

## Our City

As I write this early Friday morning it was a week and a day ago that the rumor mill was running full tilt. “The new Simplot Intermediate School would not be open for classes because of bad water,” was the general word being spread. I guess the one thing that I have learned as mayor is that after a construction project and new water main installation there are always complications especially when it comes to the final water quality tests. The water main in question was installed a bit over a year ago and runs from Fort Hall up Taylor Street about 200 yards and terminates. The culinary and fire suppression water lines for the new school take off from the new main about 20 yards before the line terminates. The problem with terminal lines is that it is really difficult to flush dirt and debris out of the terminal end. As of August 24 the water to the new school had passed all the required tests and was ready to open but the water at the fire hydrant at the terminal end of the water main had failed coliform (dirt in the line) tests twice. Thanks to the ingenuity of Scott Dalling, Water and Waste Water Superintendent, and a vigorous flush routine the terminal end of the new line also passed water quality testing on Monday, August 26<sup>th</sup> the day of the new school’s open house. Classes began at the new Simplot Intermediate School on time with all systems clear.

At the same time City personnel, Councilwoman Jensen and many young mothers were meeting at City Hall with Michael Patton, Community Development Specialist for the Southeast Idaho Council of Governments (SEICOG) to begin the process of selecting new playground equipment for Lee Street Park. Patton and SEICOG are writing a grant that if successful will allow us to vastly improve the playground and parking area at Lee Street Park. Jensen has been instrumental in the process and is encouraging anyone with young children or grandchildren to offer input into the type of playground equipment to be installed. I believe samples will be available for comment at the back to school nights at Hillcrest and Simplot schools. If successful in the grant application the new playground should be installed next spring.

As the budget year winds down and most of the major City construction projects are completed my time and that of the City administration has turned to updating our personnel policy for Council approval and finalizing updates and changes to the City code for codification later this fall. The City code has taken nearly a year but is close to being ready for final review, Council adoption and codification by the State. I think I said a year ago that it would be a good Christmas present in 2018, well that is doubly true now. Sorry for the wait.

What can’t wait is the School District’s new initiative Read-Talk-Play. You saw the banners this summer on the City light poles. You will begin seeing the t-shirts in all the schools and many local businesses every Wednesday. The initiative is designed to prepare kids for kindergarten and beyond. Only about 20 percent of our students come into kindergarten ready. Read-Talk-Play is a community-wide effort where several local businesses and civic groups are supporting the District’s efforts. We all need to encourage our pre-k parents to spend time reading, talking and playing with their kids; preparing their children for a promising future. Certainly, research affirms the importance of all three, but beyond that it is the right thing to do as a parent, grandparent or involved community member and as grandparent I can tell you it is just plain fun! I would ask that if you are interested in at least promoting the District’s effort call them at 208-226-5173 or just stop by at 827 Fort Hall and

pick up your free Read-Talk-Play t-shirt that everyone else will be wearing each Wednesday. Help us build a better future for our kids, even as adults we would enjoy life more if we actually got to read, talk and play more. Be a part of making American Falls the very best place to live and go to school for all of our kids, Read-Talk-Play! Please!

Until next week...