

# Downtown Destruction Advocates (the DDA)

Were you as surprised as I was to learn that the DDA had paid \$10,000.00 for four murals BEFORE having an agreement with the adjacent landowner to place the murals at his property edge?

What the hell is wrong with these people?

Each bit of news that breaks about the DDA brings more discredit and embarrassment to the board and director.

Can you imagine any of the board members - a single one - spending ten grand of their own money, then seeking approval or permission from where it was necessary? That would never happen. But, with our money, the sky's the limit.

The City has a right-of-way. They should place the already paid-for murals at the right-of-way boundary and tell the faux motel developer to go back to Kansas.

At the same time this embarrassing announcement was made, the DDA released financial information to downtown

property owners.

First, the DDA will undercut the City's parking fees for the unwanted parking garage downtown. While the City tries to get \$45.00 a space ("55.00 in the near future" DDA says), the DDA will offer them at a "discounted" \$25.00 / month. What?

The mailing states that the DDA's current budget would be \$696,000, "down 27% from the previous year of \$968,000." Wow! Next year, after property owners finally tired of fueling the raging fire of spending by the DDA, it may be \$450,000.

When Jack Spiker became mayor in 2001, the DDA was run by a parttime City employee who officed in the City Building. Salaries/rent are now \$186,800. The "Parking Garage Subsidy" is \$63,000. Less than 1% of DDA's revenue is spent on promotion of downtown businesses. The DCMA received \$6,500 for their programs. The DDA is so much like the Wyoming Business Council - the only jobs ever produced are their own. Dissolve now.

# Coroner's salary

My position on this raise is not personal. I think Marty Luna does a good job as county coroner, he is easy to work with, and that the position should receive the same pay as clerk, assessor, treasurer and clerk of district court. I respect the job he does and Marty personally. I think the sheriff's pay should NOT be linked to the other elected county officials and should be based on different criteria and would invariably be highest of all.

On the other hand, I oppose any increase to elected officials' salaries AFTER the filing deadline for the election that they ultimately win and entitles them to the office.

The basic rule is that "salaries and emoluments" of elected officials cannot be changed during the term for the office to which they were elected. Constitution.

Outgoing city council members in 2000 pushed through an increase in pay for the winners in the 2000 elections, newcomers AND incumbents who were re-elected (Don Pierson and C.J. Brown) alike.

My opposition to raises approved AFTER an election - or even after the filing deadline for that office - is that it raises the question of whether other candidates would have filed had they known of a new salary and whether the raise would have been a campaign issue. In other words, would voters have challenged candidates to refuse the raise if elected? Marty ran unopposed and was generally considered unbeatable. But the potential or anticipated approval of a higher salary should have been out in the open back in May.

My position is no raises after the election.

# "Meth house" neighbor and the Channel 5 performers

Your station, CBS (KGWN) News Channel 5, on December 19<sup>th</sup> ran a story about the property at 211 E. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. It was so full of errors - some because of editing, some because of poor reporting - that it's difficult to know where to start corrections.

Macra Dee Aegerter, a former third-string KGWN sports reporter, is now called the "news director" at Channel 5 and she seems to be filling in for anchors or reporters who have either departed or are on vacation. She seems like a nice gal but she's no Justin Joseph (who, by the way, is now at the CW in Denver - channel 68 on cable). Aegerter filmed on-scene footage, primarily the owner of the house to the immediate east of 211 and a former DCI employee as her props, as well as with a failed legislative candidate.

She introduced the story with: "A house on East 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue sits abandoned, a former meth house, dragging down property values and creating an eye sore in a tight-nit (sic) neighborhood."

First, the property was never a "meth house" as she is defining one. And, as important, the house has not drug down property values. Macra Dee took the word of one neighbor about that.

Let's discuss that neighbor. First, she does not live there. She and her husband with a different surname live far out north. The house on E. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. is a rental property and it is as rundown, or even more so, than the house at 211 - the alleged "meth house." Macra Dee was careful to use a camera angle that did not show the state of disrepair that house's porch is in.

That neighbor saw the market value on her rental house, in which she does not live, rise almost 20% in the latest tax year - from \$144,679 to \$171,745. She did not appeal. Also, in the interview, she suggested she was roused the night of the arrests. She doesn't live there. And, in spite of her claim about diminishing property values, she had this house transferred to her sole ownership in 2008.

The well-dressed and well-coiffed woman spoke into the camera about how the city was "now paralyzed because of the actions of a few people." Whatever paralysis exists can be laid at the feet of one person. Her personal hero, Bob Fecht.

She and the former DCI employee who appeared on camera, well-dressed and well-groomed also, for this misleading report, said they did not know if "an assessment" had been made. That means, they didn't know whether the house had been sampled for meth contamination. Yes they did. They read it in the Herald in June '09. And the levels did not represent a health risk to inhabitants of 211 and surely didn't pose a risk to neighbors. Fecht created the monster that the owner has had to contend with for seven years.

Fecht's Senate bill would not have applied to this house. 211 was never a "meth lab." Meth was never manufactured there. If the owner of 211 decides to pursue a claim for damages, I hope he includes the neighbor who perpetrated that myth on television that Sunday night. I have saved him a transcript and video of the Channel 5 "news" story. (Note: 211 has the highest market value in the neighborhood.)

After returning to my office this afternoon (12/23) from visiting the Assessor's office to confirm some data I picked up yesterday, I listened to a message from Chief Brian Kozak. He said he and the mayor had met and determined that the house at 211 had never been a meth lab and the City was not going to pursue any action. He invited me to call him and discuss the matter further and I did. We spoke late on Thursday, December 23<sup>rd</sup> and Chief Kozak told me why he had made his decision. He obviously has far greater experience in the illegal drug field than I do and he had considered many of the same things I had - the case file of one arrested there, etc. - but he went further. He pointed out that the legislation ramrodded through by Bob Fecht dealt with "emergency action" and seven years later does not constitute an emergency. The City will finally do the right thing. Nothing.

# Who determines the LCCC salaries and wages?

The table below reveals some very interesting details about the pay at LCCC. At a time when the State was going through serious "belt tightening," the local community college was spending money on salaries like there was no tomorrow. Which, for the one most responsible for the salaries, there wasn't. At least in Cheyenne.

A stealth organization that seems to exist only to justify community college presidents and their wives exotic travel put together the comparison salaries. Readers will notice that the LCCC president's salary nearly doubled in a decade and was below the survey average until Hammon's extension. You will also notice that salaries of top administration LCCC employees are well above average in the system.

Mountain States Association of Community Colleges Average Salary Comparison Data

	President		Vice President		Other Administrator (e.g., Director of PR, Director of Financial Aid, Director of Information Technology)		ESS Professional (e.g., Counselor, Program Coordinator, Advisor)		ESS Classified (e.g., Security Officer, Custodian, Electrician, Administrative Assistant, Secretary)	
	LCCC AVG	SURVEY AVG	LCCC AVG	SURVEY AVG	LCCC AVG	SURVEY AVG	LCCC AVG	SURVEY AVG	LCCC AVG	SURVEY AVG
2009-2010	\$184,500.00	\$155,972.00	\$ 116,557.25	\$ 98,381.00	\$ 83,600.33	\$ 71,460.33	\$ 57,032.50	\$ 61,128.00	\$ 38,158.50	\$ 32,628.75
2008-2009	\$180,000.00	\$158,138.00	\$ 114,663.50	\$101,278.50	\$ 81,561.67	\$ 70,184.33	\$ 62,084.00	\$ 61,099.00	\$ 37,150.25	\$ 32,180.50
2007-2008	\$148,500.00	\$ 152,459.00	\$ 110,253.50	\$ 100,435.25	\$ 74,578.33	\$ 68,891.67	\$ 62,024.00	\$ 60,589.00	\$ 33,940.75	\$ 30,459.25
2006-2007	\$135,000.00	\$ 143,618.00	\$ 98,523.50	\$ 93,578.00	\$ 71,939.67	\$ 61,417.67	\$ 53,354.50	\$ 53,896.00	\$ 30,651.25	\$ 28,966.50
2005-2006	\$133,868.00	\$ 139,456.00	\$ 100,816.67	\$ 92,076.33	\$ 69,172.67	\$ 62,140.00	\$ 51,310.50	\$ 53,674.00	\$ 29,672.25	\$ 28,936.25
2004-2005	\$133,868.00	\$ 127,995.00	\$ 94,309.00	\$ 89,380.33	\$ 64,492.00	\$ 60,009.67	\$ 47,999.00	\$ 52,992.00	\$ 28,519.75	\$ 28,694.50
2003-2004	\$126,291.00	\$ 126,561.00	\$ 88,971.00	\$ 87,911.67	\$ 60,174.67	\$ 58,533.00	\$ 49,184.00	\$ 55,621.00	\$ 27,188.75	\$ 27,720.75
2002-2003	\$121,900.00	\$ 122,197.00	\$ 87,586.00	\$ 85,235.00	\$ 58,397.67	\$ 56,717.33	\$ 46,974.00	\$ 44,170.00	\$ 26,599.75	\$ 26,373.25
2001-2002	\$115,000.00	\$ 117,136.00	\$ 80,886.00	\$ 82,163.33	\$ 53,627.33	\$ 55,773.67	\$ 44,217.00	\$ 42,574.00	\$ 25,006.25	\$ 26,143.75
2000-2001	\$97,700.00	\$ 108,509.00	\$ 78,163.67	\$ 77,824.67	\$ 46,713.00	\$ 51,162.67	\$ 38,516.00	\$ 37,275.00	\$ 21,810.25	\$ 24,146.50