

Our City

As I get ready to travel to Moscow with 21 FFA members tomorrow, my summer schedule has started in earnest as has that of our City crews. I am pleased with the seemingly newfound efficiency in all departments; and especially their ability to work cooperatively and frugally to better serve each of you. More on those thoughts shortly.

As I will be speaking of effectiveness and efficiency, I have noticed a lot of their antithesis as I have been walking. It struck a chord with me as I have written repeatedly and quite recently about the need to conserve water where and whenever possible. Some property owners can't seem to find the off switch for their automatic irrigation system during the recent days of constant rain. One property owner waters seven days a week and I can hear the water running through the storm drain grate from nearly a block away as it pours off the parking lot and flows down the gutter. In light of the City's recent investment on your behalf to prevent water curtailments, I would ask once again that you consider your watering schedule and perhaps reprogram automated systems to water less frequently and turn them off as weather patterns permit. Those of us that drag a hose are not exempt; concrete and asphalt do not grow. It makes little sense to water to the middle of the street. American Falls, I know we can do better.

Public Works Coordinator Jeremy Peirsol, Water Superintendent Pete Cortezalong with Councilmembers Hammond and Sorensen are hosting a meeting, this Tuesday at the Waste Water Treatment Plant in the conference room, for all major urban water users. Irrigation specialists will be there to discuss and explain the new water management and efficiency practices. Jeremy tells me that folks from as far away as Grace will be attending as they too are feeling the imminent impact of water shortages and curtailments. My sincere thanks to Jeremy and Pete and the many others attending as they work to make better use of what we have and provide a better way forward for all of us in regard to how we use our water.

As I sat in my office yesterday afternoon speaking with Kacy Gerhing, Vicki Meadows and Jeremy Peirsol. I was very pleased with the cooperative spirit and effort shown by all three as they worked through an agreement that will benefit both a new business building, its surroundings, and the City. With very limited funds Street Superintendent Daren Dahlke is making the most of what he has available; the cooperative agreement with Kacy and Vicki is just one example of how common efforts can make a little go further. As I came off of Hillcrest above Highland, the street felt different beneath my feet yesterday morning. I had to look down to see that it had been completely repaired where only the day before it was in various stages of degradation. Several other paving projects are in the works as Daren continues to work with the County Highway District and others to make a little go a long way as they endeavor to improve the infrastructure that is our streets.

Last Thursday found all the City Superintendents, Council President Dan Hammond and myself in a budget meeting where we discussed possible ways to make our revenues go further. Early projections show an increase in funds of \$9,000 allocated by the State. Insurance is expected to increase by four to five percent which will likely consume much if not all of the increase from the State. As we discussed equipment needs, insurance and regionally competitive salaries, I felt like many of you do when you try to juggle a budget that doesn't quite manage to

pay the always present bills, put food on the table and care for the health of your family. Where do we sacrifice? Who doesn't get what they need or deserve. In the end it will be a Council decision; it won't be an easy one; it will take thoughtful study and deliberation over the next month and a half.

This past month we honored those who protect and serve us; our local Police and Sheriff's Departments. What you don't know is that during the month of May two of American Falls' finest saved the life of a three year old with severe head trauma and the life of an employee of one of our local businesses as she was nearly strangled and beat to death by an unknown assailant. The fate of both the assailants lies now with our Power County Prosecutor; I look forward to justice being served. Through a careful and deliberate investigation, a sexual predator has been indicted on Federal charges through our partnership with the Special Assistant United States Attorney. To Chief Wilkinson, Sheriff Jeffries and the outstanding women and men who work with you, my words will fail to express the gratitude I have for each of you and what you do for all of us, so I will simply say, thank you one and all.

As I began my walk this morning I passed Officer Robbie Engle who was most of the way through a graveyard shift. For a summer Friday night he said it was surprisingly quiet. A good start to summer. I hope it continues and as those of us at the City do our best to make American Falls the best place to live. I thank each of you as you do your part in that same effort.

Until next week...