

"ANYTHING TWO PEOPLE KNOW IS NOT A SECRET."

FREE

THE LEGENDARY
CHEYENNE

HERALD

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DUI arrests are up 50% and the Cheyenne mayor and police chief want more liquor licenses?

What part of "the more liquor a driver consumes, the more likely he/she is to drive drunk and the more availability of liquor, the more likely more people are to partake of it" don't officials of the City of Cheyenne understand?

The mayor and police chief want more liquor licenses in general and the new mayor wants more liquor licenses for the downtown specifically.

Do they ever wake up in the morning, see themselves in the mirror, and wonder what the hell they're pushing?

At a time when seemingly popular brewpubs, pizza/wing restaurants and restaurant chain operations in Cheyenne are closing and several others are struggling, these guys think more liquor licenses is any sort of solution to the economic downturn in the city? Please. Get a grip!

The last time the City was allowed an additional retail liquor license because of presumed population growth, they gave it to a downtown brewpub that didn't make it instead of to Taco John's which wanted to develop another prototype restaurant. Peppercorn's was not to be.

There is no shortage of liquor licenses - either in downtown or around town. An unlimited number of restaurant liquor licenses is available and that's all a restaurant needs. How many package liquor stores are needed downtown or in other parts of Cheyenne? How far should a patron be willing to travel for a drink, 12-pack of beer, bottle of wine or booze?

How many places to you think there are in the "core" area of downtown where you can buy a drink - an alcoholic drink? Consider the core to be the same as the DDA boundaries.

How many and how near?

Let's list 'em: On the southside alone - Lamp Lounge, Los Amigos, Keg 'n Kork. Just steps away is Casa de Trujillo.

North of the viaduct: Shadows (in the depot), The Albany, Hacienda Guadalajara, The Green Door, The Capital Grille (Plains Hotel), The Crown Bar,

Eagle's Club, Elk's Club, Dynasty Cafe, The New Mayflower Seafood Restaurant, Pizzeria Venti, Sanford's, Lucky 7, Game On Sports Bar, Twin Dragon and Golden House Restaurant. Just outside the DDA boundary downtown is Scooter's.

How many places to you think there are in the "core" area of downtown where you can buy a drink - an alcoholic drink? How many and how near? Let's list 'em: On the southside alone - Lamp Lounge, Los Amigos, Keg 'n Kork. Just steps away is Casa de Trujillo. North of the viaduct: Shadows (in the depot), The Albany, Hacienda Guadalajara, The Green Door, The Capital Grille (Plains Hotel), The Crown Bar, Eagle's Club, Dynasty Cafe, The Elk's, The New Mayflower, Pizzeria Venti, Sanford's, Lucky 7, Nagle-Warren, Game On Sports Bar, Twin Dragon and Golden House Restaurant. Just outside this DDA boundary is Scooter's. That's 22. In the DDA area. How many is enough? 122? How many? The City of Cheyenne has 71 "utilized" liquor licenses in all.

Granted, two membership clubs but imbibers can get just as drunk at a fraternal organization's bar, golf club or "resort" and then drive drunk as they can anywhere else that sells alcohol.

It would be a simple matter for Good Friends, Village Inn, El Charrito's, Mondello's Downtown, and the replacement to One West (if and when that happens) to acquire a restaurant liquor license and add five to the mix

There are now two parked retail liquor licenses, one (the former Outlaw Saloon) is to be reactivated with a package liquor store on the eastside and the other a speciality license held by C.B. & Potts.

The City has been authorized to issue five "bar and grill" liquor licenses and only four of them have been issued (Olive Garden, Guadalajara's on 16th, Jackson's and On The Border, which is coming). One remains available to the next qualified applicant. Yet, the mayor and police chief are trying to convince the Legislature that Cheyenne should get two more of that contrived license. Restaurant liquor licenses are in unlimited supply and unless the operation wants a bar for patrons to linger and drink in greater quantity, they can serve all the liquor a person can drink at a table - with a restaurant liquor license.

There are also resort liquor licenses, brew pub liquor licenses - they've tried to find every possible means to issue more and more and more liquor licenses. As has been written here in the past, a new class for "daycare" liquor licenses may be next. How about "funeral home" licenses.

They have spacious viewing rooms which are also used for funeral services and mourners are grieving and might be receptive to a cocktail or two before heading to the cemetery. How about the churches? There are several downtown.

Traditionally, the most devout parishioners are among the heaviest drinkers in any community.

Over the past few years, there have been downtown businesses that have sold and transferred their retail liquor licenses out of the downtown. Fix 'n Mix Liquor Store, The Whipple House and Scooter's come to mind.

It's amazing how little responsible people understand about the issuance of liquor licenses. Reed Eckhardt despises existing liquor store owners and his editorials are always about having an unlimited number of retail liquor licenses. He presents it as a free enterprise issue but it's all about retaliation for the liquor dealers pulling their advertising from the pages of the WT-E almost as soon as Reed was hired. You will notice that liquor stores advertise extensively and exclusively in Trader's Shoppers Guide. It isn't because of the comparative rates, it is because the WT-E crossed those liquor retailers about eight years ago and now the WT-E doesn't see any of their advertising.

Reed would like his few remaining readers and the visiting legislators to think his stand about unlimited retail liquor licenses is about competition. It isn't. It is solely about punishing those who have spent all of their advertising dollars in another medium for nearly a decade. It is all about getting even. To further illustrate just how little Eckhardt knows about the issuance of liquor licenses in Wyoming, his recent column asks: "Why shouldn't anyone who has no criminal record, has broken no laws related to alcohol sales ...?"

He comes across as blissfully unaware that Cheyenne has an owner of a retail liquor license and has four (4) felony convictions. The guy actually is on record as having ownership in two (2) retail liquor licenses - one in the city and one in the county. There is no prohibition of a serial felon holding a liquor license. Reed knows about the local guy because he's read about him on these pages several times in the past. No one has responsibility to insure serial criminals do not own a liquor license in Wyoming. Not the liquor commission. Not city or county clerks. Not law enforcement. No one.

It is incredible that one who has the job of publishing an escalating incidence of drunk driving violations and convictions, and even devotes considerable space in his newspaper for voyeurs to keep tabs on drunk drivers, would encourage still more liquor licenses. Eckhardt even suggests that the wholesaling of liquor should be opened up beyond the Liquor Commission. Doesn't he realize that those sales would go to Colorado wholesalers who could sell for less, further widening our imbalance of trade with Colorado?

The manner of issuing and renewing liquor licenses is well-established. There is some hand-wringing about the chain restaurants who might, REPEAT, might, come to Cheyenne if they could but buy a retail liquor license for \$1,500.00. How many of those who considered Cheyenne in the past five years now are relieved that they didn't join the overcrowding that is taking a toll on those who are open here? How many of them are grateful for not being able to take injurious action against themselves? As a country song said, "sometimes the best thing you did is the thing you didn't do," or something similar.

So much about this is selfish. The daily newspaper wants more liquor licenses to punish those already holding one. The police chief did not oppose repeated renewals of a liquor license held by a multiple felon because that bar was using off-duty officers for security and that supplemented officer's pay he could not get raised on his own. If the only way we can revitalize our downtown is to sell more liquor down there, maybe it should stay as it is and has been since 2001.

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