

# the Norris Canvas



Photo by The Cheyenne Herald May 17, 2010

That didn't take long.

If the Norris Viaduct is "graffiti-proof," someone forgot to inform the taggers.

Obviously, the new viaduct is attractive to those who like to place graffiti and are also confident the City has no way to prevent their tagging and will take forever to remove the work so taggers can enjoy their handiwork for weeks - possibly months - before it is removed.

The Cheyenne Herald will watch to see how long this piece of graffiti lasts and when others follow along.

The expanse over the railroad tracks, both sides of the wall and both sides of the roadway, provides a canvas like no other in Cheyenne. A welcoming backdrop.

Now the question will be: Will the Norris Canvas look like most UP rail cars coming through Cheyenne - plastered with graffiti of all types and sizes on the sides?

Was any thought given to placement of security cameras so tagging like this could be recorded and identification of the miscreants might be made? Or, like so many other instances of graffiti in town, doesn't it really matter?

Tagging on the new viaduct is a real insult. At a cost of over \$25 million, you'd think the City would have been prepared and could either prevent the tagging or immediately remove it.

Of course, the reality is that not enough "important" people in town traverse this lightly used bridge over the railroad tracks so it is only those of us who live on the southside and go over the Norris Viaduct regularly who would see the graffiti.

I would bet you lunch that at least half, no make it almost all, of the city elected officials have not been over the Norris

Viaduct more than once since it was opened to traffic several months ago.

Be that as it may - that the "elites" don't travel this path - how will the City deal with this latest canvas for graffiti? Can they stay close behind the taggers? Will there be arrests or is the City Attorney still convinced that he does not have an ordinance to prevent graffiti or cause its clean-up? Or, because this is on the border of the southside, will it be ignored as a southside park was for so many years after voters approved its creation? They can rely on Reed and Mike never going over this viaduct. But I do. Daily.

## Only 4 "Safeway houses" and 1 garage claimed

At least the State gave people the opportunity. Had they not agreed to let residents "claim" houses and outbuildings that were going to be demolished, some would have been up in arms about that.

Can you imagine if the library, city and hospital would have made a similar offer on the houses they confiscated on Thomes Ave., Fifth St., and out at Nob Hill? In the case of the houses taken for the library, a guy who was being displaced, and expected to see his house demolished, asked if he could take a new chandelier he had just placed in his dining room and was told he'd have to buy it once the county confiscated his house. I told him to just take it and put back up the one he had taken down - he still had it.

One reason the government entity that confiscates these properties doesn't offer residents an opportunity to have houses that are going to be demolished is that there are some issues involved. To the State's credit, they realized that and considered any complications, set some parameters, and offered the houses (and garages) for the taking. Good for them.

I have asked for the addresses of those houses to be moved but the deadline to apply for one of the houses just passed and the State may be allowing for stragglers. When I have that detail, I'll drive around the block over there and size up the choices people made. Frankly, I have been in the area a few times and didn't see more than a house or two I thought

might be worth the effort and expense of relocating. But, for handymen and do-it-yourselfers (which I am not), a house nearly a century old might present the challenge they relish. The old officer's houses on House Avenue that could *not* be demolished would present that challenge. And, after having toured one's interior, if you're into that sort of thing, those houses have a charm that could make a remarkable renovated house.

For awhile, the parking lot all around the former Pioneer Safeway was full of state employee parking. Now, there are only a few at any one time. They must have finished another area and parkers returned to more convenient parking.

The promise of a co-op grocery store in that part of town seems to have faded. I had an angry telephone call from a person who had attended one of the co-op meetings and he chastised me for opposing such a venture. That happens a lot - readers don't read what I write, they read what they want to see. I never opposed a co-op. In fact, I said that we would purchase a membership if such a co-op were opened even though we probably would never avail ourselves of it. What I wrote is that I thought it would never happen.

No, I never tire of being right. It's so much better than often or always being wrong as is the case with the daily newspaper. Now, the DDA is paying an insider five grand to point them toward a grocer for "downtown." What a waste of funds.



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