

Trash-to-Ethanol Waste-to-Energy

Wouldn't it be something if one or both of the methods of disposing of Cheyenne's municipal waste really can work? If either one does, it will be further examples of this city administration getting it wrong a second time - after they got it wrong the first time.

The Cheyenne Herald was recently contacted by a high school teacher in Middletown, New York. That is the home of the first trash-to-ethanol project to be semi-legitimate. While more than a decade had passed without the project reaching fruition, partially because the founder of the first company to propose construction died, new contact has been made and renewed promises have been made to construct an \$82 million plant.

The Middletown teacher wanted approval to link a local website having to do with the trash-to-ethanol debacle and other Middletown projects of concern to the Cheyenne Herald articles (our website) on the aborted project proposed for Cheyenne as related to theirs.

Readers will remember that the Herald exposed the principal of the first failed project to dispose of Cheyenne's municipal trash. The so-called head of that newly minted corporation - to be called Renewable Utility Development Corporation - out of Kansas City (Silver Spring), Missouri, had left the town of Mogadore, Ohio, holding the bag when he disappeared from their radar screen after making similar promises there to which he would later make in Cheyenne.

As he did in Cheyenne, the guy enlisted a local man with credentials to get his foot in the door. But who would build this test facility and from where would the funding come for construction and operations? Minor details to this City.

Once informed about what RUDC was, the City pulled away from the relationship. The outfit in Middletown is unrelated to Cheyenne's paramour but has proposed the same end product - ethanol from municipal trash.

After the Cheyenne Herald exposed J. C. Williams, a website was put up by his RUDC outfit. That website name is now for sale - see below. For weeks after Cheyenne pulled the rug out from under him, the website continued to proclaim that RUDC was not only going to build a plant to produce ethanol from local trash but it also was going to lease some to all of the Belvoir Ranch for an energy park.

The unproven trash-to-ethanol technology was the second publicly announced way the City was going to dispose of future municipal trash - and in the process become a dump for regional trash. The first was the acquisition of the Belvoir Ranch. In spite of its geology and distance from the City transfer station, the mayor and his minions were quivering with excitement when they told residents they were going to pay the full listing price for the 17,000 acres west of town. That excitement has cooled somewhat as they can't figure out even the first use for the land. Unless one considers using it for cheap grazing for a feedlot operation to be among the reasons to acquire it.

The third solution was announced with as much, or more, giddiness as the first two. Next, the City was going to convert municipal waste to diesel. A demonstration was performed and City officials were beside themselves with excitement once again. This time, the WT-E got to announce to the City (before the Herald could get it printed) that the principal of this outfit was an ex-con who had forgotten to share that tidbit with the mayor and his eye-watering group. Even when he 'fessed up, he lied about the outcome of his guest stint in an Austrian prison. And he forgot to mention a shorter stay as guest of a Washington state jail.

Now, he may have found a sap ... er, a customer. His company, Green Power, Inc., has announced they will build the \$82 million plant in Fife, Washington. Suffering from delusions of grandeur, the guy won't announce where his funding will come from 'cause the big oil guys will try to sabotage his success. Right.

Johnny's on his way out

Herald readers are familiar with the story of Johnny Lopez.

He was one of the last victims of the overzealousness of Natrona County District Attorney Kevin Meenan before Meenan himself was convicted of (pled guilty to) a felony(ies) for stealing money from his own children (stepchildren, that is).

Meenan **PLED** guilty to his misdeeds.

Johnny Lopez never did. He never confessed to committing any crime. He never confessed to committing any act that was consistent with the injury that caused the death of his good friend ("best friend") in Casper.

There was no testimony presented at either trial in which juries found Johnny guilty - first of second degree murder then of voluntary manslaughter - that he had struck his friend on the same side of the head the coroner and a paid (\$10,000+) witness from Colorado testified the injury had to have occurred to cause death.

The only trial testimony came from a guy who had an arrest warrant outstanding at the time of the first trial (for escape) and that warrant miraculously disappeared after his testimony. He was not arrested even though law enforcement had him available right in the courtroom.

In spite of that guy's sworn testimony that Johnny had struck his friend (the deceased) with an open hand to the side of the head, which no one else testified to, he said it was to the opposite side of the head to where the injury was sustained, according to the testimony of the local coroner and Colorado paid expert.

The opposite side of the head!

Depositions (not testimony) of others in different units of the same apartment complex at the time of the incident said that the state's star witness was not in the room when Johnny and his friend had an argument. Johnny's testimony - his consistent accounting of the incident - is

that he shoved an angry friend, who was trying to stand up from a sitting position on a couch, back to the couch with an open hand and he did it with his left hand, which, if his hand had slipped upward and made contact with the head, would have been to the right side of his friend.

Testimony from law enforcement was that, while Johnny had stated what happens was as above, he demonstrated for them that he had used his right hand, not his left. Presto! You have the injury on the correct side of the friend's head. But, alas, the tape recorder was not on when he revealed that contradiction.

The felon, Kevin Meenan, overcharged at the first trial and the jury bit. Witnesses who were anywhere near the scene that early morning were unreliable. They either weren't present in the room or were passed out from drinking. The jury convicted Johnny of second degree murder but the Wyoming Supreme Court reversed that and remanded for a trial on charges of voluntary manslaughter.

Testimony from the same people, who were not there or in the case of the one who testified he saw the "blow" and was then forgiven arrest on the escape charge (for his testimony?), gave testimony in conflict with what the expert witnesses testified to, but it led to a second conviction - of voluntary manslaughter.

Unsatisfied with a conviction with no confession, no honest firsthand witness, and no physical evidence, the prosecution decided, in what the public defender's office appropriately charged was a "vindictive prosecution," to seek an enhanced sentence as an habitual criminal. In Laramie County, serial criminals get violent felony charges reduced to misdemeanors so they do not face sentence enhancement. And walk.

After what the Herald has labeled an injustice to Johnny Lopez, and after most of the last decade in prison, he has been transferred to a re-entry facility in Casper. He should be released early next year.



RUDC


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