

## Microchips help return lost animals to their owners

Statistics show that one in four pets will be lost sometime during their lifetime. Of those pets that become lost, many of them are never found again by their owners. How can you assure that your beloved family member is reunited with you if it gets lost? The best answer is to make sure that it is wearing tags and is microchipped.

A microchip is a tiny identification device that is implanted beneath the skin of your pet. Each chip contains a unique identification number. When a pet is found, it can be scanned at an animal shelter or veterinary clinic.

"Last month, Animal Control returned 16 lost animals to their owners because those animals were microchipped. Our Animal Control officers would rather drive stray cats and dogs back home to their loving families instead of bringing them to the shelter," said Michelle Hazzard, spokesperson for the Cheyenne Animal Shelter.

"We are encouraging pet owners to check that their information is up-to-date with the microchip company so that if their animal gets lost, it can be returned. If you need help finding your animal's microchip number or the phone number to update your information, give the Shelter a call—we're happy to help," continued Hazzard.

For more information about microchipping, call the Animal Shelter at 632-6655.

**Cheyenne Herald note: Owners would still be issued a citation for an animal at large and must pay the usual fines assessed to that violation.**

## Mark Gordon's campaign

In a move that probably forever changed the political campaign spending landscape in Wyoming, Mark Gordon's pursuit of Wyoming's lone seat in the U.S. House set a benchmark of personal contributions and total spending that may never be duplicated and will require candidates to weigh whether they have the resources to compete with a wealthy candidate, however marginally qualified that wealthy candidate may be.

The Cheyenne Herald disclosed that Mark Gordon had made several campaign contributions to Democrats over the years and had become a serious Republican donor only after he decided to seek the Republican nomination for the U.S. House seat being vacated by Barbara Cubin.

Gordon spent (2008 primary only) \$1,385,645.72. He put \$1,167,012 of his own money into his campaign. He lost.

## Uninsured motorists

The Cheyenne Herald was recently contacted by a local resident who has twice been the victim of an uninsured motorists. We have frequently been told about people who will have insurance written on a vehicle long enough to get plates or stickers, then cancel the coverage.

Why hasn't the State put an end to this abuse? Why hasn't the State focused on correcting this correctable problem? Other states have. And it's a simple correction. In fact, we once tried.

The State of Wyoming made a half-hearted attempt at that correction in the 2005 legislative session. HB169 was filed by the Joint Transportation, Highways and Military Affairs Interim Committee. Most often, when a bill is filed by a committee as opposed to individual legislators, that greases the skids.

But not this time.

First, some explanation about the problem. When a motorist without insurance has an accident with another vehicle, there are few options. Presumably the person doesn't have insurance because of the cost - even though it's a state law to be so insured - so they cannot pay for the damage out of their own pocket. A good share of the time, it's safe to surmise, that same person has other problems. Like driving while high or intoxicated, expired registration, hit and run, etc.

Unlike many other states, Wyoming does not protect the innocent motorists who end up in accidents with an uninsured. It is obvious Wyoming legislators have recognized the problem. Why hasn't our Legislature taken action to minimize it?

Remember the battle about medical malpractice caps a few years back? Insurance companies cleverly pitted doctors against residents, while avoiding the line of fire themselves. They lost on that one but have won in most other states. They effectively planted the notion that, without caps on malpractice awards, Wyoming would have no doctors, hence no available health care. That was a lie. Plain and simple, that was a lie. Note the new surgical hospital built in Casper and plans for a new hospital in Cheyenne.

Anyway, a reader called about this issue and we learned that, in one instance with an uninsured driver, the family car was "totalled" in a hit and run. At Court, the guy, who had violated more laws by driving that night, was not ordered to pay restitution because the municipal court "judge" said he did not have the authority to order it. In the second case, an impatient driver tried to pass on the right at a stop sign and, even at rolling speed, caused considerable damage to her car. This guy did have assets but claimed he didn't. Her insurance company once again had to pay for repairs.

HB169 was almost certainly a reflection of lobbyists influence. What is required elsewhere is simple. Auto insurance coverage that is cancelled, terminated or lapses requires notice from the insurer to the licensing authority. Action can then be taken to remove those vehicles from the highway. In some cases, the motorist just changed insurers and that can be reflected in the records. Where they are driving uninsured, the plates can be confiscated. But it would be more work for insurers and they don't want that. And legislators won't take them on.

## Lummis' first votes

**Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009 - Vote Passed (247-171, 15 Not Voting)**

The House passed this employee pay discrimination measure that would allow courts to consider each new paycheck as a new instance of discrimination.

**Rep. Cynthia Lummis voted NO**

**Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2009 - Vote Passed (290-135, 8 Not Voting)**

The House gave final approval to this bill that reauthorizes and expands the State Children's Health Insurance Program.

**Rep. Cynthia Lummis voted NO**

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