

## OUR CITY 7/15/16

Since the time the Mayor asked me to write his column, I have been concerned about what to write. American Falls is such a great place to live and we have so many different personalities living here that make us diverse and a microcosm of western living and life happens daily and we all do our best to make it a great life.

So, I'm going to write about a few things that I know something about, for example, running/walking. I have been running or walking around American Falls since 1987 when I went to the track one morning and began going round and round. My goal has been since then, to run/walk 1000 miles each year. Except for one year, I have met that goal. I have run/walked in a variety of places around the country. Some notable places being Chicago, New York, Florida, California, Nevada, really too many to list, but all interesting places and lots of memories. I always kept a log of where and when, until 2014, when my wife Karen gave me a "Fitbit" for my birthday. I now use that to keep track of my steps, so steps turn into miles every day. I have become quite fanatical about my "steps" and have wanted others to adopt my passion.

When Blue Cross became the city's health insurance provider and their website had wellness workshops, a digital health coaching service, and exercise tracking tools, we signed up as a city and provided entry level "fitbits" to city employees. We started with a city employee step challenge, which Mayor Beitia won quite handily I might add. Our next effort was a step challenge between

the City of American Falls and The Minnidoka Irrigation District. For 6 weeks, we went back and forth with the lead changing hands almost daily. At the end, MID took the lead and bested us by over 900,000 steps. Again Mayor Beitia led the way with over 1 million steps. Way to go Mayor! We are going to ask for a rematch soon. We are hoping that our community will want to join us in “stepping out.”

We have challenged the hospital employees to a “walk fest”, but we need to figure out how to keep track of each other’s steps electronically.

I want to take the opportunity to offer kudos to Mayor Beitia! Our mayor works tirelessly on our behalf and ALWAYS has the best interests of the City in mind. It may be streets, law enforcement, water, waste water, sanitation, golf or parks, he is mindful of the needs of the City. He always has an idea for improvement or thinks of ways to get more value for each tax dollar that is used.

One of his most important priorities is the city employees. He has worked hard to improve salary and benefits for city personnel. In the past we have been a training ground for other cities, losing our best employees because of wages and benefits. Today, we are competitive with other cities our size.

We have great, dedicated employees, who know their jobs and do them well. Robyn Herndon and her administrative crew are always working to make things better. Jeremy Peirsol is a tremendous asset to the city, not only for his work ethic, but his ability to write grants. Pete Cortez and his crew keep the new waste water treatment plant humming at its best. They take great pride

in our new Sewer Treatment Plant. Daren Dahlke keeps the street and sanitation departments at peak operation and has numerous ideas to make additional improvements, to get more bang for our street buck. Cody Moldenhauer keeps the golf course and parks looking great. He is working on several ideas to conserve water while keeping the parks green and trimmed.

Our Police Chief Brandon Wilkinson and his officers work many hours to keep our city safe. They deal with issues that not many of us know about, but must be dealt with to make American Falls the “best place to live.” Jeff Nelson is our building administrator. He is really good at overseeing the safety and welfare for the public as it relates to the physical environment of a building. He makes sure that all building codes are followed.

Not enough can be said about the time and effort and that goes into keeping a City like American Falls at its peak performance. Our citizens deserve the best we can possibly give them. To make American Falls the best place to live! Until next week when Mayor Beitia will be back .....