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A much needed boost

Winston family still grateful for Wish Upon A Star program two years later

DAN BAIN
The News-Review

For Eric and Patrice Cooper of Winston, help from the Wish Upon A Star program didn't make all of their struggles disappear in 2016. But they said it sure made a huge difference at the time.

Akira Cooper, who was 7 years old at the time, was burned over most of her body. To make matters worse, the family returned home from a Portland hospital to find the family kitchen was flooded, and insurance didn't pay for it. Eric Cooper had used up all of his sick and vacation time and was forced to go back to work.

The family, which included four kids at home the time, was nominated and selected for Wish Upon A Star, a partnership between Brooke Communications and area businesses, helping people in need

during the holidays for the last 19 years.

The program paid for finishing the countertops in their kitchen, some plumbing, a new refrigerator, food for Christmas and some presents for the kids.

"I got choked up on the phone, I had to hand it to my wife so she could talk to them," Cooper said. "It's there for people who have issues that have to be solved now, and it's not a cure-all, but it was a great thing to have happen

WISH, A9



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Eric Cooper and his wife Patrice from Winston, with their kids, after being helped by the Wish Upon A Star program in 2016. Akira, 9, at left, brother Zander, and older sister Gabrielle to her right.



MICHAEL SULLIVAN/THE NEWS-REVIEW

Roseburg Towing employee Christian Gruber holds the Courage Under Fire medal in Roseburg on Wednesday. Gruber recently received the distinction for his service as a tow truck operator.

Heroism in Tow

Tow truck driver recognized for stopping wrong-way vehicle

JANELLE POLCYN
The News-Review

Christian Gruber said it's just part of the job.

In March, Gruber was headed southbound on Interstate 5 in his Roseburg Towing truck when he heard on the scanner about a wrong-way driver heading toward him.

He activated his overhead lights and started slowing down and creating a serpentine pattern to slow down the cars behind him. He slowed to total stop at an angle in the middle of the road which stopped all of the traffic behind him.

"To be blunt, I never considered

the possibility she would hit me," Gruber said. "I was in a big F-550 tow-truck and she was in a little Honda Civic."

Gruber said the police radioed in what happened and word spread.

"Traffic wasn't upset about it, I'm assuming, because they saw the car coming at them and knew what I did," Gruber said. "There was no honking or anything."

He thought the excitement had died down until he received an invitation from American Towman magazine in September for the annual American Towman Exposition in Baltimore last November.

At the festival night, Gruber was one

of nine tow truck drivers nationwide given an American Towman Commendation award for courageous professionalism. On the medal, the words "Courage Under Fire" on inscribed on the back.

Gruber said he's stopped traffic in similar situations at least three times as a truck driver, including an incident immediately after coming home from the conference.

"This wasn't something done to get recognition," Gruber said. "It was a big surprise. I think a lot of people, if they had the ability to do what I did, would."

TOW, A9

Body of missing person found

DAN BAIN
The News-Review

An Azalea man who had been missing since Dec. 8, was found dead Saturday afternoon about 200 yards from where his pickup truck was located Thursday morning off Eakin Road east of Quines Creek in Azalea.

After three days of extensive ground searching in steep terrain, the body of 79-year-old Terry Dodds was located by search crews at 1:20 p.m. Saturday over an embankment in thick replanted trees and heavy brush.

The Douglas County Sheriff's Office was assisted by Jackson and Josephine County Search and Rescue personnel.

Sheriff's deputies said Dodds left his home on Azalea Glen Road in the Glendale area at around 8 p.m. on Dec. 8. The Sheriff's Office was notified Thursday morning that Dodds' dog had been located by loggers. The loggers brought the dog to Dodds residence, not knowing anything about the missing person report. At that time, Dodds' family reported the information to the Sheriff's Office.

Dodds' 2004 Dodge 2500 was located a short time later on a spur road off Wildcat Road. The vehicle appeared to have slid off of the roadway and into a ditch.

Sheriff's deputies said Dodds suffered from a medical issue that may have left him in a confused state of mind.

The Douglas County Medical Examiner's Office is conducting a death investigation.



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Food assistance given to families in need

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