

Our City

Thirty-nine FFA members, Emily Fisher, Daniel Heikkila, Howard Wiesenberger and I got home from State FFA events in Moscow last Friday night just after the rain had stopped. It was almost full dark when I made it to my house, but even in the dark as I pulled up I could tell something was out of place. Have you ever had that sense that something was moved or out of place but you can't quite put your finger on what it is? That was it; nothing bad, but something out of place and different. And, as OCD as I am it left me uneasy and restless all night.

The next morning as I looked out the front window it all fell into place. The street sign was different. It was taller, brighter, brand-spanking-new and had been moved about one foot closer to the power and light pole on the corner. As I ran a few errands while I waited for the grass to dry so I could mow, I noticed that the street department had had a very productive week while I was in Moscow. If I had remembered Superintendent Dahlke's weekly report everything would have fallen into place much quicker as the department is now at full staff. Part of the crew continues to install new street signs throughout town while the other is trying to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear as they work to patch and rehabilitate the devastation left by this last winter.

It is the first time in a long time that the Street Department has been able to staff two full crews. As a matter of fact, as late as just last month is the first time in years the City has been at full staff in all departments. It bodes well for productivity and service. However; as we work through the budget season a full staff nearly eliminates any discretionary funding in any department. Although, the further good news to you is that there will be no need for rate increases this year in the Water, Waste Water or Sanitation departments. That fact pleases me. You may recall ten years ago as the City worked to pass the bond for a new Sunbeam water line and waste water treatment plant, it was predicted we might have to raise rates up to nearly \$135. Now, I am not George H. W. Bush and telling you there will be "no new taxes" or rates, but I am confident that current rates will suffice for now.

There are some maintenance, equipment and security issues that need to be taken care of in both the Water and Waste Water departments and we need a new garbage truck; but that can all be managed within the current rate structure. This fall the Water department will receive a grant that will allow for the survey and report of all our underground infrastructure; and this month the Waste Water department will begin videoing our sewer lines to identify trouble spots. Next year we will begin replacing undersized or worn out water lines as the budget allows and the trouble spots in the sewer system will begin to be replaced. More work will be able to be done in the Water department as our bond payment is not nearly as big there as the Waste Water department.

No word has been received from the State or Federal agencies as to the disaster relief needed to fully repair our streets. According to Di Jones, Emergency Manager for Power County, it is going to take some time. I take that to mean months and/or years. She is doing everything she can and I thank her for that. The wheels of bureaucracy turn at a snail's pace sometimes.

I also need to thank the FFA program sponsors who made the State events in Moscow possible for the 39 members who competed. And, they did compete. Fifty two Chapters were

represented and over 750 individuals competed in the 13 different career development events. The American Falls Chapter place second in Marketing Plan, third in Agricultural Communications and had numerous top ten finishes. Thanks to all who made it possible.

Until next week...