

## Our City

The warmer weather seems to be upon us as we enter the second full week in March. With it are continuing signs of the winter we may have left behind. Flows below the dam are up to 15,000 CFS while the reservoir teeters at 91% full and the snow pack in the Upper Snake River Basin remains over 150%. My biggest hope in this regard is that temperatures remain moderate and snow melt is a slow and steady process in the high country; but it is not up to me, just like so many things around our community and region. I have no say in the matter.

As the weather warms and you are able to get out and walk, ride or drive as the snow and ice have left our streets at least for now, you undoubtedly have noticed that the winter was not kind to them. In the words of one patron from Eisenhower Street, "It looks like a bomb went off." Indeed it does. Last Friday Frank Marvin, of our Street and Sanitation Department, placed warning cones around the "crater" that appeared in the street in a matter of days as the ground beneath the asphalt began to thaw and the water, snow, and ice damage was manifested. It is happening all over town and the really concerning news is that we may not be as bad off as many of our neighboring communities. But knowing our budget for street repairs and maintenance, I am fearful that as a city we may not be able to effectively make all the needed repairs. And, further as American Falls and Power County never qualified for any disaster relief this winter, I doubt we will qualify for State or Federal fund to help patch up the mess our streets may become in the months before us. Nevertheless, Superintendent Daren Dahlke and I will continue to seek out additional funding sources to help with what is ahead.

Dahlke, Parks and Recreation Superintendent Chris Fehringer and I are also in the process of beginning work on the new tennis courts. Fehringer and Dahlke met with Alan Geisbrecht of JUB Engineering to review the plans and take samples of the current base and sub-base to be tested for suitability. Should both samples come back usable, current asphalt prices look favorable to get the project completed with the funds and labor that has been pledged and donated. If the base materials have to be replaced, that may be a different matter; but we remain optimistic. I will keep you posted.

You may recall that we were having issues at the Waste Water Treatment Plant because the air blowers that were initially installed were too big, 75 HP, for our current levels of waste water. We had ordered a smaller 30 HP blower to help moderate the levels of dissolved oxygen in the processing basins so the bacteria could better do their job of breaking things down. Well, that blower is now fully installed and will be coming on line this week and operations at the plant should be optimized as the processes get dialed in and refined. The plant is now capable of adequately handling our current population and has ability to handle growth in our community should it occur.

As Spring is just around the corner, at least on the calendar, so is the meat and potatoes part of this year's State legislative session. Many of our local elected officials along with School Superintendent Ron Bolinger and I will begin our Wednesday morning conference call to Boise with Senator Jim Guthrie and Representatives Kelley Packer and Randy Armstrong. I thank our legislators for their willingness to communicate and work with us. It is a relationship that I believe has served us well and while collectively we may not always see eye-to-eye it remains a

very good working relationship between our local officials and our legislators. I attribute that to our ability to openly communicate, discuss perspectives and work through differences.

It is that ability to work through differences that makes our society plausible and for the most part successful. In my tenure as mayor I have had disagreements with those I work with and for. But, to my recollection those disagreements have never turned disagreeable and I am proud of that. Last Friday, I was standing up front in City Hall visiting with Clerk Herndon when a lady, who reminded me of my grandmother, came in to pay her bill. She was dressed in a light purple outfit with matching earrings, looking very much like my grandmother. Grandma never went out that she wasn't "presentable." I got that sense from this kind lady too. I had never met her before but she knew who I was and she had some kind words to share with me. She said, "It's best to give roses while people can enjoy them." Roses, being her words of kindness and gratitude. Most of you probably know Rita Miser; she has lived here for 35 years, "American Falls is her home." It was a special moment when I got to meet her. The roses she gave me made my day and make me proud to be a part of this community so many wonderful people call home.

Until next week...