JustServe



America 250 Food Truck with volunteers and pallets of food

An America 250 and JustServe semi-truck arrived in Caldwell on Thursday, December 18, delivering a significant boost of food and support to families across the community. The delivery was part of a nationwide initiative by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to send 250 truckloads of food to communities throughout the United States in recognition of America's upcoming 250th anniversary. The project also highlights the spirit of volunteerism championed by JustServe.org.

The Caldwell shipment weighed approximately 40,000

pounds and included nutritious staples such as fruits, vegetables, meats, pasta, pancake mix, peanut butter, rice, oats, beans, and dry milk. All items were grown or produced through the Church's extensive welfare farms and facilities.

The food was distributed to the Caldwell Salvation Army who, in kindness, shared pallets of food with Advocates Against Family Violence, the Caldwell School District Food Pantry, Caldwell Housing Authority, and the Nampa Salvation Army.

Each partner played an important role in ensuring the donated goods reached

individuals and families facing food insecurity, housing challenges, or crisis situations.

Captain Amy Lewis of The Salvation Army in Caldwell emphasized the importance of the donation at a time when many families are struggling. "Our world is increasingly getting more and more challenging," Lewis said. "Having support like this helps us weather these changes and be able to care for our neighbors and serve them without discrimination." She noted that large-scale donations such as this one allowed local agencies to stretch limited resources

and respond more effectively to rising demand.

The America250 effort is a nationwide effort to honor the country's semi-quincennial by promoting unity, service, and gratitude as the country approaches a historic milestone. The dual America 250 and JustServe branding on the trucks served as a visible reminder that food security and community service are closely connected.

Elder Gerrit W. Gong of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, the Church initiative was intended to inspire collective action and goodwill. "As we approach

this historic milestone, we hope these gifts foster a spirit of connection," he said. "This is a moment for communities to come together and lift one another."

The Caldwell delivery was one of many scheduled to continue through 2026, with additional truckloads bringing food and hope to communities nationwide.

**Want to help?**

Community members inspired to help and serve others can find opportunities in every neighborhood. Visit [JustServe.org](https://www.justserve.org) to find local projects and volunteer needs near you.

## Whittenberger Foundation distributes more than \$380,000 to Idaho schools and non-profits



Whittenberger Foundation Chair, Mike Groff presenting to Caldwell Family YMCA Director, Erik Bullock.

Since 1973 the Whittenberger Foundation has been awarding grants to Idaho

schools and non-profits. In 2025, the organization donated more than \$380,000 to 65 organizations.

Local recipients included the Caldwell School District (\$2500) to support their National History Day activities, the Caldwell Christian Church (\$5000) to support scholarships for students attending Christian colleges, the Caldwell Salvation Army (\$7500) to support their Baby Haven program, Caldwell Fine Arts (\$7500) to support their Xperience program, and the Treasure Valley YMCA to install shade sails on the patio next

to the Caldwell Y's aquatic center.

The Whittenberger Foundation held its annual award luncheon at the College of Idaho on December 5th. In presenting the awards, the board members thanked and praised the work of the grant recipients, noting that they provide the action that carries out the mission of the Whittenberger Foundation.

The Caldwell High Mariachi band performed during the luncheon, as they were recipients of a startup grant from the Whittenberger Foundation in 2023.

The Whittenberger Foun-

dation was established by Ethel Bales Whittenberger, a Caldwell native and member of the 1913 Caldwell High graduating class. She taught school in Meridian as well as at Washington and Marble Front schools.

Upon her death in 1970, she specified that the Foundation focus on innovative and enriching projects that significantly improve the quality of life for children and young people in Idaho.

To date, the Whittenberger foundation has donated more than \$12.5 million to non-profits that support Idaho's youth. In addition to

the annual grants awarded to non-profits, the Whittenberger Foundation has been involved in larger projects such as establishing the current Caldwell Public Library way back in 1975 and building the Caldwell Family YMCA in 2005.

To learn more about the Whittenberger Foundation and to see lists of recent grant recipients go to [www.whittenberger.org](https://www.whittenberger.org).



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# LOCAL HAPPENINGS

**Ice Skating on the Plaza:** *Monday-Saturday weekly*, Noon to 8 or 9 PM, 120 S. Kimball. Sessions start at 12, 2, 3:30, 5, 6:30, and (except Saturdays) 8 PM. Costume events at 5 PM each Friday. Silent Disco from 5-7 and 8-10 PM on Saturday, *Jan. 24*. Bring a headset. Cost with skates included is \$7 for those 5 and under and \$15 for others.

**Christmas Tree Dropoff:** *Now through Jan. 15*, 206 N. 21st. Look for the orange cones at the City RV Park.

**AARP Online Classes:** Membership is not required to attend a variety of online classes. Featured topics include exercise (up to five a day), painting, avoiding scams, brain health, auto safety, and job searching. Sign up early for the links. Class listing is at <https://local.aarp.org/boise-id/aarp-events>.

**City Council Meetings:** *Monday, Jan. 5, and Tuesday, Jan 20*, 6-8 PM, 205 S 6th St. A livestream link is available on the City Council page at [cityofcaldwell.org](http://cityofcaldwell.org).

**Brave Hearts Night at Indian Creek Steakhouse:** *Tuesday, Jan. 6*, 6-11 PM., 711 Main St. A Chamber of Commerce fundraiser for Idaho veterans. No entrance fee.

**Farmway after School Program:** *Thursday, Jan. 8*, 4:30-6:30 PM, Community Room at 22730 Farmway Rd. Teens and other school-aged kids will be making vision boards this month. Snacks provided.

**Cheer Team Fundraiser:** *Monday, Jan.12*, 4-8 PM, 3108 Cleveland Blvd. The Arctic Circle will be donating 20% of all sales to the Caldwell High School Cheer Team.

**Me ‘n Genie Auditions:** *Thursday, Jan. 15*, 4:30-5 PM (grades 1-3) and 5-7:30 PM (grades 4-12), 3401 S. Indiana. Auditions will include singing “Ordinary Day”; link to video is available at [www.caldwellfinearts.org](http://www.caldwellfinearts.org). Rehearsals and performances are scheduled from Jan. 17 to 24. Cost will be \$35 (scholarships available).

**Animal Dance Party:** *Thursday, Jan. 15*, 6-7 PM, Caldwell Public Library. Girl Scouts of Silver Sage invite all girls in grades K-12 to a dance party introducing the Girl Scout organization. Animal costumes optional.

**Me ‘n Genie Performances:** *Friday, Jan. 23*, 7 PM, and *Saturday, Jan 24*, 1 PM, Caldwell High School Auditorium, 3401 S. Indiana. Cost is \$13-\$15 for adults and \$13-\$11 for children.

**Huston Vineyards Cozy & Classic Release Party:** *Saturday, Jan 24*, Noon-5PM, 16755 Chicken Dinner Rd. Huston Vineyards will release its 2023 Syrah. \$10, includes a flight of three wines.

**Idaho Renaissance Faire, Inc. Presents A Celebration of All Things Viking!:** *Saturday, Jan 24 and Sunday Jan 25*, 10AM-6PM, 2415 Blaine St., Gabiola Fields. Cost is free for ages 0-8 and \$15 for ages 9+.

**Western Idaho Ag Expo:** *Tuesday, Jan 27*, 9AM-6PM and *Wednesday Jan 28*, 9AM-4PM, The Center at the Canyon County Fair, 110 County Fair Ave.



## EVENTS

1010 Dearborn, Caldwell, ID 83605  
208 454 3242  
<https://www.caldwellpubliclibrary.org>

M-Th: 10 AM-9 PM  
Fri : 10 AM-6 PM  
Sat: 10 AM-5 PM  
Sun: 2-5 PM

THURSDAY 01

● CLOSURE  
New Year's Day

FRIDAY 02

● TAI CHI & QIGONG  
10am | Ages 18+

MONDAY 05

● BABY STORYTIME 1  
10am | Ages 0-1

★ New Hours

● BABY STORYTIME 2  
10:45am | Ages 1-2

● BABY STORYTIME 3  
11:30am | Ages 0-2

● TAROT FOR SELF REFLECTION  
6pm-7:30pm | Ages 18+

TUESDAY 06

● SPANISH AND ENGLISH STORYTIME  
10:30am | Ages 2-6

● BOARD GAME NIGHT  
6:30pm-8:30pm | All Ages

WEDNESDAY 07

● MUSIC & MOVEMENT  
10:30am | Ages 2-6

● AFTERSCHOOL FUN: METAL WORK: TIN BOX PROJECT  
3:30pm | Ages 5-12

THURSDAY 08

★ New Program

● KINDERGARTEN READINESS BOOK CLUB FOR LITTLE LEARNERS: KNIGHT OWL BY CHRISTOPHER DENISE & THE WILD ROBOT ON THE ISLAND BY PETER BROWN  
10:30am | Ages 3-6

● THURS. READ BOOK CLUB: THE LOST APOTHECARY BY SARAH PENNER  
2pm | Ages 18+ | Idaho room

● TEEN THURSDAY: BOARD GAME NIGHT  
4:30pm | Ages 13-17

● FARMWAY AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM  
4:30pm | All Ages | 22730 Farmway Rd

● GARDENING: KISS THE GROUND: A ROCCO FILM SCREENING  
6pm-9pm | Ages 18+ | Community room

FRIDAY 09

● TAI CHI & QIGONG  
10am | Ages 18+

● ADULT LEGO CLUB  
4:30pm | Ages 16+ | Community room

SATURDAY 10

● ART TOGETHER: FAMILY SATURDAY: THE JOLLY SNOW-MAN ART LAB  
2pm-3pm | All Ages

MONDAY 12

● BABY STORYTIME 1  
10am | Ages 0-1

● BABY STORYTIME 2  
10:45am | Ages 1-2

● BABY STORYTIME 3  
11:30am | Ages 0-2

● KNITTING & CROCHET SOCIAL  
1:30pm-3pm | Ages 18+

● TEEN BOOK CLUB: READ A SCI-FI  
5:30pm-6:30pm | Ages 13-17

TUESDAY 13

● SPANISH AND ENGLISH STORYTIME  
10:30am | Ages 2-6

● LEGO CLUB: FOUR SEASONS CHALLENGE  
4:30pm-5:30pm | Ages 7-16

WEDNESDAY 14

● MUSIC & MOVEMENT  
10:30am | Ages 2-6

● TECH LAB  
10am-12pm | Ages 18+

● AFTERSCHOOL FUN WITH THE MASTER GARDENERS: WINTER SLUMBER: WHERE DO THE ANIMALS GO  
3:30pm | Ages 5-12

THURSDAY 15

● PRESCHOOL STORYTIME  
10:30am | Ages 3-5

● CPL AT THE SENIOR CENTER  
11am | 1009 Everett St.

● TEEN THURSDAY: BUILD AND PLAY A MINI-GOLF COURSE  
4:30pm | Ages 13-17

● BOARD MEETING  
12pm

● THURS. READ BOOK CLUB: THE LOST APOTHECARY BY SARAH PENNER  
6:30pm | Ages 18+ | Idaho room

FRIDAY 16

● TAI CHI & QIGONG  
10am | Ages 18+

SATURDAY 17

● STORYTIME AROUND THE WORLD: SPAIN  
2pm-3pm | All Ages

★ NEW PROGRAM

MONDAY 19

● CLOSURE  
Martin Luther King Jr. Day

TUESDAY 20

● SPANISH AND ENGLISH STORYTIME  
10:30am | Ages 2-6

● READ TO A THERAPY DOG  
4:45pm-5:45pm | Ages 7-14

WEDNESDAY 21

● MUSIC & MOVEMENT  
10:30am | Ages 2-6

● AFTERSCHOOL FUN: BOULDER BUDDIES: LIFE WITH A PET ROCK  
3:30pm | Ages 5-12

THURSDAY 22

● PRESCHOOL STORYTIME  
10:30am | Ages 3-5

● TEEN THURSDAY: ROCK PAINTING  
4:30pm | Ages 13-17

FRIDAY 23

● TAI CHI & QIGONG  
10am | Ages 18+

MONDAY 26

● BABY STORYTIME 1  
10am | Ages 0-1

● BABY STORYTIME 2  
10:45am | Ages 1-2

● BABY STORYTIME 3  
11:30am | Ages 0-2

● KNITTING & CROCHET SOCIAL  
1:30pm-3pm | Ages 18+

TUESDAY 27

● SPANISH AND ENGLISH STORYTIME  
10:30am | Ages 2-6

WEDNESDAY 28

● MUSIC & MOVEMENT  
10:30am | Ages 2-6

● AFTERSCHOOL FUN: MEET THE MASTERS: DAVINCI: AN ART PROGRAM WITH CALDWELL FINE ARTS  
3:30pm | Ages 5-12

THURSDAY 29

● PRESCHOOL STORYTIME  
10:30am | Ages 3-5

● BOOKWORM BUDDIES: THE SELF-DRIVEN CHILD: THE SCIENCE & SENSE OF GIVING YOUR KIDS MORE CONTROL OVER THEIR LIVES BY WILLIAM STIXRUD PHD AND NED JOHNSON  
1pm-2:30pm | All Ages

● TEEN THURSDAY: BEADED KEYCHAINS & JEWELRY  
4:30pm | Ages 13-17

FRIDAY 30

● TAI CHI & QIGONG  
10am | Ages 18+

● PING PONG CLUB  
3-5pm | All Ages | Community room



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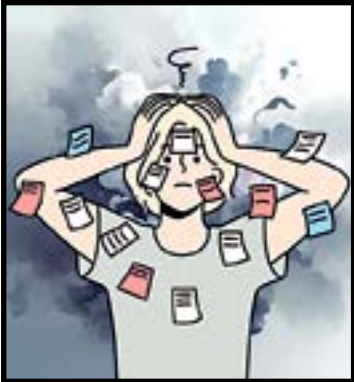
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## It's a New Year! Catch Up! Then Keep Up!

by Leora Summers



So you feel overwhelmed and you are dancing as fast as you can and you just can't catch up. How did it get to this point. You just let things go for so long and now you feel paralyzed right? Let's make a plan to help you catch up, so someday you can just keep up instead.

It's a new year. Take a look at how you have been functioning. Maybe you have been ignoring some things you need to do to keep up because you let them go for so long that you don't know where or how to begin so it's holding you back.

Well, keep up with the things that you have to, but begin the process of catching up with the things you have put off by making a

plan on how to do that and just begin. It won't happen by itself. Then put some time aside every day and do it, while not falling behind with the other things you are keeping up on. Like Nike's well known motto, "Just Do It!" There is no way around it. You know what I'm talking about, so don't kid yourself.

I have many irons in the fire and keeping up is hard, but catching up is even harder. So give it a try for this new year. Make it your mantra. "KEEP UP! DON'T CATCH UP!" Say this over and over to yourself to help you begin. But the hard fact of the matter is, is that you first have to "catch up" to be able to "keep up." So dig in and get started.

By the way, sometimes you have to dump some things that really don't matter to give yourself the time you need to keep up with the important things that need to be done. And one more thing! You also need to carve out a little time for yourself so you can breathe!

## Looking for some Motivation to Read More?

by Toni Ferro

If reading more books in 2026 is one of your resolutions, the library has some helpful motivation for you. Each year they have a variety of reading challenges.

During January, you can participate in the "2026 Winter Reading Challenge."

It's simple. Go to the library and pick up a reading log. Set a daily reading goal. Read your goal amount for 14 days during January. And that's it.

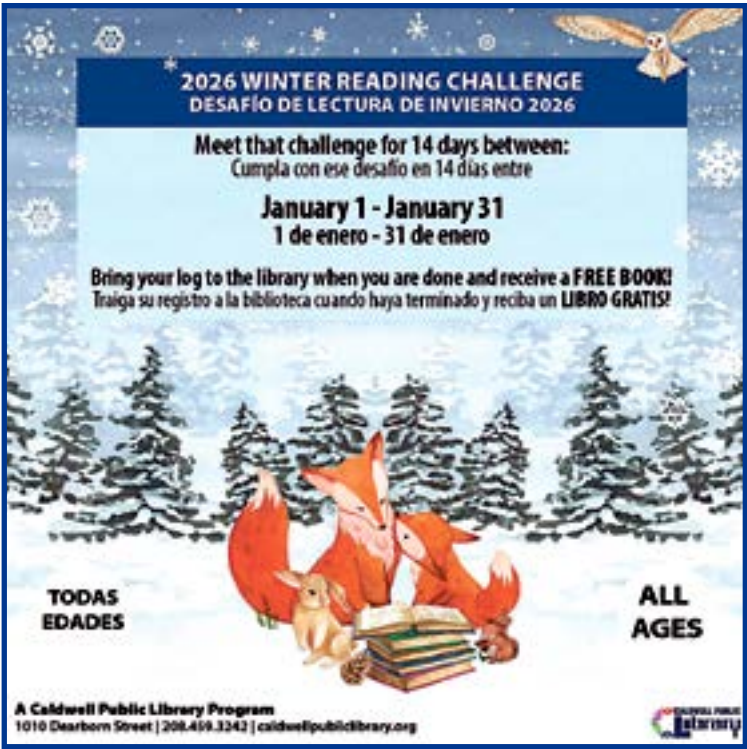
You'll have kept a resolution and you'll have bragging rights, but that's not all. The library will award you a free book when you bring your finished reading log back in.

This reading challenge is for all ages, so you can increase your motivation by inviting your kids (and/or their kids) to do the challenge with you.

If you aren't the kind of person who uses paper logs, you can track your reading on a handy app called beanstack.

Or you can login to beanstack at <https://bit.ly/4p7iey0>.

If the seasonal reading challenges are not enough for you, the library offers a year-long challenge, "The Ultimate Book Nerd Reading Challenge."



This challenge includes a list of 60 categories for you to read books from. For example, "A book published the year you were born" and "A book that takes place in multiple time periods".

To complete the challenge you need to have read books in 50 of the 60 categories between January 2nd and De-

cember 15th. Each book can only be counted in a single category.

In the interest of full disclosure I will tell you that I started this challenge in 2025 and I only made it through 22 of the categories.

Good thing we have a whole fresh new year ahead of us and anything is possible.

Finally, if you need a different kind of motivation, the library and Caldwell's two bookstores (Shared Stories and the Rubaiyat) have an array of book groups you can join.

Happy Reading!



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### 23rd Annual Gebert Arbaugh Polar Bear Challenge

Make-A-Wish® Idaho will host the 23rd Annual Gebert Arbaugh Polar Bear Challenge. At this unique winter event, participants jump into icy water to raise funds for Make-A-Wish® Idaho, a nonprofit that grants life-affirming wishes to Idaho children who have been diagnosed with critical illnesses. Participants can raise funds in a team or as individuals. Sign up or donate at [idaho.wish.org](http://idaho.wish.org). There is no suggested donation amount to participate, but donors who give more than \$100 will receive a T-shirt.

**Where:**  
Spring Shores Marina in Lucky Peak State Park, 74 Arrowrock Rd. Boise, ID 83716.

**When:**  
Saturday, January 10, 2026. Same-day registration opens at 10 a.m. and the event officially starts at 11 a.m.

**Who:**  
Around 150 Idaho residents of all ages and backgrounds will take the plunge.

**What You Will See:**  
The plungers charge into the frigid marina waters, a costume contest and possible wish kid participation.

2025 Polar Plunge, photo credit: idahonews.com

Caldwell Centennial Band Thanks the Caldwell School District and Community

by Leora Summers



Christmas Concert at Caldwell High School this December

Look What's New! Go Votes!

Happy New Year!

We are so blessed by all of your support in 2025!

Looking forward to 2026!

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Our Caldwell Centennial Band is so blessed by our community and the Caldwell School District. We had one of the best Christmas concerts this past December and we thank the Caldwell School District, CHS custodians, Choir Teacher Jackson Hart and

Band Teacher Nate Cockrum for all their help making this happen. This would not have happened without their help and support. We have been playing as a community band for the past 35 years and our community's enthusiasm is the thing that keeps us going.

We love playing for you and will see you during our spring concert and free summer concerts in Memorial Park!

Thank You and Happy New Year!

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Email it to Leora Summers at

EDITOR@CALDWELLPERSPECTIVE.COM

Local Non-Profit Makes Dreams Come True for Hundreds of Local Families

Hope United, Inc. a local non-profit, hosted their 6th annual Navidades Sin Fronteras (Christmas without Borders) event on December 16th at El Patron event center.

Six years ago, Jay Astorga, an auto repair technician, lost his mom to cancer during the holidays. To cope with his grief he needed a change, so he moved to Caldwell. Soon after arriving here, his father died in an accident.

His grief was overwhelming, yet here in Caldwell he found the support he needed. After his dad died, he posted on Facebook Marketplace saying he was interested in detailing cars for a small donation to help pay for his father's service.

Soon after, his phone started buzzing with messages from people - some he knew and many he didn't know - telling him they were sorry for what he was going through and would like to help.

The support he recieved from our community, made him realize that he could help others who were struggling, and so he started Hope United, Inc.

The first family they helped was a group of children who had been orphaned and then adopted by their oldest sibling. Jay reached out to their family and offered to throw them a party for Christmas. When he started reaching out to the community asking for help with the party, the outpouring was amazing. The family drove home from the party in a "car full of food, toys, and blessings."

Since then Hope United's Christmas Without Borders event has grown so they are now able to extend their giving to everyone in the



Hope United's Jay Astorga with Mrs. Claus, Santa, and the Grinch



Dancers from the group Danza Azteca Tonatiuh



community and offer help at Christmas.

They even accept Santa letters from children and take the time to try and fill their specific wishes. This year, one mother asked for a wheelchair for her son. The wheelchair her son used had a broken wheel and she wasn't able to afford a new one.

Jay posted a request for a wheelchair on Facebook and the post went viral. They were able to take the family two wheelchairs and turned down many other offers.

In addition, the Christmas Without Borders event, which included free food, dancing, a visit with Santa, and a gift for every child un-

der 14 was sponsored by more than 3 dozen businesses. Some of the businesses are large (ICCU Bank), but many were just small businesses (Lauri's Housecleaning Services, LLC).

Some of the businesses have been supporting Hope United for years and others reached out more recently wanting to be a part of this community event that continues to grow and thrive. Jay explained that "the community is powerful when it unites for a good purpose."

The event also included dance groups from a variety of cultures including the group Danza Azteca Tonatiuh.

Antonina Robles, a Global Project Manager at HP, who graduated from Caldwell High in 2002 was one of the founders of the dance group 14 years ago in 2011.

She started learning traditional dances to prepare for a religious celebration for Our Lady of Guadalupe. From there she kept dancing as a way to bring awareness to the Aztec culture.

Each of the dances have their own meanings. For the Aztecs, dancing was a form of prayer. For example, one of the dances represents growing corn and was a way for Aztecs to pray for a good harvest.

Antonina said that some dance steps have changed over the centuries, but when they meet up with other Aztec dancers from around the country, the drum beat is the same.

All in all, this year's Christmas Without Borders was a great success that brought joy to a lot of families in need at Christmas.

You can learn more about Hope United, Inc. on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/groups/1884497118372471](https://www.facebook.com/groups/1884497118372471) and you can follow Danza Azteca Tonatiuh at [www.facebook.com/tonatiuhidaho](https://www.facebook.com/tonatiuhidaho).

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Marching with the Commanders



Blake Cowman, Bass Drummer, Center Front

When Blake Cowman first stepped onto The College of Idaho campus, he was searching for belonging. What he found was a community that valued him, challenged him, and gave him the chance to help build something new: the Yotes Marching Band.

Cowman chose C of I because of the personal connection he felt during his visit.

“The faculty and staff valued me in a way no other school did,” he recalls. As a first-generation student, that mattered. The liberal arts model let him double-major in political economy and environmental studies, minor in music and pre-law, and still serve as student body president and resident assistant.

“How could I pass up the chance to go to the best school in the state and help found a marching band?” he says.

The College gave him more than academics. He met his wife while working as an RA in Simplot Hall and cherished the closeness of campus life. Professors became mentors, pushing him academically and personally. “Their support gave me the knowledge and skills I needed to make the jump to law school,” he says.

When Cowman arrived in 2016, football had returned after decades, but the campus lacked a marching band. That fall, he became a founding member. With fewer than 20 members, the group relied

on creativity: singing “Livin’ on a Prayer” at halftime, drumming on trash cans, and performing percussion solos. “We were laying the groundwork for a program that would extend beyond our time,” he says.

Game days were unforgettable. Cowman recalls parades through cheering fans and the electric moment when Kyle Mitchell’s 58-yard field goal kept the Yotes’ perfect season alive. “We played the fight song after that kick. The energy was electric,” he says. Other highlights included drumline runs to Dutch Bros and McDonald’s, and his own drum set solo on the field.

After graduation, Cowman attended Georgetown Law, clerked for the D.C. Court of Appeals, and joined the U.S. Department of Justice as a Trial Attorney. He credits his musical background for courtroom success. “Performing in front of judges feels a lot like performing in front of fans. Band taught me how to stay calm under pressure.” His liberal arts training also proved invaluable, helping him quickly grasp unfamiliar subjects.

Cowman thought his marching days ended with college until the Washington Commanders offered a new stage. A lifelong fan, he auditioned after moving to D.C.

by Ryan Elsberry, College of Idaho

Despite nerves and years away from drumming, he made the cut. His first game was surreal. “Walking out of the tunnel, I’d watched this team on TV since I was a kid. But once the music started, it felt like any other performance.” The Commanders band parades through the concourse before games, entertaining fans from both sides. “Even opposing fans cheer for us,” he says.

Now, Cowman balances court briefs by day and drumline by night. “Planning and organization,” he explains. “I put all my Commanders obligations on my work calendar. Both my job and the band have been supportive.”

His advice to students is simple: lean on your community. “Between alumni, faculty, and staff, someone at C of I is doing what you dream of. Reach out. Ask questions. People want to help.” And if you are considering the marching band? “Do it. You will make lifelong friends, improve as a musician, and have a ton of fun.”

From Simplot Hall to the NFL stage, Cowman’s journey proves the power of community, creativity, and saying yes to opportunity. For him, the beat goes on, whether in a courtroom or under the bright lights of FedEx Field.

Local Students Invited to Audition for Children’s Theatre Production



Children during a previous audition. All Children are cast!

Caldwell Fine Arts invites students in grades 1 through 12 to audition for its original children’s theatre production, Me ‘n Genie.

Directed by Jessica and Mike Nelson, this high energy, heartwarming musical follows an ordinary kid who discovers an extraordinary lamp and unleashes something completely unexpected.

Filled with music, laughs, and a touch of magic, the production brings local students together to create an unforgettable theatrical adventure for the whole family.

Auditions will take place on Thursday, January 15, from 4:30 PM to 7:30 PM at Caldwell High School. Preregistration is required and can be completed online at [www.caldwellfinearts.org](http://www.caldwellfinearts.org).

A FAQ sheet is located on the website and additional questions can be directed to [kim@caldwell-finearts.org](mailto:kim@caldwell-finearts.org) or 208-831-0829.

No prior experience is necessary, and everyone who auditions will be cast—ensuring a welcoming opportunity for all children eager to step into the spotlight.

Rehearsals will take place from January 17 to January 22 and public performances will be held on Friday, January 23, 2026 at 7PM and Saturday, January 24, 2026 at 1PM.

This production offers children a unique opportunity to build confidence, develop teamwork skills, and unleash their creativity in a supportive and magical environment!

Event Details

**What:** Auditions for Children’s Theatre  
**Who:** Students in Grades 1-12  
**When:** Thursday, January 15 4:30 PM – 7:30 PM  
**Where:** Caldwell High School  
**Registration:** Preregistration required at [www.caldwellfinearts.org](http://www.caldwellfinearts.org)

For more information, please visit [www.caldwell-finearts.org](http://www.caldwell-finearts.org) or contact Caldwell Fine Arts at 208-831-0829.



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From Service to Storytelling: Local Veteran Publishes Fantasy Novels

by Toni Ferro



Jason Kyle and Rubaiyat bookstore owner, Sazja Fletcher

Jason Kyle, a Nampa retired Army veteran and author, held a book signing at Caldwell's Rubaiyat bookstore in December. I got a chance to sit down with the affable author to talk about his books and his journey to becoming a writer. Jason says he started thinking about stories while

in the military on guard duty at night. He thought through ideas like, "In Lord of the Rings, what would've happened if the bad guy had won? What would that world have looked like?" His musings "spawned one idea after another" and in 2008, he sat down and wrote his first book, "Honor Lost".

Back then, he tried publishing his book through a traditional publisher, but didn't have any luck. He tried publishing on Amazon, but that didn't go anywhere, and then he tried a vanity publisher, which also didn't amount to much. In 2011 he wrote "Apprentice Mage", and then in 2012 his son was born, which meant no more free time, so he put writing on the back burner. In 2024, he picked his writing back up and sent a snippet of "Honor Lost" to Cannon Publishing in New York. Cannon Publishing was founded by retired Army veteran, author, and publisher, John Holmes. Jason described the publishing company as "a bunch of vet bros," who are also "Dungeons and Dragons geeks". Holmes liked "Honor Lost" and wanted to publish it, but it was still owned by Jason's vanity publisher,

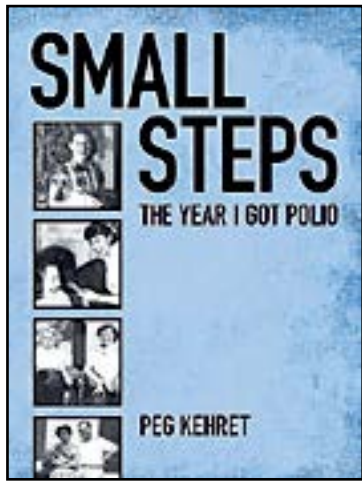
so, Jason offered to write a whole new book for Cannon Publishing. In 2024 he wrote "Beyond The Wall: A Novel of Post Roman Britain", a story set in the world of King Arthur. This book is a departure from his previous books, in that he targeted it specifically to kids like his 13-year-old son. Jason was "tired of the trend toward anti-heroes and evil versions of Superman" and instead wanted his son to be able to read a "book about an old fashioned, strong, heroic, character doing noble, brave deeds." His son liked the result, and for Jason, that meant success. Now, Jason has two books available through Cannon Publishing and two more on the way. The books you can buy now are "Apprentice Mage", a stand-alone, high-fantasy novel and "Beyond The Wall", an Arthurian novel that is the first in what will be a series. The second book in the Beyond the Wall series is

already written and with Jason's editor. The third book in the series is outlined and Jason plans to complete it in 2026. Jason also regained the rights to "Honor Lost" and will re-publish it with a new title through Cannon Publishing in the near future. Finally, Jason has a short story about his Beyond the Wall characters in "Cannon Fodder", a compilation of short stories by 15 of the Cannon Publishing authors. You can buy Jason's books in downtown Caldwell at the Rubaiyat bookstore (314 S 6th Ave) or online and you can visit his website and Facebook to learn more: [kylethechronicler.com](http://kylethechronicler.com) and [facebook.com/jason.kyle.582363](https://facebook.com/jason.kyle.582363). You can follow Cannon Publishing on Facebook at [facebook.com/Cannonpubllc](https://facebook.com/Cannonpubllc). Congratulations to Jason on finding the perfect publisher, we wish him luck and look forward to his future books.



Small Steps: The Year I Got Polio, by Peg Kehret

Book Review by Leora Summers



This book was brought to my attention by my 11-year-old granddaughter. She was very proud to be reading this book as she has had reading challenges. Her 5th grade teacher gave her this book and it highly motivated her to read! I am six decades older than her and I was unable to put it down until the end. This is a true story written by the author of her experience after having been stricken by polio when she was 12-years-old. One day she was your average every-

day kid and within 3 days, she was completely paralyzed from the neck down. For her, it started at school when her legs failed her and she could not get up. This story takes you through Peg's efforts to overcome the debilitating effects of her illness. She was placed in "Sheltering Arms," a rehabilitative center for those afflicted with polio. There she met others like her, who were also struggling to get better. Some were more mildly afflicted and some more severely afflicted, who were in need of an iron lung. Peg was one of the lucky ones. Her story is one of resilience and dedication and about some of the friends she met along the way. It captivated my granddaughter and me as well. It is a worthwhile read. If

it could motivate a struggling 5th grade girl to read a more difficult level book and a seventy-plus-year-old grandma to read it, I think it is a great book for all ages. About Polio When I was a kid in the 1950s, I remember getting that pink-soaked sugar cube, the polio vaccine, at school. It was a time when the world was trying to get rid of this terrible disease with awful crippling effects. Later, I worked at Idaho State School and Hospital with a lady who was a speech therapist who had polio as a child. She was a quadriplegic who used a motorized wheelchair to get around. Early in her disease, she had spent time in an iron lung and later, improved enough to get around, get educated and be able to help others

with that education. She was an amazing woman. We are so fortunate today. The World Health Organization, along with Rotary International and The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which matched funds earned, have played a huge role in the process of eradicating polio from our world through their vaccine program. Funds from these organizations purchased the polio vaccine which was then brought into countries where the virus was affect-

ing their people. Since this program, two countries, Pakistan and Afghanistan, are still struggling with polio due to the inability to bring the vaccine into their countries due to the barriers of war. The vaccine is no longer a live viral form and is effective for all, including immunocompromised individuals. Some "break-throughs" of this disease have been happening. We need to keep on top of this until it is completely eradicated!



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CHS Wrestling is Underway



CHS senior, Jaxson Freeman, has committed to Western Colorado University photo by Amber Sperry-Johns

CHS Senior Jaxson Freeman has committed to wrestle at Western Colorado University, an NCAA Division II school.

In addition the *Idaho Statesman* identified him as one of the 20 wrestlers in Idaho to watch this season.

Jaxson has placed at state wrestling for the last three years and has had a standout wrestling career while at Caldwell High.

Congratulations Jaxson!

CHS Sophomore Liam Rodebush was one of 10 male wrestlers nominated by the *Idaho Statesman* for wrestler of the week for December 8th - 14th.

The paper cited his victory at the Calhoun Classic in Nyssa in the 215-pound weight category as the reason for his nomination.

After the public voted, Rodebush came out the winner with 38% of the vote - 1652 votes. Congratulations Liam!

(Read more at: [www.idahostatesman.com/sports/high-school/article313728424.html](http://www.idahostatesman.com/sports/high-school/article313728424.html))



CHS sophomore, Liam Rodebush, was the *Idaho Statesman* wrestler of the week for December 8th - 14th

College of Idaho Sports Roundup

by Leora Summers

YOTE Football

On December 6th, the College of Idaho football team avenged their earlier loss to the unbeaten Montana Tech with a 41-26 win during the NAIA quarterfinals at Alumni Coliseum in Butte, MT, sending them on to the NAIA semifinals.

On December 13th, during the NAIA semifinals in West Palm Beach, FL, the Yotes' journey ended with a loss (36-27) to Keiser University from Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

This was a great season for Yote Football! See you next year!

YOTE Basketball

**Men's Basketball:** Overall W-L through Dec. 20: 8-4

**Ladies' Basketball:** Overall W-L through Dec. 20: 9-3

Other Notable C of I Sports

**Women's Volleyball:** Their season wrapped up on December 4th in Sioux City, Iowa falling 3-1 to No. 11 seed Mount Vernon Nazarene in pool play at the NAIA Volleyball National Championship.

**Swim and Dive Team:** The Yotes will be training all Winter Break before returning to action at George Fox University for a dual meet on January 9th.

**Track and Field:** Launch of an indoor season.

To keep up with College of Idaho sports, go to: <https://yoteathletics.com> and then click on the sport you want to check on.



CHS sophomore, Maritza Medina

CHS Sophomore Maritza Medina was one of 10 female wrestlers nominated by the *Idaho Statesman* for wrestler of the week for December 8th - 14th.

The paper cited her victory at the Calhoun Classic in Nyssa in the 100-pound weight category as the reason for her nomination.

After the public voted, Medina came out fourth place with 12% of the vote - 756 votes. Congratulations Maritza!

Yotes' Standouts Earn Seven VSN All-American Honors



The College of Idaho football program was well represented on the 2025 Victory Sports Network NAIA Football All-American teams, with seven Yotes earning national recognition following an 11-2 season and an undefeated 6-0 mark in Frontier Conference West play.

Offensive lineman Ashton Patterson headlined the list with VSN First Team All-American honors. Patterson anchored a College of Idaho offensive line that powered one of the NAIA's most efficient and balanced offenses.

The Yotes averaged 410.8 yards of total offense per game, including 217.3 rushing yards per contest, while controlling possession for more than 34 minutes per game. College of Idaho

rushed for 2,825 net yards and 28 touchdowns, averaged 5.3 yards per carry, and converted nearly 43 percent of its third-down attempts.

Rylie Byington earned VSN Second Team All-American recognition at running back after finishing the season top-10 nationally in rushing yards. Byington totaled 1,203 yards on 224 carries, averaged 5.4 yards per rush, and scored 16 rushing touchdowns. He added 19 receptions for 208 yards and two touchdowns, giving him 18 total scores on the season. Byington recorded four 100-yard rushing performances, highlighted by a 198-yard outing at Carroll and a 145-yard, four-touchdown performance at Montana Tech during the NAIA Football Championship Series.

Defensive back Tanner Steele was selected to the VSN Third Team All-American squad after a strong season in the secondary. Steele finished with 82 total tackles, including 52 solo stops, added 2.0 tackles for loss, recorded one interception, and broke up 15

passes. He was named the defensive player of the game in the NAIA Quarterfinal round and helped the Yotes advance to the national semifinals.

College of Idaho also placed four players on the VSN Honorable Mention All-American list. Nathan McClelland earned recognition on the offensive line, Travis Marieiro was honored at wide receiver, while Dee'Shon Swafford and Tucker French received honorable mention honors on the defensive side of the ball.

The VSN NAIA Football All-American teams are compiled by Victory Sports Network editor Jason Dannelly, with nominations drawn from first-team all-conference selections and input from coaches, sports information directors and media members across the NAIA.

The seven All-America honors reflect the Yotes' success on both sides of the ball during the 2025 season, which concluded with a run to the NAIA national semifinals.



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### Caldwell High School’s FCS Program Donates \$2,595 to “Make-A-Wish”



Members of FCS Leadership Group I, to R: Juan Rosas Rangel, Ysel Toledo, Ella Corner, Bristol Runnels, Brooke Cossel, Jazlyn Garcia Rivera, and Emily Angeles. Not pictured is Sophia Jacobsen, the FCCLA advisor.

On December 11th, Caldwell High School’s FCS (Family and Consumer Sciences) program’s leadership group in HOSA (Health Occupations Students of America), raised money for and donated a check of \$2,595.00 to Make-A-Wish Idaho, bringing hope and joy to kids who need it most. Caldwell High School has an active Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) program, often linked with clubs like HOSA (Health

Occupations Students of America), where students do community service like fundraising for Make-A-Wish, showcasing practical skills and leadership in areas like health, food, and family. They also offer other related clubs like BPA (Business Professionals of America) and have Career/Counseling support for courses that focus on real-world readiness within their curriculum.

### CHS Robotics Teams Are Back to Work

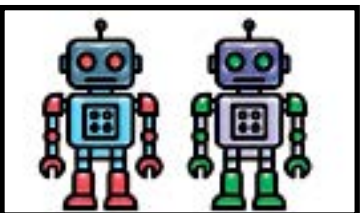
They may look like run-of-the-mill teenagers, but don’t be fooled. These teens are really really good at designing, building and programming robots that do all manner of tasks. Last year one of Caldwell High’s robotics teams, Social Hour, won the VEX Robotics State competition. They travelled to Dallas, Texas to compete in the VEX V5 World Championships against teams from all over the US as well as China, Vietnam, Columbia, Canada, Australia, and more.

This year, three members of Team Social Hour are back as seniors (Ben Ferro, Kiera Ferro, and Matthew Quintero) and they are already impressing coaches around the state.

Team Social Hour along with another strong CHS team, Team Dead Weight, brought home five trophies from the Valley of the VEX tournament on December 12th. Their trophies included skills champion and the overall excellence award.

We are looking forward to seeing how our CHS teams perform in their robotics competitions this year and in the future.

Congratulations to these students and coaches!



### New Caldwell School District Trustees

by Leora Summers



Sam Stone, incoming Caldwell School Board Trustee, Zone 5

Erin Sullivan Smith was appointed by the Caldwell School District’s trustees to fill the seat vacated by Andrew Butler, Zone 4, who resigned on October 27th after serving on the board for 6 years. Board Chairman, Travis Manning, said that Butler was “moving on to other things in his life.”

Erin is the Executive Director and Secretary of Caldwell Foundation for Educational Opportunity (CFEO). She grew up in Caldwell and attended Caldwell schools. Erin and her husband have two daughters who graduated from the Caldwell School District.

Smith told the board that she hopes to boost student attendance, increase parent engagement and strengthen



Erin Sullivan Smith, incoming Caldwell School Board Trustee, Zone 4

local business relationships with the school district. She previously worked in retail management and as an office manager for a funeral chapel and for the Caldwell Chamber of Commerce. “We really want to show that we are the place to be,” Smith said. She will begin her term immediately.

Sam Stone ran unopposed and was elected as Zone 5’s trustee this past November, and will replace Marisela Pesina, who chose not to seek reelection due to her bid to run for Caldwell City Council.

Sam is currently employed with the State of Idaho as a Consulting Tax Appraiser for the Property Tax Division of the Idaho State Tax Commission. He and his wife have a daughter who at-

tends school in the district. “I ran for the Caldwell School Board Trustee seat because I care deeply about public education and more specifically, public education in Caldwell. I grew up quite literally in public education as the son of two former educators here in Caldwell and now find myself raising a daughter who is going through school in the district. My professional background with the Idaho State Tax Commission has provided me with knowledge of how the budgeting and levy process works and how it can affect the property owners in the district. I believe this combination of personal and professional experience lends itself well to the current makeup of the school board and will benefit every stakeholder of the Caldwell School District.” His term will begin in January.

#### The 2026 school board, beginning in January

- Trish Robertson – Zone 1 (term expires 2029)
- Manuel Godina – Zone 2 (term expires 2027)
- Travis Manning, chairman – Zone 3 (term expires 2027)
- Erin Smith – Zone 4 (term expires 2027)
- Sam Stone – Zone 5 (term expires 2029)



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IV. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy

V. Honor thy father and thy mother

VI. Thou shalt not kill

VII. Thou shalt not commit adultery

VIII. Thou shalt not steal

IX. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor

X. Thou shalt not covet

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City Moves Forward on Three Fire Department Facilities



Renderings of Station 1 (above) and Station 4 (right)

The Caldwell City Council has given final approval to the construction of three fire department facilities: a single-story rebuild of Fire Station 1 in downtown Caldwell, a repurposing of the former City Hall building to serve as Fire Administration, and new construction of Fire Station 4 on Lake Avenue south of Karcher Road using a hybrid pre-engineered structure. All three projects will be conducted as a coordinated construction effort to reduce overall costs.

In November 2023, Caldwell

voters approved a fire stations bond. Following that approval, the City and the Caldwell Fire Department developed a comprehensive plan to modernize Caldwell's fire facilities based on our operational needs and long-term service needs. In April 2025, the City selected CORE Construction and Pivot North Architecture to design and construct all

three facilities. The total program budget is \$20 million. Of that amount, \$17.3 million will be funded through voter-approved bond proceeds, with the remaining balance funded through fire impact fees. This approval represents the final step before construction activities begin, with construction anticipated to start in early 2026.



CFD Community Push-In Ceremony



Engine 13 (above) Squad 13 (left)

The Caldwell Fire Department had a community "Push-In Ceremony" welcoming its two newest apparatus, Engine 13 and Squad 13, into service. The event took place on December 10th at Caldwell Fire Station 3 (11945 Skyway St, Caldwell).

A push-in ceremony is a long-standing fire service tradition where firefighters and community members join together to "push" new apparatus into the station bay, symbolizing readiness for service. This time-honored ritual dates back to the era of hand-drawn fire equip-

ment and remains a meaningful way to introduce new resources that will support public safety. Engine 13 and Squad 13 will enhance emergency response capabilities across Caldwell, improving efficiency, reliability, and service to residents. These modern units reflect the City's continued investment in public safety and its commitment to ensuring firefighters have the tools they need to protect the community. Community members, media, and partners attended the ceremony. They met the crews, and got an up-close look at the new trucks.

Make a Fire Escape Plan for Your Family

Your ability to get out of your home during a fire depends on warning from smoke alarms and planning. Fire can spread rapidly through your home, leaving you as little as one or two minutes to escape safely once the smoke alarm sounds. Households with children should consider drawing

a floor plan of their house and marking 2 escape ways out of each room, including windows and doors.

- A closed door may slow the spread of smoke, heat, and fire.
- Install smoke alarms in every sleeping room and outside each separate sleeping area.
- Install alarms on every

- level of the home
- Pull together everyone in your household and make an escape plan.
- Walk through your home and inspect all possible exits and escape routes.

CFD Engine 11 Selected for 2026 Pierce Manufacturing Calendar



The Caldwell Fire Department (CFD) has been selected for inclusion in the 2026 Pierce Manufacturing Calendar, featuring the department's new custom Engine 11, which was placed into service in 2024. Visit [www.piercemfg.com/customers/calendar](http://www.piercemfg.com/customers/calendar) in January to learn more about Engine 11 and to view more photos.

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Additional events and information can be found online at [www.cvmh-vets.org](http://www.cvmh-vets.org).  
Donations are needed, and always appreciated, to help with our outreach program through the winter months.

**2026 COFFEE KLATCH**  
Join us every Thursday morning from 8 am to 11 am for our weekly Coffee Klatch get-together!

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Police Awards Ceremony Recognition

On Dec. 3rd, the Caldwell Police Department celebrated the outstanding service, courage, and dedication of their team at the 2025 Caldwell Police Awards Ceremony.

They recognized community partners who strengthen public safety, professional staff who keep

the department running, and several units whose teamwork and proactive efforts have made a lasting impact on crime reduction and community trust.

Awards included Unit Citations, Meritorious Action Awards, Life Saving Awards, and the department's highest honor—the Medal of Valor—pre-

sent to officers whose bravery protected lives during extremely dangerous incidents.

Thank you to our officers, professional staff, community partners, and families for supporting the work we do every day. We are proud to serve Caldwell

CPD Good Citizen Award  
Corey Turner



Corey Turner

The CPD Good Citizen Award recognizes a community member whose actions significantly aided the CPD or contributed to the safety, protection, or well-being of the Caldwell community through an act of service, courage, or initiative.

In collaboration with the CPD, Corey supported a proactive approach to community policing. His efforts and knowledge of Plaza operations contributed to more than 1,000 self-initiated police checks at the Plaza throughout the year, ensuring a safe atmosphere for residents and guests during a wide variety of festivities.

Corey's continuous coordination with officers, calm professionalism, and forward-thinking planning significantly strengthened public safety and deepened trust between law enforcement and the community.

Life Saving Award - Megan Townsend,  
Mike Eldridge and Edgar Rosales



Animal Control Officer Megan Townsend, Corporal Mike Eldridge and Officer Edgar Rosales

On July 29, 2025, a rollover crash left a woman trapped beneath a vehicle and moments from death. Animal Control Officer Megan Townsend, realizing she was closer than responding patrol units, arrived first on scene and immediately recognized the severity of the victim's condition. She provided critical updates to dispatch, assessed the victim for signs of agonal breathing, and positioned herself beside the woman to support her head and neck, preventing further injury while help arrived.

Within moments, Corporal Mike Eldridge and Officer Edgar Rosales reached the scene and, together with bystanders,

acted without hesitation. At significant personal risk, they used their combined strength to lift the vehicle off the victim—an action that allowed her to be pulled to safety before the car could collapse back down. Their decisive, physical intervention, paired with ACO Townsend's rapid assessment and protective care, directly contributed to the victim's survival.

The courage, coordination, and selfless commitment demonstrated by ACO Townsend, Corporal Eldridge, and Officer Rosales reflect great credit upon each of them and are fully in keeping with the highest traditions of the Caldwell Police Department.

Unit Citation for Crime Analysts  
Kenneth Keene and Marlon Leslie



Kenneth Keene and Marlon Leslie

Kenneth Keene and Marlon Leslie have distinguished themselves through exemplary performance as the Crime Analysis Unit for the Caldwell Police Department.

Over the past year, their analytical work has been directly responsible for strengthening our mission-based policing strategy. By identifying emerging crime patterns, forecasting trends, and providing timely intelligence to patrol, investigations, and command staff, they have significantly improved the Department's ability to operate proactively rather than reactively.



Behind the Badge Service Award  
Ethnea Strassell



Ethnea Strassell

The Behind the Badge Service Award recognizes a professional staff member of the Department whose dedication, professionalism, or initiative significantly supports the mission of the department or enhances the efficiency, morale, or service to the Caldwell community. This award honors exemplary behind-the-scenes service

that strengthens public safety, supports sworn personnel, or contributes meaningfully to the department's success.

Since joining the department in July of this year, Community Service Officer Ethnea Strassell has demonstrated exceptional productivity, reliability, and professionalism. In a short period of time, she has responded to more than 800 calls for service, generated numerous reports and summonses, assisted in forwarding cases for prosecution, and provided critical support at over 60 traffic crashes—often during the most demanding and resource-intensive incidents.

Unit Citation for B Nights Team



Ofc Christopher Henze, Sgt. Craig Gregory, and Ofc. Hunter Shaw

The B-Nights Team is composed of: Sgt. Craig Gregory, Cpl. Dustin Filice, Ofc. Marshall Buie, Ofc. Hunter Shaw, Ofc. Christopher Henze, Ofc. Steven Martinez, Ofc. Nicholas Janes, and Ofc. Autumn Anderson.

The B-Nights Patrol Team has demonstrated exceptional dedication, professionalism, and consistency throughout the year, setting a standard of performance that directly supports the mission of the Caldwell Police Department and the safety of our community.

While working nights—a shift that consistently brings some of the most unpredictable and demanding calls—this team has shown remarkable initiative in mission-based policing. Through their proactive work, they led the department in DUI arrests and traffic stops, signifi-

cantly contributing to safer roadways and early intervention with impaired drivers.

Their commitment to traffic enforcement, criminal interdiction, and high-visibility patrol has played a measurable role in reducing crime throughout the City of Caldwell.

Their balance of proactive policing and high-quality service calls is reflected in their outstanding performance numbers—including more than 5,400 proactive activities, nearly 1,600 traffic stops, and more than 1,400 written and oral warnings and citations.

These accomplishments demonstrate not only productivity, but dedication to protecting the public and upholding the values of the Caldwell Police Department.

Meritorious Action Award  
Corporal Bridget Kernan



Corporal Bridget Kernan

In September 2023, Caldwell Police officers responded to what was first reported as a suicide. As the investigation unfolded, it became clear that the case was far more complex, ultimately revealing a staged homicide committed by the victim's husband.

After the initial investigative work was complete and the case moved toward prosecution, the Canyon County Prosecuting Attorney's Office specifically requested the assistance of Corporal Bridget Kernan.

Corporal Kernan had been partially involved in the early stages of the investigation, but it was her reputation for diligence, investigative tenacity, and unwavering attention to detail that led prosecutors to seek her out as the trial approached.

while simultaneously managing her own active caseload.

Her careful review, organization of evidence, and ability to identify and address investigative gaps were instrumental in readying the case for courtroom presentation.

During the nearly two-week jury trial, Corporal Kernan sat at the prosecution table, offering insight, expertise, and critical case knowledge at every stage of testimony. Her ability to clearly articulate investigative details, anticipate evidentiary needs, and support the prosecution's strategy contributed significantly to securing a conviction for first-degree murder.

Corporal Kernan's dedication to truth, her meticulous preparation, and her steadfast commitment to justice were essential in bringing this complex case to its rightful conclusion. Her actions reflect great credit upon herself and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the Caldwell Police Department.

She devoted several intensive weeks to preparing the case—often working overtime, through weekends, and

Unit Citation for Caldwell Police  
Pipes and Drums



Mayor Wagoner, Sgt. Aron Streibel, Sgt. JL Davis, Van Bradley, Ethan Streibel, Sean Scarlett, Stacey Bradley, Josh Agee, and Chief Ingram

Caldwell Pipes and Drums includes civilian members Michael White, Van Bradley, Stacey Bradley, Bud Lancaster, Sean Scarlett, Josh Agee, Ethan Streibel, Travis Robbins and Sergeants Aron Streibel and JL Davis.

Since its founding in 2019, the Caldwell Police Pipes and Drums has grown into the largest and most active law enforcement pipes and drums band in Idaho. This achievement is due in large part to the extraordinary dedication

of both its civilian volunteers and sworn leadership. Together, they have strengthened the bond between the Caldwell Police Department and the community through service, tradition, and unwavering commitment.

These members give countless hours of their time, often at personal expense, to honor fallen first responders, support grieving families, and represent the City of Caldwell with professionalism and pride.



### CPD Asks Citizens to Take Care Near Schools



The Caldwell Police Department is urging the community to take extra precautions after responding to two separate incidents in the past two days involving students struck by vehicles while walking to school. Both students suffered serious but non-life-threatening injuries. Each incident highlights the critical importance of attentiveness and safety for drivers, students, and parents. The driver involved in the first incident, near Caldwell High School, is facing a reckless driving charge. The second incident occurred at Willow St. and S. Montana Ave. The driver was cited for inattentive and careless driving. Both students were in crosswalks, but not in an area that had flashing school zone safety lights. Previous to this incident, the City had already planned to install flashing lights to improve school safety. CPD planned to increase patrols around schools and to initiate a social media campaign to educate the public about this issue. Caldwell Police ask parents to speak with their children about safe walking habits, including:

- Using designated crosswalks.
  - Making eye contact with drivers before crossing.
  - Staying alert, avoiding phones and earbuds near roadways.
  - Wearing bright or reflective clothing during early morning hours.
- Drivers are urged to:**
- Slow down in school zones and residential areas.
  - Stay alert for students who may enter the roadway unexpectedly.
  - Avoid distractions and keep attention on the road.
  - Follow all traffic laws related to crosswalks and student pedestrians.
- “Student safety is a shared responsibility. Even one injured child is too many, and we are hoping both students have a quick recovery. We ask everyone in our community to remain vigilant and do their part to keep our students safe. We urge drivers to be especially cautious during school commute hours and remain alert for young pedestrians. We also encourage parents to take time to educate their children about pedestrian safety and the importance of making sure drivers see them before they cross,” said Rex Ingram, Caldwell Chief of Police.

Happy New Year!

May your family be blessed this year with health and happiness.



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### Jess Urresti Selected as Canyon County Clerk



Former County Clerk Rick Hogaboam, newly appointed Clerk Jess Urresti, Commissioner Leslie Van Beek, Chairman Brad Holton, and Commissioner Zach Brooks

In a unanimous decision, the Board of County Commissioners has selected Jess Urresti, current Deputy Clerk and Director of Court Operations, to be appointed as the new Canyon County Clerk. This appointment follows the election of current Clerk Rick Hogaboam as Mayor of the City of Nampa.

County Clerk is an elected position and Clerk Hogaboam is a Republican, which means the Canyon County Republican Central Committee (CCRCC) was responsible for making new County Clerk recommendations to the Commissioners. Jess Urresti emerged as the

CCRCC’s top recommendation, alongside nominee Daniel Lee. In a letter to the Board, CCRCC Chair Chris Trakel stated, “The CCRCC overwhelmingly believes Mr. Urresti is the most qualified and best individual for the role of Canyon County Clerk.”

Clerk Hogaboam voiced strong support for Urresti, noting that he provided a letter of recommendation as did Prosecuting Attorney Chris Boyd, Trial Court Administrator Benita Miller, Judge Bever, and others. “Mr. Urresti has demonstrated his ability to take on this role during his time as Chief Deputy,” Hogaboam

said. Hogaboam expressed deep gratitude for Urresti’s support, stating that he would not have been as successful during his nearly two years as Clerk without Urresti’s leadership and dedication. Commissioner Leslie Van Beek highlighted Urresti’s extensive experience, stating, “This is a great win for Canyon County.”

Urresti expressed his appreciation for the trust placed in him, crediting Clerk Hogaboam’s mentorship and leadership for his success. “I would not be here today without his guidance,” Urresti said. Jess Urresti will be sworn in on January 5th.

### Canyon County Selects New Operator for Animal Shelter Services

by Toni Ferro

The Board of Canyon County Commissioners has selected Nampa’s Copper Quill Haven (CQH) to replace the West Valley Humane Society (WVHS) as its provider of animal shelter services. The decision came after a County Request for Proposal (RFP) process that resulted in two proposals (from CQH and WVHS). The proposals were reviewed by a committee of leadership and law enforcement from Canyon County, the City of Caldwell, and the City of Nampa.

The RFP process was initiated after WVHS made budget requests of Caldwell and Nampa that were well

above the amounts the municipalities had paid in previous years. WVHS asked Caldwell for \$540,000 annually up from \$68,000 and asked Nampa for \$720,000 annually up from \$83,000. WVHS’s request of the County went from \$200,000 annually to \$240,000 and the County provides WVHS with a facility and facilities maintenance.

WVHS argued that the budget increases were warranted, because previous boards of the organization hadn’t requested the budget hikes necessary to address the needs of our growing population as well as increases in labor and other costs.

The committee reviewing the proposals found that CQH was best suited to meet the County’s needs “due to its demonstrated experience, organizational approach, and community-oriented service plan.”

WVHS responded to the County’s decision by saying they planned to file a formal objection. Objections can be filed within seven days of the decision.

In the meantime the County plans to “start working with CQH to establish a new service framework ensuring continuity of care for animals and improved outcomes for residents.”



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Meal Preparation at Home Helps Welcome the New Year

by Surine Greenway, Family & Consumer Sciences Extension Educator, University of Idaho

With this new year upon us, it can be a fresh start for hobbies, sports, activities, and everything else thrown in the mix. Stocking your pantry can be helpful for the busy time ahead and preparing meals at home can be an easy and meaningful way we care for ourselves and our family.

However, it is key we ensure food safety always be a part of the process! Following safe food-handling practices helps reduce risk of food borne illness and guarantees meals are nutritious and safe all year long.

Safe meal preparation begins with the basic practices of food safety, followed from start to finish, these are clean, separate, cook, and chill. Washing hands and surfaces, keeping raw and ready-to-eat foods separate, cooking foods to proper internal temperatures, and refrigerating leftovers quickly.

These recommendations should be followed, even when making freezer meals you will reheat or cook when ready to eat. If making freezer meals, remember to quickly cool foods completely before placing them into your freezer. Make sure to not overload your freezer as it can increase the temperature of your unit, placing all foods in your freezer at risk for safety issues.

When it comes to preserving foods for shelf-stable storage, following tested and approved methods is especially important. Improper preservation can create food safety risks, particularly with low-acid foods such as meats, vegetables, and complete meals.

Luckily, this can be avoided by beginning with equipment that is properly tested and using up-to-date safe canning recipes. Low-acid foods must be preserved using a pressure canner to reach temperatures high enough to destroy harmful bacteria, including Clostridium botulinum, which can cause botulism. Unfortunately, unsafe canning advice is common online. This is why following trusted, research-based sources is critical.

If you are interested in learning to safely can low-acid foods for ready-to-go meals at home, then you should consider the upcoming “Meals in a Jar” class.

This lecture and hands-on workshop will focus on the foundational science behind preparing research-based recipes that can be safely processed at home using a steam-pressure canner. Participants will complete a recipe in class, walking away with knowledge, skills and confidence to can their own safe recipes. Plus, participants will take home their own meal in a jar to have ready for a busy night ahead!

During the workshop, participants will learn about proper equipment, ingredient selection, jar preparation, pressure canner use, and current tested recipes. Emphasis will be placed on understanding each step, empowering participants to make safe choices when preserving food.

The hands-on format allows attendees to build confidence while practicing correct techniques under guidance. This workshop provides practical, reliable information for participants who are new to canning or looking to refresh skills. To learn more and register, visit: <https://bit.ly/26jar meals>.

University of Idaho Extension provides research-based information on preparing and preserving foods at home. For more information about safe food handling, meal preparation, or to learn about upcoming food preservation classes, contact University of Idaho



Advanced Master Food Safety Advisor, Cindy Tekus, reading the instructions for BBQ Pulled Pork, a Ball pressure canning recipe, to a participant in the hands-on class that took place in January of 2025.

Owyhee County Extension office at 208-896-4104 or [owyhee@uidaho.edu](mailto:owyhee@uidaho.edu). Reliable food handling, safety and preservation practices protect not only your pantry, but the health of everyone who gathers around your table.

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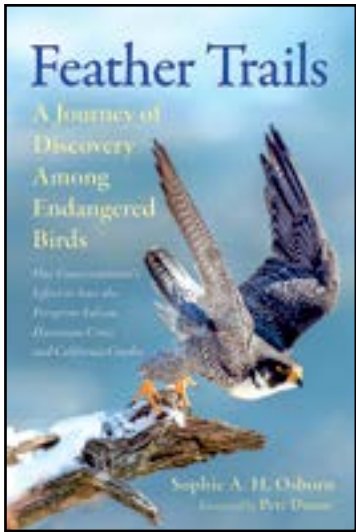
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Southwestern Idaho Birders Association



Author Sophie Osborn

Between the time this was written, before Christmas, and the time readers see the magazine, SIBA members and other area birders will have spent long, cold hours on the Nampa Christmas bird count.

Meanwhile, some of us get lucky and the best birds we can hope for come right to us. For me this year that includes an Anna's Hummingbird that found a happy place on my patio, accepting an invitation in the form of a feeder that I've maintained for years with no previous luck. A very special Christmas gift!

Anyone who recognizes or values birds, especially endangered species, might benefit from viewing the Zoom-only meeting of SIBA at 7 p.m. on Jan. 8. It's available to you by emailing [sibainfo1@gmail.com](mailto:sibainfo1@gmail.com) for the link to sign in.

Sophie Osborn, author of the book, "Feather Trails: A Journey of Discovery Among

Endangered Birds", notes that birds are visible, vocal sentinels that alert us to environmental harms through their declining numbers or their failure to thrive. Sophie shares her personal experiences reintroducing endangered Peregrine Falcons, Hawaiian Crows, and California Condors to the wild.

While immersing listeners in the triumphs and tribulations of being a wildlife biologist, Sophie explores the threats that imperiled these birds, and reveals that what harmed them threatens us, too.

She discusses what led to the endangerment of these three captivating species, recounts the efforts of biologists to recover their populations, and reads a few excerpts from her book that describe what it was like to work with these magnificent birds.

Sophie is an award-winning environmental writer and wildlife biologist whose work has included the study and conservation of more than a dozen bird species in the Americas. She contributed to reintroduction efforts for several endangered birds

by J C Clancy and served as the field manager for the California Condor Recovery Program in Arizona for four years.

Her first book, "Condors in Canyon Country", won the 2007 National Outdoor Book Award for Nature and the Environment.

Reviewers for the American Birding Association (ABA) chose her second book, "Feather Trails," as their favorite bird book of 2024.

Sophie has written articles for Bird Watching, Wyoming Wildlife, and Sojourns magazines. Her writings are also available on her website and her "Words for Birds" Substack blog.

SIBA's first field trip of 2026 will be the annual trek through Canyon Hill Cemetery starting at 9 a.m. Jan. 10. This trip takes an easy walk around the cemetery to see many of the winter birds in our area. This is a great trip for beginner birders.

Some of the birds often seen on this field trip are Red Crossbills, Townsend's Solitaires and even Saw-whet Owls, along with many others. Past trips have found Clark's Nutcracker, Pine Grosbeak, and Chestnut-backed Chickadee. Dress for cold weather.

Bring snacks, warm drinks, and water. If time and weather permit, the group may move on to Curtis Park for more birding. Registration is required: email James Jarrett at [SIBAFieldTrip@gmail.com](mailto:SIBAFieldTrip@gmail.com).

Dave's Big Backyard

by Dave McCormick



Saturday, December 6th, my son-in-law insisted I go on a pheasant hunt with him. A friend of his had invited him on a hunt along with six of his employees. I decided to fall in. The hunt took place between Notus and Parma at 2C Pheasant, 160 acres of sudan grass and milo.

We arrived at 2C headquarters around 9:30 and were hunting a little after 10:00, following a brief safety speech. We spaced out 10 to 20 yards apart and started trekking down rows of sudan grass. Our two guides, Jerry Payne (owner) and Carson (nephew), were also the dog handlers. Jerry had a shorthair named Rosie and Carson had 2 Brittany Spaniels, Amo and Ponch, all good dogs. I had to put my shorthair, Halley, down about a week prior to this hunt. It certainly was not the same without her.

When I was a teenager, there were so many pheasants, one could not imagine paying someone to be able to hunt them. I guess no one imagined buying bottled water either.

Most gunners were packing 12 gauges. I was carrying a double 410, not that I think I am that good, I just like the light weight and almost no recoil.

After several passes through the sudan grass and milo, we worked our way back to headquarters, cleaned our birds, shot the breeze and had a beer or two, all-in-all a fun hunt.

January, usually a cold month, means outdoor activities become more limited. Chukar season runs through the end of the month, and waterfowl season continues into March, if you like to hunt snow geese.

January for me is a good time to prepare for the future. If you are a fisherman (male or female), check your rods, clean your reels and change line if necessary. If you are a fly fisherman, this is a good time to tie flies.

I'm a fly fisherman and I used to tie profusely. Many hours were spent on the South Fork of the Boise River. My wife loved the sport and my daughter was learning, great family memories.

I used to reload shotgun shells. Now I don't shoot enough, so I just buy them.

In 2022, I began building fishing rods, though I've slowed a little this year.

Whatever enterprise you choose to pursue, preparation will make for a more satisfying outcome.

Happy New Year!

Local Dirt

by Pat King



definitely something I never planned or wanted to do, but it did show me what I was capable of and I found that I enjoyed it. And now I wish I didn't have a job, a farm and a house to clean, because I would really like to write more than I find time to.

I am almost certain a lot of your lives have similar stories where life took you in many different directions than you had planned. I really want you to think back on what your future looked like in 9th or 10th grade and compare it to where you are today and the journey you took to get here now. For 90% of us, it looks very different than that 15 year old's vision.

That brings up my point

here. I didn't want to write at all. I was a grunt type worker, I still am for the most part. I'm very capable with my hands and I love creating things that weren't there before, a tremendous gift from God.

I'm hoping that over the last ten years, you have found a love for your natural surroundings and have enjoyed watching things that you've had a hand in to help thrive and be productive. Or now maybe you see the wisdom of being more involved in the process. My goal has always been to help you find a love or an enjoyment of growing and maintaining the externals of your nature.

The season before Christmas I'm sure you're familiar

with, is Advent. Advent in the Christian world is one of patience and hope for what's to come. Winter is similar, as we wait patiently for the spring to come and start to wake things up from a winter's nap, so that the earth can reap a bountiful harvest. But none of that can happen without us to assist in its course of action. Left on its own, it becomes unruly and I believe that was intentional, to place weeds to keep the soil in place.

As we wait, the time is perfect for planning your future garden, the trees that need either minor pruning or a major one to reduce possible damage from a storm and equipment needs etc.

Now is the time to think

of what you'll need to buy or order to accomplish your desired goals. If you wait, you are already behind and may not get what you really want.

I can't tell you how many people would call me in early spring and say, "Hey can you come out tomorrow? I've got some things I need taken care of." I would have to explain that I've already been out for the past few weeks and I'm two or three weeks out before I can get to you. It was tough to say that and disappoint people, but the ones that thought ahead got the worm. There's no time like the present to prepare for spring.

Until next time,  
Happy New Year, Pat

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Local Flu Forecast



Our SWDH epidemiologists are seeing a rise in influenza cases in Southwest Idaho right now. Our forecasting models suggest that we may see an earlier peak in flu cases, possibly later in December as students head home for the holiday break. This is about 3 to 4 weeks ahead of what we have observed in previous seasons. Why the shift? One of the

flu strains gaining traction this season was not included in the 2025-26 flu shot formulation. If this strain becomes more common in the U.S., it could lead to an earlier-than-usual peak in flu activity. Keep in mind that even with a mismatched strain, the flu vaccine remains effective at preventing severe disease. For this flu season, the vaccine is expected to reduce hospitalizations and outpatient visits by around 50%. Since last year was clas-

sified as a severe flu season across the country and it's rare to have back-to-back severe seasons, this year is expected to be moderate in terms of cases requiring medical attention. To monitor local flu activity and find tips on how to keep yourself and your family healthy this flu season, check out our popular Local Respiratory Illness Levels Map on our website's epidemiology page at [swdh.id.gov/epidemiology](http://swdh.id.gov/epidemiology). Click on Respiratory Illness Levels.

Nampa Job Corps Accepting Students



Now in its sixtieth year, the National Job Corps offers free residential job training and education for young people, aged 16 to 24,

with limited finances. Courses prepare students for careers in certified nurse assistant, welding, or three areas of computing – technician, cybersecurity, or data science and coding. Students may also earn a drivers' license and high school diploma. Educational programs are individualized and usually take from six to 18 months. The application process starts online at [enroll.job-](http://enroll.job-corps.gov)

[corps.gov](http://corps.gov), and requires information about legal status in the country, family income, previous education, criminal background, and state of health. The total process, including a background check, takes about a month. Students get free board, room, and needed medical services. Get more information at [www.jobcorps.gov/i-am-a/student](http://www.jobcorps.gov/i-am-a/student).

Caldwell 100 Years Ago, January of 1926

From the weekly "Caldwell Tribune" newspaper located in the Indian Creek Museum archives, 1122 Main Street, Caldwell

January 1, 1926, Want Ad Section

All persons who left watches with W. D. Wood for repair are hereby notified to call for them at once. If not called for by February 3, they will be sold for charges.



January 1, 1926, Skaggs United Store Ad

Corn Flakes or Post Toasties, 15 cents – Pure cane sugar 25 pounds \$1.79 – Cigarettes 2 packs for 25 cents.



January 21, 1926, Burglars Raid Troy Laundry

Burglars last Sunday raided Troy laundry for the second time in a month. But this time the night raiders found Enos Campbell, caretaker, on the job. Two prowlers whom Mr. Campbell can furnish only general description were put to flight by him through the help of a fusillade of shots from his revolver.

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Reflections: Looking Back–Moving Forward

by Leora Summers



Toni Ferro/Owner Publisher



Leora Summers/Editor

Chantele and Michael Hensel started a wonderful thing back in December of 2014, a great little monthly newspaper called the Caldwell Perspective. It was a publication of Caldwell's good news. The catalyst to create this paper came from the excitement caused when Roger Brooks came to town and talked about a plaza that his town of Rapid City, North Dakota developed and

how it revitalized his town. The excitement it stirred in our community caused Chantele and Michael to start this paper to help keep that momentum moving forward and to keep the public informed about the good things happening in our area. So now, eleven years later, this little paper continues spreading Caldwell's news. The time has come and Chan-

tele is handing the reins over to Toni Ferro, who is taking charge of this paper. Toni has been a part of our team for awhile now and is excited to continue telling all of you Caldwell's good news and I will continue as her editor. Toni said "Running Caldwell's hometown paper is my dream job. I am thankful to Chantele for the opportunity and thankful to Leora for the many (many many many) hours she spends working on each issue." Our community has grown so much since those first days after Roger Brooks came to town when our journey of revitalization of downtown began and there is still so much more to tell! Thank you Chantele for creating such a wonderful vehicle to tell Caldwell's good news and keep our community updated on events and changes. And thank you Toni for continuing this great little paper that will continue to keep us informed.



We want to hear from you

As the new year gets underway we thought this would be the perfect time to reach out to you to get some feedback about the Caldwell Perspective. The Caldwell Perspective is mailed by the US Postal Service through Every Door Direct Mail to over 12,000 homes each month. We know it's a bit old-fashioned to send out physical copies of a newspaper, but we think that a printed news-

paper carries more weight than a social media post or a blog. And for young people, seeing their picture in the paper makes them feel like they are part of a community that is interested in them and where they are headed. During 2025 we added online versions of our articles to our website (for free of course) so they are easier to share on social media. And just last month we revived our subscription op-

tion, so anyone who does not receive the paper in the mail can subscribe. You can check out the changes on our website at [caldwellperspective.com](http://caldwellperspective.com). Going forward, we'll be continuing to make changes so the Caldwell Perspective can serve the community in the best way possible. This month, we'd love to hear from you. We have just three survey questions for you to keep things simple.

Your input will mean a lot to us and help us as we continue to publish Caldwell's hometown paper. To respond to our survey: Go to [caldwellperspective.com/survey](http://caldwellperspective.com/survey), or follow the QR code on the right, or fill out the form below and mail it to us at Caldwell Perspective, PO Box 922, Caldwell, ID, 83606.



Survey QR Code

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Caldwell, ID 83606

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What sections of the Caldwell Perspective do you read the most?

- ☐ Agriculture
- ☐ Arts
- ☐ Local Business News (openings, awards, etc.)
- ☐ Caldwell Night Rodeo News
- ☐ Caldwell Public Library events and information
- ☐ Caldwell Schools Information (sports, academics, awards)
- ☐ College of Idaho (sports, academics, awards)
- ☐ County Fair News
- ☐ Elections (non-partisan voters guides, voter info)
- ☐ Events
- ☐ Local History and Remembrances
- ☐ Municipal updates (city news, city council updates, police and fire news, county news, etc.)
- ☐ Outdoors (Local Dirt, Dave's Big Back Yard, Southwest Idaho Birders, etc.)
- ☐ Service and Advocacy Organizations (Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis, etc.)
- ☐ Volunteer Opportunities (JustServe, etc.)
- ☐ Every article, cover to cover!

What would you like to see more of in the Caldwell Perspective?

How else can the Caldwell Perspective better serve Caldwell?