

Government-provided daycare for 182 kids? How many new employees will that produce?

Reminds me of the claims made, without so much as a blush, back a few years ago when the toadies for "economic development" asserted that turning the UP depot into a modest attraction would result in 292,000 visitors to the property annually. With a straight face.

Or, claims by the trio of Jack, Patrick and Tom that a downtown garage would draw 1275 paying customers, at a rate of \$80 a month each. How about 300 at \$35?

These "flat-earthers" are always making extravagant and unsupportable claims.

Now, a new daycare center funded with public money, in competition with all the private daycare businesses and family members who watch relatives' kids for pay, will be a panacea to all that ails quality daycare in Cheyenne. Sure it will.

This ain't your father's country, kids. Surely not your grandpa's.

Our federal government has turned the automakers into tools of government. One advantage of that, come to think of it, is that when the country needs war equipment, they won't have to bargain with GM, Ford or Chrysler to make it. The government itself will own all auto production plants and can quickly convert to making tanks and other equipment of war. But, GM just sold the Hummer to China so we better hope our opponent in the war isn't China - we'd have to subcontract with our adversary to make those ugly, gas guzzling vehicles to ferry around our generals and admirals.

That would make for an interesting conversation - negotiating with our enemy.

We keep saying on these pages that it is no trick, nor an accomplishment, for

public funds to be plowed into projects that should be privately-funded. There is a word for that and we used to take great umbrage when someone suggested the country would be better off if it became socialist - with government owning everyone and doling out what it thought people needed to those people.

Downtown Cheyenne has seen the failings of government funded projects. Had a parking garage been needed and could have been profitable, don't you think some money from Casper or Denver would have built such a garage? It has now been shown why little private investment goes into our downtown. Those with failing businesses or buildings just wait around until the government steps in and bails them out. State government provided the funds to acquire the former UP office building at 17th and Warren, just long enough to demolish it and stripe the surface for a parking lot.

Now, the plan is to provide a \$3 million grant to build a daycare center. Those who are seeking the public generosity have not been able to raise the matching funds often promised. If the project has a \$3.8 million price tag, just imagine what improvements and additions could have been made to established and existing daycare facilities. Most of this money is in the form of a grant. A grant is a secret word for "gift." It doesn't have to be paid back. If 50 existing and reputable daycare providers had been given \$60,000 each - a gift of \$60,000 - is there any doubt in your mind that they could have each added four spaces to their centers?

If a \$60,000 gift of public money had been provided to 50 established providers, they probably could have easily expanded to accept another dozen children each. That would add 600, not 182, slots for children.

Who has the responsibility to provide daycare for employees? Family? If they can. Friends? If they choose. Employers? To some extent. The employee? The parent? Absolutely.

Anyone who believes quality, dependable and affordable daycare is a recent phenomena watches too much Judge Judy. Placing children with people who have no kinship to them and often are in the business just for the money, has long presented a dilemma to parents.

But, until recent years, mothers and fathers who wanted to be, or had to be employed, knew that child care was one more hurdle to cross - one more obstacle toward employment to overcome.

The last thing residents of the United States wanted (until recently) was for government to become even more involved in their lives. Now, far too many people see government intervention as necessary and/or desirable.

To compare Cheyenne to Riverton is a mistake. Riverton's problems with daycare were brought on, to a great extent, by government. Riverton, as all but the WT-E realizes, has an Indian reservation. They now have a casino. Combine the two and a unique problem of daycare was presented. They chose to try to assist those who have been held down for over a century, with a aid to become gainfully employed. Efforts here are to assist those who work in government or for such large corporations as Lowe's and Walmart and the minimal-sized Sierra Trading Post. If the large employers wanted to partner for their own daycare center, more power to them.

Those who argue that daycare is an extension of education are stretching the truth. Daycare is a babysitting service - some of which involves some educational efforts. Basically, daycare provides a safe, secure and comfortable place for children when their own parents cannot provide care for them and do not have family members or friends to do that job so they have to pay others to do it.

Laramie County has about 44,600 non-ag jobs. Slots for 182 children will take half their kids from existing daycares. No new jobs there. That leaves 91 slots for new jobs. If the average taker has 1.5 children in daycare, that's 60 new jobs. An increase in employment of .001345 - not enough to benefit anyone.

This ain't your grandpa's country anymore, folks. Government has taken over.

CDL

A few weeks back, the Herald had a story about a truck driver who was caught in the snarl of inefficiency and indifference that is Laramie County justice.

Last fall, a disgruntled fellow employee of the same company in Salt Lake City called law enforcement and local media to report this guy was going to leave the company yard pulling two trailers and that he was drunk. Both called responded and the guy was arrested and issued a citation for DUI. The guy who called was quickly fired from his job and the reported driver has battled red tape every since.

His company stood by him and, to this day, he uses a cell phone provided and paid for by that now former employer in Salt Lake City.

The breathalyzer used on him that night registered below the "drunk" level for a commercial truck driver (.04). More importantly, he never left the yard and had no plans to. He knew the requirement for a driver - that he cannot drink alcohol within 15 hours of driving on a public street or road. The most he did was hook up the trailers (in the private yard) so he would be ready the next morning to take the tractor and trailer to the company's service garage for repairs. Because a fellow driver was to pick him up from that garage and return him to the yard to pick up another rig, he made sure he did not drink beyond the allowable window.

Next came the snafu. A snafu that has kept on giving. Or taking - from the unemployed driver. A snafu that both the citation issuing state (Utah) and the state where his CDL was from (Texas) long ago corrected. Not Wyoming, though.

It took awhile for the dismissal of charges in Utah to catch up to the CDL state but the corrections were made at least five months ago. Unfortunately, Wyoming will not accept another's correction unless it complies with nonspecific requirements so the guy languished in Cheyenne for months, trying to get his CDL cleared so he could go back to work for the company that had employed him in Salt Lake.

Yesterday morning (June 8), he called to remind me that he finally had a trial date in circuit court here. He had hired a private attorney to represent him. I was going to attend. This morning, a few hours before his scheduled 1:30 pm trial, he called to tell me there would be no trial - that the DA's office has finally agreed to accept an affidavit from Texas that his CDL is in good standing - never suspended - and Wyoming would remove that hold on his driving privileges. In four weeks! Justice delayed is justice denied. Again, our shame.

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