

Will terrorists board planes in airports that tout poor security measures as an attraction? Like Cheyenne.

It has bothered me for a long time that groups like "Fly Cheyenne" advertise that a reason to depart from Cheyenne is, basically, that security screening is so much more lax here than, say, in Denver.

And while no one believes terrorists would target a 19 passenger Raytheon, it is not inconceivable to believe that terrorists will start looking at boarding planes in airports that boast about less screening so they can get to the major markets where the big planes are.

Let me say upfront that I think much of the inconvenience air travelers are experiencing is unnecessary. Almost all of the screening is based on an occurrence of the past, not preventing one before it happens. That doesn't sound like the best plan to me. With our intelligence-gathering capabilities, we should know what terrorists are planning next, not what they did, or attempted to do, last.

After a long haired freak tried to detonate a shoe, Americans had to remove their shoes so they could travel through the conveyor belt and through an x-ray. My shoes have had more x-rays than I have in my lifetime. Apart from the airport machines, that is. Did you ever see a picture of a Richard Reid shoe? (Below)



We can train dogs to sniff drugs inside cars (from the outside) and in luggage but we can't invent a machine to detect plastic explosives? That hardly seems right for a country like the United States.

Based on the over-reaching methods being used by TSA agents in the larger airports, it wouldn't surprise me much if the FAA, Homeland Security or another initial laden bureaucracy changed the rules on passengers entering hubs from lesser airports and begin to require them to clear security again at the larger airport. If they truly believe that sobbing 7 year-old girls, grandmothers with walkers and Mother Superiors might be carrying explosives onboard a plane, they will surely wise up to the possibility of real terrorists capitalizing on airports like Cheyenne, Casper or Fort Collins - airports that brag about the ease to pass security - for their original boarding site.

The inconvenience to an air traveler having to clear security a second or third time, maybe even having to claim their luggage so it can be screened more thoroughly at the larger airport, should be secondary to the fear, real or imagined, that such a passenger now poses a much greater risk to air safety than one who cleared more stringent security measures.

TSA and government officials know they could never impose draconian measures bad enough to discourage people from flying. And if measures as I've described (second check-ins on continuing flights) are imposed, small airports will become even more unattractive and they will fail for lack of traffic. Even the American Eagle flights to Dallas / Fort Worth are presented as "first leg" flights, which means most passengers are continuing on from DFW, so connecting passengers would have to re-clear security.

If places like Cheyenne run broadcast or print advertising that even suggests their security measures are lax, look for the government to crack down on them. It is like a terrorist recruitment message.

We have been looking over our shoulders since 9/11 and it won't get better before it gets worse. The bad guys are getting the best of the good guys. Then, they win.

Homeless Memorial Day December 21, 2010 at noon in front of the State Capitol Building

Recognition of those who died homeless on the streets of Cheyenne will take place with bell tolling and speakers. The Wyoming Coalition for the Homeless has sponsored this event in Cheyenne since its beginning in 1990. This is the 21st Homeless Memorial Day in Cheyenne and the rest of the nation.

In the 1980s, a small group of cities remembered those who died on the streets but this event was organized in 1990 by the National Coalition for the Homeless and the Healthcare for the Homeless Council.

December 21st was chosen as the day of recognition. It is the longest (most hours of darkness) and frequently the coldest day of the year in many communities. In 2009, 152 communities / agencies participated in Homeless Memorial Day.

To donate or volunteer this winter or at any time, call Virginia at Wyoming Coalition for the Homeless, 907 Logan Avenue. 634-8499.

The Jessica Venable Compassion Fund

Cheyenne Herald readers continue to make money donations to Jessica Venable during her incarceration at Lusk. Judge Peter Arnold reduced her sentence by two years and she has made application to a halfway house and she is hopeful of being accepted and released to a halfway house within a couple months. In the meantime, and probably for the few months Jessica will spend at the halfway house, she can still use some financial help to purchase paper, envelopes, stamps, personal hygiene items, snacks, etc. So I am once again encouraging Cheyenne Herald readers to join my wife and me in providing some financial relief to this young woman who is facing challenges on so many fronts. I am on her approved visitor list at Lusk and can send her money. If you would like to join us, you can send your donation for Jessica to me (please make your check payable to the Cheyenne Herald). I buy money orders to forward the funds on to Jessica. Only those on her approved visitor list can send her money or you could do it directly.

You can send Jessica a Christmas card

I won't publish Jessica Venable's mailing address at Lusk here but there are two ways you can send her Christmas greetings. I just don't feel comfortable making her address available to any kook who may have the wrong reason to want to contact her.

You can send a card in her name to me at the Cheyenne Herald address and I will forward those I receive to her a week before Christmas. Please put your return address in the left hand corner of the envelope. Or, you can call or e-mail me and I'll give you her mailing address so you can send a card directly to her. I know she'd appreciate the gesture and Cheyenne Herald readers have been very generous to and supportive of this wrongly imprisoned woman.

Dave Featherly

2010 Christmas Parade

The 20th Annual Cheyenne Christmas Parade went off without a hitch.

The festival of music, lights and magic had about 120 entries, with over 150 units. From the time the first unit was in front of you until the float with Santa takes its place there, about an hour had elapsed. The parade is well run, with few gaps and no real "bog downs."

Classic cars are numerous but they must be decorated with holiday lights. Multi-color lights are everywhere. Music never ends. There are few horses and that's nice. Frontier Days is a western-themed event, let those parades have the horses.

The weather for the 20th Annual Parade was nice. There was virtually no wind so sitting on the east side of Carey Avenue behind the old post office was as pleasant as our normal location across the street.

This year, the distribution of candy was handled differently and more safely. Candy was individually handed to children, not thrown at their feet which caused a scramble in the past. There were few paper handouts even though there were several churches represented in the

parade. That is also nice because, first, attendees have gloves on. Next, it's dark and unwanted proselytizing is hard to recognize. And it would just be wrong, in my opinion. So, while the parade has religious overtones because it's a Christmas parade, there were no offensive acts by any group. At the CFD parades, you don't know what you'll be handed.

The mood is happy. Even the smokers aren't too numerous. Maybe they're considerate under the circumstances but, while smoke may waft in the air a bit, it is not that intrusive.

There are quite a few children in attendance but the vast majority of the people there are adults. Adults well bundled, attentive and politely responsive.

Parade participants on floats are mostly children. They wave their arms off and wish all a "Merry Christmas" a few million times on the parade route.

Marie Crader, you brought something to Cheyenne that may never have existed without your imagination, initiative, perseverance and dedication to your fellow citizens. We are all in your debt. Thanks.

Pot was allegedly found on Willie Nelson's tour bus. What a surprise! And the sun sets in the west, water runs downhill, government will give us reasons to complain, Joe Biden is a fool and it's very cold in International Falls, Minnesota in January.