

Residents ignore Cheyenne Light wind power program

The following story originally appeared in the January 29, 2007 Cheyenne Herald

Customers of Cheyenne Light, Fuel and Power have been repeatedly informed about a voluntary renewable energy offered by the Company.

Each of the three Laramie County newspapers published stories at the introduction of the offering. Cheyenne Light has provided billing inserts, brochures, website information, posters, advertising, etc., to inform residents in their service area about the program.

Beginning July 1, 2006, customers, both residential and commercial, maybe industrial, could subscribe to purchase renewable energy blocks. The minimal cost per block for this voluntary wind energy program was \$3.50.

The silence has been deafening.

In spite of the many people who have lamented for years about not having access to alternative forms of energy, and criticized Cheyenne Light for not availing itself of wind energy in an area where the wind seemingly blows constantly, 24/7, those people have stayed on the sideline.

They either are still unaware of the program or, as so often happens, have decided to "let the other guy do it."

The lack of acceptance ... no, let's call it what it is ... the **rejection** of this Cheyenne Light offering is almost total.

When gas and electric rates increased dramatically in the past, many local residents spewed their dislike for the Minnesota parent of Cheyenne Light - Xcel Energy. But Xcel is no longer involved.

So why the repudiation?

Do some think it is just another revenue stream, a profit source, for Cheyenne Light? Is there a resentment for yet another large corporation trying to extract still more money from the lowly customer?

Well, the money doesn't stay in Cheyenne Light's bank account very long and it doesn't just get transferred to its current ownership in Rapid City, either.

According to CLFP's January 26, 2007 report to the Public Service of Wyoming, the little money so far generated by this voluntary program will be sent to Bonneville Environmental Foundation as soon as they bill Cheyenne Light for it.

We Americans tend to concern ourselves only with the end price. How we get there is less important. We are content to pull up to the gas pump and pay the current \$1.96 per gallon (Note: January 2007 price), unconcerned and unaware of why the price is that low. Where the oil to produce that gasoline comes from is of no importance to us. A country could be holding our Embassy employees hostage but if they will sell oil to us at \$35 a barrel, we will overlook that.

And if we can pay a lower cost per kwh

by using natural gas than from wind power, bring on that natural gas.

Collectively, we need to bow our heads in shame. We can, and probably should, do so much better. Thirty of over 30,000 customers put some money, albeit it little, where their mouths have been. The **TOTAL** revenue generated for the six-month period ended December 31, 2006, was \$1,225.00! **ONE THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED TWENTY-FIVE DOLLARS!**

That's it. \$805.00 of that came from a single, unidentified commercial customer.

Breaking down the residential participation: The \$420.00 represents \$70.00 a month. At \$3.50 per "energy block," that is twenty (20) blocks per month on average.

Single customers may have subscribed for more than one block. And not all 29 residential subscribers have been in the program since the outset.

Participation stinks. There is no other conclusion. Here's the deal: I don't want anyone to ever bitch to me about utility companies not using enough renewable energy sources. I just don't want to hear it. This program is not the only measurement of users concern on the subject but it is one of them. And it is the only one available to CLFP customers at this point. So, unless you're one of the 29 residential customers who have subscribed or the single commercial customer, don't waste my time.

An update. November 10, 2009: Nearly three years after the foregoing story was presented, the situation is little different.

Answering questions put to them by me, a CLFP spokesperson told me that there are presently 43 residential customers and six commercial customers enrolled in the "Renewable Premium Program," having purchased 735 and 145 blocks, respectively. There are approximately 38,000 residential customers for electricity, 32,000 natural gas customers - most customers use both.

The support for this program has been abysmal. And, it isn't getting better.

Back in August of 2006, we enrolled (at Casa de Herald) in the Renewable Energy Program and we have paid for three units (\$10.50 a month) every since.

I didn't mention it in the 2007 story because we weren't looking for any credit or recognition for doing something we thought made sense. But, because of the lack of support (only 43 of 38,000 residential customers are participating), it doesn't seem like our meager contribution each month has value and I have withdrawn us from the program. It has nothing to do with the economy or wanting to save the money. When I inquired the other day, I expected to be told there were 500-1,000 participating CLFP customers. I was shocked and disappointed to learn the low numbers. So, we have ended our participation..

Warren National University

(Continued from Front page)

Because the Cheyenne Herald website has provided most of the coverage of the subject of degree sellers, including Warren National University, former students from around the U.S. and even around the world, continue to contact me to ask for advice or direction.

So, I concluded it would just be wrong of me to refuse to respond or refer potential additional plaintiffs to the litigation.

Frankly, I can't suggest to anyone that there will be any resources available to pay any damages or make any refunds, but I can direct them to the Denver law firm acting on the former student's behalf.

As I've heard directly from more and more former students, some having "degrees" that they have now learned are very likely worthless, it appears probable that WNU and its predecessor in name, Kennedy-Western University, may have committed illegal acts. Crimes. It is one thing to offer a bogus product and take unsuspecting and gullible "students" money, it is quite another to violate Wyoming or federal laws while doing so.

Obviously, the Attorney General of the State of Wyoming is not too eager to expose the Legislator and Governor who appointed him as being uncaring and complicit by their lack of oversight while this grand scheme took place. But, it is important that some of these stories being told to me be told to the AG's office. It is pointless to try to involve the Governor's office or legislators. They are now in full, "Hear no Evil!", "See no Evil!", "Speak no Evil!" mode. It also helps their defensive posture that very few Wyoming residents

got caught up in the scam. So, there is little chance of a run on the Governor's office by cheated parents or former students.

Another path that should be taken by those left with loans to repay even though the product they are paying for has not been delivered and/or was provided but had/had no worth. Had a retail store taken deposits for big screen televisions and not delivered them, there would be legal action taken against them. Had they delivered nonworking sets, ditto. This is similar.

That is basically what WNU did to numerous former students - they closed their doors before even bogus degrees were provided. In effect, they took deposits and fled from Cheyenne. And the State of Wyoming was complicit in the scam and facilitated the cheating. There was no requirement to escrow funds until the "education" was provided and there was no requirement they have adequate bonding to insure delivery of the "degree."

Two suggestions now to former students who have learned that they were fleeced: 1.) If the lender was either Sallie Mae or Wells Fargo Educational Services, please advise me. They should not be immune from prosecution if they colluded on a great number of loans used to purchase a degree lenders should have known had no value. And, 2.) If WNU lied or deceived you as a former student or parent who guaranteed a loan to pay for these worthless "degrees," provide your story to the Wyoming AG's office at:

Wyoming Attorney General
123 Capitol Building
200 W. 24th Avenue
Cheyenne WY 82002

Please copy the Cheyenne Herald on all.



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