



# Service Beyond the Cattle Guard

Hereford breeders Kyle Colyer, Katie Colyer, Ivan Klippenstein and Brett Klippenstein step out to serve their communities.

by Kayla Jennings

A fog of dust and smoke has historically filled the air around the ranch working pens each spring. The familiar smell only cattlemen can recognize as branding season confirms spring working has commenced. Neighbors come from far and wide to lend a

helping hand gathering and branding the red and white stock.

In all the hustle and bustle, there is time to see a rancher's gloved hand reach out to help a fellow man up from flanking his 10th calf of the morning. Jumping in to assist others has been a mainstay



Kyle and Katie Colyer and eight others in the community comprise the Bruneau Quick Response Unit, servicing not only their local community but everyone within 70 miles.

trait of Hereford breeders since the beginning. Today, it is clear producers have taken their desire to help others into the community in the form of service. Whether that be pursuing volunteer opportunities for rural medicine, finding a career as a firefighter or a registered nurse, or even serving their country overseas, Hereford breeders are not scared to get their hands dirty to help those in need.

“The main reason I wanted to help out and do it is because, number one, they were running low on personnel, and number two, the community backs everybody 110% and wants the service to be available,” Kyle Colyer says of serving as a volunteer emergency medical technician (EMT). “Everybody is really appreciative of what you do for them and for the community.”

### Cattle ranchers turn EMT

A rural ranching community in the southwestern part of Idaho boasts one of the few rural communities to offer EMT services to its residents. In addition to the EMT services, Bruneau also has an emergency medical center.

Over the last decade, siblings and longtime Bruneau residents and Hereford breeders Kyle and Katie Colyer, along with a group of community members, acted to expand the longstanding EMT service to include more licensed EMTs and a brand-new building. Their mother, Sherry, has been an EMT in the region for 42 years, so with her encouragement, the siblings were certified 11 years ago.

At that time there was only a small cinder block building available for EMT training. With 10 others in the same class as Kyle and Katie, the Colyers ended up opening their sale facility to house the training from April to August of 2009.

The Colyers knew their EMT program desperately needed a facility to operate out of, so the fundraisers began. Through land gifted from the local church, private donations and support on a variety of fundraising activities, the Bruneau Quick Response Unit (QRU) building finally opened its doors in 2014.

“It was all done by private donations and funding just through the community,” Kyle describes. “We had very little grant money, if any. It was all built by donations, pledges and different things.”

One of the most successful fundraisers was selling bricks marked with the donor’s name or logo, which were used in building the sidewalk and the outside wall. “There were quite a few



The Bruneau Emergency Center was built in 2014 to offer the community a place to house their EMT service and as a multi-purpose facility for the community.



In order to fund building, the EMTs sold bricks to various individuals and business in and around the community. It ended up being their largest fundraiser for the building.

who made a memorial donation and bought a brick and put in memory of a family member,” Katie recalls. “Different companies in the area, or surrounding area, supported the idea, so they bought a brick.”

Not only the service but the building has been a tremendous blessing to the region. Kyle notes he and Katie have had the opportunity to save lives through volunteering as EMTs. Their region covers 70 miles, and Bruneau EMTs are on call 24/7, so there is a lot of ground to travel and a lot of work, but to them it is undoubtedly worth the effort.

“Patients don’t get a bill through our ambulance or anything,” Katie notes. “All of our supplies, or anything like that we use, we get donations from the community to pay for.”

In addition, the building serves as a multipurpose facility for 4-H meetings and other community activities. As Katie says, “The community came together to help raise the money to build it, so it’s something that everybody can utilize this way.”

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Ivan (middle) has been a member of the St. Joseph fire department for 20 years and has not only helped many people, but he has made many strong relationships along the way.



Ivan and Brett both developed their passion for service by first volunteering as firefighters at a very young age.



For Ivan, growing up in the Hereford business equipped him to serve and lead in a way that benefits those around him greatly.

### Brothers unite

Over a day's drive away in, Maysville, Mo., two young Hereford breeders were considering their next steps. After time at a Pennsylvania boarding school, and volunteering at the local fire department, paired with their desire to serve, it was no surprise when Brett and Ivan Klippenstein pursued careers in firefighting. By the flip of a coin — nurse versus pilot — Brett also became a registered nurse. Coincidentally, he did later receive his pilot's license.

"I like solving the problem — the puzzle. It's a puzzle every time," Brett notes. "After you've applied yourself to a certain kind of profession, you get a certain intuition about what's going on. Whether it's in cattle or maybe aviation or politics, or whatever it is, you just get a sense for things."

Not quite by flipping a coin, Ivan made his decision to attend Kansas State University to study animal science business and returned home to raise purebred Herefords with his dad, Glen. While Ivan loved the cattle business, he knew he needed more than the cattle enterprise alone — thus firefighting. His time fighting fires in his earlier life set him up perfectly to land his current job in St. Joseph, Mo., 20 years ago.

**“Cattle teach you how to think not only for what you need to do, but what somebody else might do.”**

— Ivan Klippenstein

“They say you do it to help people,” Ivan shares. “In the beginning, you probably do it because it's fun. Then over time you realize how much you help people. Over time, helping people begins to become a big part of it.”

Brett relocated to southeast Washington after his high school graduation and hasn't left yet. Thirty-seven years later, he has been a firefighter and a nurse and served his country in the National Guard after 9/11. He was commissioned as an officer and served a 21-month deployment to Iraq.

“It was an honor, but it wasn't fun,” the veteran says. “But it was an honor. I would do it again.”

As the years progress, they both look forward to following the family legacy and dipping

back into the Hereford business. After all, both brothers credit their upbringing raising and showing Hereford cattle to their ability to excel in their current careers.

“Cattle teach you how to think not only for what you need to do, but what somebody else might do,” Ivan says. He compares working cattle through a gate patiently and quietly to driving a firetruck to a fire and taking action. The best outcome requires thoughtful action.

For them, it is clear their careers have been an extension of all the character traits they developed growing up on the farm.

“Cattle taught me a lot of lessons,” Brett adds. “I tell people jokingly sometimes, I was raised by cattle. Not by my parents. They teach you a lot of lessons about patience and how to deal with people.”

Kyle and Katie can agree that many life lessons are learned at the cattle barn, and they all encourage junior Hereford breeders to consider careers or volunteer opportunities in these fields. After all, Hereford juniors are very well equipped. Nonetheless, as the dust settles from today, the sun will rise again tomorrow offering Kyle, Katie, Brett and Ivan the opportunity to do it all again — work in agriculture and help their communities in a loving, patient and wise way.

“Loving people without wisdom isn't love. Being wise without love is not wisdom,” Brett concludes. “They have to go together. Helping people in fire or medical or in any case smartly is the goal.” **HW**