

## Our City

There haven't been many, so when they do occur I am slightly taken aback. Most weeks are punctuated by an event that the rest of the week revolves around both leading up to it and after; like the potato harvest that started for most producers in the area this week. Yet, for most of us at the City it was a pretty routine week. However, for one of us it was the start of something totally new and for seven students at AFHS it provided a learning opportunity seldom if ever experienced.

For the Enterprise Department things are into their fall routine with the maintenance of fire hydrants and as you may recall Pete Cortez and his crew began flushing sewers this past week. As another friendly reminder, if you have had problems with back flow during this process let Pete or someone at the City know, please. Our new SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) system was scheduled for installation this week but alas, it will be later in the month. The new SCADA system is a control system at the core of many modern industries, including water distribution and waste water collection. Basically SCADA collects information from sensors and sends it to the system's programmable logic controllers, which then send that information to computers with SCADA software. The SCADA software analyzes and displays the data on a computer or smart phone. This automated reporting process helps Superintendent Pete Cortez, our Waste Water Treatment Plant Operator Scott Dalling and others in the department reduce wasted time and improve efficiency as they monitor and work within our water distribution systems and waste water collections. On a similar positive note, the new sewer line to the American Motel has been completed; another project checked off.

The Miller Lite, Red, White and Blue golf tournament was held this past weekend. It was the season's largest and last, with 78 players each playing 27 holes. It was successful by every measure and a great way to wrap up the regular tournament season. Congratulations to Austin Torres and Andrew Cortez for their First Place Gross Finish along with Warren and Todd Giesbrecht for their First Place Net Finish (Gross and Net refer to the player's handicap). I need to thank Denny Howell our Golf Pro, Cody Moldenhauer the Superintendent and Clerk Robyn Herndon for working so well together throughout the season; their efforts have made the transition this past year possible and tournaments throughout this season productive and well attended. Cody will also have aerated the greens on Monday of this week so they may look a bit rough going into the weekend but are still very playable. That pesky maintenance can be an inconvenience at times, sorry. There is one more night golf session on the board in the Club House for this coming Saturday, the 19<sup>th</sup>. Check with Denny for details.

On our City streets you will find Mark Scherer, Karl Kozain and Mason Chacon hard at work completing patch-backs and filling pot holes in preparation for winter. If there are places close to you that need attention please let us know at City Hall. If they aren't already on our to-do-list, Mark and his crew will certainly get to them, time permitting.

Not that she is counting but our short-timer Debbie Erickson has 14 days left until she retires. She's not giddy; but she seems pretty happy with what her future holds. Her new replacement seems quite happy as well. If you didn't know her already and came into City Hall recently you most likely met Minerva "Minni" Chaqueco. I must say she seems to be fitting in quite

well. And like Debbie, she always has a smile on her face and a kind word to say. For someone totally new to our City's billing and accounting system Minni couldn't be doing any better.

In the weeks and months to come the same may not hold true for the fish and water quality in American Falls reservoir and the river below as the reservoir dipped to ten percent last week. In a note I received from Lynn Van Avery with the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality he stated that there is a pretty good algae bloom going on, but that sediments and sedimentation are not an issue yet. As water continues to empty from the reservoir and the winds of fall grow near, sedimentation may once again become an issue and concern for the health of the local ecosystem.

The Chief District Judge for the United States District Court for the District of Idaho, B. Lynn Winmill, recently ruled that the 2014 Ag Gag Law violates the First and Fourteenth Amendments, and therefore the heart of the law is unconstitutional. Judge Winmill's ruling will no doubt cause concern for many Idaho agricultural operations but it provided a once in a lifetime learning opportunity for the seven members of the National qualifying American Falls FFA Agricultural Issues team. As you may recall, the team's issue this year presented both sides of the Ag Gag Law. Three members of the team represent animal rights and investigative journalists while three others represent the State of Idaho and proponents of the law and its original legislation. The seventh member of the team actually portrays Judge Winmill. Upon the Judge's ruling last month I contacted him to see if he would be willing to sit down with the team to discuss the case and provide input based on their presentation in preparation for the national competition next month. Last Tuesday, Judge Winmill spent two hours doing just that as he made the trip to American Falls High School. It was gratifying to me to see the back and forth discussion, questions and answers from both the Judge and the students. Honestly, I am not sure who was more impressed, the Judge or the students. What I can tell you is that the one-on-one and back and forth on a topic the students have spent nearly a year researching was an invaluable learning experience and one I could have never duplicated in the "regular" classroom.

Judge Winmill's ruling on Idaho's Ag Gag Law will most likely be appealed by the State and move up the legal system. I am certainly no legal scholar, but based on the research done by my students, and the discussion and points made by Judge Winmill, I bet his decision will be upheld. As to the Ag Issues team, they have a foundation and understanding of the issue that will allow them to compete exceedingly well if as a group they now make the commitment to do what is necessary to compete at the very highest of levels. I hope they choose to deviate from their weekly routines and make the time to prepare for what will be a very competitive national event. Should that commitment be made, the National Ag Issues event may well serve as a stepping stone to many more life changing possibilities for each of them.

Until next week...