

Mayor's Newsletter

Mayor Brian Blad
City of Pocatello
P. O. Box 4169
83205-4169

- www.pocatello.us
- (208) 234-6163
- mayor@pocatello.us

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Tax Increment Financing

There is currently controversy statewide about Tax Increment Financing (TIF). Some people don't believe in its value, and the Idaho Legislature is proposing various changes to the law. It seems only appropriate for me to address the issue given Pocatello's history with TIFs.

Pocatello has formed 15 TIF districts from 1988 to today. We were the first city to close a TIF district, and when we did, the State of Idaho was unsure as to the procedure for closing a district. We worked with them on the process, and since then we have successfully closed 11 districts. The Central Corridor District is the most recent district we've closed. This leaves 4 active districts within our city limits. They are the Airport District, Portneuf District, North Yellowstone District and the NOP District.

The City Council, with the recommendation of the Pocatello Development Authority, votes to create a TIF district when it is necessary to help bring (or keep) a major employer to our area. For example, the

Central Corridor District helped us keep ON Semiconductor in Pocatello. As a result, last year ON Semiconductor added over \$26 million in capital investments to this plant, which secured over 600 jobs and allowed them to add another 100.

The Airport District was created to put in the necessary infrastructure for development at the airport. Because of the district, Petersen, Inc. was able to expand here in Pocatello rather than continuing to send work to their Ogden plant to finish. This keeps 60 jobs and a \$6-\$10 million investment here.

The NOP District has helped with infrastructure at the Gateway West Business Park. There are several businesses in this park employing a total of 500 people. The North Yellowstone District is home to Pocatello Square and Railroad Crossing Plaza. This was a blighted area desperately in need of help. Now, millions of dollars have been added to the tax rolls from the businesses that located in this district. Finally, the Portneuf District was formed to help Hoku come to Pocatello (rather than Singapore). This plant will add

\$400 million to the tax rolls and 200 new jobs to our economy.

Establishing TIF districts is the only tool we have in Idaho to bring new businesses here and to help existing businesses expand. Other states and other countries can offer more money and different, larger incentives. This makes it difficult to compete globally, which is what we are doing these days. Companies can locate or expand anywhere in the world. If we were to lose the ability to form TIF districts, I am certain the growth we've seen would not continue at the pace it has.

As I look at the facts, Tax Increment Financing is a necessity in the state of Idaho. I know there are a few people who do not agree. However like it or not, TIF districts are a great thing for a community. If used properly, TIF districts can vastly improve the tax base, but more importantly, TIF districts can increase employment opportunities. I support the use of Tax Increment Financing in our community.

Brooklyn's Playground

By now, many of you have heard or read about an exciting project coming to Pocatello – Brooklyn's Playground. Through a grassroots effort conceived by Jonny and Melissa Fisher, and the subsequent involvement of Valley Pride, this project entails the

development of a state-of-the-art "inclusive" playground. Once completed, this play structure would provide the opportunity for all children, regardless of age or ability, to play together in a safe, fun environment.

Although many of our current playgrounds provide limited

accessibility for children with various disabilities, the City has shown support for this project for a variety of reasons. These reasons include, but are not limited to, a documented need for such a facility in Pocatello, the uniqueness of the structure,

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Brooklyn's Playground (continued)

the creation of an attraction for visitors from around the area, and its limited cost to the City. Our initial support has been the City Council's approval of the playground's site, which is at O.K. Ward Park.

This project will follow a "community build" process

(similar to the *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* format) from design and fundraising through to the actual construction of the playground. In addition, the project's core committee is committed to providing additional funding for future maintenance and upkeep of the playground.

The City is excited to add this new feature to our park system, but it's going to take everyone's help to complete. For more information or to get involved in the project, visit the Brooklyn's Playground website at www.brooklynsp playground.org.



Fire Safety



Pocatello has recently experienced two serious house fire incidents. Unfortunately, one homeowner lost her life, and another was badly burned. The Pocatello Fire Department and I are taking this opportunity to remind everyone about the importance of knowing what to do in case of a fire.

It's essential that you make a plan ahead of time to keep you and your family safe. A good place to start is with properly installed and working smoke detectors. Smoke detectors that are over 10 years old should be replaced.

Do you have an escape plan that identifies 2 ways out of your home and includes a meeting place? Do you have a plan for calling 911?

The best way to be prepared is to not have a fire in the first place. Look around your home for fire hazards, such as overloaded electrical outlets, portable space heaters or candles you don't blow out. Do you have safe cooking practices? Are matches and lighters stored safely?

If you have a fire extinguisher, do you know how to use it? More

importantly, do you know when the fire is more than you can handle? The Fire Department strongly believes it is always better for you to escape the fire and call for assistance BEFORE attempting to fight the fire yourself. After all, buildings and belongings can be replaced, but your life is very precious.

For more information about creating an escape plan, installing smoke detectors, using fire extinguishers, etc., please contact the Fire Prevention office at 234-7083.

CURBSIDE RECYCLING SIGN-UP

Program Changes Begin April 1, 2011

Name _____ Daytime Telephone No. _____

Address _____

E-mail address _____ Owner or Renter _____

Recycling is collected every other week. For your pickup schedule, call 234-6193 or go to the Sanitation Department's webpage at www.pocatello.us.

If there is a topic you'd like me to address in future newsletters or if you want to comment or ask a question, write it down, tear off this part and send your comment to me. If you wish to call or e-mail, my number and address are listed on the front page. While I cannot respond to all comments individually, I do pass them on to the appropriate departments. v14,n3

My question/comment is _____

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____