

## Hospital land at Nob Hill

Acquisition of the land wanted for the possible construction of a new hospital west of the city has moved at mach speed.

Only one parcel remains to be secured.

The use of the words "eminent domain" and the word "condemnation" certainly accelerate the process.

While hospital officials won't commit to any specific plan of construction - or even if a new hospital will ever be built out there - their acquisition agent used the pressure of an immediate need to push away any reluctance. Residents of Cheyenne or Laramie County now know that there is a ruthless power when it comes to private holdings wanted by a body with the right of eminent domain at its disposal.

If residents could have believed the hospital's agent, heavy equipment would have been on the properties, moving dirt, demolishing their houses, and construction crews would have been close behind.

Even now, when hospital officials who should know say there is not even a proposed date for construction to begin, property owners who have bowed to the unbearable pressure to sell their land have until March of 2008 to live in the houses they've sold to the hospital.

Not quite everyone knuckled under to the pressure and intimidation. Two holdouts challenged the representations of urgency and power. One recently accepted a greatly increased offer and has sold his property to the hospital. The other, a woman naturally, has not agreed to sell.

She does not currently live in Cheyenne but she knows that when she comes back, which she plans to do in the future - when the right teaching position becomes available in the school district - her replacement cost for a house will far exceed what the hospital agent says her semi-rural property is worth.

Nob Hill near Cheyenne is not Nob Hill in San Francisco, California. Houses are old and neighbors are many from the same family. Some are generational - having parents and grandparents living at Nob Hill before them, or with them. But all in the area now realize that the only safe subdivisions are north of the city. If you live in Bar X, Mustang Ridge, the Pointe, etc., you have no risk of your land and home being seized for "growth."

Does anyone believe that if the hospital decided that the best location for their new facility would be the north end of Western Hills, they would have moved toward the use of eminent domain to seize that property? Of course not.

This is the third area to face confiscation (at a price, of course) and all have been in lower income areas of the city. Houses were taken for the library. Houses have been taken for the Norris Viaduct and connecting streets. Now houses have been taken for a hospital which may never be built. There are those who would defend the confiscation and argue that the property was not "taken" - that it was purchased. When you have a property owner who does not want to sell but chooses to because he believes he can't fight "City Hall," the property is "taken." Period.

### "Meth house" owner contact

Whoever has tried to contact the owner of the house at 211 E. 3rd Avenue by sending a certified letter to his home address in Boulder, should change tactic. The guy lives "in the country" by Boulder and works in Denver. He is not at home to sign for mail during the day. A letter sent regular mail will reach him. One requiring a signature is unlikely to. He has never tried to avoid contact or communications from up here so whoever is attempting the contact should have no problem. Whether it's the city attorney, chief building official, police chief, mayor - whomever - if you can't reach the guy, call the Cheyenne Herald. We'll put you in touch. It's really very simple. Really.

### 2007 Schedule - Cheyenne Herald

Now published on Thursday

Thursday, November 29

Thursday, December 13

Thursday, December 27

### SANDWICH SPECIAL

Two Chili Dogs w/cheese

Large Drink

Large Fries

**Burger Inn**  
Pershing & Snyder

**\$5.99**  
plus tax

**MAXIE MONDAYS - \$1.25**

A press release from Carbon County School District No. 1 regarding the Wyoming AP calling its high school a dropout factory

## DOES "DROPOUT FACTORY" LABEL DAMAGE SCHOOLS?

Rawlins High School students and teachers are concerned that an Associated Press article labeling the school a dropout factory has unfairly damaged the school's reputation.

Actual data from the Wyoming State Dept. of Education for the RHS class of 2006 shows a graduation rate of 81.45%—which meets the minimum 80% graduation rate required by the state of Wyoming. The AP article claims a dropout rate of more than 40% for RHS.

How can there be such a large discrepancy between the two figures? The John Hopkins University study used for the AP article simply counts the number of 9<sup>th</sup> grade students at a school and then counts the number of graduates four years later. The study does not account for students whose families move or students involved in the district's Cooperative High School. Clearly, the Hopkins study penalizes schools located in areas with a transient workforce.

At Rawlins High School, the class of 2006 had 140 students during 9<sup>th</sup> grade and 72 at graduation. Eleven of those students were true dropouts. Fifty-seven of the "missing" students moved out of the area or transferred to another school.

While RHS principal Shane Ogden stressed that even one dropout is too many, he felt that the inaccurate picture of the school presented in the AP article could damage the morale of students and teachers. Once a school has a negative image, it is hard to overcome the perception and make the community aware of the school's actual performance.

*Editor's Note: An attempt was made to get similar information from Fremont County School District No. 14 (Wyoming Indian) data but it was not received by presstime.*

## Alvord on the move again

It seems like just yesterday, Cheyenne's ambulance service raider left town to take a similar job in a much smaller market.

Almost as soon as he unloaded the U-Haul in El Mirage, Arizona, he was firing off his resume to cities hither and yon.

On May 2, 2006 the Cheyenne Herald reported that Alvord had applied to be fire chief at Boca Raton, Florida, a city with nearly 200 uniformed firefighters. He was a finalist down there but did not get the job. He was known to be seeking employment in other cities as well as the time.

According to news reports out of El Mirage, headlined: "El Mirage fire chief resigns suddenly" and he "handed in his resignation this morning" (October 24, 2007), telling the City Manager that he was "taking some time off and pursuing family interests."

Evidently, his family interests included moving to Vail, Colorado because at the same time he was resigning, he was making application to become Vail fire chief.

In fact, on October 29, 2007, the Town of Vail announced fire finalists for their position of fire chief and further announced that interviews would be conducted that week. It seems that at the very time he was telling El Mirage that he was going to take some time off, he had a bus ticket to Vail, Colorado to apply for their job.

El Mirage is barely more than a bucket brigade and Vail has a slightly bigger force with a large operating budget. There are 21 paid staffers and 12 student-resident firefighters (whatever they are) in Vail. The operating name there is Fire / Emergency - presumably with the emphasis on "emergency" during ski season.

They were offering "up to \$105,000" for a new fire chief.

Scott Alvord was one of five finalists for the Vail job but lost out to a guy who had worked for the Loveland, Colorado fire department for about 25 years, the last four as chief. He made a quick move to Vermont.

These guys don't have time to unpack before they're on the move again. According to the El Mirage press release, the city spokesman thanked Alvord for "his service in the last 17 months."

The timetable then reveals that the former Cheyenne fire chief was on the job in Arizona for about a month before he was looking for another one.

That may not be a record but it's a helluva average. Alvord can't even afford to order those return address labels in every Sunday newspaper insert. After his attempted hostile takeover of Cheyenne's private ambulance provider, it hard to tell what he can do for an encore. At least it's not for Cheyenne anymore.