

## Our City

It seems more like a winter of old, as many times as I have had to shovel my walks and driveway, and the number of times the Street crew has been called out to plow, and so many phone calls received at City Hall with concerns about snow removal on the sidewalks of Idaho Street. I was a bit surprised to see that the Snake River and its associated drainages are at less than 100% of the 30 year adjusted average. Yet, the frequency and amount of snowfall has been enough to warrant concern by several business owners on Idaho Street about the City's ability to keep up.

I know I have asked before but I am compelled to do so again that if at all possible please don't park or leave a vehicle on Idaho Street in the early morning hours between the stop light and Ken's Market. It makes snow removal extremely difficult and consequently deters potential commerce. The City's Street crews are called out anytime, at all hours of the day, whenever access to the hospital or other critical services becomes impaired. However, the crew usually gets to Idaho Street on nights or early morning snow storms at around 4:00 a.m. and if cars are left there for whatever reason their ability to provide the needed snow removal service becomes extremely difficult. The same can be said about any street in town. We will do a better job of keeping Idaho Street, its sidewalks and ADA ramps clear. If you are a business owner or patron thank you for your patience.

Thank you too for your patience as it was brought to my attention this week that our City's website is a bit out of date with events, departments and personnel. That will be rectified this week. If you have suggestions as to how we can make the website more user friendly and valuable please let us know.

I wrote last week about a possible Spring Clean-up. Last Wednesday the Council approved the reinstatement of the traditional alley clean-up abandoned a few years ago. To a person, they believe it is a very worthwhile service that we as a City can provide property owners as you ready your premises for greener days. There was talk however about why we discontinued the practice and I remember that discussion of a few years ago quite well. It was common practice for many homeowners to accumulate a year's worth of garbage in their alley between Spring clean-ups; they simply began leaving everything for the City to dispose of once a year. While I am very much in favor of providing a useful and needed service, the City is not your keeper. If you choose to pile trash in your alley after the clean-up, you will be cited and fined. I don't intend to sound rude or harsh but I do not like being taken advantage of either. So I am asking you please keep the alley associated with your property clean and maintained throughout the year; it is part of your responsibility as a citizen. For the majority of you who do this regularly of your own volition, I thank you.

Also during last week's City Council meeting the possibility of raising some fees at the Golf Course was discussed. In an attempt to make things a bit easier on everyone, taxes will be included in all applicable items. A public hearing has been set for the February 3<sup>rd</sup> City Council meeting for comments. I know there is continued concern about raising any prices as many users of the course are City residents and already pay City taxes which, yes, do help pay for some of the course's maintenance and operation just like our City Parks. It has been suggested over the years that City residents who golf should pay a lower fee than those who

are non-residents. Similar I suppose to an out of state hunting or fishing license. My initial concern with that idea is that it would deter out-of-town golfers from coming here at all. We have a very nice nine hole course; but it is not Augusta or Pebble Beach, folks come here I have to believe because it is well-kept, well-managed and affordable. Perhaps I am wrong. The Council and I very much appreciate your thoughts and input.

Another group that will be calling on you for input in the months to come is the American Falls School Board. Dr. Ron Bolinger informed those of us on the District Leadership Team last Thursday that the Board is preparing to run the bond that failed last November again this May. The Board and Dr. Bolinger will be reaching out to you for your thoughts and constructive input as they are doing their very best to find solutions to overcrowding at Hillcrest, 60 year old infrastructure at the Intermediate School and a considerable lack of gym space throughout the School District and our community in general. Those of us with kids or grandchildren in our school system need to do a better job of providing input and showing up to the polls in May than we did the last go-round. The bond last fall surpassed a majority approval but failed to exceed the 66% supermajority required. Passing the bond will not raise your taxes and will provide and insure needed space and facilities for future generations. Not because I am an employee, but because they are truly doing what is right by our community, I applaud the continuing efforts of the School Board on behalf of our youngest citizens and their future. As responsible adults and citizens of the same community I encourage you to do what you can to help the School District keep up with increasing demands and essential services.

Until next week...