

The meth scourge - Ray and I talk

"The State Still Lacks a Planned and Coordinated Approach."

While that assessment might apply to several areas in state government, in this case, a January 2006 Management Audit Committee Staff Report authored those words and the subject is meth.

Stories are circulated about the severity of the problem but even after \$36+ million has been spent, it is reported by the Substance Abuse Division of the Wyoming Department of Health that we "cannot identify the scope of the State's abuse problem." And, "effective services cannot be verified." Good Lord!

Even the Wyoming Tribune-Eagle, an unabashed fan and ally of Governor Dave Freudenthal, wrote "state government officials should be red with embarrassment over a legislative service office report that shows after four years and \$36.5 million - that a statewide abuse program is yet to be developed."

If that's the best your friends have to say about your efforts, what are your critics supposed to say? Praise your efforts?

Ray Hunkins has developed a plan to deal with the meth problem. Some believe that spending money ineffectively may help. It doesn't and should not be tolerated by the Legislature that funds these nonproductive efforts. It is time for a solution.

Ray's proposal for a "cabinet level" state official to coordinate "all state drug programs in Wyoming," was denigrated by the Governor. It seems a lot more important to finally tackle the drug problem in the state, even if it entails another level of bureaucracy to solve the problem, than it was to add a "School Facilities Commission" and a "State Buildings Commissions."

Having a person responsible who reports directly to the Governor might put an additional supervisory burden on the Governor, but the meth scourge has to be more aggressively pursued.

Law enforcements agencies and officials all seem to agree. Arrest and incarceration are doing nothing to alleviate the problem. Treatment centers are required and they are slow to come on-line.

Ray Hunkins also recognizes the awful irony of our allowing safe passage of drug runners on our hundreds of miles of interstate highways because of too few highway patrol personnel on the roads.

Perhaps his 15 years as an instructor at the Law Enforcement Academy taught him - I'd think that 15 minutes of thought would do it - that having it well known that our state's highway patrol don't patrol throughout the night won't cut it. Even drug couriers can read. If there are no highway patrolmen on duty at certain

hours of the night, those are the hours they will drive through Wyoming. If elected, Ray will push through the Republican legislature the necessary funding for more highway patrol. Leadership of the same party should be able to get that done. Turf battles now may be hindering that necessary action.

Who will pay for treatment centers? Ray, being the good Republican that he is, favors private funding. I, being the less patient person that I am, would fund it publicly. Use some of the \$2 billion budget surplus for this purpose. We are willing to spend over \$100 million to build another small prison near Torrington, so spending \$5 million each for a series of meth treatment centers would be a better investment. Far, far better.

The meth epidemic has to be met with more than quips. It is a nefarious drug addiction that won't be stopped with another "Just Say No!" campaign. It is cheap, it is readily available, it is easy to manufacture and we have no room in our jails or prisons for more addicts. We have a formula for disaster on our hands.

The time for talk ... the time for arguing ... the time for finger-pointing ... have to end. Like Ray Hunkins, I too have young grandchildren in Wyoming. I don't want more desperate meth addicts who are not in control of their actions walking our streets. This is no joke, Dave. It isn't.

Herald

pick-up locations

- City News - Downtown
- BLM Building Lobby
- Safeway - South Cheyenne
- Wonder Bread Outlet - Ridge Rd.
- Oroweat Bakery Outlet - SW Dr.
- The Bread Basket - 19th St.
- Borderline - Colorado Lottery
- Laramie County Library - East
- Laramie County Gov't Center - North
- Herschler Building - North
- VA Hospital - South Entrance
- Town & County Liquors
- Burger Inn
- Luxury Diner
- American Storage
- Avenues Pet Clinic
- Los Amigos
- Diamond Horseshoe
- Oasis Market
- Zen's Bistro / Balloon Family
- Quick Draw Optical
- Village Inn-Downtown
- T-Joe's Steakhouse & Saloon
- Pine Bluffs A & W
- RA Lumber - Pine Bluffs
- Panhandle Co-Op, Burns
- Antelope Truck Stop

Many, many other locations in the City and Laramie County

Watch for the League of Women Voters' voters guide on October 20, 2006. Available in Trader's Shoppers Guide and elsewhere.

Won't have to pass the hat for Barbara Cubin

Despite any mailings to the contrary, Barbara Cubin's campaign for another - her seventh - term in the U.S. House is not destitute. Far from it.

According to her FEC filing through the second quarter of 2006 (June 30, 2006), she had Total Receipts of over \$563,000.00 during this election cycle. Political committees (basically PACs) contributed almost \$400,000.00 of that.

At June 30, 2006, the Cubin campaign had \$217,871.43 cash on hand.

She may try to make the point that Gary Trauner is a wealthy young entrepreneur who can put as much of his own money into his campaign as he needs to to try to win. That may or may not be true. He has outpaced her in individual contributions so he may not have to use as much of his own money as many think.

When Barbara Cubin solicits money from her supporters and other Republicans, she does not share all facts about her anticipated revenues with them.

The Republican National Committee (RNC) has committed \$150,000.00 to her campaign and the vice president, Dick Cheney, has already visited Casper once to help raise money for her campaign.

Due to the highly competitive nature of U.S. House races this year, it is very likely that Dick Cheney would come back to help her either in campaigning or fundraising, if she needs help with either.

Every seat - **EVERY SEAT** - that is up for grabs is critical to both the Republicans and the Democrats. The balance of Congressional power is in at stake.

When Mrs. Cubin sends out pleading letters, desperately asking for more money as though she were broke, that might explain why she has refused to return the tainted money she took from Tom DeLay's disgraced and disbanded PAC.

But it is a bit disingenuous to suggest to supporters that she is down to her last dime when special interests are good for a quarter million dollar which they can probably expedite if she needs it sooner than she'd normally receive it.

She can also accept contributions from fellow Republicans in Congress who have an excess they don't need for their own campaigns. With only a third of the Senate up for election this year, there may be a few million bucks lying around with those not in the hunt. Surely some of them will make a handsome donation to one of the House's least influential members. No?

Write-in candidate for HD12 ...

Leo Garcia

Leo Garcia became a write-in candidate in HD12 at the urging of the Democratic Party. When no Democrat filed for the seat held in Party hands for the past few sessions, Leo answered his Party's call.

He has been there before. He was appointed in May of 1995 to fill an unexpired term and then ran for a single term in 1996, serving during 1997-1998. He did not seek re-election in 1998.

Leo has been retired for about 18 years and had settled into a life centered around his family - his wife Doris, their three daughters and five grandchildren, ranging in age from 4 to 17. His daughters live in Torrington, Golden, Colorado and Las Cruces, New Mexico.

A graduate of St. Thomas Seminary in Denver, Leo spent 30 years of his career as business manager for Laborer's Union Local 1271, first as Cheyenne director,

then for the State of Wyoming.

He had offices in Green River, Casper and Cheyenne and traveled between the cities in carrying out his duties.

While in the Wyoming House from 1995 through 1998, Leo served on the Transportation and Travel, Recreation and Wildlife committees.

His special areas of interest, if he is elected in November, include insuring state road construction and maintenance are adequately funded and that the Game and Fish Department receive adequate funding and support.

Disclosure: I have come to know Leo Garcia fairly well through our mutual efforts to prevent illegal annexations by the City of Cheyenne. Leo has become an expert on the subject and knows it better than almost any other legislator would.

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