

# Downtown sidewalks were an embarrassment during CFD

Actually, every day.

Beautification? Hardly.

I've already written about the pitiful planters here. The best thing that happened to them was the hail - with the two storms close together, visitors may have given us some slack, believing that the lousy appearance was the result of being pounded by hail. Little did they know that those planters looked the same before and after the hailstorms. Awful.

What the hell does the DDA do with the hundreds of thousands of dollars that go their way - much of it unwarranted? A little bit of it may go to wealthy developers but not very much of it goes to trying to keep the downtown presentable. And, it hasn't mattered who was the supposed "executive director" or board members. None have made an improvement and the area seems to get worse every year.

It seems like if there were ever going to be an honest effort to improve the appearance of Cheyenne's downtown, it would be prior to the annual

Frontier Days. At least the City stripes some of the lane dividers and intersections in hopes of fooling visitors into thinking that's the way it is all the time - not just for their visit.

But the weeds, dead trees, missing trees - and oh those planters - make it pretty apparent to visitors and residents alike that no one really cares. If even one DDA board member or even one city council member or even one mayor cared, our downtown wouldn't look so abandoned, dirty, neglected and ignored.

Lincolnway has to be one of the heaviest traveled streets (roads) in the city. And there are two designated "keepers" of the streets, sidewalks, curbs and gutters - the City and the Downtown Development Authority. With hundreds of thousands of dollars for the DDA and tens of millions of dollars for the City, there is no money to keep the downtown - the focal point of any city - tended? It doesn't look like it.

The photos below show the current condition on W. Lincolnway. The one on the right shows two "suckers" that

have survived on their own and are real attractive. Not. Visitors must be impressed with the expensive brickwork around the planting areas, only to have scrubby "bushes" instead of trees. On the left is the sidewalk from in front of Bart's Flea Market to beside Goodyear. There are no trees (not even a cluster of weeds) growing from those three expensive planting areas including decorative surrounding brickwork.

The embarrassment is not limited to downtown's most heavily traveled street - Lincolnway. Just to the west, across the street, of the Wyoming Business Council office on 15th Street is similar - a determined sucker and the empty planting areas. RIGHT ACROSS FROM THE WYOMING BUSINESS COUNCIL, for God's sake!!!!!!!

On 17th Street, near City News and to the west on the same side of the street, stands a dead tree and another tree is stunted and dying.

Curbs are crumbling, trees are dying, flowers were pathetic and no one notices? There are weeds in the

narrow grassy area south of Twin Dragon. It isn't that there is no traffic in that area - Twin Dragon continues to be one of downtown's most popular restaurants.

Where has Cheyenne's pride gone? When did the City decide to be a dirtier Fargo? A more unkempt Butte? A less attractive Pueblo?

The story often repeated by insiders is that a woman wandered through Cheyenne while on a "scouting" mission for Lowe's Regional Distribution Center and noticed the concrete walkway called a "Greenway" and left Cheyenne convinced Lowe's would invest \$65 million in a town because of that walkway. Had it been asphalt, who knows? That is an exaggeration and those same insiders surely won't be able to convince anyone in the future that someone chose Cheyenne for business expansion because of the downtown appearance. Remember when the "west gateway" into the downtown had to be improved, to the tune of several million dollars? It was a poor use of money to direct visitors into what has become our downtown wasteland.

