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Former Wyoming State Superintendent of Public Instruction deeply involved with one of the nation's major degree sellers!

Operating as Kennedy-Western University for years, this California-formed outfit sold countless degrees that had limited use or value to recipients.

They, like so many others fellow travelers, moved their operation to Wyoming because this state had no meaningful laws prohibiting degree sellers from playing their trade on innocent victims.

The unaccredited "institutions of higher learning" have a thousand names but all have the same purpose. That purpose is to sell virtually worthless pieces of paper to willing but naive buyers. Some provide what may appear to be minimal "education" but none wanted to comply with requirements placed on legitimate distance learning institutions. They do not want to, or cannot, become accredited.

Kennedy-Western was among the largest of them all. Highly profitable, Kennedy-Western sold thousands of "degrees" to unsuspecting "students" around the world. Finding a safe haven in a basement office in Cheyenne, the money rolled in. They could not even sell their degrees in California, the state they claimed as their headquarters until December, 2007.

When the State of Wyoming passed a law requiring degree and diploma peddlers to gain accreditation or cease operating from Wyoming, at the instigation of the Cheyenne Herald, all other unaccredited degree sellers except KWU fled the state. Most of them had professed that what they were doing was legitimate and the State should ignore the fact that many businesses and government entities would not accept their "degrees" for employment, advancement or pay purposes.

Kennedy-Western University changed its name to Warren National University and, to its credit, has applied for accreditation. The process is slow and the basement operation in the old J.C. Penney Building in downtown Cheyenne has changed its

operation while it slogs through the accreditation challenges.

It has suspended new admissions.

To add legitimacy and give a "home-town" flavor as it seeks accreditation, local well-known people were added to the board of directors of Warren National University. Judy Catchpole, Wyoming State Superintendent of Public Instruction from 1995-2003 is on the board of directors of both Warren National University *and* its parent, L3, Inc. On both listing of these boards, Catchpole is proudly listed as a former Wyoming State Superintendent.

Why would a professional educator want to be linked to one of the most notorious degree sellers in the country? And, why would those organizations want a person inexperienced in the business world to be a board member?

Well, Judy Catchpole was one of 13 educators who received the 2007 John Vaughn Excellence in Education Award from the **North Central Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement**. Why was she recognized so long after her tenure as State Superintendent had ended? What had she done later?

Interestingly, the press release that announced her award also stated that "she is the **Public Representative on the Wyoming NCA State Committee**."

WNU writes that "**The Higher Learning Commission of North Central Association of Colleges and Schools**" will decide whether WNU receives accreditation.

Any further questions as to why Warren National University wanted Catchpole on its board and also has her as a board member of the parent organization?

By the way, if Warren National receives accreditation, degrees sold by Kennedy-Western will still be unaccredited.

For more on Warren National University, go to their website: <http://www.wnuedu.com/>

How many residents in Cheyenne live in houses that do not have a certificate of occupancy?

Previous inquiries to the City's Development Office have shown that the department doesn't have a procedure to insure temporary certificates of occupancy are remedied or extended before expiration.

At least two different subdivisions in two distant areas of Cheyenne have multiple residences occupied without certificates of occupancy. The total number of residential units occupied in these subdivisions without certificates of occupancy number more than two dozen.

How many such units are there in total in Cheyenne? Fifty? A hundred? More?

A review of the file for a business operation on Ridge Rd. a year ago evidenced that that business did not clear a temporary certificate of occupancy for over three years after it was issued. Typically, ninety days is allowed for deficiencies to be corrected. The problem is that there is no reliable follow-up mechanism and that the builder's "honor system" is not working.

Lacking a certificate of occupancy does not necessarily mean a house is unsafe for habitation. It probably seldom means that. In fact, a temporary certificate of occupancy usually does not have anything to do with the interior of a house. But it can and are not to be issued open ended. The TCO's have an expiration date.

In response to homeowners demanding a builder correct the deficiencies cited on the temporary certificate of occupancy, City officials threaten the property owner.

They are told if they push for the corrections, they may be forced to move out of their houses until a tardy builder makes the corrections they've sometimes had a year, two years, or longer, to make.

In the haste to get more and more houses built and occupied, rules have been ignored and/or bent. One of the worst violations involves drainage. How many of the new subdivisions have actually solved drainage problems is anyone's guess. A common complaint around town has been that new development, much of the new construction, has created untenable and uncorrected drainage problems.

Just as no solutions have been found to deal with another flood such as the one of 1985, no solutions have been found for flooding as the result of new construction, either. When surfaces are "skinned" of vegetation, new drainage issues develop and often neighbors that were high and dry for decades become flooded. It isn't just water sent their way. Silt, soil and mud creates a huge mess.

At this time, there are about 25 residential units that have been brought to the attention of the Cheyenne Herald because long overdue certificates of occupancy have not been earned by builders. Obviously, there are more. A review of records at the Development Office will begin and a more accurate number of such units will be provided in the future. How many businesses are operating without certificates of occupancy? That is an answer we will seek. Stay tuned.

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