



CITY OF AMMON – STATE OF THE CITY 2023

Dear residents of the City of Ammon, faithful and hard-working employees and staff, and dedicated city council members, it's a new year in Ammon and it's still the place Where Tomorrow Begins. There's nowhere else I would rather live than in this wonderful community, as your neighbor, a fellow parent of a student in our wonderful schools, a fellow church-goer, a fellow customer of our wonderful local Ammon businesses and restaurants, a fellow user of our parks and public spaces, a local acquaintance, a friend. We truly have so much to be grateful for! We live in a time and place where there are greater opportunities and growth everyday. There are more high-skilled and high paying jobs moving into this area. There are greater educational opportunities for us and our children, especially with a community college right on our doorstep. Even with national economic uncertainty, business in Ammon is strong. And Ammon is seen as a great location to do business from home, due to the strength of Ammon Fiber. There are many life-enhancing experiences and events that add to the quality of life here. And we have a mutually strong relationship with our sister city, Idaho Falls. We are benefitted by their successes, and vice-versa. Crime in Ammon is low, and life satisfaction is high. It is, truly, a great day to live, work and play in Ammon, but the work is never done. There will always be more improvement to make.

And I see that desire in those around me. We know we have climbed many mountains which at first seemed daunting and scary. I can recall a city council meeting many years ago looking at the challenges of our growing city and feeling a little overwhelmed. But in the face of that, we did move forward and have accomplished much of what we once thought was intimidating. Ammon is conserving water and covering the ongoing cost of operating and maintaining the needed water infrastructure due to the decision to meter water throughout the entire city, which we have completed. We have advocated for and seen changed the sales tax revenue sharing formula, which is bringing needed help to our street fund, parks and recreation, and law enforcement. We have planned for the future of our fire protection needs by joining the Bonneville County Fire District, which has greatly benefited our Ammon firefighters and fire protection.

And, within the last year, we made possible what at a point in time seemed like a huge undertaking—the creation of the Eastern Idaho Regional Sewer District. We knocked on thousands of doors to collect signatures and then educated the public on the benefits of a Sewer District to our area, resulting in an 82% pass rate at the May election in Bonneville County and an 80% pass rate overall. Now, I am pleased to report that we have a well-functioning sewer district board with three out of the five board members representing Ammon areas, funding for the first phase of needed plant expansion and a plan moving forward to fully fund the remainder of the expansion. A year and a half ago this all seemed like a huge undertaking. It was, but we did it, and the change will benefit generations of Ammon residents to come.

During WWII, Nazi Germany began a months-long bombing campaign of London intended to cripple the resolve of England. What happened was that it just made the British people's resolve that much stronger. With every bomb which flattened a home or a building, survivors developed an indestructible willpower not only to live, but to thrive. A psychiatrist described this phenomenon:

“We are all of us not merely liable to fear, we are also prone to be afraid of being afraid, and the conquering of fear produces exhilaration.... When we have been afraid that we may panic in an air-raid, and, when it has happened, [and] we have exhibited to others nothing but a calm exterior and we are now safe, the contrast between the previous apprehension and the present relief and feeling of security promotes a self-confidence that is the very father and mother of courage.”

Having overcome each mountain and finding that we have done so successfully, we should have every amount of confidence and courage to continue to overcome what appear to be daunting challenges. We have seen it, and we have overcome. On to the next challenge, because we can do it.

We have a challenge to establish a strong, long-lasting relationship with the Bonneville County Sheriff's Office—one that will last the test of time. In 2022, we have jointly studied law enforcement needs in Ammon, and in 2023 we will continue to work toward a strategic plan to make sure that our Ammon Division of the Sheriff's Office, which is our Ammon police department and which does an outstanding job protecting all of us, is the sustainable solution well into the future. This may very well involve a future law enforcement district, which we are jointly working on and working with legislators to make possible. But in the meantime, I am confident that our great relationship will continue to bear positive results for law enforcement in Ammon.

We have a challenge to even more effectively fund streets in Ammon. In 2022 we budgeted 90% of sales tax revenue sharing increases to streets, a department that definitely needs funding. This will make a difference, but we all know that we need more. I am pleased to officially announce that Ammon has received a \$5,830,400 federal grant for reconstruction of 1st Street in Ammon, and that our Public Works Department is going to work immediately to make a five-lane, curb, gutter and sidewalk 1st Street between Hitt and Ammon Roads finally become a reality. In addition, this is the year we will develop a city-wide Capital Improvement Plan which will help us move forward on a more long-term, sustainable street funding mechanism. We have also obtained nearly all of the right-of-way necessary to extend John Adams Parkway finally from Hitt Road to the Tie Breaker subdivision, and to extend Curlew to John Adams and even further up to 1st Street, all of which will help alleviate traffic congestion in the city. We also completed a successful remodel of Rawson Street in the Original Townsite and a new access point to south Ammon Road and Woodland Hills Park named after Bonneville County's tallest mountain, Mt. Baird Drive.

In 2022 we were awarded two large grants to help us accomplish our challenge of a more walkable and bikeable city. The State awarded Ammon a \$250,000 grant to help build a walk and bike path connecting Rimrock Elementary to Quail Ridge Park along 21st Street. That construction will happen in 2023. We were also awarded a \$325,000 grant for a similar pathway along 49th South, connecting the neighborhoods to Woodland Hills Elementary and to our park. More such pathways will be pursued in the future, with the goal to connect all areas of Ammon.

In 2022 we allocated a significant amount of grant money to completing the Well 13 project, which is now operational, toward the regional sewer plant, which is on its way to expansion, and for further expansion of Ammon Fiber in areas of need. We were also able to purchase more than a million dollars of groundwater rights to strengthen Ammon's water portfolio for future generations.

Speaking of fiber, in 2022 the Fiber Department made significant progress on LID 5, our largest LID to date, and opened LID 6, which will be our second-to-last LID for Ammon Fiber. Sixty-five percent of

Ammon now has fiber access, and that number is climbing fast. We will in short order accomplish the challenge which only less than a decade ago seemed not possible—a city with full fiber optic buildout in every neighborhood. No other city in Idaho other than Idaho Falls will be able to do such a thing in such a short period of time. Ammon and Idaho Falls are together leading the way in municipal fiber development.

We finished 2022 having vastly improved Ammon's internal sewer collection system. It was a big inconvenience for our residents for quite a while, I will admit it, but the Ammon Road and Crowley Road sewer projects were extremely important to our system, as installed gravity flow lines and eliminated two sewer lift stations, removing the possibility of sewer backups in power outages. We will continue to make progress on our sewer collection system in 2023 by moving the Taylorview lift station to a different location that is not in that neighborhood.

We may see some changes with Ammon's facilities in 2023, as we have approved a contractor to build a new sanitation building and have determined final design for the expansion of city hall. The reality is that city hall is nearing capacity, and the expansion (which has been planned for many years) will double the size of the building allowing the city to handle the needs of the public well into the future.

In 2022 we saw change in the Parks Department with the retirement of Ken Knoch and the hiring of Josh Embrey. Josh brings with him a wealth of knowledge about parks and has already made significant improvements to our operations. Just for one example, his online tree inventory will help the city determine tree maintenance and needs for all of the city properties. And we continue to have great public events and programs (such as Ammon Little League, Adult Co-Ed Kickball and the new Ammon Glow Hot Air Balloon event) due to the work of Randal Miller. In 2023, we will continue to seek out options to replace the aging Ammon Pool, and we call upon the entire community to be a part of that process.

In conclusion, I have to give great thanks to our City of Ammon staff. We have the finest professionals in this community. I have the utmost confidence in every Department Head. You are relentless in your pursuit of excellence. You do the superhuman with so little—with the fourth lowest tax levy in the entire state, most do not realize that what Ammon does with that is simply amazing. Roughly 55 employees service a city reaching 20,000 people. And they do it with great pride in their work. We have great pride to be able to be a part of this venture.

I am also proud to work with this dedicated city council. Your courage to do the hard things is incredible, and is not surprising given that you have surpassed so many challenges in the past several years. Together we can do what needs to be done, make the difficult choices, the right choices, for our community, to keep it moving in the right direction.

I am excited for 2023 and look forward to another year, side by side with our friends and neighbors, in the community Where Tomorrow Begins. We have a wonderful city which, I am confident, will make great strides toward more improvement and excellence in this new year. The state of our city is strong. May it continue to get stronger.

