

# Who paid for the plane and who is paying the wages?

As voters watch with rapt attention the goings-ons of the national election, some have begun to wonder - who is paying these people's wages?

All four of the candidates for the highest offices in the land were on the public payroll when they began their quest. Three are U.S. Senators and one is Alaska's governor. Obama and McCain have been running forever, months and months before the Iowa caucuses that were held on January 3rd. (Joe Biden, now the Dems No. 2 choice to be president, received less than 1% of the vote at the caucuses.)

Not only are all of the candidates on the public payroll, surrogates travel the country backing the candidacy of one or the other ticket and they are often on the public dole as well. Most of the candidates during the primary election cycle were on the public payroll. Joe Biden, Chris Dodd, Hillary Clinton, Dennis Kucinich, Bill Richardson, as well as Obama on the Democratic side.

In fact, who besides John Edwards was not on the government payroll as they spent months pursuing what was to be a fruitless dream for all except Obama?

The Republicans fielded mostly candidates from the private sector, even though most had been in public office earlier. Only Ron Paul, Duncan Hunter and John McCain were on the public payroll when they made their run. Mike Huckabee, Mitt Romney, Rudy Giuliani and Fred Thompson were not costing taxpayers anything as they chased their dream - all had held elective office but were out at the time.

In Iowa, Barack Obama did prevail at the Democratic caucuses but John McCain came in fourth, behind Huckabee, Romney and Thompson and barely ahead of the real maverick, Ron Paul.

Everyone reads how much money is being spent on these campaigns - whether raised from private sources or by way of public financing. It has become an obscene amount. Beyond the candidates

direct spending, tens of millions are also spent by PACs and 527s. One has to read quickly to see who is paying for each ad.

But one cost that is overlooked is the payroll cost of public employees who are campaigning on company time.

With voter's mentality that a qualified candidate must be one who already holds office, the U.S. Congress is depleted for the heavy lifting necessary during the year to two before a national election.

Only once in recent memory did a candidate do the right thing and resign their office to pursue the presidency while in elective office. Bob Dole did that in 1996. It didn't do him much good but it is the right thing for a candidate to do.

The Cheyenne Herald received an e-mail from a reader who forwarded a copy of her e-mail to Wyoming's governor, with copies to each Senator. She asked the governor who had paid his way to Pennsylvania to campaign for Barack Obama. She also asked him if he were paid by Wyoming residents and how he got there - did he take one of the State planes?

This kind of behavior is just taken for granted anymore so it was enlightening to see at least one person picked up on Gov Dave's absence and questioned him about the details. He hadn't answered her by press time.

The Herald shares her interest in the costs to Wyoming residents, and we can't help but wonder what the Wyoming governor was doing campaigning in Pennsylvania anyway. Not a soul there knows who he is nor cares. We would bet our printing press (if we had one) that not one in ten residents of any state, ANY STATE, east of Nebraska could name Wyoming's governor. That bet could be extended to Wyoming residents if one in ten here could name any state east of Nebraska's governor. Minnesota might be easy - Tim Pawlenty was in the news a lot as a potential McCain running mate. How about Delaware? Who is current gov of Florida?

# Definitions ...

**Capitalism** - Economic system characterized by the following: private property ownership exists; individuals and companies are allowed to compete for their own economic gain; and free market forces determine the prices of goods and services. Such a system is based on the premise of separating the state and business activities. Capitalists believe that markets are efficient and should thus function without interference, and the role of the state is to regulate and protect.

**Socialism** - is an economic system which is based on cooperation rather than competition and which utilizes centralized planning and distribution.

**Marxism** - refers to the exploitation of an entire segment or class of society by another. Marx saw it as being an inherent feature and key element of capitalism and free markets. The profit gained by the capitalist is the difference between the value of the product made by the worker and the actual wage that the worker receives; in other words, capitalism functions on the basis of paying workers less than the full value of their labor, in order to enable the capitalist class to turn a profit. This profit is not, however, moderated in terms of risk vs. return.

**Communism** - is a socioeconomic structure that promotes the establishment of an egalitarian, classless, stateless society based on common ownership of the means of production and property in general. The communist movement has attempted to produce a communist society by setting up political parties, which in some cases have become governments. These attempts have never produced a communist society, and have frequently led to totalitarian states. Communism is the belief that private ownership should be abolished and all work and property should be shared by the community.

There are many variations of the above economic systems. The United States is experiencing a major variation in the principle of capitalism with the government buying or investing in private banks, etc. In addition to financial institutions, government at different levels has "invested" in the airline industry, the automakers, and now the federal government is prepared to loan, invest or give, somewhere near a trillion dollars in the hopes of "kick-starting" an economy that is not irretrievably broken.

Based on the four definitions of economic systems above, where do you think the United States has been, is now and where are we headed? Are we creating a mixed breed system that is neither fish nor fowl - not all privately owned property nor all government owned property? Capi-Comm-alism? Or, Capi-Soci-lism?

# The chamber's fee forums

The word above is "fee," not free.

The downtown chamber (DC) has already sponsored two fee forums and another is just ahead. I won't provide the date, time or place because it think it's deplorable that they can't offer access to these events without charging for them. They already are paid dues by a few hundred complacent businesses, some who would like to withdraw but corporate home offices far away won't allow it. There isn't enough money to sponsor a forum with a meal unless attendees have to pay and there wouldn't be enough interest on the part of members or nonmembers if food isn't involved? That says something.

That's sort of pathetic, isn't it? That a local chamber of commerce couldn't draw a crowd without doing something at lunch where employers, both private and public, pay for the food attendees eat.

I wonder how many who attend are there at *your* expense - being public employees? Anything having to do with a meal an employee would eat anyway should not be paid for from public coffers. Then what kind of a crowd could the downtown chamber attract? It sounds like maybe 30-40. Fewer?

Why doesn't the DC seek a sponsor(s) for such events? Go to the daily and offer to let them promote the forums and share the cost of the food and beverages.

If 300 attended and the cost of the lunch or breakfast were \$5-\$6 each, the total food cost would be \$1,500-\$1,800. Doesn't Cheyenne have a business or multiple businesses (we now have a thousand banks) that would pony up \$300, \$400, \$600 each to sponsor such an event? Multiple times? Of course we do.

When the car dealers wanted to place a 40 foot call girl in front of the depot, they donated substantial money to hire a bozo to dummy-up the plan. Sierra Trading Post is probably Cheyenne's best corporate citizen now, how about asking them? Or Cheyenne Light. They should want voters to be informed and in their corner in case the next city administration tries to municipalize public utilities again. How about Lowe's? Wal-Mart? The McMurrays? The chamber has sought donations to advertise in support of the sixth penny tax in the past. Why not seek donations for these candidate forums?

The head of the downtown chamber told me the DC lost \$430.13 with the first mayoral forum. The forum after the primary with the three remaining US House candidates took in \$4,455.00 but that went toward a \$5,000.00 donation to the Kiwanis Club - a group of wealthy individuals who can donate money directly. Why not NEEDS? The net result of that forum was a \$1,192.00 loss to the DC. With a little initiative and effort, they could at least break even doing it my way.

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