



CITY OF MERIDIAN and CITY OF GARDEN CITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Friday, November 4, 2016

CONTACT: Kaycee Emery, 208-489-0538, kemery@meridiancity.org

CITIES OF MERIDIAN AND GARDEN CITY APPEAL TO JUDGES REGARDING THE COUNTY'S DEMAND FOR SATELLITE COURTHOUSES

MERIDIAN – The Cities of Meridian and Garden City will plead their cases in front of nine district judges at the Ada County Courthouse today, Friday, November 4 at 1 p.m. This hearing comes after Ada County Commissioners demanded the two Cities each pay \$660,000 a year, or build separate court facilities.

“This request is being demanded of our citizens and we still haven’t been given a straight answer as to why. Space isn’t the issue. Voters decided they wanted one facility on Front Street and according to the Trial Court Administrator that facility is only being used at 80% capacity. We don’t see the need and we can’t seem to get an answer as to why our taxpayers must pay twice for the same service,” said Mayor John Evans, City of Garden City.

The Ada County District Court provided an extensive list of what they consider “minimum requirements” to equip each facility, and the total is well over a million dollars.

“We did some fact checking and there is no county courthouse, let alone a satellite facility in the entire state with the minimum list of requirements being demanded of us. At the end of the day, Ada County is just trying to get the cities to pay,” said Mayor Evans.

Both cities believe their hands are tied in the matter and their citizens will end up paying twice for services they already pay for in their county taxes. After thoughtful consideration and determining what a more reasonable list of minimum requirements would be, both mayors decided it would be most cost effective to provide a facility in each respective city.

“Ironically, when we were building our current Meridian City Hall, we asked the county if they wanted to put a courtroom in our City Hall and the county said no. It seems to me that this is all about money,” said Mayor Tammy de Weerd, City of Meridian.

This case stems from a 1994 court order to determine if courtroom facilities were needed in the two cities. Two years later the issue became null and void when Ada County residents voted to consolidate all courthouse services and build the Ada County Courthouse on Front Street. Since the

request has resurfaced, the two Cities have been unable to get an answer as to why a new facility is needed, eliminating the opportunity for due process.

“We have been ordered to present our plan for providing a courtroom. We will be prepared to present what we’ve found to make the most fiscal sense, even though we still don’t know the problem we are trying to solve with such a plan. Ultimately this will lead to creating a de-centralized magistrate court system in Ada County,” said Mayor De Weerd.

“How do you expect us to tell our citizens that they have to pay an additional tax when we can’t tell them why. We believe our citizens deserve better than that.” said Mayor Evans.

Both city officials are still hopeful that Ada County Commissioners will halt these proceedings against the Cities of Meridian and Garden City and agree to come to the table to discuss a solution that is fair for all citizens.

For more information on this issue and to see a full list of the “minimum requirements”, visit www.meridiancity.org/courthouse.

###