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# HERALD

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## Belvoir dump dumped!

### \$894,470.55 into "Siting, Permitting, and Design of a New Landfill for The City of Cheyenne, Wyoming," the Belvoir dump contract (No. 4276) was cancelled.



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Governor. Legislators. Are you paying attention?

While you wrestle with the "problems" confronting you with only a half billion dollars or so of budget surplus, municipalities like Cheyenne will be pigeon-holding you in the hallways, trying to convince you to throw more money their way.

There are many towns, cities and counties in the state that should share in the bounty. There are many that are not wasteful with the funds available to them.

Cheyenne is not among those.

The current city administration could not, as they say, pour an unnamed liquid out of a boot with directions on the heel.

Examples abound of their questionable use, and abuse, of public funds. Have any uses risen to the level of dishonesty, are they guilty of illegal acts, or have they just squandered several million dollars of both excess and normal revenue stream funds? Others can make that judgment.

But as Cheyenne city officials, including one now sitting among you, and their minions from the Wyoming Association of Municipalities, approach you with their empty cups extended, hold them to account for money they have spent for non-productive and unwise purposes.

Was the fire training facility built as presented? What other fire departments in the state, even within Laramie County, are afforded use of this state-of-the-art facility? Why are local firefighters still being trained at other facilities?

Why has this administration defended, at great cost to residents, several illegal annexations they had approved? And why weren't they able to defend those illegal acts with in-house attorneys - now employing three, plus several outside attorneys to handle court appearances - instead of hiring more? Why did they waste public funds on those frivolous defenses?

Ask those city officials, in the hallways of our Capitol begging for more money to spend, about the infamous Belvoir Ranch purchase. Inquire how an uninformed mayor could possibly know better than a Landfill Advisory Committee, which had worked over three years on siting a new landfill location, where the next landfill should be located.

The Belvoir Ranch land was never considered as even a possibility for a new landfill - until the mayor and his excitable lackeys met Jerry McMorris. He "owned" the Colorado Rockies, for God's sake!

*He never did, of course, but they didn't know the distinction between general partner and owner.*

Delirious about the potential of sitting in the "owner's" box for Rockies games and adding to the asset base of the City of Cheyenne, they had to come up with a reason to bail ol' Jerry out. He needed several million dollars for his "call" by the real Rockies owners. So, Jack and the Beanstalks brought the Board of Public Utilities into the equation. In spite of having abundant water for whatever growth Cheyenne may realize for the next half century, that board was convinced that they could extract more water from under the Belvoir than now is held in several reservoirs or available from existing and permitted wells.

They overlooked the small matters of prior water rights and the contaminant TCE (the carcinogen of choice according to the mayor) which is abundantly present in that water supply near the Belvoir.

Utilizing their house organ, the Wyoming Tribune-Eagle, the mayor and others trudged to a knoll on the Belvoir and, facing west as Sacagawea had doubtlessly done before them, proclaimed the perfect future landfill site in the distance.

Having paid the full listing price of \$5.9 million to the financially-strapped McMorris (and not even getting the ladders at the ranch site in the bargain), the City was then committed to siting the new

landfill on the Belvoir.

After first placing one of the two designated spots for such a landfill right on top of existing and marked gas pipelines, they settled on another location out there.

The fact that this new location was a short Cessna flight from the current sanitation department transfer station did not register with them. They would, they announced, build a new road to the landfill site, using the Warren exit off I-80. A few miles of roadway, a couple bridges over canyons and before you know it, you're there.

The plan was now in place.

Expanding the Happy Jack landfill was impossible, they claimed, because the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality would not permit more dumping of municipal waste on top of the aquifers from which the City pumped public water.

The new plan was to dump municipal waste on top of other aquifers from which the City would pump public water.

Sounded like a plan to me.

Told by a water quality gal at WDEQ that it wasn't a very good idea to her, the City proceeded anyway. What the hell could she know? She is a woman. And the City does not allow women a voice in their decisions. Right, Judy Case?

As time passed, more and more truth surfaced. It must have finally sunk into their thick heads that the area's top hydrologist was right when he told the Cheyenne Herald that putting a dump on the geology that is present on the Belvoir was a recipe for trouble. He described the granite under the proposed site as providing "an expressway" to the aquifer when the double liners finally leaked.

But nothing could discourage these characters. Contract No. 4276 was approved in the original amount of \$632,140.00. But you know how far \$632,140.00 goes these days. So Modification No. 3 was

approved, adding \$653,118.00 to the original amount. The "new contract amount" became \$1,286,258.00 on June 30, 2005. Now the vendor had some real money to work with. And, at \$115.00 an hour for a former city employee and 60¢ a mile mileage reimbursement, it could go fast. At about a quarter mil a year, that modification wouldn't last long.

During this time, the Belvoir landfill had taken a back seat to disclosures by both the WT-E and Cheyenne Herald that the City was negotiating with scammers who had chosen Cheyenne for the world's first trash-to-ethanol, then waste-to-diesel plants. The WT-E salivated right along with the mayor, only to be embarrassed when both projects fell through because ... well, because both of the proposals were sort of ... frauds.

During the recent Christmas holidays, the City quietly, and, according to reliable sources, unknown to the mayor, pulled the plug on the contract to site, permit and design a landfill on the Belvoir. According to memos from a mid-level city employee to another employee, **"there may be one additional invoice and then this will be closed. Contract was cancelled effective 24 Nov 2006."** (That's Air Force for November 24, 2006.)

Minutes for the December 22, 2006 city council voucher meeting are vague: **"It was noted that there may be one additional invoice for services and that the contract was cancelled Nov. 24, 2006. ... Mayor Spiker advised that due to staff involved in this matter being out of the office over the holiday season, information on cancellation of the contract would be provided to Council members, including the amount of expenditures paid under the contract with Terracon."**

The amount paid was \$894,470.55. The reasons for cancellation and what the future holds for disposal of trash in Cheyenne has not been made public. So, Legislators, perhaps you can find out why this money was spent before giving the City of Cheyenne more to waste.

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