

Our City

It's almost like having both hands tied behind your back while trying to navigate an overloaded boat through miles of whitewater. About all you can do is dig in with your feet and heels and hope for the best. I have done it before, although never without my hands; you can ask Mark Beebe, it didn't end well for me at Granite or Wild Sheep in Hells Canyon. The boat, passengers and supplies made it; I however nearly drowned three different times.

That was over twenty years ago, but as I talked with Street Superintendent Daren Dahlke it seems like we are both in that undersized rubber raft again and what we have before us is ominous. You will have noticed if you live here that the Street crew has begun excavating the larger winter damaged portions of our streets with the backhoe and loader. Little can be done beyond that until the ground beneath dries out. Yet, even then our hands are tied as we have limited resource to patch back these vast sections of streets. The smaller holes throughout town are being patched as weather allows; however, a patch is a patch and not really a fix.

This Wednesday Dahlke, City Clerk Herndon and I will be meeting with the Power County Emergency Management official Di Jones and the Southeast Idaho Area Field Officer for the Idaho Office of Emergency Management Mark L. Stephensen. We will be discussing what if anything can be done to help with our disastrous street situation. That we are meeting is a positive and while I am not sure if anything will come from the meeting at least we will be one step closer to seeing if any funds may be available to relieve our situation or if we need to take much of our local street infrastructure back nearly a hundred years to gravel; something that we can maintain on such a limited budget. Sorry; I am not in gest, Dalhke and I have spoken about entire blocks and streets where that may indeed be the case should disaster relief not be forthcoming.

I hate being all doom and gloom. I apologize for coming across that way; but there are somethings you just can't pump full of sunshine. Another such thing is our City sewers. As per our public notices, Waste Water Superintendent Pete Cortez and his department began flushing sewers this past week and I wish I could say it was with sunshine. Despite the property owners and the City trying to do everything right, mishaps still occurred with sludge being pushed back into the drains of residences. As was the case a year ago when similar events transpired some of our sewer infrastructure is built pretty close to grade level and not very deep, because of the solid rock some homes are built over; while still others may have blocked sewer venting. I know Pete is doing everything he can to prevent this from happening as I signed the purchase order for over \$7,000 that allowed him to buy new nozzles that were specifically designed for flushing these kinds of sewer lines. I apologize on behalf of the City to the property owners that were adversely affected by our efforts. If you feel you need to file a claim with the City please see Clerk Herndon and she will give you the appropriate paperwork to complete.

Sometimes though the best you can do is in fact the best you can do. We should hear back this week on the testing that was done on the existing base material at the tennis courts. If the tests return favorably that project should proceed nicely. A special thanks to the Bank of Commerce who matched our Tree City USA tree grant which will allow us to plant \$600 worth of new trees on the golf course. And, while the golf course is in extremely good shape we find

ourselves having to clean graffiti off several tee box signs and also at the mercy of the weather for golfers to enjoy the course.

On Tuesday of last week Police Chief Brandon Wilkinson and I met with the new Special Assistant U.S. Attorney for the District of Idaho, Bryan Wheat. Wheat vowed to work with our department and others in the region to help stem the flow of meth and heroine as Interstates 84, 86 and 15 continue to be the preferred route for transport and distribution of the drugs to eastern Idaho and Montana. I look forward to continuing the good work and successes of the Eastern Idaho Partnership in this and similarly serious endeavors. The Partnership is making a positive difference in all our communities. If my Emergency Management meeting this Wednesday should turn out as productive perhaps we will be able to navigate this bit of troubled water.

Until next week...