

What didn't the mayor / council know and when didn't they know it?

When did City officials realize American Eagle had deceived them?

I hope Howard Baker doesn't mind my twisting his famous Watergate line.

Preparing this story about the early experiences of American Eagle Airlines reminded me of several other somewhat similar events of past times.

In the early 1970's, a professional football league was formed. It was called the World Football League and signed some noteworthy players in an effort to challenge the NFL, among them Jim Kiick, Larry Csonka, Calvin Hill, Ken Stabler, Craig Morton, Paul Warfield, John Gilliam and Daryle Lamonica, quarterback of the AFL's second team in the World Championship Game against the NFL's Green Bay Packers in January 1968 - a contest that became known as the "Super Bowl."

The Philadelphia Bell of the WFL became infamous in the less than two season duration league by claiming attendance of staggering numbers. They later admitted tickets were sold for virtually nothing or given away ("papered") to get people to attend the games. Several jokes spawned from the Bell's dishonesty. Because there were so few paying fans in the seats, one joke had a fan calling the

stadium and asking what time the game started. He was himself then asked, "What time can you get here?" Another joke had to do with an announced huge crowd. An sportscaster said "75,000 of them must have come disguised as empty seats." Like the announced attendances at UW men's basketball.

Why did I think of those jokes? Because I watched American Eagle unload and board again today. The flight time shown on tickets is 2:15 pm. Today, the passengers had boarded and the ramp pulled away from the plane by 1:59 and the plane taxied away at 2:03. It seemed like the old Philadelphia Bell joke. "What time does your afternoon flight depart for Dallas today?" "What time can you get here?"

After less than six weeks of service, there is already huge controversy with American Eagle. All announcements from those in town who have no aviation or airline service experience were that "American Airlines" would provide twice daily flights between Cheyenne and Dallas/Fort Worth. Ad infinitum. The Chamber director loudly proclaimed that the airline would be responsible for saving our airport (he forgot military use). A panacea.

Of course, your elected officials didn't raise any questions and had no concerns. Ignorance is bliss. They were asked to pony up \$200,000 toward a shack for waiting passengers and all they wanted to know was the payee for the check.

To say the Cheyenne city governing body could mess up a one car parade may be giving them too much credit. Could they, indeed, pour liquid out of a boot without directions on the heel? Debatable.

The mistakes made by this group over the past decade are legend. Whole shelves in libraries would be required to document all the impetuous, bizarre, wrong, illegal, foolish, and dumb things they've done in such a short span of time.

So why should this to-be short-lived marriage to American Eagle (not "American") Airlines be any different?

With great salivating excitement, a self-imagined ad hoc group dubbed "The Cheyenne Experience," "Cheyenne Experiment," "Cheyenne Foundation" or something equally reaching, proclaimed to the world that Cheyenne would soon be a north Colorado Springs, as though

be reduced to a single flight a day (each way) almost before the paint dried in that new little passenger waiting shack. After just more than two weeks, American Eagle had already decided that they could not maintain two flights a day and made the shocking announcement they were cutting back. Supposedly, the contract they had (without airport management knowledge) with the Downtown Chamber cowboy allowed them to decide, AFTER FOUR MONTHS SERVICE, to cut back to a single flight each way per day at that point. What they did, the little rascals, is announce within 20 days that they would cut back when the four months expired on November 15th. They didn't wait.

Nobody knew of this provision? Surely the city elected officials didn't know, did they? They wouldn't have "donated" \$200,000 of your funds for just one flight a day service, would they? That's a rhetorical question. We all know the answer.

The Chamber guy, who is reputed to be on very thin ice, knew it, he said. He obviously didn't think it important enough to share with even the airport manager. That guy also didn't know where the figures banded around by the Chamber dude had come from even though the dude had said the airport manager was a source.

The Chamber dude just claimed "our rate of fill for the seats has been very good." That is not true. And, what's the "our?" Did we buy into American Eagle? I have personally observed several flights unload and board since July 15th. I will not reveal the passenger counts until after AE does at the end of September. I'll see if they tell the truth. But, it ain't "very good." Kind of like all the vacant and abandoned buildings downtown present "an opportunity." These guys wouldn't know the truth if it bit them on your ample ascots.

Carrier Record Locator: 888888 Status: Purchased - Aug 03, 2010	Flight Number	Departing		Arriving		Booking Code	Meals
		City	Date & Time	City	Time		
AMERICAN AIRLINES OPERATED BY AMERICAN EAGLE	3266	BTR Baton Rouge	Dec 27, 2010 10:40 AM	FW Dallas/ Fort Worth	Dec 27, 2010 12:05 PM	Q	Food for purchase
AMERICAN AIRLINES OPERATED BY AMERICAN EAGLE	2991	DFW Dallas/ Fort Worth	Dec 27, 2010 12:45 PM	CYS Cheyenne	Dec 27, 2010 01:50 PM	Q	Food for purchase
AMERICAN AIRLINES OPERATED BY AMERICAN EAGLE	2979	CYS Cheyenne	Jan 05, 2011 06:40 AM	DFW Dallas/ Fort Worth	Jan 05, 2011 09:35 AM	Q	Food for purchase
AMERICAN AIRLINES OPERATED BY AMERICAN EAGLE	2919	DFW Dallas/ Fort Worth	Jan 05, 2011 10:20 AM	BTR Baton Rouge	Jan 05, 2011 11:40 AM	Q	Food for purchase

Copies of itineraries above and to the right represent travel plans of a single traveler. The itinerary above he printed after his reservation to fly from Baton Rouge to Cheyenne was made and paid for on August 3rd, just two weeks after American Eagle began service between Cheyenne and Dallas/Fort Worth. The itinerary at the right is what now appears on the American Eagle website. The passenger has not been informed of the arbitrary changes to his flight times. All sixteen (16) times were changed - going and coming. American Eagle made those changes (to all four legs of his travel both ways) without his knowledge or approval and still have not notified him of the changes. I repeat, every leg of his travel was changed from what he booked and paid for and he still hasn't been told about the changes. The reduction to one flight a day beginning in November was known by American Eagle within five weeks of starting their service. Well after a new itinerary was up on the American Eagle website, the local airport manager said he didn't know the new departure time for the one flight a day out of Cheyenne. Notice the right itinerary discloses it to be 12:25 pm? American Eagle hasn't told Cheyenne's airport manager? That's hard to believe.

Carrier Record Locator: 888888 Status: Purchased - Aug 03, 2010	Flight Number	Departing		Arriving		Booking Code	Meals
		City	Date & Time	City	Time		
AMERICAN AIRLINES OPERATED BY AMERICAN EAGLE	3372	BTR Baton Rouge	Dec 27, 2010 06:00 AM	FW Dallas/ Fort Worth	Dec 27, 2010 07:30 AM	Q	Food for purchase
AMERICAN AIRLINES OPERATED BY AMERICAN EAGLE	2991	DFW Dallas/ Fort Worth	Dec 27, 2010 10:40 AM	CYS Cheyenne	Dec 27, 2010 12:00 PM	Q	Food for purchase
AMERICAN AIRLINES OPERATED BY AMERICAN EAGLE	2992	CYS Cheyenne	Jan 05, 2011 12:25 PM	DFW Dallas/ Fort Worth	Jan 05, 2011 03:20 PM	Q	Food for purchase
AMERICAN AIRLINES OPERATED BY AMERICAN EAGLE	3395	DFW Dallas/ Fort Worth	Jan 05, 2011 05:35 PM	BTR Baton Rouge	Jan 05, 2011 06:50 PM	Q	Food for purchase