

## **MEMO FROM EMMETT MAYOR GORDON W. PETRIE**

### **SUBJECT: THE DIFFERENCE A VISION MAKES ALONG WITH A GREAT STAFF**

In 2015 when appointed Emmett's Mayor by my peers following then-mayor Bill Butticci's exodus to the county commission, what I discovered was what I expected. The expectation centered on the department heads thinking the annual budget was a "plan" as opposed to simply a statutorily required tool—an important one to be sure—but only a tool. The planning, then, under that misconception amounted to nothing more than year-to-year.

Strategic planning, in order to be truly strategic, reaches out about five years. This is an appropriate span for small, economically struggling towns like Emmett. It allows us to marshal assets required for bigger projects that have to be taken "out of hide", so to speak.

So the first week on the job, I sat down with the department heads, and over a couple of meetings we developed a five-pillared strategic plan that looks something like this: (1) An economically vibrant and (2) health-conscious city, (3) legally compliant with all state and federal laws, (4) performing its constitutional mission (protecting people and property) (5) with adequate infrastructure for growth.

Obviously, some parts are moving along faster than others, but the point is, they are ALL moving along. Further, the pillars are always visible when circumstances, often beyond our control (e.g. Snowmageddon a couple of winters ago) get us momentarily off course. We find ourselves having to do a "compass check" while on the march, and sure enough, we see the five pillars for a course correction, when needed.

In order to further keep on course, notwithstanding our necessary adjustments along the way, we needed a vision. Thus, our vision encompasses becoming a core-competent municipal team providing excellence in municipal governance.

In the last four iterations of the budget I have presided over, the department heads have learned to be collaborative, not close-fisted; sharing, not self-centered. Perhaps their greatest work is evidenced by the budget for our next fiscal year. The department heads were able to *reduce* the overall budget by 4%. Last year our budget exceeded \$8.04 million. This next year our budget (if approved) will come in at \$7.76 million from all sources. Yet, we still balance in such a way we should still be able to accomplish everything that needs to be accomplished in the next fiscal year, all while keeping our five pillars in plain view.

I have worked at the federal level (at least militarily), the state level as a judge, even the county level as an elected prosecuting attorney. Now, for the first time, I have the opportunity to operate at the city level. Remarkably, Emmett is the only unit of government I have ever worked with that goes out of its way to do more with less. We are a municipality wholly dedicated to being good stewards of the allowance we are given through all of our resources: ad valorem taxes, enterprise funds, grants, license fees, or whatever. That accomplishment is a tribute to the outstanding department leaders serving us. It validates the proclamation we make after each department head meeting: "One Team! One Mission!" Bottom line: we readily accept the challenge of doing more with less each year, but it certainly helps to have a banker on board as the clerk and chief financial officer!