

## City website

It is way past time for the City to bring their website into the 21st Century.

Not only does it look like something designed and maintained by elementary school children (with apologies to the third graders), but it lacks so much of the information the public is entitled to and has requested be provided.

Six and a half years ago, there was a guy who kept calling a local radio call-in program and asking why the City's financial information was not on their website. He wanted to be able to track the revenue and spending and thought that should be available on the website. The mayor always promised him he would see what could be done and agreed that it

should be possible.

Of course it's possible. In the modern age, all things posted to a financial software program can be easily transferrable to the website. That fellow should now be pleased the promise will be kept - six and a half years late.

The City of Cheyenne, with general fund spending approaching \$50 million should have a much more attractive website as well as a more functional and informational one. If it takes them going to Kansas City to find a design firm capable of improving their offering, that's consistent with having to go out-of-state for everything. We can't even buy radiator caps from a local business. Just git 'r dun.

## Street and bridge

In recent weeks, residents have contacted the Cheyenne Herald about two issues having to do with City streets and bridges.

A neighbor said he had contacted everyone he could think of short of Billy Graham, trying to rid his street of the standing water he was afraid could breed the mosquitoes that would bring with them the West Nile virus. To no avail.

In addition to it just being wrong that street repairs weren't done after such a long time, the street in question is beside a City property, the Neighborhood Facility on 7th St. of the Southside.

Another fellow contacted me about the new Morrie Avenue "bridge." This project was completed in the past year and "humps" over drainage that replaced a series of three culverts that used to

collect sand, gravel and debris and clog. The water cascading under the 1st St. bridge had no place to go and would overrun Morrie during and after heavy rains. The new bridge traversing Crow Creek on Morrie was no sooner open than the asphalt separated across its width.

There are three places, extensions of the expansion joints on the adjacent sidewalk, with such cracks. There are also two "potholes" developing that need patching.

The assistant City Engineer assured me that both problems would be addressed. Morrie will be repaired (it's a cosmetic, not a structural, problem) before the end of this year's construction season and he would travel to 7th St. that same day and view the standing water and assure neighbors the correction is being addressed.

## County commissioners doing the right thing with the Animal Shelter

It's about time a local governing body starts treating the money they spend as public funds, not personal pocket change.

No one this side of Alberto Gonzales has received worse press over the past couple years or so than the local Animal Shelter.

At the same time huge amounts of private money have been provided to the Shelter, one thing after another has gone wrong out there - starting with the new building construction. When I visited the new Shelter facility shortly after completion, pails were placed all over the place to catch leaking rain. Employees had derisively labeled the containers "Reiman Buckets" for obvious reasons.

Then there was the departure of the enormously popular Bill Hein. The reason for his departure wouldn't hold the water the Reiman Buckets were gathering. Next, a guy with no experience similar to running an animal shelter was hired and on his first day on the job, he took the hit for ordering the euthanasia of scores of dogs.

I forgot to mention the exaggerated revenue used in the bond offering documents. To try to qualify for certain treatment under state law, a Denver attorney had the audacity to opine that an animal shelter was a "health care facility." It's no wonder lawyers are the subject of so many jokes.

Other happenings at the Shelter made these publicly-known ones pale in comparison. Residents were in contact with the Cheyenne Herald on a regular basis with one beef or another about the Shelter, employees behavior or attitude.

While the bonds were issued using the name of Laramie County, neither the city nor county is financially responsible for their payment. Directly. But services provided by Animal Control and the Animal Shelter are required so, without the 501(c)(3) Shelter, they would have to provide their own operation or find another non-profit to provide those services. In effect, residents of Laramie County ARE on the hook for the bond payments.

The commissioners recently put off a final decision but have placed some new demands on the dysfunctional operation of the Animal Shelter. One of those demands is that the County have an ex-officio member on the Shelter Board. The City should have done the same thing but they just can't be bothered with protecting public money. There's always more where that came from. Residents of the city and rural areas should not face risk with an Animal Shelter going through constant upheaval in its operations. The latest director was not the problem. The board is and it needs oversight - a great deal of oversight - and the commissioners are doing the right thing. Stick to it.

## St. Mary's school bonds

While the top bond expert in Wyoming has told the Cheyenne Herald that using the City's name to sell bonds to construct a new St. Mary's Catholic school is perfectly legal under Wyoming statutes, one still has to wonder if it's a precedent residents should be comfortable with. Even though the education operation of the local Catholic Diocese has scaled down considerably from that of 20 years ago, the repayment of these bonds poses no risk. It is not about the Catholic Church benefiting from lower interest rates by linking the issue to the City's credit. It is about where the City will draw the line. Where WILL the City be able to draw the line?

Opening the door for a religious entity to issue industrial revenue bonds with a municipal tie might prove complicated. What if the next religious group does not have the resources, standing, stability and strength of the Catholic Diocese but is still a legitimate religious entity? What if that particular religion brings discomfort to the City or County governing body? Without intending to be judgmental, what if the next religion is Muslim? Mormon? Jehovah's Witness? Seventh Day Adventist? Westboro Baptist? The mayor's church, Creative Ministries? Would the same approval be granted?

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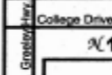
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