

Stolar leaving KGAN/FOX 28 for East Coast

Written by Jim Ecker

Tuesday, 26 May 2015 19:34 - Last Updated Thursday, 28 May 2015 04:42



Landon Stolar says he's enjoyed his nearly three years as a sports reporter at KGAN-TV and FOX 28 in Cedar Rapids, but he feels the tug of home and is planning to return to the East Coast once his duties here are done this week.

His final day on the air will be Friday.

Stolar says his departure is a "mutual decision" between himself and the television stations. His contract is expiring and he wants to go home.

"It's been a wonderful 2 1/2 years here," he said. "As much as I've grown here as a journalist and a broadcaster, it was just time to get close to home.

"I'm from New Jersey, my family is back there, my friends are back there and it was just time to get back. I'm pretty excited and eager to get back east.

"As fun as it's been here, it just hasn't felt like home."

Stolar, 26, graduated from the Newhouse School of Communications at Syracuse University and spent approximately two years at the NBC affiliate in Bozeman, Mont., before moving to Cedar Rapids in October of 2012.

He has served as the interim sports director at KGAN/FOX 28 since Jared Aarons left last

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summer, but never had the title as sports director.

Stolar and Aarons worked together for about 18 months and Stolar called him a "great mentor."

"He's the reason I feel I've grown and shined and really developed in this business in Cedar Rapids," said Stolar. "I'd like to see how far I can take it."

"I've been told by a lot of people that I'm pretty darn good at this. I like to think I am."

Stolar has applied for three jobs on the East Coast and is confident he'll find a suitable spot that's closer to home in East Brunswick, N.J.

"Here's my problem," he said, smiling. "I've got a lot of self-confidence and I really feel I can take this far, and I want to see how far I can take it."

"But at the same time it's a very competitive business and I'm glad for my time here, that the people have been kind enough to welcome me to their games, their practices and sometimes even into their homes. It's been a blast."

Stolar cherishes the "Ed Thomas Coach of the Week" stories he's done here. It's a series named in honor of the late Aplington-Parkersburg football coach and salutes coaches for their work in the community.

"That's been wonderful, to see so many coaches in the area that have really carried on his legacy," said Stolar. "We always cover who wins and which coach has all the wins and which team is doing well and winning the championship. This was really a different type of story."

"We got a chance to meet a lot of people who are doing good things in the community."

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Stolar also enjoyed doing a story about a deaf girl who played for a roller derby team in Cedar Rapids. "Those are the stories that really stick out for me," he said.

He said he'll leave Cedar Rapids with fond memories.