

# Southsiders, you can determine the outcome of this election!

by  
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FEATHERLY**

**In 1996, three precincts south of the UP tracks determined the outcome of the mayor's race**

For all other days of every two year cycle, residents of the area south of the UP tracks (but still within the city limits) can be taken for granted. For 730 days (or 731 days if Leap Year is involved), those residents get the short end of the stick.

Even after voters say, "yes, let's do something for the southside," politicians can still shove those projects to the bottom of the list - they can make them the lowest priority. And, invariably, they have.

In November of 2003, voters approved a new viaduct over the UP tracks toward the refinery. In the same election, Laramie County voters overwhelmingly approved a South Cheyenne Community Park.

While the funds were made available through sales tax collection, neither project is near completion. Parks have been provided and improved all over the city but the southside waits and wants.

November 4<sup>th</sup> is the 733<sup>rd</sup> day - because Leap Year fell in this two year cycle and the election is two days later than in 2006. November 4<sup>th</sup> is the day southsiders can finally say, "I'm mad as hell and I'm not going to take it anymore."

November 4<sup>th</sup> is the day southsiders can be heard. Maybe for only that one day if they don't take the action necessary to be heard on the other days to follow. The next election, in 2010, has only three city council seats up for election and the mayor's seat isn't up again until 2012.

It has been five years - **FIVE YEARS!** - since Laramie County voters said, "give them a community park." And where is that park? It is on the drawing board. The only thing provided is land and a metal

shed. Can you imagine telling the Bar Xers that a park near them will have a decades-old metal shed to serve as their community center? Can you imagine a metal shed being acceptable even in Sun Valley? Hell, they wouldn't accept an expensive sculpture. It was lugged out on Storey Boulevard where few see it.

I'm not trying to divide neighborhoods - not trying to polarize residents of different areas of the city. Residents all over Cheyenne know what I'm writing about and agree with me, I'm sure. Maybe not some snobs in Bar X but the vast majority of Cheyenne agrees with me. They voted for the South Cheyenne Park. The fact that improvements for Lions Park piggybacked on that vote didn't make that north park the driving force. The 2003 approval was to provide the long overdue community park on the near southside.

That still hasn't happened.

How many times are southsiders going to take it on the chin before they use their power of the ballot to demonstrate the sway they hold in local city elections?

In 1996, Leo Pando sought re-election to a second term and his opponent was Rod Miller. Leo won that race by 464 votes. (Leo had won by even fewer votes in 1992 over incumbent mayor, Gary Schaeffer. That margin was 362 votes. Those precinct-by-precinct vote totals are not available at the Laramie County Clerk's office.)

Leo won the three southside precincts in 1996 by a total of 487 votes. Rod won the rest of the City by 23 votes. Of the precincts with more than 30 votes, Miller won 11 and Leo won 15, six in Ward 1, three in Ward 2 and six in Ward 3.

In that election, three precincts south of the UP tracks determined who would be Cheyenne's mayor for the next four years. **They** chose Leo Pando. Those three precincts more than cancelled the votes in all the rest of the city. Three precincts trumped the loss by Leo in the rest of Cheyenne. Southside votes more than offset the votes that Miller had beaten Pando by **IN THE REST OF THE CITY!**

It can be done again.

But it will take a level of determination on the part of Ward 1 voters seldom shown.

Perhaps Ward 1 voters don't have favorites in the city races they can control - Mayor and Ward 1. The differences between Rick Kaysen and Jayne Mockler as mayor may be too slight to have gotten Ward 1 voters attention.

Let me offer some input on that choice: In a nutshell, electing Rick will insure four more years of the last eight years. The same charge as has been made by Barack Obama about John McCain. So, if you like what has happened in Cheyenne and for the southside since 2001, Rick is the best choice. Kaysen has business experience no prior candidate has ever had. His running Cheyenne Light, Fuel and Power Co. provides him the credentials to be able to do the job "business-wise" of managing Cheyenne.

He has been an insider with the Wyoming Tribune-Eagle for a long time. Very quietly, he served on the corporate board of directors of the paper which has fallen into disfavor with residents since Reed Eckhardt came on board. As a board member, presumably Rick had something to do with that hiring. Kaysen also served

which case, he was used as a prop and should not have lent his name.

Finally, about his close ties to the WT-E, a principal owner of the paper hosted a "meet the candidate" gathering for him during this campaign and she and her husband have also made financial contributions to his campaign.

If continuing the cozy relationship between the mayor's office and the daily newspaper and longstanding ties to the chamber of commerce and other special interest groups of the community do not concern you, Rick is your best choice.

Jayne Mockler should be your choice if you prefer independence over business background. Jayne has served in the Wyoming Legislature for a long time and must have earned respect across the aisle, she being of the minority Democratic party, because one of the state's leading Republican's, Cale Case, made a sizeable contribution to her campaign.

Jayne did not agree with the agenda of the daily newspaper - at least not often enough to satisfy them - and they have savaged her in print. She is a graduate of Wellesley College and that counts for something. It ain't Ames Community College, folks. Back to the way the WT-E has torn into her - that may be reason enough for many to vote for her. *The enemy of my enemy is my friend.*

Jayne has noticed that the downtown has regressed during the Spiker administration. Dramatically. It has virtually emptied. Rick sees all of those abandoned buildings downtown as revitalization and wants to continue that revitalization.

What it boils down to is this: If voters on the southside are satisfied with the way their part of town has been treated during the past eight years, principally that no park has been provided even though voters approved such a park five years ago; that the Norris Viaduct only began construction in time for this election; and that the Walterscheid project has been on hold for a decade - if voters from the southside accept the newspaper's defense that these things take time and no fault lies with the administration, Rick Kaysen is your best choice for mayor. He will work closely with the newspaper to comply with their demands and with the "chamber types" on projects most important to them.

Jayne Mockler will have more to learn about being a CEO. But, she will go in with a more open mind. She is more likely to surround herself with people with skills, not connections. Her idea of having an assistant would correct the biggest mistake Jack Spiker and I made when he was elected. He never righted himself from not having such a person to shield him from the too-strong likes of Collins, Segrave and Eckhardt.



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