

Our City

Don't throw it away! It happens to many of the things that the city mails in envelopes. The one coming next week is different. It is your monthly bill. I know I told you about it last week, but this is just a friendly reminder. The bill will be in a window envelope with your name and address in the window and the city's return address in the upper left corner. It may be stamped with "Bill Enclosed" also. As I stated, many folks come into City Hall asking about various things from sewer flushing to tree trimming saying they were never notified when in fact letters or other forms of notice were sent to their homes or businesses only to be discarded because it wasn't the little white and blue postcard; so it must be junk mail. But, I can assure you if we pay for the cost of postage for an envelope and letter to 1500 addresses, \$800, it's not junk mail and neither is the new envelope and bill inside it. Your new bills should arrive in your mail boxes around February 1, just like the old post cards would have.

On the topic of bills I have been asked several times recently as to why the city does not accept credit or debit cards as a form of payment. The short answer is cost. We currently pay three percent for each card transaction at the golf course; this past year that transaction fee totaled about \$2800. As a city we do not want to pass a fee like that onto you the home or business owner, nor can we afford to absorb it in our Water, Waste Water and Sanitation budgets. If coming by City Hall to pay your bill or mailing it is inconvenient, you can do as I do and use Bill Pay through your bank account, set it to automatic payment and forget it.

It is difficult to not notice or forget the huge piles of snow accumulating in and around our downtown. Weather permitting, city crews will begin hauling snow from the affected areas this week. I would like to once again thank everyone who voluntarily pitches in to make life a bit easier for the rest of us; your efforts don't go unnoticed. Keep up the great work!

That same sentiment is extended to the folks that make the Fired Up After School Program possible for so many of our kids. I, like some of you perhaps, was aware of the program but didn't fully appreciate it. That changed for me last Tuesday. A month ago I received a phone call from Jason Stucki, a teacher at American Falls High School, asking me as mayor to take part in the program's Reader's Theater. He further added that the story I chose to read should be appropriate for second and third graders and one that made an impression on me when I was that age. I arrived at the event late having to finish a golf meeting first. As I walked in to the old band room at the intermediate school, the room was filled with young kids and parents and Emily Cade, a teacher at Hillcrest, was reading *Algo de nada*. I had missed *Police Cars* that was read by Police Chief Brandon Wilkinson. Teacher and coach Tony Cade read *Tacky the Penguin* which at its heart made the point that it is just fine to be different and unique and not follow the crowd; as intended I saw Tony in that story and quite agreed with the premise. A former student, army veteran and current aide at the high school Adam Andersen read *Green Eggs and Ham*; again I agreed. It is often good to try new things, it changes your perspective. Before reading I explained as Jocelyn Lopez interpreted that there are several kinds of people in this world; as kids and adults we need to figure out which kind we want to be. The book I read depicted someone who thought they were above helping someone less fortunate or in need; it illustrated someone who found themselves to be too important and still others that were just overly tired and bitter to help those in need. I have met all three types in my years since first reading the *Little Engine That Could*. Like many of you, I made the decision long ago to

dedicate what it is I do to those who need it simply because I thought I could. My thanks to Jason for the invitation and privilege and to Jocelyn for interpreting all the stories read; the Fired Up After School Program, part of what makes American Falls the best place to live.

Until next week...