

## Our City

American Falls City Code, taken from the International Fire Code, Section 307 – Open burning, recreational fires and portable outdoor fireplace. About two months ago my daughter Frances bought a house here in town. The house was built in 1920 and sits on a double lot surrounded by an overgrown hedge and nearly 20 mature trees. At one time it was one of the most beautiful yards in town; upon Frances's purchase it was an overgrown mess. As her father, I was against the purchase for obvious reasons, as mayor I was all in because I knew it would get cleaned up. She is a hard worker and enjoys a challenge. Well, she got one – the challenge that is. Probably more than she bargained for. As her cleanup efforts began, a limb and brush pile grew uncontrollably in her yard. Lacking any means to haul it off, her solution was to burn it. OOPS. Upon seeing the mushroom cloud of smoke billowing above the tree tops in town, City Police officer Larry Jones responded to issue Frances a warning citation for open burning; and rightfully so according to City code 307.

Recently, we have been getting several calls regarding similar open burning occurrences. Without citing the entire ordinance, open burning is prohibited within the city and its impact area according to Section 307.1.1. However, there are a few minor exceptions: any open flame must be contained in an approved container like a BBQ grill and be kept 15 feet from a structure or in an established fire ring that will contain a pile not more than three feet wide and two feet tall and 25 feet from any flammable structure. This ordinance exists for the safety and health of all. The recent complaints regarded health issues of neighbors who are adverse to the effects of smoke because of respiratory problems. Please be considerate of your neighbors. The code exists to protect you both. As the weather remains hot everything will begin to dry and form all manner of kindling. Please also do your part and help us avoid emergency fire calls.

The City's emergency relief call for street damage was answered in part recently. It appears that sometimes the government is actually there to help. There are currently three rounds of considered funding from the Emergency Relief Fund (ERF). The first round produced 180 project applications with requested funds of just under \$32 million. During the first round of funding the City was approved for funding for parts of the following streets (the number associated with each street identifies our priority of repair): Fillmore 1, Tyhee 1, Hillcrest 1, Hillcrest 2, Idanha 4, Madison 1, Oregon Trail 1, and Oregon Trail 2. These are the worst parts of each street; some of which are already fixed. The second round of funding requests produced even more applications than the first round, with 183 submitted. In addition to the 183, there were 35 applicants that were moved from Round One to Round Two for reconsideration, making the total requested funds for Round Two just under \$22 million. Oregon Trail 2 from above was one of those.

The remaining sections of streets have been moved to Round Three for funding consideration and include: Teton 2, McKinley 1, Polk 1, Eisenhower 1, Van Buren 1, Teton 1, Adams 1, Madison 2, Bannock 1, Bennett 2, Johnson 1, Tyhee 2, Arthur 1, Idanha 2, Idanha 3, Bannock 2, Bennett 1, Adams 2, Idanha 1, Whitman 1 and Jefferson 1. We should find out later this month their funding status.

When you read this much of Pocatello, Hillcrest, Bennett, Sunset Lane and Shirley Lane will have been chip sealed by the street department in conjunction the County Highway District. Later this week Water Superintendent Pete Cortez and I will meet with Commissioner Lasley to begin investigating a long-term solution to the Cemetery's water issue; we are exploring reuse possibilities from the Waste Water Treatment Plant.

Although we often hear of how dysfunctional government is and how inconvenient many of its ordinances or laws are, there are actually times when the functionality of government does what it is intended to do and that is to better serve the people. Frances now enjoys small contained fires in compliance with our fire code and our streets are seeing relief and repair because sometimes the system actually works; both instances make things better for the whole.

Until next week...