

More than 70% of local crimes involve alcohol in some way and the police chief supports more liquor licenses in Cheyenne?

Is there a point at which even law enforcement will agree that there are already enough liquor licenses in the city and out in the county? If so, when will that be? When there's a bar or package liquor store at every intersection and a couple on the block between?

When churches and governmental groups use liquor to raise funds, what will the young, impressionable people think? What's next, schools? If it's okay for churches and cities, why not schools?

Will Little Johnny be told to take note home from the teacher to his mother, asking the parent to donate a bottle of liquor for the upcoming PTO fundraiser?

"Dear Mrs. Smith; For the upcoming fundraiser, where we will try to raise \$50,000 for new playground equipment, an event to be held in the school gym after school hours on the 20th, would you be good enough to bring a liter of either Jack Daniels or Jim Beam, please?"

To make certain that the mom doesn't bring any unnecessary baked goods, Johnny's teacher would go on: *"Please be reminded that this fundraiser will involve no baked goods. We have found that liquor sells much better than cupcakes so we plan to go in that direction in the future. If it would be more convenient for you to bring a case of either Coors or Bud Light, in bottles, please, not cans, that would be just fine."*

Alcohol and driving are not supposed to mix but even very responsible people in the community, including elected officials and city department heads, do not accept that they should not drink to excess, then jump behind the wheel of the Lexus or Grand Cherokee and head out.

The problem is that those who should know better and those who have a duty to know better, don't. Know better.

When law enforcement officials, elected officials and school board members drink and drive, it's obvious that there's a long way to go before alcohol-related driving offenses will diminish.

Why is the Wyoming Legislature reluctant to drop the hammer on those who drink and drive repeatedly? Well, the Cheyenne Herald has been told by members of law enforcement that legislators are often among the worst offenders of alcohol abuse. By their actions while in session considering enhanced penalties, they make decisions that should make residents wonder why they are unwilling to make penalties more severe on repeat offenders. Could it hit them personally?

On the other side of the coin, when a northern legislator wanted to appear concerned about the high incidence of fatal car accidents in her area involving juveniles, she introduced legislation to punish all young people in Wyoming by raising the age at which they could earn a Wyoming driver's license.

While the problem was an aberration and mostly confined to those northern counties at the time, it was easier for her to push it as a statewide problem than own up to local alcohol and drug problems.

A couple years back, because some local elected officials and state legislators believe that dispensing more alcohol is synonymous with economic development, another class of liquor license was created. There are now retail liquor licenses, restaurant liquor licenses, resort liquor licenses, bar and grill liquor licenses, brewpub liquor licenses - about all that's lacking is a day care liquor license. That's next.

Some of the liquor licenses named above are limited in number and restricted in use - such as retail and bar and grill. On the other hand, there are an unlimited number of restaurant liquor licenses available and that wholesale availability insures that someone ordering a pizza or eggs benedict can also have an unlimited supply of hooch to wash them down.

Is it any surprise that so many reported crimes - "reported" crimes - involve alcohol consumption in some fashion? Bar owners, including those veteran's clubs where membership and dues are required, have reported a loss of business due to the Cheyenne smoking ban. Booze peddlers believe that more and more people are buying at package liquor stores and taking the sauce home to drink.

Alcohol may contribute to the "crimes" analyzed in that recent survey but what the pollsters did not have available were the statistics of unreported crimes. Maybe it's like a tree falling in the forest with no one near to hear it - there is no crime if it's not reported. Tell that to a wife or girlfriend who gets the hell beat out of her because her macho mate drank until the bar closed, somehow managed to avoid being caught drinking drunk home, then was mad because she hadn't kept his supper hot. So, he punches her around. Unless she calls 9-1-1, there is evidently no crime committed.

The study is of little value. Law enforcement and the courts already knew those statistics. But when people who could reduce the rate of incidence are pushing for more liquor licenses, the rate of violation isn't going to go down. Up, maybe.

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Newest diploma mill to call Wyoming home

It seems like just yesterday that we had Wyoming legislators taking junkets with Preston University degree sellers and coming back to Wyoming singing their praises. That fact that Preston had preyed on naive education seekers all over the world, students wanting to gain a degree from a U.S. university, didn't bother the legislators or Wyoming Department of Education staffers who took these expense-paid trips to exotic locales.

For years, scurrilous businesses flocked to Wyoming, particularly Cheyenne, and set up shop. Their "campuses" were small offices in basements of downtown buildings but pictured in their recruitment catalogs was green space to rival Ivy League campuses. Wyoming authorities turned a blind eye to the scam. When trips to Pakistan, UAE and Costa Rico are involved, those charged with keeping Wyoming somewhat pure took the side of the degree sellers from distant lands.

Accreditation by a U.S. Department of Education-recognized private firm is what separates the online businesses that provide a valuable education from those who are just selling pieces of paper and calling them degrees. Ask State Senator Bob Fecht to see his - you paid \$2,504 for a piece of paper, worthless in all aspects.

Finally, at the instigation of the Cheyenne Herald and as a result of the initiative of Trent Blankenship, enough state legislators were convinced that these scammers were a blight on Wyoming to pass legislation that finally caught up to almost every other state in the United States.

The crooks would have to gain accreditation within five years, and make application much sooner, or get the hell out of Dodge. The junketeers were disappointed. Preston University, which had pledged undying love and loyalty to the Wyoming legislators, immediately packed their bags and relocated to Birmingham, Alabama where they can operate without the need for accreditation. or legitimacy.

A WDOE employee's photo, arms wrapped around one of the scammers, appeared in that outfit's recruitment catalog. He also helped another scammer set up shop by using a mail delivery box on Dell Range. The same location was recently used by the latest illegitimate "educational institution" hoping to troll unsuspecting pigeons from around the world - with a Cheyenne, Wyoming return address. Their "campus" is a delivery box in the UPS Store and their phone no. is the fax no. for the UPS Store. Who caught them for the WDOE? Surely not WDOE.