

Our City

It's a matter of perspective and circumstance really -- time. Time itself is a constant, at least as far as I understand it; but given your circumstance the feel of a certain amount of time may be completely different. While on vacation a few weeks ago, Al and I endured 36 straight hours of rain in the middle of the Frank Church Wilderness. For practical reasons we were unwilling to leave the dryness of our two-person tent. Twelve hours into the rain event, the minutes began to feel like hours and the hours stretched on forever. Conversely, as projects begin to pile up for Street Superintendent Daren Dahlke and his crew, minutes, hours, and days seem fleeting at best as there doesn't seem to be enough hours in a day to get everything done. That the projects will get done I have no doubt, just like I knew that eventually the rain would stop.

As I returned to City Hall after eight days in the wilderness and three days in Yellowstone with our FFA officers on their annual planning retreat, I wasn't sure what I would be greeted with. What it was surprised me frankly. The enforcement of the new parking ordinance seemed to keep the phones busy and folks even coming into City Hall in my absence expressing their desire to see the new ordinance enforced; which I took as good news. According to Clerk Robyn Herndon, it is the most public input the City has received on an ordinance's enforcement in her memory. Again, I took that as a good sign. However, in talking with Police Chief Brandon Wilkinson, we both want to be fair in rolling out the enforcement of the new ordinance. As I told Preston Crompton last night at the City Council meeting, although I have written about the new ordinance previously and it has been published in the Power County Press, there are still folks who are unaware of the new parking restrictions on city streets. New signage will be installed in much of our downtown, restricting parking between the hours of 2:00 am. and 6:00 am. But, until Daren Dahlke and his crew find the time to install the signs I am not comfortable asking our police officers to enforce it. I know Daren is doing the best he can to get the signs installed; but time is not on his side at the moment.

On our residential streets, parking infractions run rampant according to calls and visitors at City Hall. These will begin to be addressed by our Police Department as soon as the new "Parking Tickets" are received from the printer; which should be by the time you read this column. There is a section (10-4-9 B) of the ordinance that will pose an inconvenience for some but in the spirit of the ordinance, it will provide for safer streets, street maintenance and repair we believe are essential. Recreational vehicles that exceed (8') in width, (21'6") in length from hitch to bumper, and (9') in height will only be allowed to park on city streets for up to 72 hours solely for the purpose of loading and unloading. I know this will upset some of you and for that I apologize. I am happy to discuss the matter with you. I would ask that you consider the intent of the ordinance and not just the inconvenience of it just as two of the City Council members whose regular practices will be affected by the change did when we discussed this section of the ordinance. Those two Council members voted with the rest of the Council to adopt the ordinance as written, in the best interests of the City.

Like the "Parking Tickets," the street sealing project will be done and in the books by the time you read this. Thank you for your cooperation in helping Daren and the City crews complete the chip-seal project. While I spent days hiking in the wilderness, the Street Department was busy repairing a section of Bannock Street and associated storm drain and gutter by the middle school; another job very well done! There are similar projects around town that I know Daren

wants to get to but time is not his friend as he still needs to place over 200 hundred new signs around town, the quarter of a million dollar paving project will begin at Willow Bay before long and thanks to the efforts and contributions of many, the tennis court project will likely begin this fall as well.

As Daren moves forward after the chip-seal project this weekend, he will be a man down in his crew as Karl Kozain will be moving to Pocatello for family reasons. I have known and worked with Karl since he was a freshman in high school. He is as solid and steady of a worker as any employer could hope to find. He will be greatly missed, but I will never begrudge a person for doing what is best for his family. We all raise our kids to do just that. I am proud of Karl, the skills and success that he has acquired since I have known him. I know his new employer will find the same value in him that the City of American Falls benefited from. Best of luck to you and your family Karl!

Time will tell if we are able to find someone as capable as Karl to fill the hole he is leaving, although I have no doubt that others within our City's crews will step up and fill in the void until such time as a replacement can be hired. In the meantime Daren will be able to scratch one big project off his to-do-list once the chip-sealing is completed.

Daren, Public Works Coordinator Jeremy Peirsol and Police Chief Wilkinson will be working together to determine the best placement of the parking signs. Be looking for them as you park downtown. For those who have unlicensed and uninsured vehicles parked on public streets I would kindly ask you to park them properly off the City street; it will make things easier and less costly for everyone concerned. In an effort to make the Street Crew's job easier as they proceed with repair and maintenance of our streets cars not properly documented and parked will be ticketed and eventually towed should their owners not take proper care of them.

For all of you willing comply with the new parking ordinance I thank you for helping. For those of you who find the ordinance inconvenient or even difficult, again I apologize but honestly believe it will provide for safer and better streets within our City. It will also make Daren's job as Street Superintendent much easier as he works his way through an extensive list of projects this fall and strives to maintain passable and safe streets in the winter.

Just as time eventually passed in the rain trodden tent and the clouds gave way to sun, Daren's project list will be completed and the new parking ordinance will become common practice. I will be in Indianapolis from July 23 through the 29th. In my absence, you can enjoy Dan Hammond's column for the first week of August.

Until two weeks...