

Our City

It definitely wasn't "Breakfast at Tiffany's" as I went to see Doctor Ben D. Over last Tuesday morning before I ate. Soon after, I started screeching the chorus to Moon River. It was my over 50 once a year wellness checkup. Through a session of groping and prodding Dr. Over found nothing out of the ordinary with my prostate or anything else; then he turned me over to Nurse Ratchet for my blood work. I must have been near as dry as California as she had to put four holes in me before finding blood in the fifth. After filling her three required vials she said they would call if there was anything I needed to be concerned about in the results. It's been four days so I figure I am good for another 365.

I finished my checkup in time to put some thoughts together prior to meeting with our State Legislators who were on tour in Eastern Idaho and having lunch at Petersen's Manufacturing at the Pocatello Airport. Mayor Blad had requested that Mayor Paul Loomis of Blackfoot and I join Pocatello City Councilmen Cooper and Brown in providing a few remarks to our Legislative body at a luncheon hosted by the Pocatello Chamber of Commerce. Both Mayors Blad and England were in Boise at an Association of Idaho Cities Board meeting.

As a region and a State we have a few things to be thankful about as a result of this legislature's efforts. Councilmen Cooper and Brown addressed how much the increase in the Transportation budget has helped at the local level. Mayor Loomis and I would echo their comments as the added funding has helped. However, as Cities and a State we have a long way to go before this budget line is at a level that will allow us to do much more than try and play catchup with an infrastructure that is vastly in need of more help. But, we certainly applaud the efforts that have been made this past year by the legislature.

Mayor Loomis and I highlight the benefits of the new Special Assistant United States Attorney (SAUSA) position that was funded at \$70,000 by the legislature this past session. This funding allowed the formation of the Eastern Idaho Partnership (EIP) on 17 August 2015 at the first Annual Meeting of the Partnership. To form the Partnership a Memorandum of Understanding was signed by 12 counties and 17 cities for a total of 29 member units. The SAUSA will be available to prosecute a wide range of federal crimes including: Internet based Crimes Against Children, Gun and Gang Violence, Drug Trafficking, Fraud and other White Collar Crime, Terrorism, Identity Theft and Immigration Offenses. It is estimated that 24 to 30 offenders will be prosecuted annually by the SAUSA. These cases will be prosecuted under Federal law and offenders will be incarcerated in the Federal prison system. It costs an estimated \$20,382 to keep one inmate in an Idaho Correctional institution for one year. Moving 24 Eastern Idaho cases to the Federal system will result in an annual savings to the state of \$489,168.

Ladies and Gentlemen, as a City with only eight police officers the SAUSA position will be a huge help in the fight against the Mexican Drug Cartel that is spread throughout our region. It has made a tremendous difference in the years since its implementation in western Idaho in the number of gang and drug related crimes. The members of the Partnership are more than hopeful it will eventually have a similar impact here. We are equally hopeful that the Legislature will continue funding the program making our communities safer and saving the state money in the process. It makes good sense at least from my desk.

Late Tuesday afternoon found me back at my desk and visiting with Superintendents Cortez, Nelson and Clerk Herndon. As you will find elsewhere in this issue of the Power County Press

Superintendent Pete Cortez and the Waste Water Department received the new vacuum truck that was ordered this summer. You may recall me explaining that the old one is nearly inoperable and the new truck and camera trailer were ordered so that our sewer lines could be properly maintained. The Waste Water Department has been busy the past few weeks using the camera trailer to inspect sections of sewer line and now it is time to start cleaning. Although the sewers aren't necessarily the only thing within our infrastructure that is clogged or congested. Many of our City's alleyways seem to suffer a similar condition. The new vacuum truck is a huge piece of equipment (refer to the picture with Pete's article) and will require the full width of any alley if it is to access the manholes and the majority of the City's sewer lines. Please clear your section of alley of any debris, shrubs or overhanging tree limbs up to 16 feet in height. If you are unable to comply with this request a notice will be placed in your door asking that you allow the City's Arborist Jeremy Peirsol to properly trim your trees and shrubs so that the vacuum truck will have unimpeded access to our sewers. The alleys from East Park to Harrison and Sunbeam to Oregon Trail will be cleared over the next week and sewer flushing will begin on the week of October 19. Please do your part to help us keep your home accessible to all City equipment; not much ruins a home like a bad sewer line or fire that cannot be properly accessed by fire engines and crews.

We will be asking for a similar level of cooperation next spring as we reinstitute the citywide spring cleanup. City crews will once again be cleaning all alleyways of debris. The program will begin next April and more information on how you can help us help you will precede it.

Speaking of trees and how we can help you this past week Police Officer Chris McKay received a call at 11 o'clock one night where a citizen had lost a cat up a tall tree. Yup, it's just like you think. Being unable to climb the tree Chris called for help and volunteer firemen Charles Jones, Mark Scherer and Ronnie Stillwell came to the rescue of the stranded feline and distraught owner. I can't remember the name of my childhood book that told the story of the kindly fireman rescuing the kitten from the tree at the end of the long ladder on the truck but the picture stuck in my mind and I smiled widely as Chief Wilkinson told me the story. Thank you Chris, Charles, Mark and Ronnie for making American Falls the best place to live.

The City's Police department was again on stray animal patrol last Friday as we had a moose on the loose again in town. The young bull thought he would show up for school at Hillcrest finding all the children safely inside he then wandered to the high school. My students said he crossed below the soccer fields and headed to the cemetery where he hopped the wall, sauntered down the hill, swamped the river and disappeared into the heavy trees and brush. Cool.

The only thing that would have made it cooler is if the officers involved with both the cat and moose had their new body cameras on so that we could put snippets of the escapades on the City website to share with you all. Chief Wilkinson through his frugal spending practices saved enough money in his 2015 budget to purchase each officer their own body camera which arrived late last week. If you have watched the national news over the past year you will recognize the significance of this investment in the protection of you as citizens and the officer as well. Our officers will be wearing the cameras shortly. It won't be quite like Candid Camera, but do smile when you see our officers if it involves a cat, moose or some other social tidbit; and with your permission you may find yourself posted on the City's website. The cameras will be on and recording 24-7-365. I am glad Dr. Dover wasn't wearing one as I sang "Moon River."

Until next week...