

# NEWS FROM THE CITY



City of Ashton

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 1



## FROZEN

In Ashton, the frost line or the depth that the groundwater in soil is expected to freeze is usually four feet. Snow cover can insulate the ground so that the frost depth is lessened but there is not much snow yet this year. Also, many residents move the snow in order to make parking easier which makes freezing easier. When the ground freezes, water lines can freeze also.

Moving water does not freeze as easily as standing water. The City water mains are running much of the time but many homes may not have water moving through their service lines at all times. This is where running a dripping faucet may help.

Letting the cold water in a faucet drip can prevent frozen service lines. The drip can be very slight and can be adjusted depending on the weather forecast. If the weather forecast calls for colder weather, the faucet should be adjusted to a larger drip.

Since the frost depth is deeper with each below freezing day, it may be necessary to continue to let a faucet drip until spring arrives.

Some lines froze last year in Ashton. The City helped those residents to thaw the lines if possible or provided hoses and coordination with their neighbors to provide water to their homes. Billing for the water cost is then done by

first averaging the past water use of the neighboring home then after the meter is read, taking that average from the current water use. The average use is then charged to the neighbor and the remaining is charged to the user borrowing water.

It may take until spring for frozen lines to thaw. The cost of digging up the lines, the risk of freezing during & after the trenching and the mess caused by the digging are serious considerations. In most cases, waiting for the spring thaw is preferable.

The City encourages residents to use their own judgment in deciding when to run a drip to prevent frozen water lines.

# HAPPY NEW YEAR

### January 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

### February 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	We	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

### March 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

### Calendar Key

City Council Meeting	Yellow
City P & Z Meeting	Cyan
Utility Bill Payment Due Date	Red
Utility Bill Mailing Date	Light Green
City Building Closed	Orange



## NEWS FROM THE CITY



# Council Letter to Legislators

Dear Congressman,

As Mayor and City Council of the City of Ashton, we are writing this letter to express concerns about regulations concerning the City's wastewater system.

In 2006, the City's wastewater system needed some much needed upgrades. A 2.5 million dollar project was planned, constructed and currently serves our citizens. In 2010, the City was placed under compliance order from the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality forcing the City to build a nitrate removal system for the City. A 3.5 million dollar project was planned, constructed and currently serves our citizens. Our citizens currently pay \$78.16 per month in base rates to cover the costs of the improvements and maintenance of these systems. With the usage costs most residents pay over \$100 per month for water and sewer service.

The Environmental Protection Agency issued the City a new discharge permit in 2014. As part of this permit, the EPA has established lower ammonia limits for discharge. The current system cannot meet these lim-

its. The EPA has given specific time limits and the City is currently working on a Wastewater Planning Study to meet these limits. The City has received a grant from the Idaho DEQ to help pay for the \$75,000 study that is required. Preliminary estimates from the engineers put the new project costs between 2 to 4 million dollars.

Right now, the citizens of Ashton have borrowed over 6 million dollars to complete projects in 8 years. The City of Ashton has 1,129 residents with only about 500 homes. With the current 6 million dollars in debt, each home will be responsible for \$12,000. Adding another 3 million will put each citizen's portion at \$18,000 with an estimated monthly base rate of \$98. Many of the City's citizens are retirees on fixed income. Many others work on farms or in the tourist industries and thus have seasonal income. Our citizens need your help.

The other issue is that the ammonia limits are based on what the City feels is faulty data. The stream that the regulatory agencies are testing is not a stream it is the start of a marsh that does

not support aquatic life. This marsh naturally cleans the water and by the time the effluent gets to a stream that has aquatic life, the water is safe for that aquatic life. At the very least, there should be more study by the DEQ and/or EPA on the stream to prove that the effluent is causing any sort of damage. We care about our environment and know that our citizens do also. Our wastewater system is clean, works well and is not hurting the environment.

The City's citizens count on their elected officials to speak out for them. We are hoping that you will assist us in alleviating the debilitating debt that is being forced on Ashton's citizens. Please assist us in getting the EPA and DEQ to reevaluate the limits they have placed on the City's wastewater system.

Sincerely,

Mayor Teddy Stronks

Councilman Brett Pincock

Councilwoman Teresa Hansen

Councilwoman Becky Harrigfeld

Councilman Tadd Atchley



## Write Your Own Letter to Legislators

Citizens could assist the City Council and Mayor by writing to the Legislators themselves. The more letters they get, the more likely it will be that they will investigate the situation. If they really look into this, the Council and Mayor are confident that they will work to get the agencies involved to look at Ashton's actual facility instead of trying to make it fit some scenario out of a textbook.

Here is a sample of what citizens could write in the letter:

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

*As a citizen of the City of Ashton, Idaho, I am writing you to ask for your assistance in an important matter.*

*As a citizen, I am paying large fees in order to have water and sewer service. These fees have raised because of projects done in order to comply with DEQ and EPA guidelines. Now a new*

*guideline may force us to raise fees again.*

*In addition, the new guideline is being placed on the sewer system using false information. Please investigate to find out more.*

*I am requesting that you look at the City of Ashton's unique situation and help my family.*

Sincerely,

Ashton Citizen



## MAYOR'S CORNER



*Mayor Stronks*

The City Council and I want you to inform you all about an issue the City is facing.

The EPA has set some new limits in the City's new wastewater discharge permit. The current system cannot meet the new limit. The City has been given a strict enforcement timeline in which to meet the limits.

The first required step has begun with a study of the wastewater system.

Following the study, the City will be expected to use the recommendations

of the study to build/repair the wastewater system to meet the new limits. Engineers are estimating a project costing between 2 to 4 million dollars.

As you all know, the City has been under this sort of pressure twice in less than 10 years and we are all paying for completed wastewater and water improvement projects. A new project would raise the rates again.

We are asking you all to help us. We are including

in this newsletter the letter that we are sending to our state legislators and U.S congressmen. If we all work together, maybe we can get the EPA to look closer at our situation. We are including the phone numbers, email addresses and mailing addresses for you to contact the legislators. Please contact them.

Let's work together to make a difference!

Sincerely,

*Mayor Teddy Stronks*

## Write to Ashton's Legislators

### State Senator

#### Jeff C. Siddoway

1764 E. 1200 N.  
Terreton, 83450  
Home (208) 663-4585  
FAX (208) 663-4428

### State Representative

#### Van Burtenshaw

1329 East 1500 North  
Terreton ID, 83450  
Home (208) 663-4607

### State Representative

#### Paul Romrell

512 Park St.  
St. Anthony, 83445  
Home (208) 624-4304

### U. S. Senator Mike Crapo

#### U.S. Senate

239 Dirksen Senate Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510  
(202) 224-6142

#### Idaho Regional Office

410 Memorial Drive, Suite 204  
Idaho Falls, ID 83402  
(208) 522-9779

### U.S. Senator James E. Risch

#### U.S. Senate

483 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510  
(202) 224-2752

#### Idaho Regional Office

901 Pier View Drive, Suite 202A  
Idaho Falls, ID 83402  
(208)523-5541

### U.S. Congressman Mike Simpson

#### U.S. House of Representatives

2312 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
(202) 225-5531

#### Idaho Office

802 W. Bannock, Suite 600  
Boise, ID 83702  
(208) 334-1953

### U.S. Congressman Raul Labrador

#### U.S. House of Representatives

1523 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515  
Phone: (202) 225-6611

#### Idaho Office

33 Broadway Ave., Ste. 251  
Meridian, ID 83642  
(208) 888-3188

You can email them by following the links at <http://legislature.idaho.gov>

You can email them by following the links at <http://legislature.idaho.gov/iso/legislative-delegation.htm>

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## CITY OF ASHTON

P.O. Box 689  
Ashton, ID 83420

Phone: 208-652-3987  
Fax: 208-652-3401

### UPCOMING MEETINGS

Regular City Council meetings are held each month on the 2nd Wednesday of the month. For specific dates & other meeting information please

refer to our website:

[www.cityofashton.com](http://www.cityofashton.com)



There are still MANY items on the City street property! Items on the property include used appliances, old cars, boats, trailers and more! The City street property is 80 feet wide on most streets. It is 60 feet wide on Spruce, Walnut, 10th Street and Maple Leaf Drive. It is 100 feet wide on Main Street. ***Please move the items before they are towed and/or confiscated.***

Thank you!

**HAPPY  
NEW  
YEAR**

*From the Mayor,  
City Council and  
employees of the  
City of Ashton*