

WNU lawsuit - Plaintiffs amend complaint

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After months of inertia, the K-WU/WNU former students lawsuit has shown some movement of late.

Based on a personal review of the case file (Docket No. 174-045 in Laramie County District Court) on March 22, 2010, some interesting action has taken place.

The Defendant's original attorneys, Hirst Applegate of Cheyenne, had represented all Defendants, including Travelers Casualty and Surety Company of America. Hirst Applegate has now withdrawn as counsel for the bond issuers (fired?) and local law firm Sundahl, Powers, Kapp & Martin LLC replaced them as counsel for Travelers.

An amended complaint was filed on behalf of the plaintiffs on March 11, 2010. The most important change in it is the addition of 130 *more* plaintiffs - bringing the total to 197. That motion to amend was granted by Laramie County District Court Judge Michael Davis on March 15, 2010 with no objection from Defendants.

The Motion to Amend can be reviewed on the Cheyenne Herald website.

An amended complaint, of course, starts the wheels in motion all over again. Months will likely pass before anything else happens - except for a response to the amended complaint which will be due in a few weeks.

Then it will be hurry up and wait all over again.

Almost weekly, a former student of either Kennedy-Western University or Warren National University calls the Cheyenne Herald. As the "publication of record" on this subject, it is easy to access our contact information if an internet search is done on those two degree selling businesses. And Preston University, of course.

And, if anyone believes that the worst is over and there will be few "graduates" with problems unique to their situation who surface in the future, that will not be the case.

Just a couple days ago, I fielded a call from a "graduate" of Kennedy-Western. The woman holds a Bachelor's Degree from K-WU of about a dozen years ago and has been self-employed since and the quality of her degree was not critical to her owning her own business.

Now, she had decided to enter the work force and wanted to earn a Master's Degree to enhance her qualifications. She did not realize that Warren National University, K-WU's successor in name, no longer existed. In spite of living in the same state that has put out all the publicity about the demise of degree sellers in Wyoming, she did not know that K-WU/WNU was defunct.

When she couldn't contact them, she started a search on the internet and discovered Cheyenne Herald articles.

She, like so many before her, asked the typical questions. Is my degree worth anything? Will an accredited university accept my degree toward a master's? Will any accredited university accept *any* of my credits toward a higher degree? Can I get my money back?

I could not give her any positive news about her predicament. She told me she had paid about \$9,000 for the bachelor's degree she was now learning had no value.

She had contacted an accredited university and was told that they would need a copy of her transcript before determining whether they could accept her prior "education" toward a master's degree. Based on my earlier conversation with Grand Canyon University officials, I could not give her encouraging news about that either.

She asked if there was a way to still get a copy of her

transcript and I walked her through a search for the Cheyenne Herald article in which Warren National's drop box in Fort Collins, Colorado was revealed.

To those who ask my advice on these matters, I am cautious about reminding them I am not an attorney and do not offer legal advice. I know the subject well enough that I can answer most of their questions but I don't want anyone to think I'm providing legal advice. In this case, my advice was one of caution about sending any more money to Warren National University, compounded by the risk that it is being sent to a drop box at a packing store in Fort Collins, Colorado.

Contacts, telephone calls and e-mails primarily, concerning experiences with these two degree selling operations, are often heart-wrenching. How the federal authorities have allowed such enterprises like these to fleece vulnerable residents of the United States without criminal charges being brought is beyond my comprehension.

It would have been bad enough that students had a worthless degree that they believed, and lenders like Wells Fargo and Sallie Mae led them to believe, had value. But many former students were caught in the middle of their pursuit. Had Warren National University been a health spa that took advance membership dues, state or federal authorities would have come down on them for fraud. To take fees upfront, then sack someone who borrowed \$8,000 from Wells Fargo to pay for an "education," never having seen the money because the lender sent the money directly to the unaccredited degree sellers, is just unconscionable. The State of Wyoming should also be a defendant in this litigation but now tells former students there is nothing they can do. For years, the State encouraged the cheating and stealing, now they distance themselves from any financial solution. For a few thousand bucks, the State sold its integrity and reputation. And now say there is nothing they can do.

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American Eagle

What affect will the regional commuter carrier American Eagle have on air travel in and out of Cheyenne? Minimal.

Once again, it was the money provided by Wyoming - state and local - that attracted this second airline. Having a different destination will have a small benefit to some but Dallas-Fort Worth is not exactly the hub most Cheyenne air travelers probably would have chosen.

American Airlines has a hub in Chicago and that would have been a better choice.

Dallas-Fort Worth is better than nothing, though. But, it will not produce a great number of additional boardings from Cheyenne. Maybe 30-50 a day.

It sure would be nice to see a business select Cheyenne because Cheyenne warranted that choice. Not because of public money provided by the State of Wyoming and City of Cheyenne.

Before the excitement of a different airline coming in and out of Cheyenne twice daily consumes the EcDev folks, they should remember the short-lived experiment with Northwest Airlines in Casper.

Herald
 pick-up locations

- City News - Downtown
- BLM Building Entryway
- Safeway - South Cheyenne
- Wonder Bread Outlet - Ridge Rd.
- Oroweat Bakery Outlet - SW Dr.
- Borderline - Colorado Lottery
- Laramie County Library
- Laramie County Gov't Center - North
- Herschler Building - North
- VA Hospital - South Entrance
- Town & County Liquors
- Burger Inn
- Luxury Diner
- American Storage
- Avenues Pet Clinic
- Los Amigos
- Diamond Horseshoe
- Daylight Donuts (both)
- Quick Draw Optical
- Village Inn-Downtown
- T-Joe's Steakhouse & Saloon

Many, many other locations in the City and Laramie County

In the county ...

- Rikachee' Cafe, the A & W and Wild Horse Restaurant - all in Pine Bluffs

- Panhandle Co-Op and Antelope Truck Stop in Burns