

Head-to-head burnout

The Memorial Day Run in Minneota last week produced 255 riders, money for two charities and the "burn". In this case motorcycle riders went head to head, caused a storm of smoke and tried to burn out their worn tires. It didn't work, but it was lots of fun for everyone. See more on Page 5. Staff Photo by Byron Higgin.

# Another Minneota officer hired by sheriff

By Byron Higgin Mascot Publisher

It didn't take long for Lyon County Sheriff Eric Wallen to notice the work of Minneota part-

time police officer Austin Thompson.

Tuesday Thompson joined a long list of parttime Minneota officers who made the jump to become county depu-

> But few have done so with notoriety.

'He helped deliver a baby," said Lyon County Commissioner Charlie Sanow.

**Austin Thompson** It got a good laugh, but in the end Thompson was hired as a deputy sheriff.

He was hired at a rate of \$23.27 per hour and is expected to start about September 3.

Last week, Minneota Police Chief Bill Bolt told the Minneota City Council that Thompson would be allowed to continue work as a parttime officer — at least for the coming year.

Thompson, a Minneota graduate, finished his officers training this past year and immediately

was hired by Chief Bolt as a part-time officer in Minneota.

Thompson was involved in the delivery of a baby recently at the town hall in Minneota. He is also a first responder.

"Sure, he can work part-time. A lot of officers have," Commissioner Steve Ritter told The Mas-

Thompson, in a recent article in the Minneota Mascot written by Scott Thoma, said he became interested in being an officer when he accepted a dare from classmates and asked Minneota parttime officer Joel Walerius if he could ride along.

Walerius later became one of those Minneota part-timers to join the sheriff's staff.

"Sure come along," Walerius told Thompson. He found the work, "Interesting and appealing," and decided to make law enforcement his career. He went to Minnesota West in Worthington and did his on-the-job training with Chief Bolt and the Minneota police department.

He began as a bicycle officer, helping people in the community. Now, he's trading in that bike for

a sheriff's deputy vehicle. Chief Bolt has been one of Thompson's supporters. "He has shown a high aptitude for working with people and understanding the concerns of others," said Chief Bolt.

Now, only 20 years old, he's embarking on a

Most likely Chief Bolt will be looking for another part-time officer — someone Sheriff Wallen can steal from him again.

Actually, it's a win-win for everyone. Minneota gets officer help, so does the county -Austin Thompson is in the middle of it all.

# Minneota loses a friend

Minneota lost a friend and well-known resident Tuesday morning when 69-year-old Richard "Fuzzy" Downing died in a one-car crash roughly a mile south of Minneota.

An early-morning accident, about 4 a.m., in the 3300 block of Lyon County Road 3, about one mile south of Minneota, resulted in his death.

The accident at about 4 a.m. Tuesday morning was a lone-vehicle accident. Sheriff's deputies reported the vehicle was over-turned in the west ditch of County Road 3 and that Downing was ejected from the vehicle and was pronounced dead at the scene of the accident.

Downing was driving a 2005 GMC Envoy southbound on County Road three when the vehicle lost control, entered the west ditch and over-turned.

"It does not appear that Downing was wearing a seat belt at the time of the crash," said Chief Lyon County Deputy Todd Roelsema.



partments and first responders North Ambulance responded to the ac-According

Police and Fire De-

unofficial reports, Downing may have been driving to work for a company he worked with part-

**Fuzzy Downing** He was an avid follower of Minneota

sports, particularly since he had several grandchildren actively involved. He was "wrestling man" who always was at basketball games for support. According to the Lyon County Sheriff's Office, an investigation is ongoing.

# Weather

Hi Lo Prec. August 14 79 61 0.00 August 15 84 55 0.22 August 16 84 57 0.00 August 17 89 60 0.66 August 18 75 57 0.27 August 19 86 52 0.00 August 20 87 64 0.00

#### **Outlook:**

The highs will be in the 70's and with lows in the 50's and 60's. Highest chance of rain on Sunday (40 percent).





## Lots of fun for

everyone

The Porter Harvest Fest is less like a Fest and more like a reunion as everyone comes home to Porter to relive the past and catch up with friends. The waterfights are always fun but this time they brought laughter to Josie Frank of Canby as she tried to hang on to the hose and hit the barrel in the air — despite the fact her eyes were closed. See More **Harvest Fest Photos** inside. Staff Photo by Byron Higgin.

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