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WEATHER
OUTLOOK

Saturday: Rain likely with a
high near 74

Sunday: Chance of rain
with a high near 77

WEEKEND
EDITION

OBITUARIES

Wayne Yarger
David Kemmerer
Raymond Charles Haugen

Libby woman jailed in Idaho after high-speed police chase

By SCOTT SHINDLEDECKER
The Western News

A Libby woman facing multiple charges in Montana is in custody in Idaho following an alleged police chase last week-end.

Heike Langley, 61, is in the Boundary County Detention Center following an incident on the evening of Saturday, Aug. 29, that authorities say risked the lives of multiple people before ending with a crash into a local dentist's office in Bonners Ferry.

According to law enforcement, there were also indications she was considering fleeing to Canada.

Langley is charged with one felony count of fleeing or attempting to elude a police officer as well as resisting or obstructing officers.

Langley's bail is set at \$250,000 and she is being held at the Boundary County Jail pending a competency evaluation. A preliminary hearing was set for Sept. 11, but was vacated due to a evaluation request to determine if Langley is competent to aid in her defense of the case.

According to the affidavit in support of a warrantless arrest, county officer Tony Jeppesen and two other local law officers responded to a report of a reckless vehicle, a red Subaru

Outback with Lincoln County plates, on Highway 95. A dispatcher told officers there were three different calls reporting the vehicle was speeding, driving into the oncoming lane and forcing vehicles off the road. One vehicle reportedly crashed.

A Bonners Ferry police officer saw the Outback and pulled it over while another sought to find the wrecked vehicle. Cpl. Jeppesen said as he approached the Outback that the driver of a Ford pickup truck stopped and told him he saw the Subaru cross the center line, causing another vehicle to leave the road.

Bonners Ferry police offi-

cer Robbie Bates was speaking to the woman, identified as Langley. When he sought her driver's license, registration and proof of insurance, she said she didn't have her license and had to ask someone to put gas in her vehicle so she could go home, according to the court filing. Langley gave Bates her information verbally and while he checked for outstanding warrants and her driver's status, Langley spoke to Jeppesen.

She denied doing anything wrong when he confronted her about her alleged reckless driving. She also denied ingesting

See CHASE, A5



Flames leap from a structure that caught fire at about noon Tuesday, Sept. 1, 2026, in Vanderwood Court in Libby. Libby Volunteer Fire Department firefighters were on the scene for more than one hour. Libby Volunteer Ambulance crews transported two residents to the hospital for possible smoke inhalation. (Scott Shindledecker/The Western News)

Two Libby men hospitalized in structure fire

By SCOTT SHINDLEDECKER
The Western News

Libby Volunteer Fire Department crews battled a structure fire Tuesday afternoon that sent two men to the hospital.

The call came in at 11:39 a.m. and when firefighters arrived the single wide mobile home in Vanderwood Court was fully engulfed.

Libby Volunteer Ambulance crews took the men to Cabinet Peaks Medical Center.

Fire Investigator Matt Backen was able to talk to one of the men who told him he was in a bedroom when he saw smoke come under his door and when he exited the room he saw the fire.

He helped the other man who lived there get outside.

Also, someone helped a dog in a fenced-in area at the home escape.

Fire Chief Steve Lauer said the cause of the fire is under investigation.

He also reported a good response to the fire with 15 firefighters, one engine and two water tenders.

Flathead Electric shut the power off so crews could work safely and officers from the Lincoln County Sheriff's Office assisted with traffic control.

COMMUNITY FOCUS Johnson overcomes adversity in life, work

By SCOTT SHINDLEDECKER
The Western News

Much has changed in the life of Montana Highway Patrol's Lewis Johnson during the last few years.

Johnson, 38, was grievously injured in 2023 while working as a trooper when he was nearly killed by Jason Allen Miller, 44, during a chase. Lincoln County law enforcement personnel were attempting to arrest Miller Feb. 16, 2023, on an outstanding warrant.

Johnson, who was left confined to a wheelchair, saw Miller convicted and sentenced to life in prison a little more than two years ago. Last year, in September, he and his wife, Kate, a trooper with MHP and their son, 6-year-old Ryder, moved to Fort Benton.

In 2025, the couple divorced, but Johnson was pleased to report they are still co-parenting their son.

Johnson is still pursuing two of his passions - enjoying the bountiful outdoors

See ADVERSITY, A5



Montana Highway Patrol's Lewis Johnson proudly shows off the big, bull elk he bagged last fall during a Big Hearts Under the Big Sky hunt near Emigrant. Johnson has overcome many obstacles after nearly dying in a line-of-duty incident in 2023. (Courtesy photo)

Red Cross to hold disaster shelter training

For those who have wondered how the Red Cross responds during an emergency such as a wildfire or flood or how they can help when disaster strikes, Montana Red Cross is hosting three in-person shelter training sessions in Northwest Montana this month.

Polson, Kalispell and Libby are each hosting sessions this September. Community members and organizations are invited to attend the free sessions.

In Libby, the training will be held from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 16 at 105 Collins Ave.

The training is free,

See TRAINING, A6

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