

Trash to pellets next?

The first magic elixir was to be trash-to-ethanol. That fraud enlisted a reputable local man to front this undoable project and after being exposed by the Cheyenne Herald, it tumbled faster than Mary Lou Retton. That operation, Renewable Utility Development Corp. also bragged on a new website that they were going to lease all of the Belvoir Ranch and put up wind turbines enough to supply electricity for all of the Free World. Didn't happen.

Following that disappearing act was the trash-to-diesel snake oil salesman. Gullible city officials watched as he dumped a trash can of garbage in one end of a belching, heaving, noisy machine and pure diesel came out the spigot. If he had loaded it, maple syrup could have come out the reservoir. The felon was exposed by the efforts of the WT-E and the Cheyenne Herald once again.

Then word came around that the city employees who were so desperate to find some solution for municipal trash disposal had now found another start-up firm that would convert the trash to pellets. Coincidentally, the same guy who was employed by the City earlier and was convinced that the trash-to-diesel scammer was legit, is with this company now.

How convenient!

Those who know something about the subject have tried to warn the City via a letter to the editor at the Tribune-Eagle.

Once again protective of their friends at 2101 O'Neil, the WT-E has refused to print the letter. The letter points out that "the per ton cost to make these pellets exceeds the cost per ton for low sulfur coal which is abundant in Wyoming." It also pointed out that "the fuel is too dirty to burn in low sulfur power plants so the only customers are high sulfur or 'dirty plants' which are being phased out or retrofitted to meet clean air requirements."

The future doesn't look too bright for the pellet peddlers, does it?

That letter warned: "The out-of-state company needs Cheyenne to be the guinea pig for this technology and has made a presentation for a 20 year contract which has outlined many money grabbing details in it. For instance, the pellet making company will get Cheyenne's carbon credits to sell on the open market. Another part of the deal is the City of Cheyenne has to build them a million dollar building to store these magical machines and to manufacture the pellets."

There may have been a time in the past when residents would think the City was not so incompetent and desperate so as to fall for another snake oil charmer. Don't bet on it. It's like there's a chain of billboards surrounding Cheyenne from every direction that says simply: "Saps ahead!" These schemers pull into town in their leased SUVs and celebrate like frat boys when the City accepts another

harebrained proposal from a fly-by-night schemer from out of town.

We'd all like to believe Cheyenne could be the choice for a legitimate introductory method to dispose of municipal trash. And, it could happen. But it hasn't with all of the goofies to make presentations. The mayor promised a Washington newspaper that the City would do a better job on due diligence on these clowns in the future. But he is more impressed with spiral-bound presentations than he is skeptical about any proposal's potential.

Now it's not just Cheyenne to be plucked. There is Southeast Wyoming Regional Landfill Group (SWRLG) targeted as the next pigeon. Who makes up this group? Evidently, "Eastern Laramie County Solid Waste Disposal District, Cheyenne, Laramie and Rock River." Thank God Rock River is included. They give the group standing and legitimacy.

Interestingly, principals of these groups picking the pockets of Cheyenne taxpayers are usually former City employees. Hmmmmmm. What's going on here?

Two groups made proposals to the City - for the purpose of solving this nagging problem of what to do with a couple hundred tons of trash a day. Incredibly, the two groups have former city employees as their "project managers" and their bids for the job are within \$10,000 of each other. It is interesting to note that one of the firm's - Terracon - fervently supported a landfill on the Belvoir. It seems that a new \$299,920 changed their thinking.

Wonder why there are four places involved in this group? Because if there are three or more, the State will pay up to 90% of the cost of developing a plan to dispose of municipal trash. The language in these proposals is often laughable. "As a cost savings measure, Terracon may chose (sic) to conduct such meetings on a regional basis." In other words, in one place. And, "our team will issue up to 4 press releases throughout the project." The other firm, Trihydro of Laramie stated: "Trihydro's strategy is expected to translate into substantial cost savings for the SWRLG members." Expected to. Their cost estimate was \$289,893. No member of the public is invited by either firm.

Where's the beef?

Why is there no fairgrounds on the 6th Penny ballot?

When the commissioners were trying to beat back objections from the WT-E to their buying property east of Cheyenne which is now referred to as the Archer Property, they presented major uses of the land as being for a new fairgrounds and the privately-funded shooting range and moto-cross track.

After a little time has passed and local resident's memories have dimmed a bit, the only one of the three still on track is the moto-cross track. Those folks put their project together and even held competitive racing out there this summer.

But the shooting range has morphed into what is being called a Laramie County Recreation Board project in support of a publicly-funded shooting range.

That will stand or fall on its own merits if it appears on a 6th penny ballot next May.

But what became of plans for a new fairgrounds? Why renege on that commitment to residents? Why not let voters give it a thumbs up or thumbs down as a stand-alone item on the crowded and expensive ballot being formulated now?

Why have private interest projects like a shooting range and the Christensen Overpass project been advanced and a county fairgrounds not even considered? Has time dulled the memories of those county commissioners who favored such a project? Or is it because there is no

election facing any commissioner?

To undertake a major project like a new fairgrounds when it would not require the displacement of residents would be pretty unique around here anymore. Maybe it was ignored because no one was going to have their houses taken from them to accomplish the project.

A new fairgrounds has always been a stated use of the Archer property - just as the shooting range was to be privately funded. On the latter, at the time a lease agreement was approved for use of land for a shooting range at Archer (at \$1,468 per year for five years), a reason stated for needing the lease was to raise money for the shooting range.

Minutes reflect: "Chairman Ketcham asked Mr. Smith to outline the future plans (of the shooting range). Mr. Smith stated that until a signed lease was in hand, fund raising efforts could not begin. However, if the lease is approved today, those efforts will begin and will be put first toward the cost of fencing and it will be at least three years before implementation of the master plan could proceed." A year and a half ago, it was reported: "The motorcycle club hopes to make a track operational this year, but shooting park members say they will need at least 18 months to raise the \$3.5 million needed to start building the shooting range." This is a private project. Fund the fairgrounds - let the voters decide.

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