

Our City

It was just sun-up while walking south on Oregon Trail near the Thresher elevators that I recognized the truck and cowboy hat as he got closer. I waved. He stared wonderingly; like “Who the hell is that vagrant with the pack on his back and dog at his side? And, how does he know me?” I learned later that day that my own son-in-law Kelton Landvatter thought I was a homeless guy passing through town as he and Suzanne drove by me on their way back to Phoenix. It was too dark then to see the look on his face as Suzanne eased to a stop to say good bye after being home for the Fourth of July weekend. I guess it’s odd enough to walk when I do but to do it with a backpack and walking sticks must seem just plumb weird to most folks that pass me; so I understand the look that Doug Whitnah gave me as he passed.

Farther down Oregon Trail I came upon Larry Jones and Robby Engle, two of our police officers, discussing the previous night as Robby was going off shift and Larry was coming on. As I stopped to chat, it turns out that with the exception of illegal fireworks and a verbal altercation at Willow Bay that Larry responded to, it was a quiet weekend. As we talked, Larry indicated that I would probably be getting a call from several citizens about the illegal fireworks. I didn’t. The illegal fireworks I am referring to are the mortars that are fired up into the air and unless you are deafer than me, you heard them most of the weekend. Illegal fireworks are very difficult to police; they are banned in the City, just like the rest of the State. In the past they have been confiscated by our police officers from people selling them illegally. But, once acquired, it is very difficult for one or two officers to find out who is setting them off as they are fired apparently by the sound of things all over town. It would be effective if documented complaints came from citizens who actually witnessed the use of the illegal fireworks. That however is difficult also, as few want to “rat out” their neighbor when they are not following the rules. At last Wednesday’s City Council meeting, the Council discussed possible solutions, although one was replete with liability and the other was cost prohibitive for a city of our size; as most fireworks shows cost around \$10,000 per fifteen minutes. Perhaps the City could work with the Chamber of Commerce to find a few corporate sponsors for a half hour show. We will look into that possibility. I know it has been pursued before, it won’t hurt to ask again. Although, if a corporate sponsor was found it would be hard for me to justify blowing up ten to twenty thousand dollars in a matter of minutes when I could list a page of projects within town that could use donated money like to make a long term impact within our community.

I am pleased with the impact that our two new concessionaires are making at Willow Bay. Both the campground and café enjoyed a very good weekend. In talking with Scott at the café, things are steady. The Friday night steak night continues to be a big hit and special events or days draw lots of customers. The campground also remains consistent as Tambi and Anthony are doing a great job providing a quality and peaceful experience to all of their guests. It has been an adjustment for a few who have been vacationing at the campground for years. The adjustment is that while Willow Bay has always had parking and camping restrictions along with leash requirements for dogs, they were seldom if ever enforced by previous concessionaires. The parking restrictions exist to protect private, City and Federal property and insure access for emergency vehicles. As concessionaires, Tambi and Anthony are required by contract to fix and pay for all damages to the campground. They have a vested interest in making sure everything works for everybody. The leash requirement is being enforced for the

protection of all the guests and their pets that visit Willow Bay. To that specific point, new signage will be posted around Willow Bay this week specifying the leash requirement for all dogs. Please abide by the ordinance; it will provide a better experience for everyone.

Apparently Mother Nature didn't get the memo about the City's planned street sealing project for Sunday, July 10th. It looks like she is going to rain out the project. She has a mind of her own and doesn't much care about whatever we may have planned. In order to appease the rain she is predicted to drop on Sunday, the sealing project will be postponed; most likely until July 24th. A more definite time will be forthcoming as Superintendent Dahlke coordinates with affected property owners and the contractor who will be completing the project.

Speaking of projects, those of you who visit and camp at Willow Bay or frequent the City Park will be happy to know that Jeremy Peirsol has done it again. We found out officially a few weeks ago that Jeremy has secured a grant for about \$276,000 to completely pave all the remaining Willow Bay campground gravel roads and campsites. That project is scheduled to be done next spring. We found out yesterday that he was successful in completing a Transportation Alternative Program(TAP) grant for \$425,000 that will see the sidewalks around the City Park complete and much of Bannock and the 300 block of Roosevelt with new sidewalks, curb and gutter; all of which will provide alternative travel routes to and from the middle of town for those walking or riding a bike. The design of the TAP project will begin in 2017 and construction will follow in 2018. Great job, Jeremy!

Jeremy was on a hiking vacation this past week so I haven't had a chance to thank him in person yet for all his hard work; but I look forward to doing so when I return from my hike on July 18th. It is this coming hike that my lifelong friend Al Goetz and I are going on that saw me walking with a backpack these past few weeks as I try to prepare my legs and feet for the miles and climbs ahead. We will be flown into a very remote part of the State where we plan to complete a significant loop hike while fishing streams and lakes that seldom see fishermen. Regardless of the fish caught or not, it will be good to get out, be out of touch where few go, and to just have the opportunity to try and relax; something I don't do so well.

Dan Hammond will be writing this column next week in my absence. I look forward to reading his perspectives on Our City.

Until two weeks...