



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THIS YEAR

I have written 23 columns this past half-year, sharing with this community information that I have from my cat-bird seat as a clean-energy advocate in Idaho and also as a clean-tech investor, in recent years part-time in Silicon Valley. All of the columns are on my website, but here are some positive soundbites from the columns for you for your end-of-the-year review.

Shutting down coal plants early saved Idaho ratepayers \$17.2 million (this year rate case).

In March 2019, Idaho Power signed a power purchase contract from a solar farm at \$.02175 per kWh (our current retail power rates range from \$.08-\$.10 per kWh. This solar power is cheap power!!!)

Idahoans can get free lightbulbs and an energy-efficiency kit from Idaho Power just by calling them. All-electric mobile homes can get \$600 worth of energy-efficiency services free, as well.

We have really great, naturally occurring renewable energy resources here in Idaho—wind, solar, geothermal. Renewable energy is now the cheapest form of power.

Microgrids, with batteries, solar or other distributed generation, are viable and affordable now; they enable a place like the hospital, or even our whole county, to ‘island’ and survive when the rest of the main grid goes down.

Idaho is also home to top experts POWER Engineers and Schweitzer Electric, who are modeling and installing microgrids all over the world right now. We also have the world’s leader in grid cyber-security research located in Idaho, the Idaho National Lab. They all stand ready to help us in Blaine County.

Michael Bloomberg has previously spent \$500 million to shut down coal-fired power plants and he continues this work. Idaho used to have 50 percent of its power come from coal-fired power plants in Nevada, Oregon and Wyoming. My shareholder initiative in 2008 with Idaho Power to reduce its dependence on coal-fired power was successful and, along with many others’ (Idaho Conservation League, the Sierra Club and Snake River Alliance) work, we are shifting out of coal-fired power here in Idaho.

There is \$10 billion worth of real estate here in Blaine County. The selling of, building on, investing in, and maintaining that real estate is what underpins our economy; let’s spend some effort and dollars to adapt our Valley to climate-change realities to continue to thrive and keep the value of our real estate.

Other communities like ours have gone to non-wire solutions rather than building more transmission lines. Westmoreland, N.H., Punkin Center, Arizona, Provincetown, Cape Cod, Mass., Martha’s Vineyard, are current examples, and there are many more, from Puerto Rico to Nantucket. Energy storage batteries have made the difference for these communities to provide power when the main power is disrupted; it has also been more cost-effective than a transmission line.

Solar-generated power costs have come down so dramatically in recent years that Blaine County residents could benefit from this cheaper generation from a community solar farm.

The first 800 kWh of energy a residence uses per month costs \$.08554 per kWh; the next 800 kWh costs \$.1027 per kWh. It pays to reduce your energy use through energy efficiency measures!

To be continued....



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Happy
Holidays

CALENDAR

EVENT

FEATURE



Hailey’s Main Street sends a message of peace during this holiday season. Photo credit: Carol Waller

IT’S BEGINNING TO LOOK A LOT LIKE CHRISTMAS

Holiday events overflow

BY DANA DUGAN

Bells are ringing, snow is falling, skiers and boarders are stoked. The winter holidays are in full force and there are several theater offerings, community events and opportunities to enjoy the Wood River Valley over the next couple of weeks.

Laughing Stock Theatre Company will present “A Christmas Carol” at the Argyros Performing Arts Center, at 7 p.m. Friday, Dec. 20, Saturday, Dec. 21, Sunday, Dec. 23, and 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 22, and Tuesday, Dec. 24. Celebrate the holiday season with the Charles Dickens classic tale of Christmas spirit. For more information visit theargyros.org/calendar/a-christmas-carol or call (208) 726-9124.

“Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley,” presented by Company of Fools at the Liberty Theatre in Hailey, will continue its run through Sunday, Dec. 29. The play, written by Lauren Gunderson and Margot Meclon, brings together much of the Bennet and Darcy clan for a Christmas of possibilities and revelations. Mary Bennet, the studious middle sister, is beautifully fleshed out in this witty play. Visit SunValleyCenter.org for tickets.

The Roots Enrichment Center will host a Women’s Winter Solstice Celebration from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 21. Among the activities will be Meditation and Yoga; Tea and Tarot; Astrology Archetypes; a Dance Party; Ayurvedic Winter Skin Care; cookies, crafts, a potluck and gift exchange, and a feast. For more information and tickets to classes, visit eventbrite.com/e/womens-winter-solstice-celebration-tickets-7415109421.

A new tradition continues with Ketchum’s Winter Solstice Soiree, to be held from 6 to 8 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 21, at Town Square. The free solstice celebration will also include free cocoa and cider provided by Starbucks; music by Tylor & the Train Robbers; a screening of TGR’s “Fire on the Mountain”; speakers and kids’ activities, along with some serious dark sky viewing. A telescope will be provided, and informational displays on the Central Idaho Dark Sky Reserve will be set up. To really cap off the solstice celebration, there will be pop-up planetarium shows at City Hall, across the street, every 30 minutes. The space will be limited to just 25 people per show. To reserve a spot for the planetarium, email participate@ketchumidaho.org.

Then, on Saturday, Dec. 21 at 7 p.m., the Sun Valley Hallelujah Chorus, under the direction of Patty Parsons, will present “The Promise” at the Argyros Performing Arts Center in Ketchum. The moving, Gospel-influenced show was created by Parsons more than 25 years ago. Hilarie Neely, artistic director of Footlight Dance Centre, will create pieces for her dancers that highlight “hope and peace for the new year,” Parsons said. Donations are always appreciated. For more information, visit theargyros.org/calendar/hallelujah-chorus-the-promise.



Galena Lodge and others will host festive dinners and events over the holidays. Photo credit: Galena Lodge

Holiday dinners will be offered at Galena Lodge, north of Ketchum, from 6 p.m., Monday, Dec. 23, through Thursday, Dec. 26. As with every year, this promises to be a night of food, fun, skiing and snowshoeing. Dinner will be served in one seating at 6:30 p.m. Seating is communal-style, so be prepared to make some new friends. For reservations, call (208) 726-4010.

Christmas Day will fall on Wednesday, and most businesses, school, stores and services will be closed for the holiday. Enjoy!

Church Services

Emmanuel Episcopal Church

Family Christmas Eve Service (children of all ages are welcome) 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 24 Holy Eucharist Service, Christ’s Mass, 9 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 24

Christmas Morning Prayer Service celebrated by Pamela Tucker, 9:30 a.m. Wednesday, Dec. 25

Valley of Peace Lutheran Church

Advent services Wednesday evenings at 7 p.m. Caroling at 5:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 21. Christmas Eve services will be held at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 24.

The Rock Church

Christmas Eve service at 5 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 24, for a traditional Christmas Eve service that includes the reading of the Nativity story, carols and candlelight. This service is open to the public at no cost. Come early for hot coco and treats. For more information, visit therockchurchwrv.org.

St. Thomas Episcopal Church

Children’s Nativity Pageant with communion 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 24

Candlelight Service with choir and communion 8 p.m. and 11 p.m. (come early for music and seating)

Presbyterian Church of the Big Wood

Family Christmas Service at 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 24, for service with carols and readings.

For more church services, visit appropriate websites or call the church offices.