

## Our City

The average person in the United States consumes between three and four bushels of wheat each year, about 220 pounds. It takes around six tenths of a pound of phosphorus to produce one bushel or 60 pounds of wheat; for a total of about two pounds of phosphorus to produce the 220 pounds of wheat. The 2014 US population was 318.9 million; multiplied by two pounds equals 637,800,000 pounds or 318,900 tons of phosphorus required annually to produce wheat for our country alone. The Simplot Don Plant near Pocatello produces 440,000 tons of phosphorus fertilizer annually. Do you think what they do is important? Did you know that Lamb Weston can produce enough MacDonald's French fries in five minutes to keep the average store supplied for eight weeks?

Similar facts and questions were posed to over 70 of my students as they were introduced to the local and global significance of what the Simplot Don Plant and Lamb Weston near American Falls produce. Last Wednesday was our first of hopefully many more business and industry tours in an attempt to show and educate students about the significance of the region's numerous agribusinesses. The tours also emphasized how far each level of education can take a person as the students begin to form ideas about their future and career paths beyond high school. I need to thank the American Falls Agricultural Advisory Committee members Kirk Adkins of Simplot and Tommy Brown of Lamb Weston for making these educational tours possible for my students; they provided real life insight into what I can only talk about in class. It was a learning experience for all us associated with the Ag program.

With a little luck and a lot of skills I hope the engineers at Keller and Associates will be able to provide the City with some insight as to how we can best address the storm drainage issue that exists from the 200 block of Van Buren and down North Oregon Trail. The survey and modeling processes will begin shortly as the needed remedies are sought. Funding solutions will take considerably longer to obtain as grant opportunities have to be researched and applied. Still that is no guarantee. Yet, I remain optimistic that it can be done.

Among Clerk Robyn Herndon, Superintendent Cody Moldenhauer and Golf Pro Denny Howell, things and opportunities are falling into place at the American Falls Golf Course. I have signed a five-year lease to own agreement for 13 new Yamaha golf carts, as Denny begins to order merchandise for the club house. This past week Cody, Denny and Robyn have been learning how to operate the new point of sale equipment and putting in the necessary codes to make your visits to the Course enjoyable and accounting on our end transparent and accurate. It's pretty cool. One of the more lengthy processes has been the transfer of the requisite liquor license. On Tuesday of this week all City Council members and myself will be finger printed and fill out background information in order to complete the transfer process. I would like to thank Bill Beck for his willingness to transfer the license to the City, it was a magnanimous gesture. Depending on Council action, hopefully the carts, merchandise, and liquor license arrive before the official opening date around March 1<sup>st</sup>.

Also opening will be the Willow Bay Café. Candice Reynolds has been busy this past week cleaning out the winter dust bunnies and preparing to open on March 2<sup>nd</sup>. Candice and Denny will be working in concert to provide golfers with great meal values and with a little more planning camping and golf combo packages. As spring seems to have sprung two

months early, Denny, Cody, Dusty Whited and myself will be looking at property owned by the City to build a driving range. The most likely spot is out by the old trap shooting range. If successful, a new driving range will add value to not only the golf course and Willow Bay, but also to all the recreational opportunities available in our community. I am excited about the possibilities.

If you are looking for new and enhanced recreational opportunities beyond the happenings at the golf course and Willow Bay, please plan to attend the first Ferry Hollow Trail Open House on February 26<sup>th</sup> from 5:00 to 7:00 pm. in the American Falls Public Library's Community Room. The Trail Committee has met twice this past month and members have been working to reduce to words and maps the first general description of the trail from Willow Bay to Massacre Rock State Park. The OpenHouse will provide you and your friends the chance to make comments and suggestions on the trail's intended use, route, and access.

Corey Wight, owner of the Sandtrap, and I have walked or biked the route's entire length of over 17 miles; with possible side trips adding a few more miles. While it is not Yellowstone, the Sawtooths, or the White Clouds, it's an awesome route within minutes of most folks' reading this. Raptors, waterfowl, song and shore birds, coyotes, and deer are along the route's length. And, it is accessible year round via hike, bike, or even snowshoe on rare occasions. Segments between proposed trail heads range from 3.5 to 4.5 miles with terrain options available for the handicapped or the most skilled mountain biker. Another facet of the trail will be a few recommended water routes for small open watercraft and their enthusiasts who enjoy a good float and paddle.

As of yet, very little of the route is set beyond those segments already existing at Willow Bay and Massacre Rocks. Your input and the willingness of property owners to grant access will shape this trail. The trail's website will be available within the week and an online survey will also be there. Please plan to visit the site and complete the survey hosted by the National Park Service. I look forward to seeing you and listening to your ideas and questions on February 26<sup>th</sup>. Representatives from the Sagebrush Land Steppe, Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Game, Bureau of Reclamation and property owners will also be in attendance. If you are a birder, hiker, biker or just like getting out more, please attend.

Until next week...