

## Our City

Initiative, according to Webster is the energy or aptitude displayed in initiation of action. Similarly, Cambridge defines initiative as the ability to judge what needs to be done and take action, especially without suggestion from other people. As a small town mayor I very much appreciate the Cambridge definition above as the initiative of our City superintendents and employees makes so much possible for all of us; to no small degree it makes the part-time mayor's position at least appear to be productive. It has long been surmised that if you want to accomplish great things you surround yourself with those you trust and who share your same goals and vision. It has been my experience in American Falls that premise is reality.

When we generally think of initiative, I at least, often think big. Something that will make a lasting impact and be recognized as something significant done for the greater good. But, in reality, the big things never happen unless the initiative is taken by one and all to insure that the basics, the routine and even the mundane are always taken care of.

Not long ago someone printed and shared a Facebook post with me about how our City street department was spending all their time helping the golf and parks department trim trees and ignoring the many potholes and wash boarded gravel streets. I don't know who posted the comments but they obviously know less about street maintenance and repair than I do. You see, it does no long-term good to patch potholes when there is still moisture and frost in the ground. The patch just "blows up" when everything under it thaws. So, the street department exercised some initiative, wanting to be productive and forward thinking, and helped where help was definitely needed. I know the folks who live on Howard and those who golf are appreciative of the efforts of all City but some aren't touting it as a "waste of time and resources." It is certainly a person's right to have an opinion.

This last week stumps from the trees that were completely removed from the golf course and throughout town were also removed providing space for something new. If you have been out on the Willow Bay trail lately you will have noticed differences as our Parks Department has been working with the Natural Resource Conservation Service and Idaho Fish and Game through a grant from Lamb Weston to reestablish native habitat in the area. This was an initiative that began last year and as native seeds are planted and the invasive species of grasses, mustards and lettuces are controlled it is hoped that wildlife and upland birds will soon return. Eighteen years ago I used to walk the trail in the predawn light seeing and hearing all manner of waterfowl, Pheasants, Hungarian partridge, Sharptail grouse and deer. Now, there are cottontail rabbits and a protective mother moose. An enterprising senior from American Falls High School is going to place birdhouses out along the trail also this spring; adding to the attractions already there.

This past week several City employees attended a two day traffic control "Flagger" training; which may seem silly to some, but not those employees who have nearly been run over by folks in town when working on various projects in, on or near our City streets. It happens more than you can possibly imagine. Streets continue to be swept and potholes are now being patched as the weather permits. Construction on the sidewalks around both City Parks has begun and with luck will be done before Memorial Day.

As you may know I have incurred a few other obligations this year and have been traveling a bit. Things in the City are well taken care of in my absence. A few things at school are very far behind because of the traveling. Last week I mentioned in one of my classes that I could use some help this last Saturday in the greenhouse. As I was getting ready to start transplanting Saturday morning Alejandro showed up to help, shortly after that Guadalupe came, then Jessica, then four students who had just finished taking the ACT test (Katia, Marializ, Rosa and Trevor) came, followed by Juan. That they worked alongside me for six hours without any thought as to what was in it for them makes me proud of each. So often we hear, “today’s kids lack initiative and work ethic.” No they don’t! They just need a place to practice both. And, that is a topic for another time.

Until next week...