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A BRIEF HISTORY OF GREENLEAF, IDAHO

The first settlers in the Greenleaf area were dry land farmers who came to homestead on the fertile agricultural land shortly after 1900. The soil quality was so good that the first orchards in the region watered their fruit trees with water carried by horse-drawn wood water tanks from nearby rivers. Farming and settlement expanded with irrigation projects in the early 1900's. A rail spur extending from the main line in Caldwell, Idaho through Greenleaf to the City of Wilder was put in, with original plans of expansion to San Francisco, California that did not come to fruition.

A significant number of the early settlers were Quakers, who started the Greenleaf Friends Church in 1906, and the Greenleaf Friends Academy in 1908. The Academy continues to be the largest employer in the city. Although the name 'Mountain View' was considered for the community due to visibility of mountains to the North, East, and South, the community took the name Greenleaf after the Quaker poet and abolitionist John Greenleaf Whittier.

In the 1920's, public transportation by rail was available from Greenleaf to Boise and most points between, utilizing a connection in Caldwell between the rail spur through Greenleaf and the Inter-urban mass transit system that extended throughout the Treasure Valley. Greenleaf continued to develop a commercial center along the rail spur through town, including a general store, a creamery that specialized in ice cream, and a lumberyard.

The commercial center shifted away from the rail spur as State Highway 19 (SH-19) developed, the Inter-urban ended operation, and use of the rail spur declined. In time, the creamery and lumberyard ended operation. The original wood frame Greenleaf Store building was moved to the present location on SH-19, later replaced by the current block structure.

Throughout the community's history, a vast diversity of agricultural crops have been grown in the Greenleaf area. These include many different seed crops, hops, sugar beets, onions, and mint, along with orchards of apples, cherries, and other fruit varieties. There are also cattle and dairy operations, and more common row crops, such as wheat, corn, and barley, are also grown in the area.

Due to the fierce spirit of independence and close-knit culture of the community, incorporation as a city was not a priority. The City of Greenleaf incorporated in 1973 in response to the potential need for a community sewer system. With a water and waste-water improvement bond levy election in 2000, the city took ownership and responsibility for a water system that served the majority of the community and a waste-water collection system with 29 connections. Both systems were operated to that point by a private water and sewer association.

Major improvements were made to the potable water system from 2006 to 2010 to add fire-fighting flow capability to the system, resulting in fire hydrants providing over 1000 gpm flow and 300,000 gallons of above-ground storage. A new waste-water collection system and waste-water treatment plant were built to serve the majority of the community, with plant start-up on 01 January 2013. Prior to this, the only waste-water treatment in the community was through septic tanks and drain-fields. (updated 19 February 2016)