



SPECIAL SECTION: Honors Scholarship



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Captain calling

Lemke begins second stint with IFPD

BY JUSTIN ITES | ites@iafalls.com

Lance Lemke's law enforcement career has come full circle with his return to the Iowa Falls Police Department.

The Alden native previously spent six years working as an officer for the department before moving on to a deputy role at the Hardin County Sheriff's Office.

Two weeks ago, Lemke started his second line of duty with the IFPD, but in a bigger role. He is the new captain of the department.

"I learned a lot here from my first go here and it was fun. Good guys to work with that had a lot of experience," Lemke said. "I'm excited to be back and take on a new challenge as captain."

Lemke's first stint with the IFPD began in 2007, and he spent the next six years on the job before accepting a position with the HCSO. He worked there for roughly 10 years - nine as a full-time road deputy and one year on part-time duty.

CAPTAIN LEMKE Cont'd ▶ A2



BY TAYLOR NOHRENBURG
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There was plenty to see and do during the 2023 Alden Days celebration this past Friday and Saturday. From the iconic Iowa Falls/Alden Fire Department water fights to the tractor kiddie pull, fun was had by Aldenites and surrounding visitors. See you next year! ■



PHOTOS BY TAYLOR NOHRENBURG / TIMES CITIZEN

Viva Bajarrriba!

Eldora native makes splash in tequila

BY COREY MEINTS | cmeints@iafalls.com

Jay Nance admits he knew just enough about tequila to get himself in trouble when he was younger. Today, the 1977 Eldora graduate is somewhat of a mogul.

"All I knew was I had a taste of José Cuervo a little too much and never wanted to drink tequila again," Nance said.

Not only did the taste come back to him, he got into the business.

Nance helped create Bajarrriba Tequila with two friends (Michael Hill and Rico Austin) he met while living in Mexico. Together, they formed

Tres Cabo Amigos. All having lived and done business in Mexico - Cabo San Lucas in particular - the trio has special insight into the tequila business, especially with Nance and Hill having each owned a bar in Cabo and Austin being an expert in the spirit.

"We all live in Arizona now, but we all met in Cabo like 18 years ago," Nance said. "We became friends and remained friends. We've all been connoisseurs for years. A couple years ago, we got together and said let's do a fine tequila. So, we named our corporation Tres Cabo Amigos - three Cabo friends - and started making tequila."

Nance was recently back in his native Eldora sharing samples of his brand at The Firehouse and Eldora Social Club.

BAJARRIBA Cont'd ▶ A2



COREY MEINTS / TIMES CITIZEN

Jay Nance returned to his native Eldora recently with samples of his own tequila in tow. He shared it with people at the Firehouse and Eldora Social Club.



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▶ BAJARRIBBA
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Hill has lived in Cabo for over 20 years, and already had his own tequila brand – Arco del Cabo Tequila. Austin holds a PhD in tequila and its distilling process and is a bestselling author of “My Bad Tequila” which is about his college adventures in Mexico.

All three are featured in silhouette on the bottle – Nance with his trademark cigar, Hill with his signature mustache and Austin with his ever-present sunglasses. Each one also wearing a sombrero.

The bottle itself is unique. When held upside down, its distinctive shape becomes a map of Baja California leading all the way to Cabo.

“We like to say, ‘sip out of Cabo’ and our Bajarriba name reflects that in the bottle design,” Nance said. “Baja means ‘down below’ and arriba means ‘up above’ so we say that loosely translates to ‘bottoms up.’”

The design recently won a bottle of the year award from the magazine Tequila Aficionado.

“We think a lot of people buy it for the bottle first,” Nance said. “But we hope they come back for the juice.”

Nance said tequila – long known for its salt, shot and lime – has become the second leading liquor in terms of sales in America. Trailing only vodka, tequila recently passed whiskey and is no longer the “shoot first and try to remember later” drink of fraternity parties and dive bars. It has become, especially in Bajarriba’s case, a sipping option.

Bajarriba is made from 100-percent and pesticide-free blue Weber agave from the highlands of Jalisco, Mexico. All three of the Tres Cabo Amigos tequilas – reposado, plata and soon anejo – are made at the El Viejo distillery.

“I was fortunate to have a couple partners who had done this before and they had all the contacts,” Nance said. “We visited all these distilleries, tasted, met the people, and decided what we wanted. I think we picked the right one. It’s a third generation-owned business that’s been around 87 years. We picked it because we



Jay Nance explained the unique Bajarriba Tequila bottle during a recent visit to Eldora. He was back in town sharing samples.

loved the tequila and the family that owns it.”

Nance left Eldora after graduation, heading to Cedar Falls and the University of Northern Iowa. When the travel bug hit him, he moved to Florida, then Texas and started working with a cable television company and later becoming a stockbroker. That led him to California where he owned his own firm, and later to Las Vegas. He later did some consulting and helped small companies go public. He even lived in Costa Rica for a while.

Eventually Nance ended up calling Mexico home for five years while owning the Cabo Lounge before moving to Arizona.

While new to the industry, Nance said he has been a longtime lover of tequila and can see how

tequila has changed in the minds of drinkers worldwide. He said the company is working on broader distribution as it is currently only available on shelves in the Southwest and by direct order into states allowing online liquor sales.

Iowa is one of those states.

With several class reunions recently taking place May 9-10 in Eldora, Nance felt it was a perfect time to come home and share a little of what he’s been up to since leaving. That meant samples of the Bajarriba Plata.

“I’ve only been back twice in the last 20 years or so,” Nance said. “It was time to come back and bring as much tequila I can in my checked bags, which is not a lot. But we’re here and spreading the word.” ■



Lance Lemke is beginning his second stint working for the Iowa Falls Police Department. He is the new captain of the department.

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He said the working for the IFPD and the HCSO provided different challenges along with the similar job requirements.

“Going to the HCSO, it was a change of pace and a way to learn some other things. There’s a night and day difference, but some aspects are very similar. The HCSO is big when you look at covering all the towns in the county. They do jail transports so the scope of job is bigger,” Lemke said. “Here, the IFPD is focused on Iowa Falls only. Working in law enforcement was something that I always wanted to do, but wasn’t so sure it was something I was ready to do.”

Following his high school graduation, Lemke attended Ellsworth Community College and started to work blue collar jobs. At one point, he decided to pursue a career in law enforcement. Lemke said that line of work appealed to him because being a police officer meant “you have to be at your best every day.”

The new IFPD captain said in 90 percent of situations officers find themselves in, the primary goal is helping people find an answer to an issue they are unable to attain in that moment.

“It’s about being a reassuring figure within the community. I like having a connection with community members and just talking with people out there every day,” Lemke said. “When I joined here (IFPD) back in 2007, a lot of people knew me already because I’m from Alden. That also brought different challenges because a lot of people

may know where I live. They see you off-duty and if you are doing something you shouldn’t be doing off-duty, you can lose a bit of your credibility.”

Lemke said he learned a lot from working at the HCSO, and added he would rather brag about the people he worked with there instead of talking about himself. Those influences included Mitch Kappel, Pete Lopley, Kort Nachazel and current IFPD Chief Josh Nelson.

Lemke said he wasn’t unhappy at the HCSO, but wanted something with a bit more responsibility. He thought a return to the IFPD to take on the captain role would suit his interests.

“I wanted to put myself in the fire as one who makes decisions. The officers can handle the calls, while the captain handles same calls but is responsible for the officers and making sure they are getting their training and day to day stuff the chief requires,” Lemke said.

As soon as one of the IFPD’s newest officers – Molly Copper – returns from police academy training, the IFPD will be fully staffed again at 10 officers.

Lemke said his primary goal is to help the officers be the best they can be, and allow them to do the job as they see fit.

“In our line of work, it’s important to keep offering them training opportunities and those types of resources,” Lemke said. “In this profession, if everyone had the same personality, it would be nothing but butting heads. We have some Class A and some Class B personalities. If we can keep them happy, we will keep them here.” ■

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