

Our City

As weeks go, last week was pretty damn good, both here at the City and at school. Neither place provided satisfaction without associated challenges but then I have always believed challenges provide opportunities. And, opportunities provide a way forward if potential is met with the requisite effort.

Travis Hansen, our high school principal, has had those of us on the school's leadership team reading a book about what motivates most people. Beyond our basic survival instincts of food, shelter and reproduction, it has traditionally been accepted by those who study such things that rewards and threat of punishment (sticks and carrots) were what motivated most folks. Lately, at school I found myself caught in that trap; I found myself dwelling on the countless days in my tenure as an FFA Advisor that I donated to the potential betterment of our youth. I forgot why I got into teaching and specifically FFA to begin with. It was never about the money. It was the same reason I volunteered to run for City Council and then for Mayor when Amy Manning asked me to. It was because I thought I could make a difference in peoples' lives. I have always believed that when my efforts met potential, good things would happen. I have rarely been disappointed, although I have occasionally lost sight of what motivated me. It has always been something intrinsic, I love what I do both here at the City and at school and last week reaffirmed that it has never been about the sticks or carrots.

After last week's Power County Press you may well be wondering what we plan to do with golf. The meeting Councilpersons Jensen and Hofmeister and I had with our Golf Pro Denny Howell I think was productive. We revisited the ideas that surfaced this summer which I wrote about a bit over a month ago. This week the Council will discuss the merits of each idea and how best to move forward. If the ideas are adopted, next year will see Mondays and Wednesdays from 7:30 to noon as family days and times. If approved, families (children accompanied by adult(s)) would have their greens fees waived on those days and times. Also a youth league will be started to encourage kids to pick up the game. The league will play Tuesday mornings from 7:30 to noon. The Youth League will begin after the State High School Tournament on subsequent Tuesdays through the start of school in August. The league will include a golf lesson from Denny beginning each Tuesday morning. Those league members who golf three of the four weeks each month will have their names entered into a drawing for prizes such as a variety of clubs and other essential accessories. The league will be non-competitive and designed to be educational and fun. The other idea that surfaced from the golf meeting was a Couples' Night to be offered on Fridays. Again this is a non-competitive offering where couples who sign up and participate regularly will have their names entered into a drawing for a "date-night package" each month. Other possibilities include a Senior League and an idea offered by Councilperson Workman that would allow for season pass holders to bring a guest with them who would receive some type of discount for golfing our course.

While working through some other details relevant to golf I received a phone call from Tom Henesh, the owner of Indian Springs. Tom wanted to discuss how to gain his campers a reduced cost should they want to golf; much the same as the half-priced green fees we now offer Willow Bay campers. Perhaps we may be able to offer half-priced swim passes to our campers at Willow Bay. With the thousands of campers they receive at Indian Springs each year a partnership may well improve revenue for both businesses. The idea will also be

discussed at this week's council meeting. All of the ideas above have me optimistic about the future of our golf course and its value to the City; with effort they will become something more than mere ideas and the increased earning potential of the course will be realized.

The thing about intrinsic motivation is that sometimes, at least for me, the efforts need to be somehow validated; a difference must be realized. That happened twice last week. On Monday I received a visit from Juan Saldana the Community Development Specialist from Governor Otter's Commission on Hispanic Affairs. According to Mr. Saldana if you are Hispanic there is no better community in Idaho to live in than American Falls. "It is very evident after talking to business owners, school officials, representatives of the County and law enforcement that Hispanics are well integrated and accepted throughout the community. It is unlike any other place we have visited," stated Mr. Saldana as we chatted. Now certainly I had little or nothing to do with how our two cultures have blended here, but it makes me nonetheless proud to see and hear that the community and family values we hold here in Power County and American Falls are recognized and noteworthy by the Governor's office.

Shortly after my meeting with Mr. Saldana a committee composed of Councilman Hofmeister, Clerk Herndon, Grounds Superintendent Moldenhauer, Public Works Coordinator Jeremy Peirsol and I hired Chris Fehringer to be our new grant researcher, writer and administrator. Of the applicants interviewed the committee believed Chris was the best fit for the position. His history with the City has been outstanding and there is nothing that leads me to believe that those same abilities will not carry over into the duties of our Grant Administrator. If you read these ramblings you know Jeremy Peirsol has been our Grant Administrator since he was hired ten years ago. Jeremy made the move to Boise last week to reunite with his family. He will commute back here two to three days a week until he finds suitable employment. In the meantime he will be teaching Chris everything he can about our current grants and how to find and apply for more. I will reassume my role in working with all of our superintendents to coordinate the implementation of all grants and public works. Perhaps in the years to come Chris will find himself in Jeremy's current position. Time will tell; beyond providing for his family Jeremy's motivation has never been about the money earned here at the City, it has always been about making American Falls the best place to live for every one of us. You can't put a value or price tag on that type of motivation.

Last Thursday and Friday I experienced something that I always hoped for but didn't expect from my two Communications classes. Given reports from parents, grandparents and teachers alike, this year's freshmen were going to be difficult. Indeed their collective efforts on their first two speaking assignments proved that to be true. However; something changed in the two classes over the course of last week as they excelled beyond even my expectations in an individual and team speaking test. As an entire group they went from, "Why do I need to do better; I passed?" To, "I know we can do better; let's try!" They made the leap on this assignment to get beyond a grade and make themselves better when they knew better was possible. They found within themselves the motivation to take advantage of an opportunity; to work and get better just because better was possible. They revalidated the reason I continue to teach. I am so proud of each of them.

Until next week...