

## Our City

If you have had problems in the past now would be a great time to let us know at City Hall! We can't help you if we don't know there has been a problem. Call 226-2569 and let Debbie Erickson know if you have experienced problems with your toilets or drains when the City flushes its sewer lines. Superintendent Pete Cortez and his waste water crew will begin flushing sewer lines on Tuesday, September 8, this week. The process throughout town is expected to take six to eight weeks. If your sewer line does not contain preventative back flow measures please consider keeping your toilet lid down and perhaps placing old rags or towels over floor drains especially if you have experienced minor bubble ups before. This process typically does not cause problems for most of us, but for the few that it does, some preventative measures prior to the flushing can solve most issues of unpleasantness. Look for Pete's notice in this issue of the Press as well; to be forewarned is to be prepared.

I believe we are finally prepared to move forward with the Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) grant as Jeremy Piersol and I have reworked the details of the revised grant with the folks at Federal Lands. The good news is that in the end it will provide for a safer intersection at Fort Hall and the Highway 39 Bypass and cost the City about \$140,000 less than we had originally planned for. If the stars align, work could begin as early as next fall, but the summer of 2017 is more realistic. You may recall that I mentioned that the intersection of Pocatello Avenue and the Highway 39 Bypass has been scheduled by the Idaho Department of Transportation for the installation of a semi-truck compatible roundabout for the 2020 construction season. These two reconfigurations are expected to provide a higher degree of safety and access for all users. Both will change the look and feel of the area for sure.

During last Wednesday's City Council meeting a discussion on City sewer rates morphed into a discussion on annexation. Which is interesting as I have been talking to Clerk Robyn Herndon and our Building Administrator Jeff Nelson lately about the process, just so that I could understand how it works. I am getting ahead of myself. I have had several phone conversations and there have been appeals made directly to the Council for lower rates on out of City services and as a matter of good faith I told those concerned about the issue that I would raise it for discussion by the Council. I will not presume to speak for them individually but collectively the Council believes the cost of the infrastructure that is in place and its maintenance outside of our current city limits warrants the extra costs passed on to the users, who do not pay City taxes. I know, as citizens outside city limits your opinions on the matter vary; some are fine with the rates and some are definitely not. Councilmen Hammond and Hofmeister will be reviewing the possibility of annexation of different tracts of land over the next few months with Robyn, Jeff and me. It is a long process with plenty of opportunities for public input; the Council is a long way from any decision. No doubt it will be interesting.

The Chairman of the American Falls Historical Commission, Don Johnson, has been working closely with Jeremy Piersol, Kurtis Workman and Frances Petel on an informational plaque that will be placed on the rock next to the Silver Horseshoe sign. The sign is to include a written and pictographical history of the landmark building. The plaque may also include information about the old Iris Theater which stood next door in the now U.S. Bank parking lot. The Commission is in the process of adding more homes and buildings to our historical register and will be visiting with the owners of the following properties to see if they have an interest in

joining the register: 123 Polk, 704 Stevens, 704 Hutchinson, 121 Hayes, 319 Harrison, 408 Polk, 454 Tyhee, and 656 Falls, 430 Tyhee, 738 Tyhee, 634 Falls, and 644 Falls. The only cost involved with being placed on the Historical Register is the sign which is placed prominently on the address side of the building; that cost is \$35 donation. The signs are locally made and crafted by Charles Fehringer. I truly appreciate the Commission's goal to everything local. The Commission will also be out and about during the next few weeks finding the very best Fall yards American Falls has to offer. I will announce the findings by the end of the month.

Local and regional golfers, women and men, joined in another fun-filled evening of night golf two weekends ago. You may remember that Saturday night as the first real rain we had received in the month of August. The golfers managed to play through some of the lighter rain and watch the spectacular lightning show from the clubhouse as the heavy rain passed before resuming their round and concluding the tournament. The golf was fun and the conversation great. So much so that a third night golf tournament has been requested. When I spoke to our Golf Pro Denny Howell, he was trying to get it placed on the tournament calendar. Hopefully an Indian Summer will lend itself to another round of night golf and a good potato harvest.

While the golfers were busy having fun the night it rained the newly unearthed drain field and piping that handles the storm water collected from the northern portion of town and our trouble areas of Fort Hall and Van Buren did its job. Though the rain on the night of August 29 was not what it was on May 21 of this year or those received in August of 2014 and 2013, it was a significant amount in a short period of time and the redeveloped storm water system handled it with no backups or pooling. Thanks again to our Street crew for their great work.

Speaking of great work, you know it doesn't take much to be a good neighbor. I am surrounded on three sides by great examples. Yes, it takes a little work, but really it's just about taking care of where you live. Even more basic, it is a matter of pride. More crudely put I call it the G.A.S. Factor; you can fill in the acronym. So, I was pleased to no end when I was visiting in City Hall last Thursday with Debbie and Robyn and they told me they watched a gentleman weed the parking strip on Idaho Street next to L&J. They couldn't see who he was for his back was to them, but they saw the piles of weeds he was clearing from the planting strip. To the unknown good neighbor I say, "Thank you. Thank you for caring not only about where you must live, but our community as a whole." I would very much like to meet you.

To the point about the weeds in the parking strip. Yes, they are there, and yes we are taking care of them. It is an ongoing process, just like the maintenance of our yards and homes; it doesn't stop. Hadlee Anderson, our FFA Chapter Secretary and District Vice-President will be taking care of Idaho Street this fall. You may be surprised to know that we receive more compliments on our downtown at City Hall than any other thing we have done. Although it requires a bit more work than concrete and asphalt, just like folks said it would, I believe there is a value there that goes far beyond the cost to maintain it. Really it is no different than what Pete Cortez and his crew will be doing to our infrastructure that you can't see, it's about taking care of what you have. You may recall what Idaho Street and the whole of downtown used to look like, the long neglected sidewalks grew weeds just as well as the new planting strips, but seldom did anyone make it their business to clean them. A bit of pride goes a long way.

Until next week...