

MEMO FROM THE MAYOR

SUBJECT: We Have Much for Which to Give Thanks

At a Glance: Emmett is blessed to have outstanding department heads who do more with less.

The next two memos will inform our community about our excellent city departments: Systems Administration, Police, Fire, Public Works, Building and Zoning, Library and Clerk.

Systems Administration (IT)

Mike Knittel is a no-kidding visionary. He came to the city as a police officer, quickly working up the chain. His last billet was detective, holding the rank of lieutenant. Yet, as he advanced, he became more involved in the communications aspect of law enforcement, aka Information Technology or IT. Due to the nature of time, this circumstance prevented him from focusing on his “day job”. As it turned out, not only was he very busy taking care of Emmett Police communications, other city departments and other local governmental units looked to Mike for assistance in their communication needs, as well. Always a hail-fellow-well-met, Mike became even more popular resulting in even less stick-time as a detective.

Having just been newly appointed as Emmett’s mayor (2015) when former Mayor Butticci left for his county commissioner’s seat, upon a suggestion made by a council member, I proposed a solution: have Mike become the head of a new department known as Systems Administration. Mike understood that initially he would be a department of one, but because of his vision of consolidating our telephone, internet and server access (saving the city approximated \$8200 a month in doing so), coupled with future enterprise funds plowed back into his department once the fiber optic initiative took hold with providers “renting” our infrastructure, he would easily support at least two other employees to lessen his load. As it turned out, we calculated correctly, and I have never regretted the decision of creating his department. Apart from daily operations, these are the big five accomplishments of his department for FY 2020/21.

[1] Systems Administration initiated a pilot “home program”. The small residential development selected as a test site will have direct fiber optics to the home provided by the city with the ability to choose from four different internet providers. It will also have the capacity to

do up to 10,000 mbps download and upload per home. The advantage to this focuses on making it a future-proof solution as broadband demand accelerates at a rapid pace. Having choice of providers also embraces competition for pricing.

[2] Mike's department also completed the Waste Water Treatment Plant and Shadow Butte Industrial Park fiber optic conduit and distribution buildouts. This project was 100% grant funded and brings next level broadband infrastructure to those areas. Prior to completing this project, the Industrial Park possessed a real disadvantage in internet choice and functionality. Projecting forward, this build-out will have the capacity to serve the surrounding area for any industrial, commercial or residential development.

[3] A cooperative project took place last FY with an upgrade to the entire emergency services software platform throughout Gem County. Several county and city departments now enjoy a generational leap in their communication capabilities making this a huge success. This will positively impact our community for decades to come. Systems Administration assisted with sourcing and programming new Cradlepoint routers in each of the emergency vehicles (forty-three total) during the process. This upgraded hardware provides up-to-date security for the transmission and processing of sensitive digital information. It also provides for enhanced mapping of emergency calls and location data to assist first responders.

[4] We continue to build relationships with our smaller broadband partners. We added a 3rd provider to the city's network this past year that provide service to homes and businesses and hope to add a 4th provider soon. The three providers currently using our network consist of Fatbeam, Anthem Broadband (formerly Safelink) and Vickery IT. All of these providers supplying internet on our city's network for homes and businesses are Idaho-based providers. Without the city's broadband infrastructure, they would have either not been able to expand to the wider customer base or perhaps would not have been able to provide services, period. Supporting Idaho-based providers, who support Idaho-based local businesses, while bringing next level connectivity to our local governmental entities at a reduced cost drives our mission successfully.

These local providers should not be confused with the other providers we have a direct fiber interface with: Centurylink, Sparklight, and Syringa. The latter do not provide services through our hut to the homes or businesses—at least not yet. They do, however, comprise the upstream providers to our local providers.

[5] Towards year end, we kicked off a tangible plan to utilize American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. The projects will facilitate long-term improvements to our water, sewer, fiber optic, and backup power needs. Our focus was using these one-time monies on important infrastructure improvements that will benefit us now and future generations while eliminating the need for bonds, higher taxes (that cities have no control over anyway) or grant applications.

Emmett Police Department

Last FY, Chief Steve Kunka increased the amount of P.O.S.T. certified High Liability Instructors by two with plans for one more. This is significantly important. High Liability Endorsements are limited to instructor subjects that have either a direct use of force application, or a significant use of force element. High Liability Instructors possess certification to teach Defensive Tactics, Firearms, Emergency Vehicle Operations, and Conducted Energy Devices.

Another achievement entailed improving our missing child program. We pioneered the Mandatory Missing Alert System, which comprises an exportable model for all 199 Idaho cities and its 44 counties. The last two Memos explained that program.

This summer, representatives from our local Police, Fire, EMS, Sherriff's Office, local clergy, medical professionals and Gem County Prosecutor's Office attended a CISM (Critical Incident Stress Management) training. CISM is designed to help first responders deal with trauma one incident at a time. It trains them to better process the incident when it happens without judgment or criticism. The program is peer driving. Accordingly, the training representatives from each entity have formed a CISM/Peer Support Team designed to provide multidimensional critical incident stress management services for any approved group requesting it. This includes public and private entities, as well as civilian and non-civilian agencies.

As such, priorities for the team include maintaining confidentiality and respecting the feelings of the individuals involved. It is not the function of CISM to replace ongoing professional counseling, but to provide immediate crisis intervention. For more information on Missing Child Alerts or our CISM initiative, please contact Chief Steve Kunka at 208-365-6055.

Stay tuned for more departments next time!