



THE CHEYENNE
HERALD

FREE TAKE ONE

Est. January 30, 2002

THE LOCAL ADVOCACY JOURNAL

January 29, 2007 • Issue No. 116 • Next issue February 12, 2007

This issue marks our ...

5th Anniversary
5th Anniversary
5th Anniversary

116 issues. 260 weeks.
The Cheyenne Herald has become
Cheyenne's longest running
alternative newspaper,
a credit to loyal and devoted readers.



The years in review ... 2002 - 2006

Dave Featherly

At the urging of a few, including some inside city government, I made a decision in late 2001 to begin to publish a different kind of newspaper in Cheyenne. I had been active in local politics for several years and knew there was always a concern that the truth was being filtered before release to residents.

I witnessed firsthand the great fear city elected officials had of the daily newspaper and how they would do or say almost anything to avoid their criticism. In return, that criticism was withheld, as was much of the news which should have been released to the public.

I also knew that publishing the truth would come at a great financial price. Daily (many weekly) newspapers now are driven by advertising dollars, not truth or journalism. I found out after my first issue at the end of January in 2002 just how real my belief would be. Two significant advertisers of the first issue withdrew their support after being pressured by "insiders." Insiders were not only elected officials but what I've always referred to as "Chamber types." There are those who claim support of free speech but what they really mean is speech that agrees with theirs. Speech, or expression, in opposition to their views must be suppressed,

to their way of thinking.

That was fine. I knew those who felt that way would burrow back underground once the Cheyenne Herald had established itself and that their cowardice would forever prevent their making their identities known.

And that's the way it has been.

From Day One, this newspaper, which covers far more than "news" and was soon dubbed "the local advocacy journal" by the Cheyenne daily newspaper, broke stories of interest and importance to readers.

There are a number of reasons that has been possible. First, and perhaps foremost, is because we have never feared the truth. We have never feared publishing disclosures which might embarrass public officials. That is what now separates us from the local daily paper.

We often get to the story first because we are out there looking for it. As opposed to the editors and publisher of that other newspaper being content to remain in their windowless, second floor offices, waiting for the phone to ring, pursuit of the story often results in getting it first. Our sources are everywhere, including in the government offices we often write about. Tips come our way because residents know we will take the time to investigate an issue

and, more importantly, we would never compromise their identity. The lack of trust for the other paper has dried up their tips. Even Channel 5 is more likely to be approached with confidential information than is the local daily paper.

Not everyone appreciates our diligence and our willingness to print the truth. But we don't target private citizens or private businesses. The test is whether the subject receives public money or has violated a professional oath in some way.

Seldom have our pages deviated from that basic principle.

We've been asked to investigate whether vending machines took coins and didn't deliver products. And disputes with landlords. We just don't go there. Unfortunately, Wyoming does not have a consumer protection agency so

residents have nowhere to turn and often consider us their only recourse. But I drew the line at the beginning and have held to that position.

So far, it's been a mostly productive adventure. Not everyone agrees with what we do or say or how. There are those who believe authority is always right, and when it's wrong, citizens should accept it. Not here. On other pages in this anniversary issue, we will list some of the stories we gotten to first. By headline.



David vs. Goliath, the prequel to the Cheyenne Herald

WWW.CHEYENNEHERALD.COM