

**Judy Case**  
 County Commissioner



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## You can tee it up at the Cheyenne Country Club

You can play golf at the Cheyenne Country Club and partake of what the exclusive dining room avails - without holding a membership.

Here's the deal: A group of locals have a lease with the City of Cheyenne to control the Country Club for the next thousand years for about twelve cents a decade. Maybe a quarter.

It's a bit hard to determine just when the lease will expire because every time the Country Club set does the simplest thing, the lease is extended another twenty years. The lease in my possession as I type this notice to residents that they can play golf on the best course in town identifies the lease as No. 787 and it was extended twenty years because the Club agreed to wash the windows. Actually the Club did grant some others use of the course and approved "honorary memberships" (in spite of what Wyoming

statutes say to the contrary) to, among others, "the Mayor and Councilmen of Cheyenne," and "other persons the Council of Cheyenne may propose for honorary membership." Men. Not women.

Lease 787, which was extended to January 1, 2020, Paragraph 7 reads:

**7. Permit play upon the golf course, during the period the course is open, by Cheyenne residents, without sponsorship, upon payment of green fees, subject to all rules governing play and conduct ... upon Mondays and Tuesdays.** Then, this note: ("The club shall permit Cheyenne residents playing on the days mentioned to purchase food and beverages at the prices paid by members, provided luncheons and other activities scheduled by the house manager do not prevent that. ...")

"Mr. Featherly, party of four. Tee No. 1!"

## American Eagle, the distortions and the trees



First, the economic value of the airport floated by the Chamber of Commerce and their willing parrots has nothing to do with American Eagle Airlines. The fabricated and exaggerated numbers about jobs and American Eagle investment in Cheyenne were just to convince a gullible City of Cheyenne governing body that they should do anything and everything asked of them to make the single destination airline happy.

Dale Steenberg was not under oath when he spouted the numbers he did. And, if residents believe everything said or written by groups like the Chamber, LEADS, the Wyoming Business Council, etc., that would explain a lot of our problems.

American Eagle is a nice little addition to the no-choice destination Cheyenne has had for many, many years. It has been either Denver or in the car. We don't even have passenger train service even though the railroad built Cheyenne. We don't have commercial bus service, for crying out loud. How bad is that?

Donation-paid employees just don't seem to have it in them to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. And they didn't in this situation.

First things first: American Eagle is flying two flights a day each way between Cheyenne and Dallas-Fort Worth because of a subsidy they are being provided. Like Great Lakes Airlines before them, it doesn't matter how many passengers they fly on each flight, the subsidy will cover them flying virtually empty.

But only for so long.

And, American Eagle has made no long-term commitment to Cheyenne. This is strictly an experiment to them. If the passengers are here, they may stay and use up the subsidy - they may even stay longer - but if the passengers aren't here, they are gone.

When AE announced that beginning July 15, 2010 they were adding flights in and out of Cheyenne, they also announced similar service for Columbus, Georgia.

The AP story ended: "The airline said the Cheyenne service was made possible by a partnership with the Wyoming Department of Transportation and Cheyenne."

Once again, we had to buy affection. Our market cannot support itself based just on economics and profitability? We always have to buy service? Buy love? Columbus, Georgia evidently did not.

Will American Eagle be here in its present form for the two years prayed for by the Chamber and others?

Well, they're not good about commitment.

Consider this news from Santa Fe, New Mexico, a city somewhat similar to Cheyenne in that it's a short distance to a larger city (Albuquerque) and is a high elevation city like Cheyenne. Santa Fe's 2009 Census population estimate was 73,720, its elevation is 7,000 ft. and its average snowfall is about 26 inches. Cheyenne's elevation is 6,062 ft. and the average annual snowfall is about 60 inches. Our population as of July 1, 2009 was about 15,000 less than Santa Fe's.

Why is this comparison important?


Because American Eagle just made some reductions to their service between Santa Fe and Dallas-Fort Worth.

The news from Santa Fe is that American Eagle is cutting back service - one flight per day between Santa Fe and DFW. AE will discontinue the flight on August 23, with a promise to resume it next April 5th, "when business picks up." Santa Fe's airport manager says the flight being discontinued is their "most popular flight."

The story from the *New Mexican* said, "American Eagle spokeswoman Andrea Huguely declined to say why the flights were dropped, but [the airport manager] said one reason might have been the fact that snowy weather last winter resulted in costly de-icing of aircraft. It also meant the flights were delayed." And, "It wasn't uncommon for them to be delayed up to 45 minutes," he said. The flight being discontinued began on February 11, 2010.

Note: I personally watched two of the 2:15 pm flights depart Cheyenne - on the first and third days of service. One flight took off to the west (on a day with strong winds and high temperature) and the other to the east (calm and 80+ degrees). The flight to the west was well above the old air traffic control tower at that point of take-off. At liftoff, it had a great deal of runway left. The trees were no safety hazard.

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