

## The plan

Streets. Sewers. The old Fox Theater. The West Laramie Fire Station. What's on the plate for the city of Laramie this year?

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Strategy will be a key factor in funding Laramie's many needs in 2009, especially since Gov. Dave Freudenthal has recommended budget revisions with less funding for local governments.



City workers turn off the water at the corner of Ninth and Canby streets last spring after a water main under the intersection broke. Boomerang file photo

"Funding from the state is never a certainty. Typically, when the state ebbs and flows, counties and cities ebb and flow along with the state," City Manager Janine Jordan said. "It sounds daunting, but certainly that has always been the case, especially here in Laramie where we are lean and mean."

Balancing and prioritizing the various needs of the community will be something the council will do with help from the city staff, Jordan said. Some of the main issues facing the city in 2009 include:

### Fox Theater

The goal is still to demolish the Fox Theater, 112 S. Second, in early summer, though funding and ownership are still issues.

"The council is working through some of the legal issues surrounding it," Jordan said. "We will be doing everything we can to forge forward and have that done in the spring."

The county has agreed to cost-share out of all consensus funds awarded to the county, which includes the city, she said, if the ownership issue is resolved.

"They are a willing partner, we just need to get through the ownership issue," Jordan said.

### West Laramie Fire Station

The city secured funding to build a West Laramie fire station in 2008, and the city has known for decades that that is a necessary facility.

"It is nice to see something coming to fruition out there," Jordan said.

The money for staffing a third station is still an issue.

"We have applied for and received one federal grant to assist with some of the costs of staffing the station. We have another federal grant that is pending right now and we should hear about that in the spring," Jordan said. "What we heard back from that grant, whether it is positive — yes, we'll fund you or no, we won't — that is definitely going to influence the plan and how we proceed."

### Infrastructure

The city has hired a consultant to compile a detailed 10-year capital plan focusing on improving water, wastewater, sanitary and sewer services.

"Our capital needs are great in both water and sewer," Jordan said. "The difficulty we are having is how do we finance these needs over time."

The consultant will look at the rate structure — literally, the structure, and not how much the city charges

but how those charges are sent to citizens — and the rates overall.

“I think the community in general understands that our water and our sewer need some help,” Jordan said. “They need some rehabilitation and we need to invest more in those systems and into the upkeep and maintenance of those systems.”

### **Landfill**

As mandated by the state, the city is working on an Integrated Solid Waste Management Plan, with the help of TriHydro, to be completed by this summer.

“The state said to local governments, ‘We’d like you to conduct a management plan and determine if you could consolidate some of solid waste services, maybe regionally.’ Where they are trying to is to maybe cut down the number of landfills in the state,” Jordan said.

The city’s plan is probably about three-quarters complete and may include alternatives like a consolidated landfill between Albany and Laramie counties, shipping trash elsewhere with a transfer station here or a new landfill in Laramie.

“In any case, this is a critical management plan to have in place, in part because our landfill is reaching the end of its lifespan. As it currently sits, we have three to five years of life in that facility,” Jordan said.

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