

LEWISTON TRIBUNE

FOUR SECTIONS

WEATHER, PAGE 6A:  **▲92°**  **▼70°**

THE REGION'S INDEPENDENT NEWS SOURCE SINCE 1892

ONE DOLLAR

Lewiston veteran to hold key national VFW post

Douglas Welch named National Surgeon General

By **DEAN FERGUSON**
LEWISTON TRIBUNE

A Lewiston man has been elected as the National Surgeon General of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. Retired U.S. Navy Capt. Douglas Welch, 72, was elected to the one-year post this week at the VFW national convention in Columbus, Ohio.



“As VFW surgeon general, I advise the commander on any kind of medical issues,” Welch said during a phone call from Columbus on Thursday.

By “medical issues,” Welch doesn’t mean direct patient care. He means keeping an eye on the politics affecting veterans.

For instance, Welch said he will continue with a 20-year-old effort to persuade Congress to pass the Richard Star Act, which gives some disabled veterans full retirement pay and full Veterans’s Administration benefits.

He is also keeping an eye out in his own backyard where funding was derailed a few years ago for expanding the Lewiston-based Idaho State Veteran’s Home.

“Even though it’s a state veterans’ home, they get a lot of funding from the federal level,” said Welch. Welch brings 41

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Snake River Fire

Fire burns south of Asotin



August Frank/Lewiston Tribune

Wildland firefighters look down on the Snake River Fire burning along the hillside Thursday south of Asotin.

Snake River Fire burns near Weissenfels Ridge and river on Thursday evening

LEWISTON TRIBUNE

Fire crews battling the Snake River Fire burning near Weissenfels Ridge about 10 miles south of Asotin were feeling good about their progress Thursday evening.

The blaze that is believed to have been accidentally started by someone mowing grass burned about 95 acres in steep country between the river and farm fields northeast of Anatone.

“The south and north flanks on the river side are getting pretty well taken care of,” said

Chad Sanford, chief of the Blue Mountain Fire District.

He said the fire raced through range land but had not reached wheat fields at the top of the ridge. Weissenfels Ridge Road was closed during the fire.

Sanford expected crews would be able to control the fire as long as the wind stayed calm.

“I think we will be cold trailing it into the evening,” he said early Thursday evening.

Sanford’s crew took the lead in suppression efforts and was assisted



August Frank/Lewiston Tribune

The Snake Rivber Fire burns as cows, left, decide it’s time to move down the hil.

by the Asotin County Fire District, U.S. Forest Service, city of Asotin, Washington Department of Natural Resources, and two helicopters

and two single-engine air tankers from the state of Washington.

The fire started near the river at about 3:30 p.m. in an area outside

> INSIDE

Whitman County fire covers 6,600 acres / **3A**

of a fire district but burned onto the area patrolled by the Blue Mountain District.

This marks a second day of busy fire activity in the region, with crews responding to several blazes Wednesday in the region.

Asotin County firefighters responded to two wildfires during the day Wednesday, one off Knottgrass Road and another near Valentine Ridge in Garfield

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Crews prep for toppling courthouse

Destruction set to start Monday and continue 7-8 weeks

By **ELAINE WILLIAMS**
LEWISTON TRIBUNE

A crane lowered a cargo container Thursday onto a temporary wall between Nez Perce County’s old and new courthouses.

The container was one of four in a barrier that will help protect the new courthouse when its 135-year old predecessor is demolished, said Woody Sams, superintendent of Kenaston – Leone & Keeble Group, the general contractor for the project.

See **TOPPLING**, Page 4A



August Frank/Lewiston Tribune

The old Nez Perce County Courthouse is pictured Thursday in Lewiston. Demolition will begin on the old courthouse Monday.

Pullman chooses Wells for city administrator

Works director for city chosen to replace Mike Urban

MOSCOW-PULLMAN DAILY NEWS

PULLMAN — Pullman has chosen Sean Wells to be its next city administrator.

Wells will replace Mike Urban in the role. If confirmed by the Pullman City Council on Aug. 26, Wells will start his new position Sept. 16, according to a Pullman news release.

Wells has been working in Pullman since 2023 as the city’s public works director. Before

that, he served in engineering positions with the cities of Issaquah, Wash., Covington, Wash., Federal Way and Bellevue. He has been working in public service careers since 1997.

Wells holds a bachelor’s degree in Civil Engineering from Washington State University and is a licensed professional engineer with the state of Washington. He is also a NCAA

and USA Softball Fastpitch Umpire.

Pullman used consultant Prothman Company

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Wells

Cali plans to go tit for tat if Texas does gerrymander > **1B**



Cougs coach says he won’t reveal QB before opener – **1C**

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