

Our City

I spent much of last week thinking about and getting ready to be gone all this week. Many of my thoughts kept taking me back to my friend and City Council President Dan Hammond. For those of you who may not know, Dan has been dealing with some heart issues since mid-summer and a few weeks ago he underwent open-heart double bypass surgery. As Dan and I talked a couple of days before his surgery, we both commented on how even when you do everything right, in this case diet and exercise, things can still go haywire. Instead of his usual five to seven miles a day, Dan is back to walking a few blocks as he starts his recovery. His doctor told him he may even feel like jogging again once fully mended. Knowing Dan a bit, that wouldn't surprise me.

Having missed the last City Council meeting due to his surgery Dan will be presiding over this week's meeting as I will be at the National FFA Convention with 14 students and another good friend, Patty Porath. As Dan gets back in stride and under the supervision of our extremely capable City crews, things here will be well in hand. I hope things at school go as well.

Over the last month or so I have been working with the Ag Program's business and industry partners, Simplot, Lamb Weston, Stotz Equipment, Double M, Petersen's, Driscoll's and the City, to put together a "soft skills" workshop for the freshmen class this Wednesday. The six soft skills workshops are part of the "growing our own" project the Ag Program's Advisory Committee began a few years ago. The freshman workshops will focus on properly completing and submitting a job application, how to properly respond to common interview questions, making the right first impression, how a cyber social profile can keep you from getting a job or get you fired, working well with others, and keeping a job once you get it. My thanks to our business and industry partners along with my teaching partners Traci Woodworth and Emily Fisher, for making this opportunity possible for our students. Well done!

On the City side my thanks extends to our amazing employees as they continuously work to make our community better. Street Superintendent Daren Dahlke and his team have spent more than a little time lately at Willow Bay prepping for the paving that will take place this week. The preparation turned into repair as some jackass decided to bypass our barricades to spin cookies in Daren's team's work. Even when you do everything right, things can still go haywire all because some imbecile feels compelled. The destruction was fixed; unfortunately, stupid can't be.

Stupid found its way to the intermediate school and football field press box in the form of graffiti last week also. It may not be the usual suspects as the last "artists" that were found were well past high school age. Stupid can't be fixed; but one would hope that those affected by the lack of social conscience would at some point grow out of it.

As work progresses at Willow Bay Campground, Cody Moldenhauer our Grounds Superintendent, and Public Works Coordinator Jeremy Peirsol, met with representatives from Mountain Shadow Landscape to walk through irrigation upgrades and landscaping possibilities within the confines of the grant. They also discussed hardscaping a retaining wall along the north entrance to the boat launch.

Cody and his crew continue to winterize sprinklers at the Willow Bay recreational area as well as throughout our extended park system. Cody also managed to make time to get in a final fall weed spraying before weather turned wet last week. He and his crew also got in their final fall mowing in preparation for the changing seasons.

Repairs are needed within the Willow Bay Café as old drains within the building are no longer serviceable. Scott Plousard, the chef and lessee of the café, managed to work around the bad drains throughout the summer. He is excited to get those fouled drain lines fixed prior to reopening next spring; we all are. I already miss his cooking and spring seems a long way off.

As the drain lines at the Café get repaired they will be better suited to getting their contents to the Waste Water Treatment Plant where repairs and upgrades are also taking place. In working with our partners at Keller and Associates, the ultra violet treatment building is nearing remodeled and reconditioned, which will continue to insure that all pathogens are eliminated prior to the water being delivered to the Snake River. That's a very good thing. What is not so good is that the Waste Water crew's efforts to flush and clean sewer lines petroleum products that have been found in the line that services the fairgrounds area. Motor oil and the like create havoc with the Waste Water Treatment Plant. Waste Water Superintendent Pete Cortez and I will be working the area businesses to find and solve the issue; I am sure it was caused by a slip in best management practices and not anything chronic or negligent. It is uncertain at this time whether the potential problem was caught in time prior to petroleum making its way past the lift station near the old Hirning building to the treatment plant. We should know in a few weeks. My thanks to Brian Morris of the Water and Waste Water Department for finding the problem and to Pete Cortez for following up with the Department of Environmental Quality and me to address the issue.

I will extend my thanks to Jeremy Peirsol once again for his and Chris Fehringer's work in writing and administering the grants currently in fruition; namely, the Willow Bay Paving Project, the Idaho Traffic Safety Grant that is replacing all the signage throughout town, the writing of a new Local Rural Highway Investment Program (LRHIP) grant that will repair and pave the 300 block of Roosevelt hopefully in 2018, and further teaching Chris how to write Idaho Parks and Recreation grants as we try and find ways to upgrade and enhance our city parks and their amenities.

As I complete lesson plans today and pack for a week in Indianapolis, my thoughts and thanks extend to the many partners that make so much possible in our community. To Dan Hammond for his extraordinary efforts on our behalf, to our business and industry partners that work to make our youth better prepared for life, to our wonderful city personnel who make life better for all of us and not lastly to our local farmers who so freely donate to the FFA Chapter that make real life experiences like competing at the National level a reality for our students rather than just a far off dream. Each of you are so remarkable and why our community remains the best place to live. And, though it shouldn't continue to surprise me, it does. Thank you one and all.

Until next week...