

Our City

The week that was fell lightly into place not unlike a well-cast fly before a rising trout. The Saturday before last, I cast PMD emergers to rising rainbows and cutthroat. The rust of winter and the burdensome cast of large weighted streamers but a distant feeling. As more trout came to net than didn't, I thought of the week of work before me as the hatch faded. On the City side of things, before me lay employee evaluations, the negotiation of two critical contracts and an honest effort to finalize the FY18 budget. On the school front, I had a \$10,000 grant to finalize and submit along with the final review and submission of our FFA National Chapter application as our Chapter Officers work to see how we stack up against the very best in the nation. Time will tell on the matters at school. At the City, things seemed to happen in a manner that I believe will benefit all involved.

I am not a huge fan of formal evaluations for the implied fact that they are formal; I don't like to get them or give them, but they do serve a purpose as we all have things that can be improved upon. Obviously, I will not delve into details about those at the City who choose to work for you and I know I often speak favorably about all our employee in this column and in person; rightfully so. But, fellow members of our community, I take a great deal of pride in saying that I am fortunate to work with some of the very best among us; people who work day-in and day-out doing what they can to make your lives in American Falls better.

I would also extend my thanks to County Commissioners Lasley, Funk and Andersen as we negotiated another dispatch contract that I believe serves both the City and the County well. You know I often hear rumblings about a fractured and contentious relationship that supposedly exists between the City and the County; from my perspective nothing could be further from reality. I have always found the Commissioners very approachable and willing to do what they believe is in everyone's best interest. Do we always agree on all matters? No. But, a workable compromise can usually be found and for that I thank them. What I appreciate most is that at times we can agree to disagree and still walk away as friends. One issue doesn't cloud another and positive things happen for all of us. Isn't that what public service is supposed to be? Finding a way to serve those we were elected to represent, to do what we can to make their lives safer and in the end better because of the decisions we make.

My thanks extends also to Randy Budge, managing partner at Racine Law Offices, for again agreeing to represent the City as general counsel, on Planning and Zoning matters and in Magistrate Court. The services they provide are exceptional and at the pinnacle of professionalism. The City Council will discuss and vote on the attorney contact at this Wednesday's meeting.

I have written about the budgeting process before. It is probably one of the most important things we do as elected officials; deciding how to spend tax dollars. Although the budget won't be in final form for a week or so it will be sent to the Power County Press to be published later this month. In my term as mayor, I think it is the best budget to date. Between the awesome works of Clerk Herndon, all the superintendents and the City Council the collaborative effort produced something that I believe will allow us to better serve you.

As I write this column it is much later than normal as I slipped out to the Reservation early this morning in hopes of another PMD hatch and rising fish. Alas, for whatever reason it was not to be, the day was perfect yet there was only a smattering of flies and no interest in them from below. But, tomorrow is another day and hope remains resolute.

We celebrate our Independence Day this week, lest we not forget here at home and across this nation what that should mean to all of us. Let us not forget what it means to be Americans, to leave today better than yesterday as we build a better tomorrow for all of us. Let us all work towards what is possible; that we might remain one nation indivisible regardless of political persuasion, free from tyranny, belittlement and oppression. And, where our neighbors needs are every bit as legitimate as our own.

Until next week...