

## Our City

Last month on June 26<sup>th</sup> the City held an open house on the issues facing our water infrastructure. To those who were able to attend thank you so very much for your thoughtful input. Please bear with me while I summarize the discussion, concerns and suggested solutions.

Average City wintertime water usage is 135 Gallons Per Capita per Day or GPCD. Average City summertime usage is 950 GPCD. Based on the estimated acreage of the green spaces (including parks and schools) and the NRCS recommendation of watering rate of 1 inch per acre twice weekly, thus 20% of the overall increase of 135 to 950 GPCD could be attributed to City Parks and the Schools summertime irrigation needs if the School District and the City are following the NRCS guidelines. Frankly, I think but do not know, that the City and District are applying more than the two inches per week. Approximately 50 fire hydrants are connected to 4-inch waterlines throughout the City; these hydrants and 68,800 feet, about 13 miles, of watermains do not meet Idaho code and are 50 to 60 years old and deteriorating.

As I have written extensively about in order to qualify for any major grants that will be required to replace the 13 miles of watermain and 50 fire hydrants the City will have to install water meters. The possible installation of water meters consumed the first half of the discussion at the open house. I completely understand all the associated concerns around their possible installation. It was Gary Ferguson who provided a possible solution to water meters; a solution we all thought had merit. Gary's idea was that property owners could pay for water based on lot size or square foot of green space rather than installing meters. I like that idea! It saves the money on the cost of the meters, their installation, monitoring and maintenance. It does not unfortunately qualify us for the type of federal grants we will need to help pay for the replacement of the 13 miles of old four inch watermains, but could be used to more equitably distribute the cost of our water usage until such time as meters could be installed.

The City will be determining over the course of the next three to four months how much water actually goes onto our City parks and golf course. We will be working with the School District to help them determine the same. I will also be forming a working group to determine the best route for the City to pursue in the eventual replacement of the 13 miles of four inch watermains. My thanks to Tim Rudeen and Gary Ferguson for already agreeing to serve on the working group. I have also asked Lyle Eliassen to be a part of the group when he is available. If you have an interest and real ideas for proactive solutions to any of these issues please contact me or leave your name and contact information at City Hall. I will convene the working group once the amount of summertime water usage is determined for the City and School District.

Speaking of summertime water usage and parks our City Park has sure seen a lot of community based use this summer and I am heartened by that greatly. I was in Gilbert, AZ, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July visiting our newest grandson Theo, but must thank all the volunteers who first made the Community Breakfast such a great success! Estimates are that over 1000 people attended the breakfast. The Music in the Park Independence Day celebration was also a huge success, awesome job Tammy Ramsey and everyone that made that event possible. Today, July 13, was the Annual Power County Search and Rescue Salmon BBQ; my thanks to our selfless volunteers

for their continued efforts to keep each of us safe and make supporting them a regional event that is anticipated with unsurpassed attendance and enthusiasm every year.

It is the selfless people like Tim Rudeen, Gary Ferguson and Lyle Eliassen who volunteer to do the thankless tasks; Kelly Brannock, Chris Wride, Joan Phillips, Delane Anderson who spearheaded the Community Breakfast; Tammy Ramsey and the Music in the Park group and all of the Search and Rescue volunteers who continue to make American Falls the very best place to live.

Enjoy the rest of your summer and please be mindful of the water you use outside your home.

Until next week...