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The Bulletin

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DARKNESS TO LIGHT

Former Ducks kicker from Bend hopes to be a role model for others with depression



Zach Emerson, 23, was a multisport star at Bend's Mountain View High School who went on to be a walk-on kicker for the Oregon football team. Both he and his family believe several concussions suffered during high school soccer led to his depression and suicidal thoughts.

Ryan Brennecke/The Bulletin

BY MARK MORICAL • The Bulletin

Two years ago, Zach Emerson had a plan to end his life. Emerson had been a standout athlete in Bend and was a kicker on the high-profile University of Oregon football team, but he suffered from severe depression. He declined to discuss the details of his plan in an interview for this story, but the reason this is a cautionary tale and not his obituary is because Emerson opened up to family and friends about his depression.



Emerson practices his kickoffs during Oregon's preseason camp in Eugene in 2018.

Eric Evans/Submitted photo

He had a support system in place that he believes saved his life. "That day when I had a plan, my sister showed up and figured out the signs and came to my rescue," Emerson recalled recently. "The main thing that people who are struggling need to know is, reach out. People care. For me the hardest part was finally reaching out and admitting, 'I'm struggling.' It's that first big step of saying, 'I do need help.'"

Emerson, 23, was a multisport star at Bend's Mountain View High School, where he graduated in 2016. He and his family believe several concussions suffered during high school soccer

"The main thing that people who are struggling need to know is, reach out. People care."

— Zach Emerson, kicker for the new pro indoor football team in Redmond, the High Desert Storm

cer games contributed greatly to his depression and suicidal thoughts, which consumed him in college. But even though his sister rescued him in March 2019, his battle with depression was not over.

See **Emerson** / A6

LLOYD'S OF LONDON

Insurer could again pay for fire costs

Plan would pay up to \$25M of wildfire expense in Oregon

BY GARY A. WARNER
 Oregon Capitol Bureau

With the prospect of a possibly catastrophic 2021 fire season looming, Oregon will once again rely on its one-of-a-kind \$25 million wildfire insurance policy with the world's oldest continually active insurance marketplace.

Lloyd's of London, which traces its roots to a 17th-century coffeehouse near the Tower of London, has insured the Oregon Department of Forestry against wildfire losses since 1973. No other state has wildfire insurance.

"It's a catastrophic firefighting expense policy," said ODF spokesman Jim Gersbach.

Oregon's trees are among Lloyd's one-of-a-kind insurance policies that over the years have included 1940s actress Betty Grable's legs, comedian Jimmy Durante's oversized nose, rock star Bruce Springsteen's voice, Rolling Stones guitarist Keith Richards' hands and crooner Tom Jones' chest hair.

The plan will pay up to \$25 million of wildfire costs in Oregon. Under the policy, Oregon covers the first \$50 million in fire costs, then Lloyd's pays the next \$25 million.

Anything above that level is paid for by the state. When costs get that high, federal disaster money usually pays for a large share of the costs.

See **Lloyd's** / A7

CATTLE

Crook County mutilations perplex police

BY GARRETT ANDREWS
 The Bulletin

The udders appeared to have been removed with precision — straight, even cuts, as if made by a sharp object.

The reproductive systems had been cut out cleanly as well, and without disturbing other organs.

There was no indication of predator activity and perhaps strangest of all, scavenging animals appeared to have hardly touched these six cow carcasses found in a seven-day span this year on rangeland in rural Crook County.

Detectives with the Crook County Sheriff's Office, longtime ranchers and a Prineville veterinarian who reviewed evidence from an ongoing case say they're stumped by the "unnatural" deaths.

But the mutilated cattle might be more ordinary than they seem, according to Brian Dunning, a Bend-based podcaster committed to deflating wild claims.

"This reads like a very typical case," he said.

Crook County Sheriff John Gautney said his office has no leads but cautioned there's "no reason to panic."

See **Cattle** / A9

