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'Good little paper' tries to stay afloat

- **March 8th, 2010**
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By Amanda Larsen of the Tribune
Eagle & Boomerang faces some tough times



Publisher Kai Eiselein of The Eagle & Boomerang is trying to avoid closing by moving to ...



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MOSCOW - The Eagle & Boomerang newspaper, serving the Palouse with small-town stories, is trying to avoid folding up shop.

After months of financial troubles, publisher Kai Eiselein has decided to reduce the number of issues per month of the publication previously known as The Latah Eagle. The paper had been printed weekly until January, but when times for the paper started getting tough, Eiselein cut back to every other week in February and plans to continue that publication schedule.

When he bought the small publication in July, he knew it would be challenging to keep it operating. The previous owner, LuJane Nisse, told Eiselein that he would either have to buy the paper, or find a new editing job. He decided to take on the challenge.

"I'm doing everything I can to keep the doors open," Eiselein said. "We've won state and national awards and we're still in this situation. We're still a good little paper and we're still relevant."

The 16- to 20-page publication is circulated to about 1,400 people in Latah County as well as to Palouse and Garfield, Wash. Past-due advertising accounts and mounting bills for operation nearly closed the paper last month, but when a letter telling customers about the financial problems was sent out, readers and advertisers responded with their pocketbooks. Two editions were printed in February.

"We'll just hunker down and ride this out," Eiselein said. "We're still open; we're moving out of the office (in Moscow) and we'll be working out of our home for a while until we find a new place."

Eiselein said The Eagle & Boomerang is different from the larger papers in the area because it doesn't focus on "the crime and mayhem." They like to cover kids, puppies and old people, Eiselein said. They hit the hard stuff when it's necessary, but focusing on the positive is what sets them apart.

The paper's one reporter/office manager, Suesanne Smith, said she likes the focus on the rural areas in The Eagle-Boomerang.

"We get more in-depth with every small community," she said.

The Eagle & Boomerang also publishes a weekly Web edition and, according to Eiselein, will continue to do so. Contracted correspondents from the small communities contribute stories for both the print and online editions.

Eiselein, with 13 years in the newspaper business and a family history of more than 100 years in print publications, knows there are sometimes struggles in this industry. He said he didn't expect to get rich publishing a newspaper, but he thinks it's important and will do everything he can to continue printing.

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