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## City of Chubbuck – Mayors Newsletter – State of the City – January 2016

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CITY OF CHUBBUCK  
STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS  
MAYOR KEVIN B. ENGLAND  
January 6, 2016

The opening line of a famous novel provides some interesting food for thought. "It was the best of times it was the worst of times." I have found in my experience that you usually find exactly what you are looking for. Some see nothing but good around us and some see nothing at all good around us. The actuality of our true situation is found somewhere in between these two opinions. Blessings and good fortune are with us and challenge and difficulty are also amongst us. It is my hope that this address finds all well with you and yours but if this reaches you at one of those difficult times it is my desire that the following words can produce hope and help you to feel that you are not alone.

We live in a wonderful community. There are so many who willingly step up to help for the benefit of the whole. Most of this happens behind the scenes with little fanfare and to the general public goes unnoticed. I want to thank all who give of themselves for the betterment of our society. The good that is done could not happen without the efforts of each and every one. We have wonderful employees at the city. They go above and beyond what is expected and required of them. It is a pleasure to work beside them. I have been involved in innumerable experiences where volunteers were needed and the numbers that volunteer exceed the need. I would challenge anyone to find a more compassionate, kind, and caring people than live here.

The US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics released a study last June that ranked the communities of this nation in recovering best from the recent recession. The report was based on 3 key economic indicators 1. How much the unemployment rate has fallen. 2. The growth of local employment, and 3. How much the average hourly wage has grown. Our community ranked 27<sup>th</sup> in the nation and Boise ranked 45<sup>th</sup>. We were the only 2 communities in Idaho that ranked in the top 100. That speaks very positively to the efforts that have been taking place locally by many of our citizens both publicly and privately. We should all be encouraged about our future with this kind of information. We live in a great area and that word is getting out.

Idaho Central Credit Union and Allstate continue to show great commitment to our city. Allstate continues to hire more employees and the wages continue to increase. Idaho Central is in the process of enlarging their campus as they continue to increase employment. We are fortunate to have these two great neighbors. Along with them many smaller businesses continue to provide jobs which in turn bolster our economic well-being. I would like to offer my thanks to all who provide employment opportunities to our citizens.

We have several new businesses that will be calling Chubbuck their home in 2016. Panera Bread will open their doors any day now. Freddie's Frozen Custard & Steakburgers and Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen are both in the process of hiring staff to open their businesses in the near future. Red Robin and Black Bear Diner have been issued building permits and are under construction. One business has made commitments to come here. I will not release their name in respect for their opportunity to have their day in the sun as they make their own announcement. One other business is looking hard at us and I believe they will be here this coming year. What a great trend. Thank you to all whose efforts have made this growth possible.

Farmers Holding Company, the owners of the Pine Ridge Mall, is making improvements on their property. As they continue to upgrade and make improvements to their infrastructure the city is committed to support this effort. We have seen some wonderful improvements and look forward to seeing more to come. The Chubbuck Development

Authority will oversee any tax increment funds that will be used to make these improvements. These funds only become available as the mall grows and improves.

I think most if not all of us are aware of the challenges we have had with the Post Office this last year. They closed the Flandro Processing Center and moved those operations to Salt Lake City. This move caused major delays in our mail delivery. I, along with several other elected officials and a couple of representative from business, made the trip to Washington DC to address this problem. We met with Linda Malone who is the Vice President of Network Operations for the United States Postal Service. She had her whole team with her and they were attentive to our presentation and our requests for relief. We have since been having frequent discussions with Darrell Stokes the Director of the Western Region for USPS and his team. They have been very cooperative. We have seen a marked improvement in services, but recognize that we need to remain vigilant to make sure these improvements are lasting and that all future problems are addressed with appropriate solutions being put into place.

Let's talk about water for a minute. It continues to be a big issue. Water rights can be very contentious. We live in a desert climate and sometimes I think we tend to forget that. Water is somewhat scarce and very valuable. Farmers need water to irrigate their crops and cities need water for domestic use. Did you know that all municipal water use in the State of Idaho only makes up 3% of the water used in the State? But what an important 3% that is. Water use in the City of Chubbuck continues to grow. On a typical winter day we use 1 million gallons. On a typical summer day we use 7.5 million gallons. Our annual water usage is 1 billion gallons. I think we all need to be aware of our personal water usage and conserve wherever we can. We continue to make and implement plans to stay on top of our local water issues.

On the fun side we have seen the opening of the Portneuf Wellness Complex at the corner of Chubbuck Road and Olympus Drive. The large Amphitheatre has brought in some fun bands and programs. The Beach Boys, Styx, Tesla, Pink Floyd, The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band to name a few. United Concerts plans to bring in 10 to 12 concerts a year such as Journey and Tim McGraw. A small reservoir will provide fishing and swimming and some water sports. Sports Fields, a sand volleyball pit and striped basketball courts will provide many hours of fun. Walk on the paths for exercise or just a relaxing view. What a great addition to our area. Let's all make use of it. We also saw the opening of a 3D digital Jumbo screen theater at the Carmike Theaters. If you have not experienced this yet I encourage you to do so. What a treat. Our Hockey Rink/Skating Rink is set up to provide ice thru the season. The Osborn Tennis Complex has brought some great tennis matches to our city. Bring your ice skates, and your tennis equipment over to Capell Park and check them out. Chris Adams and his dedicated staff provided another great season of youth baseball for our community this year. Thank you to all of those who work so hard to provide this activity for our youth. We have started to show movies at Cotant Park in the warmer months. When the weather would cooperate with us we had a great time. Wendy Butler, the Mayor's Assistant, along with Brad Lemmon did the bulk of the work to make this happen. We had several businesses that sponsored them. A great big thanks to all that made these happen. Look for them again this coming year. They are a wonderful family event.

There have been discussions this year of Operational Consolidation of the Chubbuck and Pocatello Fire Departments. This has been in consideration for a number of years. The process will continue into the future. Rest assured that this will not happen unless it is found to be the best way going forward for both communities. Two main issues are finances and safety. If we get to a point where Fire Chiefs, Mayors and Councils from both cities see this as a good idea we will bring it to the citizens for their advice. Our desire is to provide each of us with the service and protection that we need with proper consideration for the safety of those who provide it.

We were able to continue our efforts to replace streets in the city that have gone beyond simple maintenance. We replaced Whittaker Road and put in sidewalks. It is a great looking project. For this coming year we are going to try to complete the replacement of streets and put in sidewalks in the entire Stuart Subdivision. At the same time we continue to pursue an aggressive plan to maintain our streets. We are committed to putting all the dollars we can for the city on these projects to upgrade and maintain our infrastructure.

We had 3 city employees retire this past year. Steve Smart, who served us for almost 4 decades as the Public Works Director and City Engineer, Gary Murphy and Brian Foster. We appreciate all that these individuals have contributed. When you see them around give them your thanks. We have hired Rodney Burch as our Public Works Director. He is proving to be a great asset for the city.

We were not successful in our application for a federal TIGER grant

for an Interstate exchange at Siphon Road this year. This continues to be a priority project for us. We will get ready to make another application for a grant this year if congress approves another year of these grants. This project is on the books in the State of Idaho to be done in 2035. We do not believe that is even close to soon enough and will continue to push to move that up.

Connor Academy, a charter school, opened their doors in 2015. They truly enhance the quality of education in our community. We experienced some traffic challenges with this opening. As we worked with the school on this issue it was great to experience the level of cooperation that they displayed. We will continue to monitor this to see to the safety and wellbeing of the students and our citizens.

The City of Chubbuck Idaho is in great shape. Our financial Auditors tell us we are in the top 2 or 3 fiscally well cities in the state. Rich Morgan and his entire office deserve much of the credit for this. The elected officials work hard, with a lot of advice and direction from the Clerk's Office, at setting a budget and our department heads stay within that budget. Our tax dollars are a sacred trust that is spent with great care.

2015 was an election year. We had a very positive election cycle with great discussion taking place. Our citizens decided on 2 new council members for the coming 4 years. They are Melanie Evans and Annette Baumeister. We welcome them and look forward to working with them. They bring a positive, refreshing face to the city. This makes for a fairly young council with the average age being 37 to 38 years old. Also the tenure on the council is 6 years, 2 years and our 2 newly elected members. We say goodbye to Kermit Morrison and Brent Marshall and we want to thank them for the time and effort they have given in service to our city. We wish them the very best with their future endeavors.

I began this address with a quote from the first line of a famous novel and will conclude quoting from a part of the last line of this same novel. "It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done." It should be our goal to be able to say this at the conclusion of each year. We can just keep getting better with the best efforts of each of us. A city with great people is a great place to live. This is one of the greatest places to live on earth because you are some of the greatest people on earth. Thank you for all that you do.

With the warmest of regards,

Mayor Kevin B. England