

Highlights in History

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From the
Mountain Home Republican

We May Hope For Water

Mountain Home is faced by the greatest opportunity in her history right now, and by the spirit that our people showed in signing up for a part of the payment to the reclamation service they are fully awake to that opportunity. For more than thirty years this desert has lain about us, useless, except for pasturage for range stock during the spring and fall, and at all other times shutting us away from our neighbors and handicapping the growth of the town. During the past few years we have built miles of good roads, through sparsely settled country, to connect us with Boise, Glenns Ferry, Grand View and the settlements to the north, which, with the common use of automobiles and trucks, bring us into closer touch with other communities.

For more than thirty years it has been the dream of the people of Mountain Home to see the desert watered and fruitful, and during those years we have listened to one promoter after another, have put up our money and signed up our lands; for the thirty years' promotion we have our small irrigated area, and our deferred hopes. Every plan for irrigation has built its hope on private capital, and no capitalist has had money nor patience to develop the water that we believe can be made available. Water must come from either the Snake or the Salmon. During our years of waiting, there has been no survey requiring dependable data, from either of these sources. The government reclamation service has started the development of the American Falls storage unit, and offered to make the survey

to our lands on a fifty-fifty basis has met with such an enthusiastic response that revives all our old hopes. The reclamation service has already made a filing on the water for this project, and have shown the faith of their engineers by paying to Ada county \$2,000 in filing fees. The survey will be finished before fall, and for the first time we will have actual figures prepared by competent hydraulic engineers, instead of guess work and curstone opinions. All the people of Mountain Home ask of the doubters is that they hide out their hammers until the season for knocking is officially opened, which will be when the survey is finished and we have an expert opinion condemning the Snake as a local water source. The "I-told-you-so" contingent may get in their work.

A once in a lifetime opportunity for Elmore County



Chances and opportunities come and go and as individuals, businesses, citizens, and government agencies, we are always weighing how they can affect us personally or as a community and either ourselves or our elected government leaders have to make decisions sometimes quickly to either en-

gage or standby. As we all know water can flow very swiftly, so it appears can the opportunity to acquire relief to a depleting water table for Elmore County that is requiring more expedited action. We have been in a dire situation when it comes to our water

table for many years, with the lessening annual snow and water runoff to replenish our aquifer, but thanks to the long term vision of our County Commissioners, many things were in the works but the timeline has shifted. In just the past three weeks, progress on the raising of Anderson Ranch Dam here in Elmore County has shifted with federal and state funding and for the water users of that much-needed commodity. Due to recent announcements from the Idaho Water Resource Board, we reached out to the Elmore County Commissioners. In a conversation with County Commissioner Bud Corbus, we talked about Elmore County's proportionate share of the water rights due to the raising of Anderson Ranch Dam and how it would influence Elmore County and its taxpayers. Commissioner Corbus stated that "not only is this exciting news but it is truly a once in a lifetime possibility". He stressed the fact that this is all in the beginning stages projections and estimates with nothing in writing for the county yet, but it requires slow, steady progress based on projected timelines and to approach any hurdles by backing up and reassessing. The process of moving water here is not new but was limited to generally the spring runoff and snowmelt that fed our reservoirs and canals which has not been sufficient to meet the water needs and storage in our county. The 40 million dollar upgrade, already in the works for Elmore County included a new pump station, new pumps, and pipeline to pull the water from Anderson as it stands. Our water reaches us via contracts with landowners to allow the pipeline to cross their property, Camas Reservoir and then again contracts with the irrigation district and their 40 miles of canals and reservoirs. It is a network of cooperation for the supply and demand of water needs and contracts with the county that benefits us all. Water



as Corbus explained, and as an example, you can't include Glenns Ferry in the bill as they have their water source. This has a specific graphed area of water users. It is a complicated process but will be assisted by additional experts to ensure the assessment and studies are done in consideration of the plan and our future. The Commissioners are also dedicated to developing a "Water Advisory Group" to keep the citizens informed with a website and promised partnership with the *Mountain Home News* to keep citizens informed as the process develops. They will be providing a website as well on their progress with entities such as the Forest Service, the Grant Applications, and financing progress. We look forward to bringing you this ongoing information pool of updates in the future. In ending the interview, again Commissioner Corbus said, "it's a once in a lifetime opportunity."

The Idaho Water Resource Board said at its Jan 21st meeting that Expanding the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation dam on the South Fork Boise River would supply more water for irrigation, municipal, and other users. Starting a process to obtain funding "is necessary at this time," the board's resolution said. Staff sent a survey to Treasure Valley water users to gauge their interest in acquiring

more water. "We've still got planning documents to finalize and design work to do that will take some time this year, and the board will be in the middle of that, working with Reclamation in Boise." Construction must start by mid-December for the project to get federal funds under the 2016 Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act. It appears the construction-start requirement will be met if survey and investigation work is taking place and steps are underway to start the final design, said Cynthia Bridge Clark, Water Projects Section manager with the Idaho Department of Water Resources. The state is clarifying that with Reclamation. Reclamation estimates the cost at \$83.3 million, which it would share equally with IWRB. The U.S. Interior secretary in December deemed the project feasible. Congress recently approved \$12.88 million — \$2.88 million to complete the Boise River Basin Feasibility Study and Final Environmental Impact Statement this summer, and \$10 million for construction under the WINN Act for fiscal 2021.

In a press release from Governor Little dated February 12th - ***Our state is aware and actively supporting these projects. Idaho prioritizes clean, plentiful water to build Idaho's future***

Governor Brad Little

