

Our City

Yet, again I was wrong. Earlier this month I wrote about juveniles and vandalism, specifically graffiti on City and School District property. It turns out the perpetrator was an adult male who confessed to the crime. My mistake may have been for the better of all however, as it resulted in a brainstorming session with Judge Laggis, the County Prosecutor Anson Call, Connie Sheppard of Juvenile Probation and Police Chief Brandon Wilkinson. The meeting last week followed a weekend where eight curfew violations were charged by City Police, the eight violations were all charged to juveniles, several of whom were repeat offenders. The meeting was productive and insightful and I am encouraged by the predicted outcomes.

I am encouraged too by the progress being made on our City streets. It is kind of a cool thing to see new asphalt where old cracked and potholed rubble once was. Yes, the two holes in the new asphalt have been pointed out to me and Street Superintendent Daren Dahlke. Mistakes happen, especially as new employees are being trained in a job they have never done before and as much as he may feel he needs to, Dahlke can't be everywhere at the same time, especially with so much going on in his department. We all learn by the mistakes we make. The holes are easy to fix and will cause no long term adverse effects to the two new streets they are on.

New asphalt will be placed this week on most of Whitman and part of Van Buren. Once these streets are completed work on Fort Hall will begin in earnest. Starting this week 18 more inches of road-base will be extracted from the street and through traffic will be diverted to Whitman, Oregon Trail and other side streets making travel through that part of town slower, please allow for a few more minutes if you have to use these streets through the completion of the project. On that note, several complaints have been registered at City Hall, the Police Department and by Dahlke about speeders and dust on the already torn up Fort Hall Avenue. As construction and diversions continue through the summer speeding and carelessness may well result in unintended damage to your vehicle, drive Fort Hall only if you have to, slow down and enjoy the day.

Good progress was made at the City's budgeting meeting last Friday. I want to thank the City Superintendents for sharpening their pencils, as I know full well there was no fat to trim. I think we are within one more meeting of completing the fiscal 2019 budget. As a reminder the recessed City Council meeting which would normally be this Wednesday, June 20, has been moved to the following week on the 27th.

Speaking of things that are late the following is the Outstanding Spring Yard results by the American Falls Historical Preservation Commission. Outstanding flower displays were seen at the City Library and at these residences: 905 Hillcrest, 266 Washington, 355 Washington, 260 Monroe, 1621 Falls, 904 Reed, 446 Cleveland, 580 Snowflake, and 104 Grant. Many other beautiful gardens were viewed including these residences: 355 Autumn Way, 575 Snowflake, 236 Washington, 464 Adams, 370 Madison, 905 Falls, 408 Polk, 715 Stevens, 193 Howard, 431 Calder, 670 Calder, 510 Ralph, 729 Fort Hall, and 315 Cleveland.

It doesn't seem like I am catching up with City business as I spent four days last week back in school learning the new Idaho Science Standards. I must say after completing my 34th year of

teaching I was pleasantly surprised. As you may have heard the School District is making a shift to Project-Based-Learning (PBL), I am excited about that too. What was truly encouraging was that the new science standards are also based on PBL and are performance based not by memory and rote. Students will actually now get to do science to learn science, whereas before more often than not I caught myself teaching about science so students could pass a test based primarily on the vocabulary of science. It has long been my belief that students learn best by doing, as do I.

I want to thank Dan Hammond for writing the column last week as I was in Moscow for State FFA Career Development Events. The 45 members performed extremely well, three qualifying for their national event and four others just mere points from doing the same. We have really awesome students in this community and I feel blessed to be able to work with so many of them. As I reflect on our juvenile issues they truly are the exception, but their misguidedness certainly paints a contrasting picture to those more positively directed. Perhaps, the new direction our School District is taking will engage those prone to disruptive behavior. I look forward to trying to make a positive difference in their lives both in and outside the classroom.

Until next time...