

NEWS

Eric Johnson joins News-Review staff

BY NEWS-REVIEW STAFF

The arrival of the new year often means new beginnings. For Boulder Junction resident Eric Johnson, the turn of the calendar to 2021 brings a new professional beginning as assistant editor at Vilas County News-Review.

Johnson's first day on the job in Eagle River was Monday, Jan. 4.

A veteran 32-year journalist, Johnson comes to the News-Review from The Journal Times in Racine, where he served as the daily paper's business reporter. Johnson also covered the villages of Mount Pleasant and Sturtevant.

"I'm excited to make a professional return to the North Woods with the News-Review after a season away downstate with The Journal Times," Johnson said. "With its longstanding award-winning commitment to community journalism, the News-Review is a good professional fit. We're both on the same page, of the same mind."



ERIC JOHNSON

News-Review Editor Gary Ridderbusch said he was excited to have Johnson on the news staff.

"Eric brings a wealth of experience to the News-Review news desk," said Ridderbusch. "He knows a lot about reporting and has been a part of the North Woods for many years."

An early interest

A lifelong reader of newspapers, Johnson's interest in journalism was piqued dur-

ing his involvement with the Horlick Herald school newspaper at William Horlick High School in Racine, where Johnson was a reporter, cartoonist and advertising sales manager.

Johnson was hooked on pursuing journalism as a career after interviewing Milwaukee Brewers manager Harvey Kuenn just days after the 1982 Milwaukee-St. Louis "Suds Series."

"I love meeting new people and learning new things," Johnson said. "No two days in the newspaper business are ever alike. Every day brings a new adventure. Even more than 30 years later, it's still a refreshing, exciting rush to go to work each day."

A broadcast communications and journalism alumnus of Marquette University in Milwaukee, Johnson brings experience in both magazine and newspaper formats for a variety of publications in Wisconsin, Illinois and Ohio, including city magazines *Rockford* and *Milwaukee* and the Minocqua-based *Lakeland Times*, where

Johnson served as associate editor.

Prior to moving to the North Woods in 2007, Johnson served as editor of the *Jefferson, Ohio-based Ashtabula County Gazette* from 2004-07.

From 2010-'18, Johnson was editor-publisher of *Boulder Junction-based FYI Northwoods News*, a bi-weekly newspaper serving western Vilas County, Mercer in Iron County, and Marenisco in Gogebic County, Mich.

For more than 15 years, Johnson's journalistic labor of love has been penning his popular "Not that you asked, but . . ." special interest, humor and history column.

An award-winning community journalist, Johnson has earned numerous writing and photography awards from a number of professional trade organizations, including the Wisconsin Newspaper Association and the National Newspaper Association.

A lifelong history buff, Johnson has written three local history books with Arca-

dia Publishing — two Illinois histories, "*Rockford: 1900-World War I*" and "*Rockford: 1920 and Beyond*," and one Ohio history, "*Ashtabula Firefighting*."

In collaboration with the New York-based William T. Grant Foundation, Johnson is currently wrapping up work on a fourth history book with Arcadia focusing on the old nationwide Grants department store chain, "*Known for Values: Remembering the W.T. Grant Company*."

North Woods roots

A fourth-generation Boulder Junction vacationer, Johnson is a first-generation Musky Capital resident.

"I fell in love with Boulder Junction at first sight when I was four years old," Johnson noted. "It was a longtime dream to someday live in Boulder Junction."

It was a dream that came true in 2007. He fulfilled another dream, owning a newspaper in Boulder Junction, with his 2010 purchase of *FYI Northwoods News*.

Active in the Boulder

Junction community, Johnson, a second-generation volunteer firefighter, is a 14-year firefighter with the Boulder Junction Fire Department, where he currently serves as fire chief, public information officer and fire prevention officer.

From 2010-'18, Johnson served on the Boulder Junction Public Library Board of Trustees, including tenures as secretary, vice president and president.

Johnson has been married to Barbara Douglas-Johnson for 34 years. The Johnsons have two adult children, Evelyn, of Chippewa Falls, and Andrew, a political science sophomore at Northern Michigan University in Marquette, Mich.

In addition to a longtime interest in local history, Johnson is also an avid lifelong photographer, with interests in nature, architectural and vintage neon photography.

Johnson also enjoys traveling, with a bucket list goal of doing a Charles Kuralt-esque adventure travel tour of U.S. Hwy. 51 from Hurley south to New Orleans.