

# IMPulse

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**The Idaho Statesman**  
Boise, Idaho  
**Tuesday Sept. 5, 2017**  
by **Brian Whitlock**  
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## **GUEST OPINION: Eclipse lesson: Coordination will continue to serve Idahoans well**

No matter where your viewpoint, in the path of totality or even a little outside of it, the Aug. 21 eclipse was awe-inspiring. Equally inspirational was the way Idahoans across the state worked together in the months leading up to the big event.

Unless you secluded yourself on top of Borah Peak months ago, you know the eclipse was a major focus of the news and social media throughout the summer. For many in Idaho, however, the planning and preparation started months ago. The goal? To make sure Idahoans and the thousands of visitors coming to see the eclipse had the best experience possible. Not an easy task when there are so many unknowns.

From first responders, hospitals and the National Guard to parks and forest and land managers, communications experts and transportation authorities, everyone had a hand in preparing for and successfully navigating the days surrounding the big event. What impressed me most was the high level of professionalism, the shared commitment to our common goal, and the fluidity of working across industries and professions —both public and private.

Behind the scenes in communities across the 300-plus miles the eclipse traveled across Idaho were hundreds of people keeping systems running, information flowing, and tending to those who needed help. Among those were Idaho's community hospitals.

Oftentimes, we use the phrase "always there" when talking about how Idaho hospitals serve the community, which was clearly evident over the last week. Hospitals in the path of totality, many of them in small, very rural communities, worked for months to ensure they had the expert medical professionals, supplies and transportation necessary in the event of a mass casualty event or high patient volume. They staged ambulances and helicopters in remote locations to improve transportation and evacuation in areas where the roads might be impassable. They worked with first responders, neighboring hospitals outside of the path, and each other to share resources and create contingency plans. This same dedication could be found in all of the other agencies and public entities working to keep us safe.

Those of us who helped coordinate efforts with the Idaho Office of Emergency Management were encouraged by the positive outcomes and that the hard work of so many unsung heroes paid off in an enjoyable, safe large-scale event.

But even more importantly, it demonstrated to me how much we gain in working together.

The lines of communication and relationships strengthened during the eclipse will continue to serve Idaho well as those of us focused on the health and safety of Idahoans remain "always there."

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