

Our City

Do you ever get that feeling of foreboding, that sense all is not well or something is going wrong but you can't put your finger on it? I had that sense yesterday, last Wednesday. It started with a 7:00 am with a call to our State legislators. I got a feeling of frustration on the part of those elected to represent us in Power County; a sense that while each has been elected as a Republican, they have members within that party in the legislature who seem to be there for nefarious reasons. I get the same ill feeling in my gut as I watch the national news.

As Senator Guthrie, Representatives Packer and Armstrong and I discussed our crumbling roads and infrastructure it became clear there are those in their caucus who completely oppose any ways or means of support at any level, be it state, county or local. And, while disaster relief, \$52 million, for some counties and communities has been allocated from the State's budget, no help appears to be coming to those communities that endured the same winter but were slightly less unfortunate and were not declared disaster areas. Last night at our recessed city council meeting, Lan Smith, a regional liaison for the Local Highway Technical Assistance Council (LHTAC) left us in the chambers with much the same feeling as I got from our elected representatives. While there are those who do their level best to try and propose legislation that will allow communities to maintain their infrastructure, there are still those intent on blocking such attempts at every turn. So far, the blockers seem to be winning and our streets continue to crumble. Our annual street budget line for maintenance and repair is about \$100,000, about 300 feet of new asphalt. It is not sustainable. The citizens and communities of Idaho deserve better.

And, better is possible! All you have to do is look at the results of last Tuesday's school levy and bond elections; where nearly 70% of our community voted to build a new Intermediate School through a bond measure and 77% voted to keep all the doors open at all of our schools for the next two years by passing the supplemental levy. Well done, one and all! It gives me hope and fosters resilience in my belief that things can be better when consideration is made to look past the "me" and think of the "we."

A week ago, last Saturday, over 50 volunteers and more than 70 donors and buyers raised over \$7500 for the local FFA Alumni scholarship fund. Later this spring, scholarships will be awarded to graduating seniors to begin college and Alumni members currently attending college. This year \$7000 will be awarded to current FFA members and Alumni as they pursue more education in an effort to become fuller and more productive citizens and if we are lucky they will return to our community. I couldn't be prouder to be associated with such a fine group of people. They are indeed what makes American Falls the best place to live!

That feeling of foreboding, at times, remains in light of all the good things happening in our community. Yet, I know as well as you that better is possible; but, better always takes work and dedication. Of those I know there is plenty as evidenced once again last week. We can build on the successes of the past; that is how progress is made. The past is however, the past and our collective efforts will be called upon over and over again to fix and maintain those parts of our community that so desperately need it.

Until next week...