

What is holding up the Converse/Pershing/19th St. roundabout?

We've all known the child who, when caught redhanded, blames his misdeed on someone else.

Meet the City of Cheyenne.

Because building an intercity roundabout presented more of a challenge than the inexperienced minions employed by the City are qualified to handle, the delay until next year for even beginning a roundabout at Spaghetti Junction had to be laid at the feet of someone else.

The City acquired the two houses on the northwest corner of Pershing and Converse a long time ago so those owners couldn't be blamed. And, they City certainly is not going to blame the VA for anything.

So, basically, if City staff were to pin the delay on someone, that left only two property owners - Frank Cole of Cole Shopping Center and the Colorado Springs owner of the building that housed Hollywood Video.

"Yeah, it's all their fault," the guys responsible but wholly unqualified for ROW acquisition told their lackeys at the WTE and Channel 5. "They've delayed this process from moving

forward. They are responsible for the residents of Cheyenne not having a spiffy circle to circumnavigate when they so eagerly want one."

What those City children haven't said is that the design didn't get done and their plan to confiscate much/most of the parking lot from the owner of the building where Hollywood Video operated wouldn't leave him enough parking to lease or sell his building to anyone. That, of course, is beyond the limits of the use of eminent domain. Government cannot confiscate land they covet if what they leave the owner makes his property unusable. So, obviously, that guy is not going to agree to such devastation of his property. Not to mention that when he first opened his own video store there many years ago, the City closed him to force him to provide a rinky-dink "drainage pond" and cost him a few days business after he had heavily advertised his opening. He hasn't forgotten.

And, I'm reliably informed, Frank Cole is still in his response window so he hasn't delayed anything. His property won't be impacted like the other and he'll make a deal short of court. But he'll use his allotted time.

Ethanol

Quite regularly, Congress makes a show of ending the subsidy that has forced the price of corn and other foods up by requiring that the crop be used extensively in the manufacture of ethanol.

Each time, they fold like a Pamida suitcase, continue the subsidy, yet Iowa corn farmers continue to get chump change from ethanol producers like Archer-Daniels and Cargill.

As I've written here in the past, if lawmakers were serious about reducing the import of oil (and we get almost none from our "enemies"), they could increase the supply of ethanol in a heartbeat by reducing the tariff charged for each gallon of ethanol imported. Brazil could drown us in sugar cane ethanol on a minute's notice.

Not only do American ethanol producers receive a 45¢ a gallon subsidy, the tariff is 54¢ a gallon. Even our unaccredited diploma mill graduates can figure out that the combination is a 99¢ a gallon disadvantage to Brazil. That double whammy prevents the import of ethanol -for the protection of American farmers and businesses that have invested heavily in the production of ethanol.

And, our lawmakers whine about free trade, about fair trade? Congress has also increased the percentage of

gasoline produced that must have an ethanol blend, another way to protect our own corn producers and distillers at the expense of the American consumer.

The amount of corn that is being used for ethanol has greatly reduced the amount available for animal feed.

On a recent trip to the Midwest, I opted to fill my tank in Nebraska and Iowa with the more expensive gasoline that has less or no ethanol. I gained 10% in mileage - and the ethanol blend gasoline was only 5% cheaper. I am told it burns hotter and reduces mileage because of that. Many will look at the signs in Iowa and believe "Super" used to promote the sale of blended gasoline is better when they should ignore that come-on and use the "Regular" that will produce better gas mileage.

One could argue that it makes good sense to subsidize certain farmers more than others - many Wyoming legislators and the governor receive federal crop subsidies - and I might agree. EXCEPT ethanol is plentiful if we import it. And importing it from a friend, or at least not a vocal enemy - Brazil. We import oil from Venezuela, for crying out loud. Remember that little jerk? Hugo Chávez. Isn't he in cahoots with I'm a Nut Job of Iran, another looney?

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Bowling for injuries

There are baseball fans who believe there are no rules, and should be no rules, for runners who deliberately collide with another player fielding a ball or run through that fielder in an effort to force him to drop the baseball or through a catcher that tries to block the plate to prevent a runner from scoring. INTERFERENCE and OBSTRUCTION cover these and are in official MLB rules.

Rule 2.00 INTERFERENCE

(a) Offensive interference is an act by the team at bat which interferes with, obstructs, impedes, hinders or confuses any fielder attempting to make a play. (Note: This would apply to the catcher if he blocks the plate.)

If the umpire declares the batter, batter-runner, or a runner out for interference, all other runners shall return to the last base that was in the judgment of the umpire, legally touched at the time of the interference, unless otherwise provided by these rules.

7.08 Any runner is out when—

(b) He intentionally interferes with a thrown ball; or hinders a fielder attempting to make a play on a batted ball; (Would apply to the runner.)

7.09 It is interference by a batter or a runner when—

Rule 7.09(j) Comment: When a catcher and batter-runner going to first base have contact when the catcher is fielding the ball, there is generally no violation and nothing should be called. "Obstruction" by a fielder attempting to field a ball should be called only in very flagrant and violent cases because the rules give him the right of way, but of course such "right of way" is not a license to, for example, intentionally trip a runner ...

Rule 7.06(b) Comment: Under 7.06(b) when the ball is not dead on obstruction and an obstructed runner advances beyond the base which, in the umpire's judgment, he would have been awarded because of being obstructed, he does so at his own peril and may be tagged out. This is a judgment call.

NOTE: The catcher, without the ball in his possession, has no right to block the pathway of the runner attempting to score. The base line belongs to the runner and the catcher should be there only when he is fielding a ball or when he already has the ball in his hand.

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