

## Our City

As a species and a planet, I am pretty sure we will survive the eclipse to happen on Monday. I hope our infrastructure and regional communities are as fortunate. In chatting with Scott Ploussard last Thursday night, at his Burgers and Brew event at the Willow Bay Café, he told me that while shopping for groceries in Pocatello he encountered several people from the Idaho Falls area. He further explained that many of the stores north of us were out of most commodities and that Pocatello stores had to supply them temporarily. Curiosity got the best of me and I did some cursory research to see why this past Monday, August 21, was such a big deal. As it turns out a total solar eclipse occurs about once every 18 months somewhere on the planet; however, it only occurs on average once every 400 years in the same specific location, unless you live in Los Angeles where it occurs every 1565.9 years or in Montreal, Quebec every 91.6 years. Closer to home you can see the total eclipse in Denver every 167 years. So, while it happens somewhere every 18 months, it is a pretty big deal for our small section of the globe for a few days and, other than a bit of extra money being made by some, has little lasting impact on most of us beyond being something we may only witness once in our life time unless you travel extensively.

My meeting the Monday previous was something quite different than the eclipse and was not nearly so well attended. Yet, in my opinion, had far more long term consequences than a solar phenomenon. I have said routinely that the well-being and education of our youth are the most important things a society can achieve beyond the preservation of the planet we all share. My thanks extend to Connie Woodworth, the Power County Juvenile Justice Administrator, for inviting over 60 local community leaders, educators, law enforcement, religious figures, wellness providers and judicial officers to the District 6 Juvenile Justice Council. The purpose of the gathering was discussing how to enhance the lives of youth struggling within the various systems of our society and better determine how WE can ensure they have a productive future in that society. To those who strive to help the least fortunate among us I will simply say you are awesome as it seems the lives of many of our troubled youth are eclipsed and left in the dark almost daily by many of us. The most fulfilling thing for me as a teacher has always been the achievement of those who initially believed that excellence was not possible because of who they were and the family they came from. History is replete with leaders who came from “nothing” many of whom just needed someone to nudge them in the right direction. I would encourage you to be that nudge should the opportunity present itself. Opportunities are usually there for most of us. You just need to recognize them for what they are.

If you live in American Falls you know we have been struggling with the reconstruction of the old tennis courts. If you have children ages 5-8 you know we continue to struggle with overcrowding at Hillcrest Elementary and that even after the passing of the bond to build a new intermediate school the overcrowding will continue until the fall of 2019. As construction began on the intermediate school recently an opportunity was realized. Again, I am compelled to give thanks to others for making so many things possible for all of us. You may recall me writing that the paving of the new tennis courts was to cost over \$43,000; which pretty much eliminated any chance of completing the project. Jared Lusk, a graduate of AFHS and the President of Construction Services for the new school changed all that. Lusk contacted the Jack B. Parson's company who is the paving subcontractor on the school and the asphalt at the tennis courts was put in place last Thursday for less than \$24,000; breathing

new life into this community project. The asphalt has to “settle” for about 60 days before the tennis surface can be installed; consequently that will be done next spring. Like the asphalt the cost of the tennis surface also increased since the inception of the project, but with the savings on the asphalt enough funding still remains to see that done as well. What we lack is the \$7,000 to \$10,000 for the striping, standards, nets and other essential amenities. Remembering that pickle ball courts will also be included upon completion of the project it is my continued hope that others don’t let the opportunity to contribute eclipse them.

Until next week...