

About the City

Water and Garbage

By Councilman Kingery

It is time to update the community about a couple of the projects I talked about in the past. Last March I mentioned that we were working on replacing the old Spring House over our spring which is located about 16 miles from Douglas. Approximately 85% of our water comes from the spring and if my memory is correct (I wouldn't bet on it!) Douglas obtained the spring back in the early 1900s and has been using water from it since that time. At any rate it is time we need to replace the structure protecting the spring from contamination from the surrounding area.

I told you in March we were doing lots of planning and that we expected to start construction in October of 2012 after the ground froze up. We had expected to be finished before the high summer water use requirement. Unfortunately we have not been able to obtain a work and storage easement around the spring area to do the work, or unrestricted use of the road into the area so that we could transport equipment and materials for the project. Some preliminary equipment had been moved in and since we were not provided an opportunity to remove the equipment in a timely manner the City is faced with paying rental fees on equipment that was no longer needed and was not being used.

When the City originally purchased the land around the spring they bought 40 acres. At some point after the spring was in use the City gave "free" all but 1 acre back to the then owner of the ranch. Sadly that has now turned into an apparent mistake, as we have not been able to obtain a temporary easement for construction purposes for the spring house.

We are in the process of working on a solution to the problem and we hope to schedule construction again for this autumn. Hopefully there will be no fires, catastrophes or other obstacles that affect our water supply before we are able to replace the building over the spring. Last fall a fire swept within a few feet of our wooden structure covering the spring! Our plan is to replace the old wooden structure with a precast concrete structure that will be safer from fire and storms. We will continue to do all we can to make sure the people of Douglas are not denied our usual supply of good safe drinking water.

You may have read recently that the City Council authorized a contract with the City of Casper for Municipal Waste disposal at their regional landfill. A year ago in March and last March I talked about the possibility of disposing of our Municipal Waste via an incineration project that was to be located near Guernsey. As it turned out that idea was "too good to be true", as

ideas often are. If the incineration project ever does materialize we can consider the economics of it later. One of the attractive parts of that possibility was that we did not have to pay to have them take the waste, just deliver it to them. The project never got off the ground however, and we haven't heard any more about it for about a year.

We are going to be shipping trash to Casper, probably starting the process sometime in 2014. We are "buying in" to the Casper landfill by paying them a portion of what it cost them to set up their regional landfill. By us paying our "fair share" of the cost it allows us to get the same costs and benefits to utilize the landfill that the Casper people pay. Once we are signed up any of you can deliver to the Casper landfill and pay the same rates as people from the Casper area pay. We will also be able to utilize their tree grinding equipment to do our annual wood chip grinding instead of paying much higher prices to lease equipment as we have had to in the past. We will be providing more information about this venture in the near future. Utilizing the Casper regional landfill will result in much lower costs than if we had tried to have our own "lined" landfill which would have been require by the State DEQ. It will, however, still be expensive!

Sometime this summer we are expecting to start building our "Transfer Station" at our landfill. We were able to get some State Land Investment Board (SLIB) money to help pay for the transfer station. The County receives money each year which it distributes throughout the county in a cooperative (Consensus) agreement with cities and the county. The City of Douglas received \$400,000 for the transfer station; however the cost will be somewhat over \$1,000,000. The transfer station will be an enclosed structure where all of our shippable Municipal waste will be unloaded inside the building. The waste will be sorted and what is to be shipped will be loaded into enclosed trailers and transported by road to the Casper landfill. Recyclables will be sorted out and hauled to a recycling site separately. We will likely keep the construction and demolition waste here at the Douglas landfill unless we find that it is less expensive to have it transported to Casper.