

Florida native is new LCSO emergency services manager

ALBANY — Ric Lentz has packed a lot of incident command and search and rescue experience into his 27 years of life.

It was enough to impress Linn County Sheriff Jim Yon to offer him the position of Emergency Services Manager, succeeding Joe Larsen, who held the post for many years. Larsen will continue as SAR coordinator for a time.

“I have always been interested in law enforcement and helping people,” Lentz said.

Lentz grew up in southern Florida, but his career path has taken him a long way from Palm Beach County north of Miami.

He has worked at Golden Gate Canyon State Park near Golden, Colorado, Arches National Park in Utah and for the last two years as a ranger at Crater Lake National Park.

Lentz said he was always interested in law enforcement, which led him to a double major in criminal justice and history at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton, Florida, graduating in 2016.

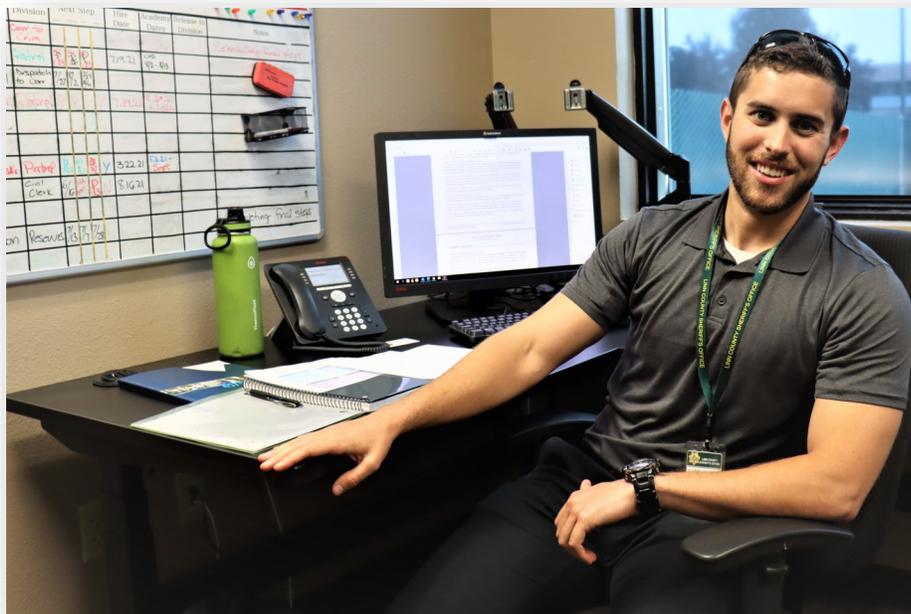
In Colorado, he was introduced to numerous search and rescue operations, as well incident command situations involving wildfires.

“I loved it,” Lentz said.

A seasonal job, Lentz spent his winters back in Florida, where he worked at Palm Beach Atlantic University as a field training officer for campus safety and security officers and helped develop incident command policies.

In 2018, Lentz completed a park ranger law enforcement program and EMT training at Skagit Valley College in Mt. Vernon, Washington, and then was assigned to Arches National Park in Utah.

“Grand County — which includes Arch-



Ric Lentz, 27, grew up in Florida and has extensive emergency services experience in Colorado, Arizona and Oregon.

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es National Park — is one of the busiest in Utah in terms of search and rescue calls,” Lentz said. “In six months, I worked on 30 rescues, everything from someone rolling an ankle to full bore highly technical rescues. The rock is slick, there are lots of visitors and it gets very hot. I learned a tremendous amount about emergency management and preparedness from my time in Utah.”

In 2019, Lentz transferred to Crater Lake National Park, where he gained even more incident management experience in SAR, EMS, Law Enforcement, and Fire.

“We had one incident in which a man fell 1,200 feet and a Coast Guard helicopter was called in,” Lentz said.

Lentz said all of that experience will be invaluable in his new Linn County job.

“This job combines everything I enjoy; emergency management, law enforce-

ment, EMS, fire, and search and rescue,” Lentz said. “Also, Linn County’s location is ideal. I used to be 90 miles to a major grocery store. Now, I can be at the coast or in the mountains in no time at all.”

Lentz said his girlfriend works on Mt. Rainier, so they see each other on weekends. He enjoys hiking, kayaking, rock climbing and working out.

“My main goal is to help this department and our communities grow,” Lentz said. “Working at our national parks means living and working in remote areas. We had to learn to be self-sufficient and do everything ourselves.”

Linn County Sheriff Jim Yon said he is pleased that someone with Lentz’ skills and enthusiasm has joined his staff,

“He brings a lot of experience to us and he is really enjoying living here already,” Yon said.

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