

## Power to the people

**Cheyenne Light and High West Energy disagree on which should provide electricity to new developments on former county (rural) land**

As land more and more distant from the boundaries of the city finds ways to get annexed and residential development in subdivisions move forward, a formal decision must be made on which of the local electric companies will serve those addresses.

At the present time, only Cheyenne Light, Fuel and Power Co. holds a franchise with the City of Cheyenne. But that franchise is non-exclusive and High West Energy has made a franchise application.

Until such time as High West is granted a franchise, the rural electric co-op cannot compete in rural city areas and provide electricity to city residents.

But they already do.

Rick Kaysen of Cheyenne Light admits that his company does not have a "right" to serve these new faraway city subdivisions. He says they have a responsibility to do so as the city expands.

But the Herald has been told that has not always been the case. There is at least one newly annexed parcel of land for which the electricity has been provided by High West Energy and still is. There may be more.

What this comes down to is similar to what created the rural electric co-ops in the first place. Density = profitability.

Seventy years ago, most American farms did not have electricity. In the early 1930's, electricity was generally only enjoyed by city residents or those with their own generators. Power companies did not think it would be profitable to run lines on poles they'd have to erect - far into the rural areas with limited users.

Thurman King is a longtime Laramie County resident. He will be immediately adjacent to the new Dakota Crossings subdivision which has brought this issue to the fore. He has told the Herald that in 1947, Cheyenne Light approached him about whether he'd like to have electricity at his place. He said he would. He was told it would require three poles, for which he'd have to pay \$150.00 each, and then he'd have to guarantee Cheyenne Light a monthly usage of \$50.00. He could not handle that cost or justify them. Shortly after, REA came to him with the same question. They strung the line at their expense and hooked him up. His first month's billing was \$2.00, he said.

The rural electric co-ops are not always price competitive. According to their Cheyenne attorney Hank Bailey, they are now. He said that the attorney representing Cheyenne Light admitted that, on a fair comparison, High West is cheaper.

Why hasn't this issue been more fully publicly debated? Why haven't the residents been invited to weigh in on which of the reputable electricity suppliers should be awarded rights to be the electric supplier to rural (now annexed to the city, however) subdivisions?

It is possible for the City to grant two or more franchises for the supply of electricity to its residents. State statute allows it and the contract with Cheyenne Light is for a non-exclusive grant. Has it been done in Wyoming? Yes. Laramie has granted two franchises.

It seems fair that each company should make a proposal to the city governing body and the deliberations be public.

For the mayor and his voting bloc to "grant" that right to Cheyenne Light without the appropriate level of public discussion is unwarranted. Why would they do that? Perhaps to curry favor with Cheyenne Light, who they recently said was incapable of managing their own affairs and asked the legislature to authorize a means by which the city could take over the operations of Cheyenne Light. That was a huge public relations disaster and Cheyenne Light probably hasn't forgotten the names they were called in debate. Will this mend fences?

Both of these companies are capable of providing the service. But whichever is granted future "rights" for new subdivisions that will surely come along in areas already served by High West Energy, the public should have a voice. Recent rate increases in the city might not bode well for Cheyenne Light right now. But no decision can be made in a vacuum.

## UW prez agrees with Herald's criticism of Fecht mail order degree

*Will he be willing to issue direct criticism of Fecht?*

As a committee of the Wyoming state legislature once again grapples with the fact that Wyoming has become a safe haven for unaccredited diploma mills, and city government in Cheyenne has even endorsed them as a valid use of public funds, an academician with credentials has publicly railed against them. Finally.

Reporting in the Casper Star-Tribune on Sunday, October 9th, W. Dale Nelson headed the article: **"Buchanan slams diploma mills."**

Without using Cheyenne police chief Bob Fecht's name, the criticism directed by current UW president Tom Buchanan could have named the chief's actions and named him as an offender.

Among the things Nelson reported that Buchanan blasted businesses like LaCrosse University, from where Bob Fecht bought his master's degree, as **"online universities with no faculty and no curriculum."**

He is quoted in the article by Nelson as also saying, **"There will always be people who want the credentials with a minimum of effort, and there will always be those who will provide them with a pretty parchment with ribbons in exchange for money."**

Further, **"There is a world of difference between getting a diploma and getting an education,"** he said. **"We don't honor a piece of parchment. We honor the work that went into it."**

**"We must not believe that getting a degree from any online university that hangs up a shingle is the same as getting an education. We have a responsibility to discriminate between greatness and mediocrity."**

**"A world of difference exists between legitimate public and private universities and the online charlatans who take your money for a worthless diploma."**

The distinction made at that address by the president of the state's only four-year university between his school and the degree sellers was right on target.

Issues of the Cheyenne Herald which have included stories about the Bob Fecht degree purchase and the support for it by the mayor and human resources director of the city will be forward to President Buchanan. He will be asked to offer his opinion on the propriety of using public money for such a degree and also to assess whether such a degree provides any public benefit to taxpayers.

He will also be asked to comment on Bob Fecht's statement that he worked harder on this degree from an unaccredited degree selling business from Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, than he did on his bachelor's degree from Southern Illinois University. Based on the other quotes from Buchanan's speech, Herald readers would be safe to assume that the head of a real university would take great offense if the ridicule were directed at the University of Wyoming instead of Southern Illinois University.

It will take more public pronouncements from professionals like UW and LCCC presidents to get the legislature to take seriously the lack of credibility in this mail order degrees (wherever they originate) and the damage to the state's reputation to serve as a magnet for degree and diploma sellers like those now in Wyoming to operate here, unregulated. The new state superintendent of schools will likely take a safe and silent posture and travel to Dubai and London as a perk.

### STAN HATHAWAY, A BIOGRAPHY

written by Torrington resident Sally Vanderpoel  
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*"Stan Hathaway is three years younger than I. Although our families homesteaded in the same community near the village of Huntley, Wyoming, Stan and I never attended the same school at the same time until I was a senior at the University of Wyoming and he was a freshman. Bobby [Hathaway] and Stan became our friends when Bobby came to teach at Huntley where my husband was the math teacher/principal in the high school. ..."*

Foreword excerpt ... by Sally Vanderpoel

STAN HATHAWAY, A BIOGRAPHY is available in Cheyenne at:  
**City News, and  
State Museum Gift Store, or  
Ask for it at your favorite bookseller**

Another great book from the author of

### Wrinklebelly

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Cover photo: Governor Stan Hathaway fly fishing on the North Laramie River  
Photo courtesy of Chuck Coon at Wyoming Travel and Tourism

