

City vehicle caused the latest Ames Avenue closing

After I wrote in the last issue how foolish it was for the City to have both of the major access routes to the southside closed at the same time, City officials quickly had it put in the daily that Ames was open, that it would be "crazy" to close them both at the same time.

Well, welcome to the Cuckoo Nest, folks. Because for several days, both Ames and Central Avenues were closed. Actually, if you had enough patience and an older car, you could get to the southside over the Central Avenue viaduct.

Living on the southside, I really notice disruptions to the travel pattern from the southside into downtown, whether by Ames or Central. I had a meeting yesterday out north on Yellowstone. Having gone into the downtown twice earlier in the day via the viaduct and sitting through six to eight light changes at Lincolnway, I chose to head east on Fifth Street, northerly over the Norris Viaduct to Pershing, west to Warren, north to Yellowstone and finally to Uncle Charlie's. I can get to Wellington faster.

The worst part of the latest closing of Ames Ave. is that it was City-caused. A sanitation department truck with a rolloff container

somehow struck the overpass and the street had to be closed for days to repair the damage.

I am a huge supporter of the sanitation department and have been since the days of Felix Pino. But, please guys, don't wallop the overpass again so we have no expedient way to go between the southside and north of the tracks.

I don't recall the mayor telling residents why the street was closed again - so soon after it had reopened after a lengthy closure. A little truth is good for the soul, Rick. We can handle the truth, we're not Tom Cruise and you're not Jack Nicholson.

It will be interesting to see how long Ames remains open this time. It is normal for the underpass to close whenever there is a couple inches of rain. Drainage hasn't come to the underpass yet. Maybe if it were in Bar X, a solution would be found. Linking the southside with north of the tracks seems unimportant to those who don't live down here. And that is nine of the ten members of the City governing body. And isn't that viaduct access from Central Avenue a beaut?

Where do we get these guys?

Maybe they should have been allowed to wear their blue unis at home games

About all that remains of the Mountain West Conference is to shovel the dirt on it.

In spite of some decent teams in both football and basketball in recent years, few go far in the NCAA tournament or in bowl games. And, in an effort to diminish the chance of a MWC team to climb the ranking ladder, the NCAA hierarchy schedules bowl games between Cinderella teams like TCU and Boise State two years in a row.

Tiring of waiting for a break in the glass ceiling that prevents the MWC from being an automatic BCS bowl qualifier, the better programs are leaving like rats off a sinking ship.

Utah went to the Pac-whatever, BYU decided to become an independent in football (select company that included only Army, Navy and Notre Dame) and TCU can't quite decide where they want to land. First it was the Big East, lately it seems to be the Big 12.

Wanting fans to believe that losing the top three athletic programs from the MWC could be offset by adding Boise State, then Fresno

State, Nevada and Hawaii (football only), the euphoria ended almost before it was announced. Those last three programs won't regularly strike fear in the hearts of quality football programs.

Maybe the commissioner should not have issued the edict that Boise State could not wear their traditional blue home football uniforms because they blended in with the blue grass and opponents of the MWC couldn't see the players and couldn't tackle or block them.

First, Boise State lost the highest quality MWC opponents to other conferences, then were told they had to dress differently to play in the MWC. Not content to whup up on the likes of Wyoming, CSU, New Mexico, UNLV and the others, Boise State is now going to change conferences again. This time, Boise State, which last time I looked played in Idaho, will play in the Big East. Excuse me? The Big East?

Without Utah, BYU, TCU and Boise State, there's not much left. San Diego State and New Mexico will have good basketball programs but there's not much after those.

Eminent domain

There is a lot of confusion about just what eminent domain is all about.

The daily newspaper in Cheyenne isn't helping its few remaining readers because they don't understand the law either.

The likelihood of the use of eminent domain delaying the project is slim. The attorney for the owner of the land on which Hollywood Video sat and the WTE have said, or been quoted as saying, that eminent domain could result in a "legal battle" and "the roundabout could be tied up in court for years."

Just like the issue of term limits for legislators was certified to the Supreme Court and decided in a heartbeat, so would an issue of eminent domain.

In *Atter*, the Supreme Court made it clear that "the power of eminent domain has been treated as a legislative determination that could not be reviewed by the judiciary unless shown to be an abuse of discretion or the result of fraud or bad faith."

And, "it conferred upon the courts the duty of making certain factual determinations, including whether the public interest and necessity require the project." Just as the City designated the Albany Bar and Restaurant and The Wrangler "blights,"

they can pretty much get away with anything they choose to do.

Should the owner of the land coveted by the City dig in his heels, the dispute will be about price, not the taking. Courts can decide later if the City would have to take the entire parcel, not just the east side of the parking lot.

W.S. 1-26-706 reads, "(a) If there is a partial taking of property, the fair market value of the remainder ... shall reflect increases or decreases in value caused by the proposed project including;

(i) Impairment of the use of his other property caused by the condemnation; and ..."

There is no doubt in my mind that the City would be required to "take" the entire parcel, whether up front or the result of subsequent court action. What would remain after the City "cherry-picked" just what they want would be borderline worthless to the owner and condemnation does not allow for that taking.

Except for a propensity to try to take advantage of its own residents (annexation, sewer line claims, city vehicle accidents, etc.) there is no reason for the City to refuse to purchase the entire parcel. It would be unconscionable to claim the parking lot and destroy the remaining value.

Get cash with:

- 1.) Valid Identification
- 2.) Current Copy of Checking Account Statement
- 3.) Verification of Employment or Income
- 4.) Just 5 Minutes of Your Time!

LOANS UP TO \$3000⁰⁰!

With Your Post-Dated Check!

THRIFTY CASH SERVICES

"Finally, a fair loan at a fair price."

619 East Lincolnway • 634-2081

For short-term or long-term stays

Central Plaza Extended Stay

1719 Central Avenue, in the Historic former Downtowner Motor Inn / 638-8383

**Comfort ... Convenience ... Cleanliness
Quality ... Security ... Affordability**

- ◆ King and Queen Size Beds
One or Two Beds per Room
- ◆ Elevator, Handicap Room(s)
- ◆ Air Conditioning, Individual Settings
- ◆ Refrigerator, Microwave, Desk, Iron,
Ironing Board, Coffeemaker,
Hair Dryer in Each Room
- ◆ 27" Color TV with Remote
- ◆ Cable TV, Free Premium Channels
- ◆ Free High-Speed Wireless Internet
- ◆ Some Rooms with Table, Seating Area
- ◆ On-Site Laundry Facilities
- ◆ Ice Machine, Vending Machines on Floors
- ◆ Phone in Each Room, Free Local Calls
- ◆ Copy, Fax & E-mail Services On-Site

Reasonable Weekly & Monthly Rates
Free Off-Street Parking

**Short Walk to Churches,
Banks, Popular Downtown
Eateries, Museums, Galleries
and Attractions - such as the
Lincoln Movie Palace, Depot
Plaza, Laramie County
Library - and Downtown
Night Spots with Live Music,
City News, Coffee Shops,
Buses, Bus Transfer Station,
Government Offices,
Courthouses and More!!**