

Commissioned cops?

One of the Ward 1 city council candidates has proposed that traffic fines be raised so that the additional revenue can be used to increase police department pay.

This idea fits hand in glove with the city's harebrained trash-to-gold proposals.

To take the idea from the ridiculous to the sublime, the proposal to use revenue from wrongdoing to reward those catching the miscreants could be extended to the downtown meter monitors. Actually, there are no meters anymore, but the scooter riders write tickets for overstaying time limits at the curbs.

By the way, what happened to the spy computers the city was supposed to put into service a couple years back so downtown employees could not park within a nine square block perimeter once they'd used their daily quota of two hours of free parking?

Back to the "cops on commission" idea.

When Jack Spiker ran for mayor in 2000, one of the promises he made was to institute a reward system for city employees who came up with cost-cutting measures. Maybe the idea of having fine money going to the ones writing the tickets is in that vein.

Let's put the patrol officers on commission. Set a base for dollars of fines each have to generate during each shift. For every dollar over that quota, the revenue would be allocated to all police department employees, whether on patrol or behind a desk, on a pro rata basis.

Money earned by off-duty officers would be thrown into the kitty too - except for an hourly wage level equal to their city pay. Cash payments from the Outlaw Saloon would, some of it anyway, find its way into the pot to be divided among all employees within the department.

So far, so good.

Now comes the part that the police department might not support: For every dollar below the quota that a patrol officer generates on his/her shift, one dollar will be deducted from the kitty. That way, there will be no sloughing off.

Off-duty officers could volunteer to be on the prowl, too. The more fine money generated (bail and bond money would also have to be divvied up for the pot), the higher wages all department personnel could receive.

If the recently departed fire chief could ignore his budget limits for payroll and overtime, why can't the police chief? Why do they have to produce their own revenue to get warranted raises?

How would the muni judges view the cops on this crusade - this payroll-enhancing scheme? Might they think officers were issuing undeserved tickets because not only their own wage level but everyone's in the department would depend on ticket revenue they generated?

Judy Case, in a statement released on July 13th, rightfully referred to the plan as creating "bounty hunters." Cheyenne would have its own Duane "Dog" Chapman. I wonder if the city would also get a woman like Dog's woman?

Public perception and respect for the local police department has taken some hits - with the chief using public funds to buy a bogus and worthless mail order master's degree; with off-duty police officers involvement in cash-under-the-table roles at the Outlaw Saloon and others; and by officer shootings. Whether ruled justified or not, residents aren't crazy about the notion that there are getting to be regular exchanges of gunfire between law enforcement and civilians.

There was abundant money in the city coffers when this administration came into office in 2001. This group has knowingly and willfully spent about \$40 million in "excess" money available to the city. The reserves have been spent down to an inadequate level; \$17+ million in excess 5th penny sales tax collection has been spent; and one-time money received from the State is spent as fast as the deposit tickets are written. Almost no interest or investment income is earned because the principal has been spent.

"To Serve and Protect" will become "To Surveil and Pursue." Residents are encouraged to snitch on each other already. Will this bring an added dimension?

Police Chief Next to Leave?
Just asking. Heard rumors.

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Albin Day

The way things used to be. And should still be.



Albin Day 2006.

When you journey to Laramie County's tiny town northeast of Cheyenne, you don't travel backward - you travel to a time many of us wish we hadn't left.

When the battle was underway to try to save the best school in the county, I was told that Albin had been settled by, as I recall, five families. Those surnames are still familiar out there today.

It was an overcast day, July 8th, when my wife and I attended the latest Albin Day. Part of the purpose for our going was to represent candidate Bill Winney, for whom I serve as campaign manager.

I am not a campaigner. I don't relish the introductions, offering material the other person doesn't readily accept, and talking to voters who have absolutely no idea who is running for what in the next election. But I gladly went to Albin that day. I consider Albin my adopted hometown.

One of the entries in the kid's parade is shown above. It is an ATV-powered cover wagon. It was the "Albin or Bust" sign that struck me. If it weren't so far from where my work is done, I'd be tempted to take up that challenge.

This is an election year, so candidates of all stripes were in the parade - most tossing candy to eager kids along the curb. In addition to my representing Bill Winney, Mary Ann Collins had a surrogate there and Rita Meyer was there herself in her incredible-looking car. Five county commissioner candidates made the trip, at least one candidate for corner (Steve Spier, who grew up in Pine Bluffs), and the four women in county offices shared a ride, even though three of them are running unopposed. Miss Frontier and her Lady in Waiting met everyone - they are well schooled in the art.

Lunch was a BBQ sandwich, heaped high with meat, beans, cole slaw, chips and a drink. For \$3.00. Only \$3.00!

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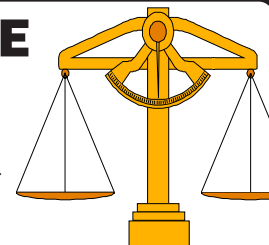
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