

## Our City

I wrote about a month ago about the possibility of being able to rebuild Fort Hall Avenue from Harrison Street to the Highway 39 By-pass. That possibility is now happening as Street Superintendent Daren Dahlke received word last week that indeed funding had been appropriated by the State legislature and signed into law by Governor Otter. Our thanks goes to our partners at the engineering firm Harper-Leavitt for helping the City secure the one million dollar Local Strategic Initiative Program grant. As a City, our ability to partner with firms such as Harper-Leavitt, JUB and Keller have made so much of what we have accomplished in the past twelve years possible. I am excited and optimistic that such partnerships will lead to even more improvements and enhancements in the years to come.

As the calendar gets into June you may not share that same optimism as travel in town, especially in the commercial district, will become troublesome. Our hope as we set bid dates last Wednesday is to have the reconstruction of Fort Hall, Whitman and Van Buren completed by mid-July. It is my hope that while Fort Hall is being rebuilt we can also replace the water main and sewer line that runs its length. Those funds will come out of the Capital Improvement budgets of both Water and Waste Water and are part of the reason that in years past and in those to come slight increases in those respective fees that you pay each month have been necessary. Dahlke and Water/Waste Water Superintendent Pete Cortez will be meeting with engineers from Harper-Leavitt this week to determine if the water and sewer projects are within our budget to complete.

Coinciding around the rebuild of the infrastructure in the commercial district will also be some major paving projects from the streets that were damaged a year ago due to the severe winter. It is again our hope to coordinate the resurfacing of streets like Oregon Trail through the golf course and several others throughout town with the contractor who receives the bid on the Fort Hall project and in doing so make our funds stretch even further. Funding for the winter damaged streets is federally sourced disaster relief money and has also already been approved for this purpose. Of course if we are lucky all of these projects will be taking place at the same time as installation of new sidewalks from south City Park down Bannock Street to Lee Street; which we also plan to have completed by late July. A note to City Park users; we plan to start construction at the City Park in June so that it causes the least inconvenience to all the activities that take place there in July and early August.

I have been at this long enough to know all about the best-laid-plans; but, I remain positive in my outlook and in being able to work with you through what may be some difficult commuting and parking conditions this summer. As I think of difficult conditions my thanks goes out to all our City personnel who are pitching in to help take care of an issue at the waste water treatment plant. The membranes that clean the water operate by reverse-osmosis and as such require a lot of air in the process. It seems that over the course of the last year or so small chips of paint from the processing basin have clogged some of the air diffusers that facilitate the function of the membranes. The problem appears to be localized in one membrane basin; yet that leaves 1600 two-foot by four-foot membrane panels that have to be manually taken out and cleaned. Yes, it is that kind of job and it has to be completed by March 1 in order to keep everything else at the facility operating correctly. So thank you to all those who are

helping get this membrane basin back on line; I am not sure even Mike Rowe of Dirty Jobs would even want to be invited to this task, but I know with certainty that it will get done.

Until next week...