



# Canyon County FARM BUREAU

## 2015 SUMMER NEWSLETTER

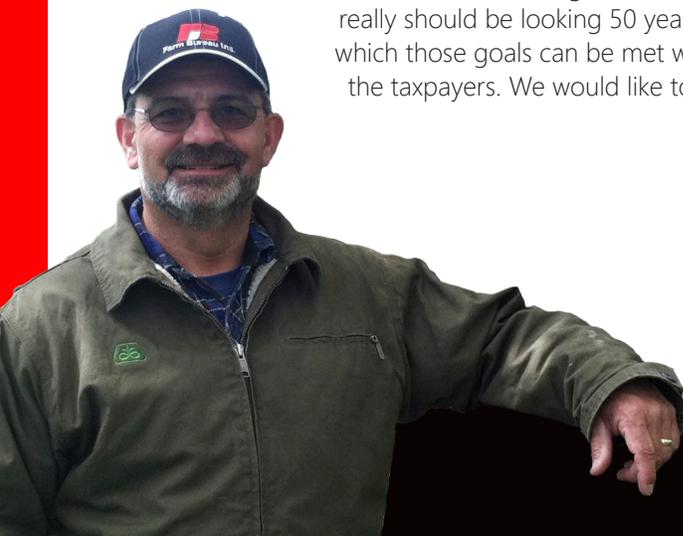
Hello,

I hope all is well with all of you and your families. It is hard to believe that we are already into June. If any of you get a chance please drive by the Canyon County Farm Bureau Federation office and take look at our new landscape. We finally got our flag poles put up and as we stood back to take a look we decided that we needed to make the place look as though it is a farmer/ rancher organization. The landscape is done, with the exception of a couple of pieces of old horse drawn farm machinery we will be putting into place this summer, and a dedication stone monument recognizing the agricultural history of Canyon County, which we plan to do this next year.

The growing season is well under way, and for the most part the crops are ahead of schedule and are looking pretty darn good considering the drought. The rains have truly been a blessing and have brought much relief. But now starts the summer months and the heavy water use will begin.

Just a couple of issues I would like to discuss. One being membership input, I can not express how much your board of directors appreciates hearing directly from you, and or, having you respond to the action alerts that are sent out to those of you who are signed in over the internet. This is YOUR federation and your board is here to accommodate your membership.

Another issue that is being discussed at the county government level is what to do about planning for the future in regards to our county jail. I would strongly encourage you all to read the Idaho Press Tribunes article pertaining to the issue in the Sunday, May 31, 2015 issue. The current short-term plan from at least two of the county commissioners, to add on to the current jail, which is currently under a consent decree by the ACLU, which will pass directly onto any additions, is very concerning to me as a taxpayer. The numbers and scenarios put forth by the county clerk and the county controller should be very concerning to all taxpayers. The current "plan" appears to be extremely short sighted and is not in the long-term best interest of the financial well being of our county. I am not so sure this is something we all of sudden need to be rushing into without a more thorough vetting mechanism. In speaking with one of the commissioners and the sheriff, this plan would increase the necessary number of deputies by at least 30, at a cost to the taxpayers of almost 3 million dollars a year in just salary, benefits, retirement, and training. That alone is 75 million dollars in just 25 years. In order not be short sighted we really should be looking 50 years out. Setting goals accordingly, developing a feasible starting point to which those goals can be met while carrying on with all other county business, and with out bankrupting the taxpayers. We would like to know your opinions on this issue. Please feel free to contact me any time.



Sincerely,  
Sid Freeman, President of Canyon County Farm Bureau  
208-941-3584

# BOISE VALLEY WATER RIGHTS “REFILL” ISSUE

“Whiskey is for drinking and water is for fighting.” This famous quote by Mark Twain could not be more accurate, especially in today’s world of future growth and water rights and priority dates being challenged by one of our own State Agencies. And it’s time to rally the troops and gather the pitch forks and torches to defend our water rights and preserve our livelihoods because what you are about to hear is happening at this very moment.

There are two kinds of surface water rights within the Boise River system. Some water rights have River Rights (Natural Flow) and others are called Storage Rights (water stored in the reservoirs to extend the irrigation season after exhausting the allocation from Natural Flows). Your water right is held on your behalf by various Irrigation Districts or Canal Companies. All water rights on the Boise River system have Priority Dates. The value of this water right depends on the priority date of your water right. The priority date of your water right determines whether you are a Senior or Junior water right holder and when in the pecking order you receive your allocation. As a Prior Appropriation Doctrine state Senior Water Right holders receive their water before Junior Water Right holders do.

The Boise Valley has a three-reservoir system. The construction of Arrowrock Dam began in 1911 and was completed in 1915. The Water Storage rights in this reservoir date back to a 1911 priority date. Anderson Ranch Dam began construction in 1941 and was completed in 1950. Storage rights were established with the completion of Anderson Ranch Dam with a priority date of 1941 attached to these water rights. These two facilities were constructed solely for irrigation purposes and have been paid for by the water users themselves.

In the 1940’s the Boise Valleys population expanded and flooding was a concern to many area residents and business owners. As a result, a third Dam (Lucky Peak) was constructed in the 1950’s to assist with flooding and to provide additional storage for irrigation delivery purposes. The completion of Lucky Peak Dam established additional water rights with a priority date of 1955 attached to these water rights. While constructing Lucky Peak Dam our water user community willingly and in good faith entered into a cooperative agreement in 1953 with the Army Corps of Engineers to release water for flood control purposes once the reservoirs reach 70% capacity. The water users agreed to this for the protection of the interests of property and businesses and for the benefit of the community as a whole. They also were assured during this time that the water back-filling into the reservoirs following flood control releases would be available for irrigation purposes. In 1986 the state Water Control Manual was adopted. This Manual is supposed to serve as a blue print for releasing water for flood control when necessary and to allow water to back-fill into the reservoirs following flood control releases for irrigation purposes.

In 2013 the Idaho Department of Water Resources took a couple of legal positions that they still hold firmly today. These include: 1) Counting flood control releases against the storage rights of our water right holders and; 2) Requiring an additional water right for any water that back-fills (what the Department calls “Refill”) into the reservoirs following flood control releases. Flood control is not recognized under Idaho Water Law as a beneficial use. Flood control releases take place during a period of time when the water is not available to be put to any beneficial use either (it is sent down river between February and the middle of March). These releases have never been counted (until recently) against the storage rights of our water right holders. Our water right holders have also never been told (until recently) that they need an additional water right to the water that back-fills into the Boise Valleys three reservoir system following flood control releases. Instead, our water right holders are being told by IDWR that they need to reach an agreement by subordinating their 1911, 1941 and 1955 senior water rights during the back-fill period to junior water users with a priority date of 1983, 1994 and even 2014 so that new development and junior water users receive their water before senior water

right holders do. This is completely backwards compared to the way allocations are supposed to take place based on the Prior Appropriation Doctrine. And in no way is our Basin 63 water user community going to negotiate our senior water rights away to junior water users and junior priority dates. Why should they?

Numerous members of the Agricultural Industry and water use community have voiced serious concerns about the Idaho Department of Water Resources' unilateral decision-making that places senior water rights in serious jeopardy. The impacts of these independent decisions by the Idaho Department of Water Resources mean that irrigation delivery entities could be forced to shut off water early in the irrigation season to our farms and ranches, sub-divisions, parks, cities and other water user communities. This would mean a significant loss to our agricultural operations due to a lack of sufficient water to irrigate crops and pasture because the water supply (the way it is accounted for by the IDWR on paper through its legal positions) is exhausted due to flood control releases being counted against the volume of water that would normally be allocated for agricultural production during the irrigation season. This means if 500,000 acre feet of water was released for flood control purposes then 500,000 acre feet of water would be recorded against your storage rights even though you were unable to put a single drop of water onto your crops or pastures. Does this make any sense? No!

IDWR's Director has also initiated and filed a contested case and appointed himself as the Hearing Officer to make a decision on this critical issue. A series of Hearings in the Director's "Water Court" will likely take place in late August to early September. Many in the Agricultural community feel that the decision by the Director will be biased and that he will take the current position of the Department's legal opinion. Many in our Agricultural Industry also question the need for IDWR's "Water Court" since this issue could go in front of the Snake River Basin Adjudication Court.

Canyon County is a large Agricultural Community with over 322,000 irrigated acres of farmland, thriving businesses, and residents that are all dependent upon water delivered by irrigation delivery entities. Agricultural producers need the certainty of their water rights and are concerned that the path IDWR is heading will seriously impact our 150-year history of Agricultural production and our long standing history of senior water rights and the Prior Appropriation Doctrine.

To help preserve and protect the interests of our water users and our water rights in Basin 63 a new organization called the Treasure Valley Water Users Association has been recently formed. If you are interested in joining this Association to help defend and protect your water rights and to help better educate our decision-makers about this and other water issues please e-mail me at [roger@amgidaho.com](mailto:roger@amgidaho.com) or call me at (208) 888-0988. Together we can help stop this nonsense and help our Agricultural Industry do what it does best – produce the necessary food and fiber to sustain our local, state, national and global populations.



Roger Batt  
*CCFB Executive Director*



## CANYON COUNTY FAIR / JULY 23-26, 2015

The Canyon County Farm Bureau Federation will be participating in the 2015 Canyon County Fair to be held in Caldwell from July 23rd thru July 26th.

We will be hosting the Ag Country Display which will feature Ag Commodity Organizations from the Treasure Valley along with featuring the Canyon County Ag Family of the Year – Treasure Valley Livestock Auction and the Davidson family of Caldwell.

Over 7,000 people are anticipated to participate in Ag Country during the fair. The highlight of last year's Ag Country, which will be returning for 2015, is an agriculture product scavenger hunt for the kids where they will hunt to find all the ingredients to make pancakes. Hunters will scour the fair animal display areas looking for chickens to find eggs, wheat to grind into flour, and milk from a dairy cow until they have everything needed to make the pancakes. Once the hunters return to Ag Country, they will grind the wheat into flour and mix it with other ingredients. Finally, they will grill the pancakes. Special thanks to Canyon County Farm Bureau Women's Committee Chairman Kristie Dorsey for bringing this activity for the kids to Ag Country. Last year, the Canyon County Fair credited the Canyon County Farm Bureau's move to spread agricultural education to more people as part of the fair being honored by the International Association of Fairs and Expositions.

The Canyon County Farm Bureau will be sponsoring exhibitor awards at the fair along with generously supporting the Canyon County Fair 4-H and FFA Market Livestock Sale by purchasing animals and supporting other market projects. In 2014, we purchased eighteen animals along with doing add-ons to support twenty additional sale animals.

We hope to see you at the fair.

Dennis Lincoln, *Fair Committee Chairman*

**\$1.00 OFF**

**YOUR FAIR ADMISSION  
WHEN YOU SHOW YOUR  
CANYON COUNTY FARM BUREAU  
MEMBERSHIP CARD**



*Canyon County*

**FARM BUREAU**

# 2014 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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# CCFB *Calendar* OF EVENTS

## **JULY 8**

Annual Board of Directors BBQ  
*Ste. Chapelle*

## **JULY 23-26**

Ag Country at Canyon County Fair

## **AUGUST 11**

CCFB Board of Directors  
& CCFB Resolutions Meeting  
*CCFB Office, Caldwell*

## **SEPTEMBER 2**

District IV Resolutions Meeting  
*CCFB Office, Caldwell*

## **OCTOBER 13**

CCFB Board of Directors  
& Annual Membership Meeting  
*CCFB Office, Caldwell*