

Our City

He knew of what he spoke when he said, “That is a really good group of kids there Marc.” He knew more so than even the relatives of some of the kids who had seen them perform and made similar comments. I have been at this teaching gig for quite a while now; long enough to have retired a year ago. I almost did, but circumstances changed around this time last year and I decided to stick around and see what would happen. Some would say I had paid my dues and built something that as a community we could all be proud, others have not been so generous. None of that makes much difference to me as it has always been about the kids and providing opportunities when I am at school and providing our best for you all in the city after my day job is done. That part has grown into a sometimes frantic yet comfortable routine.

On the tough days there are the two things that keep me in the game; those he called “really good kids” and you my neighbors in American Falls. As you read this over our spring break I am already looking beyond the 35 members competing at the State FFA Leadership events and even the bidding process on several grants, past those things and our Chapter banquet where we recognized our FFA members’ achievements and program sponsors, past the awarding of bids, past even our State FFA Career Development Events in June and the completion of four major city projects to the coming school year and starting an almost entirely new Ag program and providing never offered before opportunities to all of our kids. I don’t know how any of it will turn out for sure, but history can be a good predictor. That group of “really good kids” will compete exceptionally well and the City projects will be completed in a timely and quality fashion. Next fall will be extraordinarily exciting, but not without hurdles. It is easy to write about and even easier to talk about, the work will be hard.

And, I suppose, that is what makes them “really good kids” they aren’t afraid of hard work or long hours or making a commitment to one another to each make their best better. They are no different in my opinion than Street Superintendent Daren Dahlke who with the help of Chris Fehringer has made so much possible for this coming summer. I know it is the “I can” attitude of the “really good kids” and those at the City that make any of what I am a part of possible. It is contagious and so cool to watch when it spreads. Not long ago the Ag program was fortunate to have four members qualify for competition at our State Leadership Events now we routinely qualify over 20. Not long ago we struggled to find funding to make small improvements to our infrastructure, now we work together to complete millions of dollars’ worth of projects. You wonder what is the difference between then and now. It’s not what or who you think.

Two words answer the question: opportunities and expectations. Too often it is easier to let the opportunity that may require effort, which will be uncomfortable and even provide the possibility of failure in the public eye to pass us by. Few choose the possibility of failure; yet, the “really good ones” always do. They have a different expectation of themselves than most; they dare failure to become better, to make things better for those who can’t do so for themselves and they do it without thought of self.

I chose to continue to teach and run for mayor again because I like the company I keep. I love the student who is terrified of public speaking and a leadership role yet chooses to do both because she gets “it.” I enjoy working for you at City Hall because I am surrounded by “will do” not we can’t. Beyond that, I am excited about the opportunities on the horizon both at

school and here at the City. I remain positive and affirmed in the relationships developed between all the groups I have the good fortune to work with; but I am especially optimistic and excited to continue to work with the man who saw in my kids those same qualities I do. As our new Superintendent Randy Jensen has also proven to be an exceptional ally in City matters as well and will continue to be one of the reasons American Falls is the very best place to live.

Until next week...