

Jeannette Smith

Biography

I joined Missoula County Sheriff's Office as their Public Information Officer (PIO) in March of 2020, just as many businesses and public office buildings were closing due to the escalation of COVID-19. My training and skills as a Public Information Officer allowed me to network with other communicators throughout Missoula County as we traversed the overwhelming amount of information to be shared during this time.

I grew up in small towns in Oregon and finally settled with my family on a large farm in outside of Grangeville, Idaho. I was raised with a strong work ethic and ability to meet challenges head on. Those qualities have served me throughout my career as I became the first member of my immediate and extended family to graduate from college when I graduated from the University of Idaho with a B.S. in Accounting in the spring of 1993.

Although I started down the path of public accounting, life directed me in a very unexpected direction when I was working for a small county in Idaho and was approached to attend a Public Information Officer's course. Never afraid to give something new a try, I jumped in with both feet. Shortly after completing the course, a fatal helicopter crash occurred within the county and I served as the only PIO that day. What I learned from that experience, good and bad, directed my path firmly in sharing information. I worked ten years with the US Forest Service and became a Type 1 Fire Information Officer. In many ways my job is a double-edged sword. It is a huge honor to serve those in Missoula County by sharing critical information, but I know when I'm called the circumstances are often threatening or tragic.

Outside of work, I enjoy all life has to offer with my loving husband, DJ, and our two dogs, Josi and Mya. We look forward to those times we can visit our three adult children and spoil our 6, soon to be 7, grandchildren.