

Our City

Two weeks ago I shared with you the effectiveness of the regional Special Assistant United States Attorney (“SAUSA”). Three days ago I received some new statistics about the ongoing joint effort that you may well be interested in. The Special Assistant United States Attorney Partnership has charged 55 Defendants since January 2016. From January 2016 through July 26, 2017, the U.S. Attorney’s Office prosecuted an additional 55 offenders for firearm, illegal alien, child porn, violent crime, and drug-related crimes committed in eastern Idaho through the new SAUSA program in eastern Idaho. Thus far, 28 of the 55 charged have been convicted and received federal sentences for a total of 2,008 months, averaging 6.4 years per criminal sentence. You may recall that Jesus Nieto was sentenced to 300 months (25 years) in prison for enticing and coercing two underage girls, followed by 15 years of supervised release.

The 55 cases indicted were referred from 13 cities and 9 counties. It is estimated that the charges represent over \$800,000 in drugs seized and 30 illegally possessed firearms. Presently, the average cost of incarceration per inmate per year is approximately \$20,973, or \$1,747 per month. Thus, the 2008 months of federal sentences in the cases represents approximately \$3,500,000 in cost savings to the Idaho Department of Corrections if the Idaho Department of Corrections was to bear the costs.

As you may also recall from previous columns, the Eastern Idaho SAUSA program is sponsored by the Eastern Idaho Partnership (EIP), a coalition of local city and county officials in eastern Idaho. The EIP provides approximately 30 percent of the SAUSA’s salary and benefits; the State of Idaho through the Idaho Department of Correction contributes the remaining 70 percent. The project allows law enforcement to utilize federal sentences to see that persistent and violent criminals receive stiffer penalties than they might in state courts. Federal sentences are served out of-of-state, helping to disrupt criminal networks. The newly hired Bryan Wheat, Special AUSA says “the net result we strive to achieve is to help eastern Idaho continue to be a wonderful, safe place to live.” The removal of Jesus Nieto and others has certainly done that.

Not to make a “federal case” out of everything, but I would like to pass along another word of warning from our partners at the Bureau of Reclamation about the use of many of our public water ways that are managed by them. Please be advised that staying overnight in a vessel is prohibited on Reclamation waterbodies. To date there have been a few instances of this being attempted around the Willow Bay area. My thanks to Tamby Gilley and the Power County Sheriff Deputies for handling this in a positive and non-confrontational manner. With the American Falls Reservoir currently at 84% of full and the remainder of the entire system at nearly 100% it is likely to be attempted around and during the upcoming solar eclipse on August 21.

To my knowledge there is nothing prohibiting someone from launching their boat on the morning of the eclipse and motoring to a good view spot for the event that is to take place between 10:00 and 11:00 o’clock later that morning. However; securing that spot the night before will be dealt with accordingly by those charged with doing so. If you have further questions on the matter I would refer you to the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 43: Public Lands: Interior, Part 423 – Public Conduct of Bureau of Reclamation facilities, lands and waterbodies. Specifically subsection 423.38 – Operating vessels on Reclamation waters.

Which states that you must not occupy a vessel overnight, except where otherwise designated under applicable Federal, State, or local law, or where otherwise designated by an authorized official in a special use area. Further, that you must not use a vessel as a place of habitation or residence. And finally, that you must remove your vessels from Reclamation lands and waters when not in actual use for a period of more than 24 hours, unless they are securely moored or stored at special use areas so designated by an authorized official. For more information you can use this website: https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title43/43tab_02.tpl

The Power County Fair starts next week and school starting is not far off. Enjoy the rest of your summer; I am not sure when we will get another one with so many opportunities to enjoy all the things that make American Falls such a great place to live.

Until next week...