



Center of the Universe

12

Intersection of Bank and Sixth Streets
Wallace, Idaho 83873
wallace-id.com

Maintenance worker Shauna Hillman whisks away the sprinkling of gravel that lies over a sewer access cover near the middle of Bank Street in Wallace, Idaho. By the time she finishes her cleaning, the cover will sparkle with freshened, silver lettering that reads, “The Center of the Universe.”

How did residents of Wallace conclude they lived at the core of the cosmos? After ruminating about a signpost in Russia—which pointed the way to many places on the globe—and noting that scientists never unearthed “one scintilla of proof that Wallace is *not* the Center of the Universe.”

So said Wallace Mayor Ron Garitone, who—on September 25, 2004—publicly proclaimed Wallace the Center of the Universe. He pinpointed the vortex at the intersection of Bank and Sixth Streets and decried the fact that the eye of all creation had for so long been lidded with a common manhole cover. The new monument was dedicated that day—the black-and-silver disc that Hillman maintains. It’s graced with a compass rose and edged with the acronyms SRLM, BHM, HL, and CDE. Good Idahoans know the code for the Sterling Mining Company, Bunker Hill Mine, Helca Mining Company, and the Coeur d’ Alene Mines Corporation—otherworldly empires that, in the Gem State, at least, mark the four corners of the firmament.

—CRAIG & LIZ LARCOM