

So Who's the Chatty Cathy (or Charlie) at City Hall Who's Been Making All These Early-Morning Calls to Centennial, Wyoming?

From time to time, those of us who're involved with THE CHEYENNE HERALD find ourselves digging through public records in search of interesting things to write about. Our efforts are usually tedious and often completely fruitless, but sometimes -- praise the Lord -- we stumble onto facts which are downright fascinating.

Such was the case when the City of Cheyenne's phone records were being reviewed recently. In addition to finding what we were originally looking for (and which we will be writing about in an upcoming issue), we noticed a very curious pattern of early-morning calls from someone at City Hall to a phone number in Albany County.

The timing of the calls was what made them stand out. Many were made between 5:00am and 6:00am and almost none were made after 8:00am when most calls of a legitimate business nature would be expected to occur.

The calls from City Hall were made almost every weekday during the period being examined.

A Google search on the internet revealed that the Albany County phone number is associated with a railroad museum in Centennial, about 40 miles west of Laramie.

A roadtrip to Centennial was long overdue anyway so some of THE HERALD's staff filched the petty cash fund and headed west a few Saturdays ago.

One Citizen's Opinion

A recent story in the ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS detailed how the town of Georgetown, Colorado, had attempted to cheat FEMA out of \$43,000 for "emergency snow removal expenses" from a blizzard in March 2003. FEMA paid the bill but, to its credit, flagged the payment for closer examination by the U.S. Inspector General's office.

That office found that Georgetown officials had conspired with a private contractor to inflate his bills for snow-plowing and to change some dates when plowing supposedly took place. Because of the audit, the town has to return the original \$43,000 overpayment plus \$21,000 for interest and investigative costs.

Such stories ... and the on-going ethical problems at our own City Hall ... raise an interesting philosophical question: ARE PEOPLE BORN TO BE CHISELERS or DO THEY BECOME CHISELERS BECAUSE THEY THINK THEIR BIG OR LITTLE THEFTS PROBABLY WON'T BE DISCOVERED?

A few weeks ago, we started taking a closer look at some of the City's phone bills from VERIZON and other vendors. We were doing as private citizens what an "internal auditor" does in most well-run cities. Sadly, the City of Cheyenne doesn't (and isn't).

This was certainly not our first stab at uncovering inappropriate charges ultimately paid for by the generous citizens of Cheyenne.

Consistent readers of THE HERALD will remember our story about former City Council members Brent Beeman and Floyd Lopez charging meals at the Albany Bar on City-issued VISA cards. Their justification --- that they probably talked about City issues during their meals so the citizens should pay for them --- didn't digest too well then or now.

We also wrote about the \$180 ATM withdrawal Councilman Beeman made using his City-issued VISA card. He needed the cash to reserve his seat with fellow Council members Lopez and Don Pierson on a City-paid National Guard junket to Hawaii.

When Councilman Beeman was asked about the inappropriate use of the City's VISA card at an ATM machine, he said that Maggie Carter, the City Council's Executive Secretary at the time, had told him that it was okay.

This was the same Maggie Carter who became semi-famous on the pages of this publication after we discovered (quite by accident) that she'd been using the VISA card issued to her by the City to purchase mail-order cosmetics and "vitamins" and to pay for a motel room in Concordia, Kansas.

Rather than paying the money back, she turned a possible misdemeanor into a series of chargeable felonies when she submitted falsified vouchers to the City Treasurer to hide her personal purchases.

Instead of being fired immediately, she was allowed to collect an extra \$6000 from the citizens of Cheyenne while she enjoyed her "paid administrative leave."

While we haven't yet learned the identity of who's been receiving all those pre-dawn calls from Cheyenne's City Hall, we did discover a wonderful museum in a quaint little town which is even more pleasant and picturesque than we remembered. It's definitely worth the effort for anyone who needs a refreshing late-summer outing.

Our search for the City Hall caller (and the identity of the early-riser on the other end of the line) goes on.

It may turn out that these were all legitimate business calls which just happen to have occurred at strange hours.

Or, at the other end of the ethical spectrum, it may turn out that they were merely friendly wake-up calls which someone with early-morning access to City Hall thinks the citizens of Cheyenne should be paying for ... the kind of calls which often begin with something cute like "I had a great dream about you last night. Do you want me to tell you about it?"

Whatever they were, we'll let you know what (and who) we find. Stay tuned, fellow phone bill payers.



Ms. Carter was last seen working for a city in California.

And then there's Police Chief Bob Fecht. As we reported here in THE HERALD, he submitted multiple vouchers to the City Treasurer to be reimbursed \$2504 for a worthless mail-order Master's Degree from a notorious diploma mill in Mississippi.

After our story about the Chief's bogus "Master's Degree in Criminal Justice", Fecht and Mayor Jack Spiker concocted a story that the \$2504 paid to Fecht wasn't for "tuition reimbursement" as the Chief had specified on the vouchers he submitted to the City Treasurer under penalty of perjury, but was for a report the Chief supposedly wrote about the history of police-community relations in Cheyenne.

This was apparently the same elusive (and perhaps mythical) document which the Police Chief had supposedly submitted to the diploma mill to satisfy its "master's thesis" requirement. THE HERALD has asked several times for a peek at the report for which the Chief was paid \$2504, but so far we haven't seen it. Perhaps we should ask just one more time.

Elsewhere on this page is a list of curious early-morning calls from City Hall. Whoever made them may have some explaining to do if they weren't legitimate business calls, but even if that's true he/she still wouldn't be the City's champion phone abuser.

There's a fellow with an office near the Mayor, for instance, who's made/received nearly 800 calls on his various City phones since the start of last year to/from family members in Texas and South Dakota.

When he was asked about it under oath during a recent legal proceeding, he testified that Mayor Jack Spiker had said his use of the City's phones for personal purposes was perfectly okay.

And then there's another City employee who appears to be using his City-issued cellphone to run one or more side businesses during hours when logic suggests he should be earning the \$59,593 the citizens of Cheyenne are paying him. His cell calls to/from friends and family members were so lengthy and numerous that it triggered hundreds of dollars in "overage charges" some months ... charges which were obligingly paid by the City Treasurer's office.

We'll be writing about these two cellphone chiselers ... and maybe others ... in a future HERALD.

Jim Mathewson

Thursday	12/14/2006	8:06 AM	307-742-77##	9.8 minutes
Friday	12/15/2006	8:28 AM	307-742-77##	7.8 minutes
Saturday	12/16/2006	10:30 AM	307-742-77##	5.6 minutes
Monday	12/18/2006	8:09 AM	307-742-77##	13.4 minutes
Tuesday	12/19/2006	6:59 AM	307-742-77##	20.1 minutes
Wednesday	12/20/2006	8:02 AM	307-742-77##	13.6 minutes
Thursday	12/21/2006	8:26 AM	307-742-77##	9.8 minutes
Friday	12/22/2006	7:09 AM	307-742-77##	10.1 minutes
Tuesday	12/26/2006	7:19 AM	307-742-77##	15.5 minutes
Wednesday	12/27/2006	8:05 AM	307-742-77##	14.5 minutes
Thursday	12/28/2006	7:13 AM	307-742-77##	22.1 minutes
Friday	12/29/2006	7:43 AM	307-742-77##	12.8 minutes
Tuesday	1/2/2007	8:05 AM	307-742-77##	12.3 minutes
Wednesday	1/3/2007	7:37 AM	307-742-77##	10.5 minutes
Thursday	1/4/2007	7:30 AM	307-742-77##	10.5 minutes
Friday	1/5/2007	7:19 AM	307-742-77##	7.7 minutes
Monday	1/8/2007	7:28 AM	307-742-77##	12.7 minutes
Tuesday	1/9/2007	8:14 AM	307-742-77##	13.1 minutes
Wednesday	1/10/2007	8:07 AM	307-742-77##	12.2 minutes
Thursday	1/11/2007	8:06 AM	307-742-77##	20.0 minutes
Friday	1/12/2007	7:16 AM	307-742-77##	25.1 minutes
Tuesday	1/16/2007	7:35 AM	307-742-77##	16.2 minutes
Wednesday	1/17/2007	8:06 AM	307-742-77##	11.0 minutes
Thursday	1/18/2007	7:49 AM	307-742-77##	11.3 minutes
Friday	1/19/2007	7:35 AM	307-742-77##	9.2 minutes
Tuesday	1/23/2007	7:25 AM	307-742-77##	13.1 minutes
Wednesday	1/24/2007	8:02 AM	307-742-77##	10.0 minutes
Thursday	1/25/2007	7:05 AM	307-742-77##	11.4 minutes
Friday	1/26/2007	7:11 AM	307-742-77##	8.7 minutes
Monday	1/29/2007	7:27 AM	307-742-77##	13.2 minutes
Wednesday	1/31/2007	6:46 AM	307-742-77##	10.9 minutes
Thursday	2/1/2007	5:59 AM	307-742-77##	11.2 minutes
Monday	2/5/2007	7:11 AM	307-742-77##	5.1 minutes
Tuesday	2/6/2007	6:06 AM	307-742-77##	12.4 minutes
Tuesday	2/13/2007	7:07 AM	307-742-77##	10.1 minutes
Wednesday	2/14/2007	7:00 AM	307-742-77##	10.3 minutes
Thursday	2/15/2007	6:37 AM	307-742-77##	15.3 minutes
Wednesday	2/21/2007	7:14 AM	307-742-77##	17.5 minutes
Thursday	2/22/2007	7:13 AM	307-742-77##	11.4 minutes
Monday	2/26/2007	6:31 AM	307-742-77##	11.5 minutes
Tuesday	2/27/2007	6:31 AM	307-742-77##	13.1 minutes
Wednesday	2/28/2007	7:01 AM	307-742-77##	8.3 minutes
Friday	3/2/2007	6:12 AM	307-742-77##	8.3 minutes
Monday	3/5/2007	7:05 AM	307-742-77##	13.7 minutes
Tuesday	3/6/2007	6:14 AM	307-742-77##	12.5 minutes
Wednesday	3/7/2007	7:02 AM	307-742-77##	17.8 minutes
Thursday	3/8/2007	6:19 AM	307-742-77##	19.0 minutes
Friday	3/9/2007	6:07 AM	307-742-77##	20.0 minutes
Monday	3/12/2007	5:15 AM	307-742-77##	15.5 minutes
Tuesday	3/13/2007	5:24 AM	307-742-77##	21.1 minutes
Wednesday	3/14/2007	5:24 AM	307-742-77##	14.9 minutes
Thursday	3/15/2007	5:41 AM	307-742-77##	19.9 minutes
Friday	3/16/2007	5:16 AM	307-742-77##	15.5 minutes
Monday	3/19/2007	6:00 AM	307-742-77##	12.6 minutes
Tuesday	3/20/2007	5:01 AM	307-742-77##	10.4 minutes
Wednesday	3/21/2007	5:41 AM	307-742-77##	12.6 minutes
Thursday	3/22/2007	5:25 AM	307-742-77##	10.5 minutes
Tuesday	3/27/2007	5:43 AM	307-742-77##	14.3 minutes
Wednesday	3/28/2007	6:05 AM	307-742-77##	9.0 minutes
Thursday	3/29/2007	5:55 AM	307-742-77##	16.6 minutes
Friday	3/30/2007	5:49 AM	307-742-77##	9.9 minutes
Monday	4/2/2007	5:36 AM	307-742-77##	18.6 minutes
Tuesday	4/3/2007	5:17 AM	307-742-77##	14.3 minutes
Wednesday	4/4/2007	5:17 AM	307-742-77##	17.6 minutes
Thursday	4/5/2007	5:17 AM	307-742-77##	16.2 minutes
Friday	4/6/2007	5:31 AM	307-742-77##	14.4 minutes
Monday	4/9/2007	5:29 AM	307-742-77##	14.5 minutes
Tuesday	4/10/2007	5:16 AM	307-742-77##	0.6 minutes
Tuesday	4/10/2007	5:17 AM	307-742-77##	0.2 minutes
Tuesday	4/10/2007	5:19 AM	307-742-77##	0.3 minutes
Tuesday	4/10/2007	5:25 AM	307-742-77##	0.4 minutes
Tuesday	4/10/2007	5:37 AM	307-742-77##	0.4 minutes
Wednesday	4/11/2007	5:22 AM	307-742-77##	18.9 minutes
Thursday	4/12/2007	5:33 AM	307-742-77##	22.3 minutes
Friday	4/13/2007	5:23 AM	307-742-77##	13.3 minutes
Monday	4/16/2007	5:28 AM	307-742-77##	20.3 minutes
Tuesday	4/17/2007	5:29 AM	307-742-77##	14.1 minutes
Wednesday	4/18/2007	5:44 AM	307-742-77##	9.8 minutes
Thursday	4/19/2007	6:06 AM	307-742-77##	12.5 minutes
Tuesday	4/24/2007	5:30 AM	307-742-77##	15.9 minutes
Wednesday	4/25/2007	6:00 AM	307-742-77##	12.8 minutes
Thursday	4/26/2007	5:05 AM	307-742-77##	3.0 minutes
Monday	4/30/2007	6:01 AM	307-742-77##	17.5 minutes
Thursday	5/3/2007	5:32 AM	307-742-77##	13.8 minutes
Friday	5/4/2007	5:40 AM	307-742-77##	11.4 minutes
Monday	5/7/2007	5:45 AM	307-742-77##	10.4 minutes
Tuesday	5/8/2007	5:27 AM	307-742-77##	15.0 minutes
Wednesday	5/9/2007	5:42 AM	307-742-77##	16.7 minutes
Thursday	5/10/2007	5:12 AM	307-742-77##	22.5 minutes
Friday	5/11/2007	5:13 AM	307-742-77##	17.2 minutes
Monday	5/14/2007	5:17 AM	307-742-77##	23.6 minutes
Tuesday	5/15/2007	5:37 AM	307-742-77##	14.2 minutes
Wednesday	5/16/2007	5:06 AM	307-742-77##	28.9 minutes
Thursday	5/17/2007	5:36 AM	307-742-77##	6.0 minutes
Monday	5/21/2007	5:15 AM	307-742-77##	17.6 minutes
Tuesday	5/22/2007	5:36 AM	307-742-77##	17.9 minutes
Wednesday	5/23/2007	5:37 AM	307-742-77##	19.3 minutes
Thursday	5/24/2007	5:15 AM	307-742-77##	10.4 minutes
Tuesday	5/29/2007	5:32 AM	307-742-77##	17.9 minutes
Wednesday	5/30/2007	5:26 AM	307-742-77##	15.8 minutes
Thursday	5/31/2007	5:45 AM	307-742-77##	14.8 minutes
Friday	6/1/2007	5:21 AM	307-742-77##	10.7 minutes
Tuesday	6/12/2007	5:42 AM	307-742-77##	11.5 minutes
Monday	6/18/2007	6:37 AM	307-742-77##	9.3 minutes
Tuesday	6/19/2007	5:06 AM	307-742-77##	8.3 minutes
Wednesday	6/20/2007	5:40 AM	307-742-77##	6.2 minutes
Thursday	6/21/2007	6:34 AM	307-742-77##	21.6 minutes
Monday	6/25/2007	6:25 AM	307-742-77##	11.7 minutes
Tuesday	6/26/2007	6:33 AM	307-742-77##	15.1 minutes
Wednesday	6/27/2007	6:18 AM	307-742-77##	13.7 minutes
Thursday	6/28/2007	6:43 AM	307-742-77##	10.5 minutes
Friday	6/29/2007	6:27 AM	307-742-77##	14.2 minutes
Monday	7/2/2007	6:35 AM	307-742-77##	11.3 minutes
Tuesday	7/3/2007	6:21 AM	307-742-77##	15.1 minutes
Monday	7/9/2007	6:42 AM	307-742-77##	7.6 minutes
Tuesday	7/10/2007	6:43 AM	307-742-77##	6.5 minutes
Wednesday	7/11/2007	6:44 AM	307-742-77##	10.3 minutes
Thursday	7/12/2007	6:54 AM	307-742-77##	11.4 minutes
Friday	7/13/2007	7:08 AM	307-742-77##	5.3 minutes

TOTAL 1546.1 minutes

Jim Mathewson is just a poor dumb citizen of Cheyenne. His email address is jmat44691@yahoo.com