

Jobs' job
Ashton Kutcher on
becoming the Apple
pioneer onscreen: B6



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Grizzly attack
Two BLM workers
bitten but not
seriously hurt **C1**



North Wind grows
New company President Christopher
Leichtweis has plans to expand **C1**



Family affair
Rodeo is a way of
life for the whole
Rammell family **B1**



Preserving open spaces

The Teton Regional Land Trust has conservation easements on about 30,000 acres in eastern Idaho, protecting land from further development and ensuring sustainable wildlife habitat for generations.



Alex McDougall / amcdougall@postregister.com
Chet Work, executive director of the Teton Regional Land Trust, surveys the Three Forks Ranch property near Driggs.

Of *growth* and *greenery*

■ The Teton Regional Land Trust offers money to farmers to prevent future urban encroachment and protect private land.

By NATE SUNDERLAND
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DRIGGS — Balancing Idaho's urban growth with protection of its natural habitat and agricultural land is taking on increasing importance.

Between 2000 and 2009, Idaho's population growth was the nation's fifth fastest, according to U.S. census data.

Urban centers such as Idaho Falls, Pocatello, Boise and Coeur d'Alene

"We like farmers and ranchers to continue maintaining their properties because they are better at it than us. If they can continue making a living without impacting wildlife, that is the ideal situation."

Chet Work
executive director
of the Teton
Regional
Land Trust

showed the biggest outward expansion into surrounding private land.

But Idaho's picturesque wildness, plentiful wildlife and rivers brimming with fish, as well as its boundless farm fields and pastures, remain among the state's most recognizable features. Despite all its recent urban growth, Idaho continues as one of the nation's top wheat, barley and potato producers.

In an effort to find balance between competing interests, land trusts and conservation groups began springing up across the state in the early 1990s. The groups were formed by farmers, ranchers and ecologists who were concerned about the increasing effect of urban growth on fish and wildlife.

Today, the Driggs-based Teton Regional Land Trust, founded in 1990, is one of the state's largest and oldest con-

servation groups.

"Our mission is to preserve open spaces, scenery and recreation opportunities ... for future generations," Executive Director Chet Work said. "But it is also about preserving wildlife and ... areas of cultural significance."

The nonprofit group seeks to protect private land amid 7 million acres of natural habitat and farmland within Bonneville, Jefferson, Fremont, Madison, Clark and Teton counties, as well as the Teton Valley in western Wyoming. About half of its coverage area is federal and state land, but the nonprofit doesn't advocate for public land. Instead, the group focuses its effort on preserving private land.

■ Most conservation efforts focus on eastern Idaho's few major waterways

TRUST, Continued on Page A3



Alex McDougall / amcdougall@postregister.com
A plot of land protected from development by a conservation easement features wetlands and trees planted by the Teton Regional Land Trust that will ensure the habitat's sustainability for wildlife.

Rexburg budget will rise for 2014

■ The City Council opted to raise property tax rates by 3 percent.

By NATE SUNDERLAND
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REXBURG — A cadre of new apartment complexes — room for some 500 residents — is expected to raise Rexburg property tax revenue by \$201,800 in 2014, city financial records show.

City leaders opted to raise property tax levy rates by the maximum 3 percent allowed by state law. Despite the increase, city officials said property taxes should not rise for most homeowners due to improving property valuations.

Chief Financial Officer Richard Horner estimated the city property tax levy rate will remain at 2013 levels — \$397 per \$100,000 of taxable value on a residential home.

Rexburg residents will take a hit with higher utility rates. The average homeowner will see an increase of \$1.34 per month due to rising sanitation costs, according to city financial records.

Next year's estimated revenue and expenses were detailed in Rexburg's proposed fiscal year 2014 budget. The October to September fiscal plan received a first reading by the City Council on Aug. 7.

■ Some "wish list" items were taken off the budget when grants fell through

BUDGET, Continued on Page A3

Forest fire smoke gets researched

■ The study will help scientists understand the role played by particles spewed out by wildfires.

SHANNON DININNY
Associated Press

PASCO, Wash. — Researchers are flying over Western wildfires to sample the thick smoke they emit and study its role in cloud formation and climate.

The data-gathering campaign is intended to help scientists flesh out one of the least understood areas of climate: the role of aerosols, or particles given off by wildfires, and how they evolve over time.

Biomass burning, such as forest fires and agricultural fires when farmers burn off their farm fields, has long been known to release large amounts of carbon dioxide, a key greenhouse gas, but less is known about how smoke plumes evolve over time and affect climate.

The researchers already have flown over fires in Washington and Oregon. This week, they traveled to central Idaho, where a complex of fires has scorched some 400 square miles of grass and forest land.

■ Black smoke warms the climate while white smoke tends to cool it

SMOKE, Continued on Page A3



Bingham County News.....C2	Comics.....E6	Obituaries.....C2	Ticket.....B5
Breakfast Briefing.....A2	Commodities.....C2	Opinions.....A6	Weather.....A2
Bright Spots.....C1	Crime Log.....C4	Religion News.....C3, C4	West.....C1
Called to Serve.....C3	Games.....E7	Sports.....B1	
Classified.....D1, E1	Movies.....B8	Stocks.....A3	

92
High
54
Low

Today: Sunny.
Forecast: A2