

August 2016

PLUMMER NEWS

C I T Y O F P L U M M E R

**D A T E S O F
I N T E R E S T :**

- August 11
Regular City
Council Meeting
6p.m.
- August 11 Budget
Hearing 6p.m.
- August 25
Regular City
Council Meeting
6p.m.

Plummer City News is published by the City of Plummer and provided to customers free of charge. An electronic version is available upon request. Any comments about this publication can be addressed to Sara Gauthier City Clerk at P.O. Box B, Plummer, Idaho 83851 or (208) 686-1641 or by e-mail at Sara@cityofplummer.org

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Gateway Fire Protection District

There were EMT classes held at the Gateway Fire Protection District on July 12th. There was 12 volunteers enrolled for the EMT class. The Gateway Fire Protection District would like to thank the volunteers who provided instructing and assisted with the EMT classes. Thank you to the city for the use of the building across the street from the Fire Station and also a thank you to CDA Tribe for their donation last year and this year. Last year's donation went to fund the EMT course. The Training facility is just about cleaned up and ready for construction. The Fire Station could use any donations of lumber that volunteers can spare. IF you have a few boards laying around your house in fair condition 6 feet or longer in length they could use them. Just drop them off near the training building or the call the fire station and they can pick them up.

Plummer Senior Citizens

Please join us for lunch Tuesdays and Fridays. Have lunch and socialize.

Meet new people.

All are welcome at 12:00p.m.

Donation: \$4.00 age 60 and over

\$6.00 age 59 and under

Senior Center is located on the side of City Hall

Please Call 208-686-1863

We are also looking for someone to rebuild our handicap ramp. Can you help us?

Library News

Plummer Public Library's Summer Reading Program ended July 28th with a picnic on the lawn and prize drawings. Prize winners were Mariah Morris, (Fitbit) Nicole Middleton, (Spa gift card) Jed Mitchell, (family pass to Wellness Center) Evelyn Fenton, (Bicycle) and Arianna McKinney (Kindle Fire). Everyone who participated is a winner because they are readers!

Monday-Wednesday: 10a.m. to 6 p.m.

Thursday: 2p.m.-6p.m.

Friday & Sunday: Closed

Saturday: 10a.m.-2p.m.

Message from the Mayor

I finally got the engineers together along with Stillwater Construction and we met on the 25th to discuss the plans for moving forward on the coming strategy and work plan for the electrical system. Commonwealth Electrical Engineering has been selected to represent the city and perform the design and planning duties for us. For now, they will work on the project description and cost estimates for the bond ordinance that will be required for us to get loans for funding work over the next several years. Much of this data has already been amassed as they were also hired by KEC to design the scope of the pole replacement project we just completed. Alamon and DC engineering have also participated in various aspects of electrical data accumulation through us and KEC and we'll be gathering that information and pooling it together as we look toward rebuilding our system. What this means in simple terms is that a lot of the work that we would have otherwise had to fork out in the hundreds of thousands of dollars has already been done, which will, in the long run, save us hundreds of thousands of dollars. Then, once we get past the election, real system design and work planning will begin, then construction next spring.

Stillwater will be the first line of response to any outages or weekly maintenance through the fall and winter months, and will also do their fair share of the improvement work next spring and onward. KEC, at the moment, is the Mutual Aid responder for big outages due to acts of God or emergency response, but I'm researching alternative organizations that can fill that role too. I've asked Avista, among others, and am waiting to hear back.

We suffered another outage down at the Park over the weekend, and I'm getting sick of it as I imagine all of you are too! This is why we need that bond to pass to finally fix this system once and for all!

I met with the bond attorney and I mentioned to her that I'm hearing from customers at the park and our southern spur (Lovell Valley) about their concerns of being able to vote for the system since they are impacted by the problems too. She and Andy, our city attorney, are looking at the language of the statutes but it looks like their fate rests on the votes of those who live within the city limits. One potential way, I've discovered, to fix this is to create a "Plummer Power District," but it has to be done by petition with at least 2/3rds of the qualified electorate in the new "district" area. For those who like to read and analyze statutes, you can go online and look up Title 50, Chapter 31, particularly 50-3101 and 3103. I'm not sure it can be done, but the attorneys are looking in to it. We couldn't do it before this coming election time anyway but it might be instituted for any future issues we face in those outlying areas of our system. Key word is "might." We'll see.

Our water situation is rearing its ugly head again. The crew is spending an inordinate amount of time repairing the same lines over and over and over. The pipes are so old and corroded its embarrassing. Old meters aren't recording flows accurately. We are losing water all over the place. We are looking at ways we can try and do it piecemeal, but the current revenue doesn't give us enough room to make improvements so we are going to raise the base rate and there is a public hearing for it scheduled in front of the budget hearing the 11th of August. Once that happens we can start doing small sections and hopefully get the system acceptable within 6 years or so. Its teetering on catastrophic failure and something has to be done now! Plus it will help us lift the moratorium on water, at least on the distribution side anyway. For all of you who voted against the water bond, and you know who you are, we could have been ahead of the game by now with the same increase we are going to implement, but you voted it down and now the increase has come without the \$4 plus million dollar grant we would have used to fix the entire system! Disconnect and reconnect fees are increasing too, which haven't been adjusted since 1913!

On the sewer side, ground should break in the next week or so on the inflow and infiltration project funded by the Army Corps. Hopefully that will knock out a chunk of our sewer overflow and EPA/DEQ violations during wet weather. I'm negotiating with the tribe on an IHS project to add catch basins to the sewer plant to basically store overflow so we don't violate EPA and DEQ standards. If we can get the biggest bang for the bucks and the catch basins are big enough, we can lift the sewer moratorium. We are almost there!

The improved climate for economic and community development that lifting the moratoriums on water and sewer will create will be like a breath of fresh air after being stifled for so long! We need more housing and business development to assist community prosperity for everyone that lives here! We need room to grow!

We'll be working hard over the next months setting up the work and capital plans for the electric system. We have tried to put some wiggle room in our budget for next year to accommodate some small electric projects over the fall and winter months while we get our funding from USDA, commercial banks, or where ever we can find it. By this time next year, if all goes well, you should see work all around the city, the park, and Lovell Valley as we start improving the electrical, water, and sewer systems. I'll be keeping you posted. Finally, the office staff has been informing me that some customers want to "talk to the mayor" about disconnects and fees related to that.

I'm going to tell you right up front, that unless you have a very compelling reason as to why you shouldn't pay those fees because you were disconnected for failure to pay, you might as well not waste your time or mine. "I forgot," "No one told me," "I didn't know," or "I shouldn't have to pay that," just aren't compelling enough. The staff makes every effort to notify customers of impending disconnect, and I stand behind them 100%! If you miss the deadline, then you're going to have to pay. I, myself, have put our utility bill in the pile of papers on our table and have forgotten too. Then the lights go out and I suddenly remember, "Oh crap!" But I just pony up and pay the fees. It was my responsibility and my fault it got turned off. NOT THE STAFF'S! They don't need to be verbally abused for your mistake! Period! If I have to pay, you have to pay, plain and simple. And we live on a limited income. Utilities are not a right, they are a service, and you have the option of having them or not. There may be mitigating circumstances, but on average 98% of the reasons people give for missing their due dates just aren't compelling enough to bend the rules. This is just so you know where I stand.

If you have other concerns, ideas, or issues, then I'm open to discussion. But spare me, and the office staff, of your responsibilities for your households as residents.

If you have any questions or concerns about the coming bond election or work on the systems, don't hesitate to contact me via city hall or at mayor.cityofplummer@gmail.com.