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Steamboat Neighbors

Adding Adrenaline to Steamboat Springs ~ Meet Clay and Hannah Hockel

Cover photo by Walker and Son Photography

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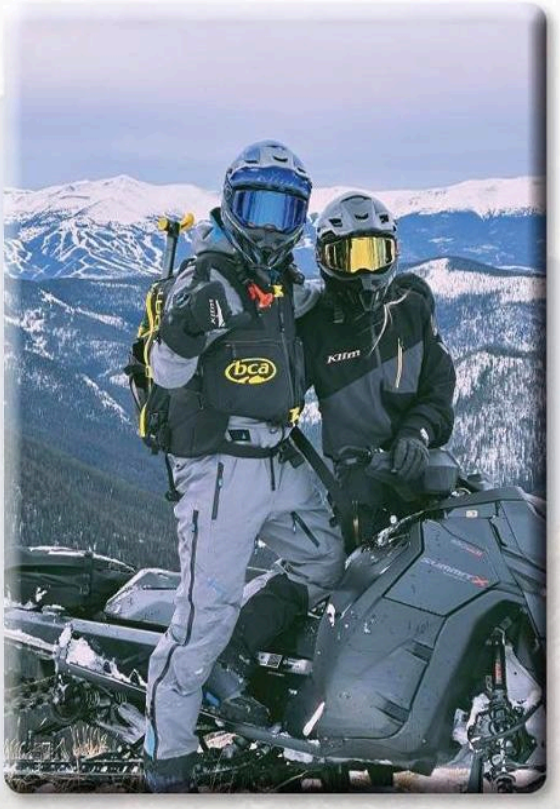
bringing people together

Meet Clay and Hannah Hockel
Adding Adrenaline to Steamboat Springs

By Erin Campbell
Photos courtesy of The Hockels



Sharing his passion for snowmobiling through his company Thunderstruck Adventures in Steamboat Springs, young entrepreneur Clay Hockel is adding a bit of adrenaline to the community. Along with wife Hannah, this young couple resides in the Stagecoach area and certainly has a focused and bright future ahead of them.

Growing up in Minnesota, Clay discovered snowmobiling on flatter terrain, but deepened his passion for the sport when he headed west. However, prior to his full-time move west, Clay grew up working with his father for Eagle Ag Consulting, providing analytic chemistry services to farmers in the Midwest. While his dad was the expert in chemistry and biology, Clay focused more on the business side of things. Having attended Colorado Mountain College (CMC) in Steamboat with a focus in business, Clay took what he learned to elevate Eagle Ag Consulting to the next level as owner and operator. Together they combined their efforts to "work with America's farmers on best practices for their bottom line as well as the environment," explains Clay. "Ultimately, we were helping to feed America with the least amount of inputs possible."

During his time with Eagle Ag Consulting, Clay was still pursuing his snowmobiling dream on the side, and even became a professional rider for Thunderstruck Films, which produces extreme backcountry snowmobiling movies. Clay impressively describes how he "once dropped a 90-foot vertical cliff on a four-stroke snowmobile and lived to tell about it!" He also became the first-ever employee for startup company Evolution Powersports, that originally had ties to both Steamboat and Minnesota. Previous Steamboat resident and co-owner of Evolution Powersports Todd Zuccone was Clay's original connection piece to the community, as he would spend time testing the latest and greatest technologies in the motor and powersports industry in and around Steamboat Springs.

While still owning and operating Eagle Ag Consulting in Minnesota, Clay also purchased Thunderstruck Films when the opportunity arose, and simultaneously started Thunderstruck Adventures in Steamboat Springs. Owning and operating three companies in his young twenties, Clay proved to have an impressive business acumen that transcended state lines. For nearly four years, Clay was back and forth between Steamboat and Minnesota running his companies, but recently moved on from Eagle Ag Consulting to make the official and full-time move to Steamboat Springs.

Now focused primarily on Thunderstruck Adventures, Clay enjoys sharing true backcountry snowmobiling in and around Steamboat with his guests. Operating with a solid crew of about 25, Thunderstruck Adventures provides different levels of riding tailored to different levels of comfort. Offering a groomed trail ride with the option to explore open meadows along the way, as well as a higher adrenaline ride exploring more extreme terrain, Clay and Thunderstruck Adventures has a little something for everyone.

Hannah, who discovered snowmobiling through Clay, also enjoys her time on a snowmobile, but has some unique passions of her own. Originally from California, Hannah received her bachelor's degree in business administration with an emphasis in real estate from the University of San Diego. After graduation, she studied theology at the University of Nations in Switzerland and volunteered for an outreach program in Tanzania. Once back in the United States, Hannah began

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Clay's Vertical drop on a 4-stroke Snowmobile in Alpine, Wyoming in 2016

Thunderstruck Team and Customers

Oceanside, CA wedding
Photo Credit: the wu photo

her career in property management in Orange County, California, and is continuing down that same career path in Steamboat Springs as the operations coordinator for Moving Mountains.

With a mother originally from Austria, a father originally from Germany and a husband from the United States, Hannah holds three different citizenships and speaks German fluently. She loves traveling and has explored 20 different countries thus far. Hannah explains that "traveling started during the summers going to Austria to visit family, and then as I got older, I traveled often with an outreach mission program I was involved with. One year we visited nine countries, and I especially loved my time in the Middle East where everyone was so friendly, and the natural surroundings were just so beautiful."

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This young couple first met through Clay's sister in the fall of 2022 in Malibu, California, and hit it off instantaneously. "We immediately felt a strong connection and began a long-distance relationship for one year. In the fall of 2023 we got married, and then Hannah moved to Steamboat after our wedding and honeymoon," details Clay. Having only dated for seven months before getting engaged, one of Clay and Hannah's favorite memories together has been their honeymoon to Dubai where they skied indoors and to The Maldives where they swam with whale sharks in the Indian Ocean.

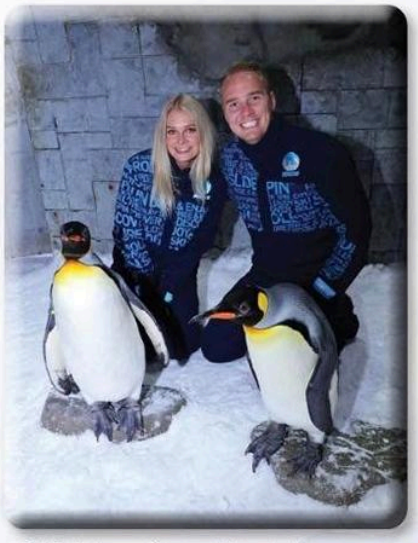
Practically still newlyweds, Clay and Hannah love to travel and are excited about future adventures together, but for now are enjoying everything Steamboat has to offer. Residing in the Stagecoach area, these two are loving the beautiful and natural scenery, along with how peaceful their neighborhood is. "We absolutely love how close we are to the reservoir as well as the hiking trails. The Stagecoach area is without a doubt up and coming and we are excited to be in this newly developing area. We were so pleased to find out how incredibly welcoming and nice neighbors in the Stagecoach area have been," says Clay. "Stagecoach is a close-knit community where neighbors look out for one another."

A unique engagement with parents in attendance: George Klause, Birgit Klause, Hannah Hockel, Clay Hockel, Karla Hockel, & Mark Hockel

Moving into their first house

While adopting a dog and starting a family is something they are looking forward to in the future, for now, they are enjoying the adventures of being a young couple. Together they have climbed some impressive chutes in the mountains of Colorado on a snowmobile and enjoyed overnight backpacking the Zirkel Circle. They are big foodies and love trying all the great restaurants Steamboat has to offer but are also discovering the joy of cooking together at home. Clay and Hannah attend the Steamboat Christian Center and appreciate how much the church is involved with and gives back to the community. And as Colorado residents, they especially enjoy attending shows at Red Rocks whenever they can.

Backpacking with Morgan Hockel (Clays sister) in the Zirkels



Ski-Dubai meet & greet with penguins

Clay and Hannah Powder Turning Ahead, Together... By Walker & Son Photography

Living by a family motto of "if we stand together, we stand a chance," Clay and Hannah, who absolutely love their Steamboat Springs community, have a thoughtful message to share. "Keep supporting local businesses and remember to be kind to others. You never know what someone else is going through, and extending compassion, patience and being slow to anger helps everyone get along in today's world. Life is way too short to always be angry or upset with one another."

With Clay's impressive business acumen and Hannah's worldly perspective, this young couple is certainly making a positive impact on their community. Although young, they both have a wonderful sense of eagerness and dedication to share, and through Thunderstruck Adventures, they are certainly adding a little bit more adrenaline to Steamboat Springs.