

Our City

As I ponder what will follow in this column I find myself in unfamiliar situations both here at the City and at school. Situations which while unfamiliar will need to be negotiated and worked through. In no small way both situations pose a test of sorts not only for myself but those with whom I work every day. The duration of the tests will be similar too; about two months. However, before I get into the details of all that, I once again need to commend the City crews for their high degree of cooperation and willingness to work toward common goals.

As I have eluded to before, the only real way a City of our size can provide the services you deserve as citizens is through a cooperative effort between the various departments and employees within the City. I do not suggest that this cooperation has not taken place in the past, but of late it has reached a new vastly different level. And as such, from my seat I can see improvement throughout our various departments. Service through cooperation allows for efficiencies and new possibilities; both of which improve your return for the taxes and fees you pay as citizens.

This past week due to a cooperative effort to maintain our alleys, the City's Waste Water crew made significant gains in cleaning sewers through one of the major areas in town. The Water crew also worked with the Grounds crew as they installed backflow preventers in our City parks irrigation systems. Beyond their routine maintenance duties they also completed concrete patches on Tyler and fixed a leaking fire hydrant on Whitman. Superintendent Pete Cortez and Public Works Coordinator Jeremy Peirsol also attended a meeting in Twin Falls sponsored by Idaho Power and focusing on energy conservation and use. As you may recall the new Waste Water Treatment Plant received an award from Idaho Power not long ago for being one of the most energy efficient in the State. As we continue to work with Idaho Power I am hopeful that more efficiencies can be gained.

Thanks to the work of Jeremy Peirsol and former Street Superintendent Jeff Nelson the City received word last week that we will be receiving a grant to allow us to replace every street sign in town with new more reflective signs that are mounted and set on breakaway posts. That's over 200 signs at a cost of nearly \$30,000. Great work Jeremy and Jeff! At the City Council Meeting last Wednesday Mark Scherer and Karl Kozain were awarded their Road Masters certification through the Local Rural Highway Investment Program; this is the highest degree of certification offered by the agency. Congratulations Mark and Karl! Jeremy and Street Superintendent Daren Dahlke are working with Don Haskins and Power County Highway Commissioners to develop a Memorandum of Understanding so that the City Street Department and County Highways may find more efficient ways in which to cooperatively work on intersecting projects. Daren and his crew also worked with Superintendent Cody Moldenhauer and his department to remove a very large tree on the fairway of hole five on the golf course. The removal of the tree will allow the tee boxes for hole five to be rebuilt, which has been requested for years by golfers who enjoy the course. Well done gentlemen!

Cody and his department along with help from our certified arborist Jeremy Peirsol also began trimming trees and removing dead ones from the remainder of the course last week. The 100 block of Idaho Street was also sprayed with pre-emergent to help minimize the need to manually weed the planting strips. The Grounds crew also worked to test and repair the water systems in our parks this past week in preparation for the irrigation season.

Before leaving for the State FFA Leadership Events last week I asked Chief Brandon Wilkinson to work with Daren Dahlke to compile a list of streets that can be designated as no parking areas in the event of heavy snow. This declaration will allow for the prompt removal of snow,

and improve safety and accessibility. It will not be a permanent designation; it is only intended to allow the City to fulfill its responsibility. As Brandon, Daren, our attorney Nolan Wittrock, and I work together to develop the new parking ordinance, we do so with the intent of providing improved service, accessibility and maintenance; all of which I know you expect, and rightfully so.

This renewed cooperative spirit among the City Departments and employees will be tested over the next two months as Clerk Robyn Herndon will be taking a medical leave as she recovers from major back surgery. And, thus I find myself in a very unfamiliar situation as I have never been without my trusted Clerk, Robyn Herndon. That is not say that Robyn directs the work of all the departments, for she doesn't. But she does work hand-in-hand with each Superintendent through their budgets and accounting of funds and funding. As we are halfway through our fiscal year and into the season of major projects, fiscal responsibility will need to be practiced by all employees and myself as I continue to provide oversight to each department's budget. Assuredly Robyn will be missed as she recovers but I have every faith that Terri Miller, Minnie Chaqueco, Pat Nelson, the superintendents and I can cooperatively work our way through the next few months. Our very best to Robyn as she recovers from her much awaited surgery.

I find myself a bit apprehensive as I failed to qualify a team or individual for National competition this past week at the State FFA Leadership events. For the first time ever we finished second in Ag Issues; while I have always known it would happen I was not expecting it this year with all the work the team had done in preparation. My congratulations go to Advisor Tom Jacobson and the North Fremont Chapter for their outstanding efforts. Seniors Abby Rowe and Alondra Murillo competed extremely well placing in the top five in Prepared Public Speaking and Job Interview respectively, but in FFA only the top individual or team advances to the National level of competition. Members of the Ag Sales and Horse Evaluation teams competed well but also came up short. Not being first doesn't negate the efforts and learning that took place by the above members, for all certainly grew and became better. I am very proud of all of them to be sure!

There is something to be said about setting goals and working tirelessly to achieve them. Shanice Allen became a member of the American Falls FFA Chapter last fall as a freshman. She attended the National FFA Convention and watched the Novice Parliamentary Procedure Career Development Event telling me afterwards that she intended to compete in it. A lofty goal given I have never had a really competitive State team. This past week Shanice and her team of Jaden Allen, Jose Gonzalez, Josh Trishendorf, Jordan Kress, Logan Johnson and McKinnon Bradley under the guidance of my student teacher Kylie Shaul and myself placed second in the highly contested event to Kuna, a program known for its superiority in the Parliamentary Procedure. But, even while placing a close second, Shanice Allen was recognized as the event's Outstanding Chairperson. Well done Shanice!

My congratulations also go to the American Falls FFA Chapter Officer team for their efforts throughout the year. At the State FFA Leadership Conference the American Falls FFA Chapter was recognized again as the best chapter in the State based on the National Chapter Award Application. Specific congratulations go to Abby Rowe, Hadlee Anderson and Maddie Wagoner for their efforts in completing the application and doing an exceedingly outstanding job through the interview process associated with the selection criteria. Last year the chapter made the cut for the top twenty chapters in the country but failed to make the top ten for National recognition. Time will tell how things work out this year.

As I look to the next two months, efforts will be focused on qualifying teams for National events at the State Career Development Events in Moscow, June 7-9. The potential is there but

has to be coupled with hard work, practice, common goals and the will to achieve the desired outcome while understanding that 94 other chapters are doing the very same thing.

Until next week...