



## Congress needs to end bogus phone charges

If Congress ever does anything except debate the budget, it needs to change the federal laws which allow unscrupulous scammers access to our phone bills.

Unauthorized charges cost Americans about \$2 billion a year, according to a study by the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee. Sen. Jay Rockefeller (D-West Virginia), who is leading an effort to change the rules, says these "mystery fees" show up on landline phone bills through a process known as "cramming."

Cramming started after changes in the industry, and federal law, following the breakup of the Bell System monopoly. Sen. Rockefeller blames major phone companies like AT&T (the former Southwestern Bell, or SBC) for not cleaning up the problem.

"It's illegal, it's wrong, it's scamming," he asked at a recent hearing. "Why haven't you cleaned up your act?"

An industry spokesman claimed the companies had made progress, but acknowledged the problem continues.

Scammers get access to the billing system through small firms which supposedly offer some legitimate telecommunications service. They attach bogus bills to home and business accounts, and the phone companies claim they are obligated to include these in your monthly bills. Apparently, they make no effort to scrutinize these charges.

When an odd charge appears on a phone bill, the companies routinely tell people that it's their job to contact the firm making the claim. Services may be de-

scribed as voicemail, directory service or web hosting, among others.

These firms usually will remove the charge, but it costs the consumer or business time and money to accomplish that. When the charge is small, some people just pay rather than challenge it. One expert described spending 15 hours to straighten out bills for a group of restaurants.

Whatever the case, when people pay, the scammers smile all the way to the bank.

The easy solution, rather than try to make this system work, would be to repeal the law which allows telecoms to piggyback their charges on landline bills. That'd save the big telcos money and save consumers from having to pay for this cumbersome and unworkable system.

Small firms would have to bill people on their own, but the legitimate need appears to be just the tail that wags this big, smelly ol' dog.

Right now, the effort to reform the billing system is bogged down in the general morass of delays in Congress, partisan infighting and the overall budget battle. What's needed, though, is not a reform, but an end to third-party billing on phone statements. It seems that most are bogus, anyway, so "reform" will accomplish nothing.

If you have received a bogus bill and think this system stinks, it's time to write our senators, Jerry Moran and Pat Roberts, and Rep. Tim Huelskamp and ask them to join with Democrats to end this travesty.

- Steve Haynes



## Casey's Comments

By Casey McCormick



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Once again, another Cheyenne County Fair is in the books. As always it was an explosion of activity and a feast for the senses!

I've been reading lately about the Roman Empire in Will Durant's series which tackled the subject of civilization's history. The Romans knew how to put on a show as well.

For fun, and to keep the masses entertained, they went so far as to stage sea battles. Julius Caesar hosted the first by building a

lake outside of Rome and sending ships and sailors to recreate past battles.

Later emperors would actually have these sham sea fights held in the Colosseum, which would be flooded to accommodate the ships.

Thousands of men would participate in these epic displays. Unfortunately, they were slaves, captured soldiers or criminals whose value of life did not mean a whole lot to the average Roman.

## Reader enjoys another great fair

Letter to the Editor:

Congratulations to the Amusement Authority and the fair board for putting together another great fair. It was nice to see the carousel, train and Ferris wheel running smoothly and the grounds were beautiful with the flowers and landscaping. I particularly enjoyed the cool, quiet(er) arbor Saturday night, waiting for my kids to finish up their shifts.

Growing up in Denver, I never knew there were county fairs until I attended a couple with my cousins in rural Ohio. I have fond memories of those times, but remember my aunt cautioning us to be careful because the rides and booths were not run by volunteers, but by traveling carnies and they were not to be trusted.

What we have here is family run fun and you can trust your children to move from ride to ride without shadowing them to keep them safe.

## Letters to the Editor

The Amusement Authority struggles more every year to find volunteers to staff the rides and games. It seems the same people work more shifts to fill in the empty spots and these same folks are growing older every year.

We've made a point to assign our children and even the older grandchildren at least a two-hour shift when they are visiting. They enjoy working and say it makes them appreciate the fair more, knowing how much work goes into it.

Considering the hours spent riding the rides, I would think even the high school students could volunteer two hours of their time to volunteer to run a ride or booth. I challenge all families to take at least one two-hour shift next year.

This is the county fair, everyone in the county should share a part of it. It saddens me to see fewer open class entries every year and I would encourage folks to take an active interest in next year's fair.

Start preparing now by taking some pictures or tweaking your favorite cake or pie recipe. Share an afghan or quilt that you're going to make this year. Paint a picture. Show everyone that hidden talent you have!

Down off my soapbox, I wish to thank everyone from the Amusement Authority, the Fair Board and all the wonderful volunteers who have given up their time to make our county fair the very best.

Deb Patton  
St. Francis

## Idalia to vote on bond for school

Letter to the Editor:

The Idalia School is in line to receive a \$11.1 million grant for facility needs! On Aug. 3, the Colorado State Board of Education officially approved the funding for all recommended BEST (Building Excellent Schools Today) projects, including the major renovation and replacement of the Idalia School.

On Nov. 1, Idalia voters will be asked to approve a \$3.87 million bond to pay for 26 percent of the \$15 million project. Upon approval of the bond, the Idalia School will receive an additional \$11.1 million or 74 percent of the project from the state.

The most recent journey to improve the Idalia School facilities really began in 1992 when the community identified the need for a new gymnasium/cafeteria building. With the formation of the Idalia Vision Foundation, the Idalia community not only raised the funds, but donated countless hours of labor to help build it.

The journey continued in 2000 when the Idalia RJ-3 School district

was formed by de-consolidation and the Idalia community gained local control of its school. With de-consolidation came the responsibility to take care of our facility.

Since that time, Idalia school boards have been addressing the needs of our school building by considering a variety of projects, grants and ideas. Several assessments identified deficiencies in the school and it became clear that a major renovation or replacement of the school was needed.

This grant program addresses the needs of schools like ours who cannot raise the necessary money on their own. In fact, the most we can raise with our current assessed valuation is \$3.87 million and even the cost of remodeling would exceed that.

On March 2, the Idalia School District submitted an application for a BEST grant and on June 30, was ranked eighth out of 45 large grant applications based on facility needs. Idalia School was one of 11 projects recommended for large BEST grants. If our bond election fails,

our grant money of \$11.1 million will go to one of the five alternate schools.

Idalia is known as a "can do" community and has a long history of self-help. The history of the school district is a testimony to community spirit and determination.

Unlike many other school districts, Idalia RJ-3 has not asked its voters for a mill levy override or for a bond and the district is debt-free. The Idalia community supported the new gymnasium building and then went on to support de-consolidation.

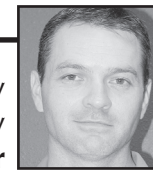
We ask Idalia to once again show their support for our school and the longevity of our community by voting yes for this bond where 100 percent of the funds will stay in the Idalia School District. Let's take advantage of this incredible once in a lifetime opportunity.

Wayne Weyerman  
Nancy Helling  
Lindsey Richards  
Ross Morris  
Keith Weyerman

## Across the County

New E911 signs erected

By Marty Fear



County Extension Agent

Cheyenne County residents may be noticing new, reflective blue E911 signs being installed at rural locations. The signs are provided to each rural address for emergency medical service communication and location.

If for any reason emergency personal are needed at a rural location when seconds count, these signs will give the correct address in a uniform, easy to read sign. In addition, they also help people who are unfamiliar with some areas of the county, such as myself!

The E911 signs are a result of a community service project of the Cheyenne County 4-H clubs. 4-H clubs included in the project are the Bird City Go-Getters, Lawnridge, Pleasant Hill and Plum Creek Clubs. This project was started in 2009 by Linda Elfers, K-State Research and Extension assistant.

A lot of time and planning had to go into the project to make it a reality. Former emergency manager, Gary Rogers and his wife, Carol, were very helpful in putting the

numbering on each sign.

The appraiser's office helped provide all the rural addresses and Doug Flemming offered advice for installing and locating the signs at each location.

Once the signs were completed it was time for the 4-H'ers to step in and do their part. Each club was assigned an area in the county to install the signs.

Clubs are given the flexibility to install signs as their schedules allow. Therefore, not all the signs are presently installed but they

should be in the coming months.

This has been an excellent opportunity for 4-H clubs to give something back to the community and has been a great club building experience.

Please take care of your new E911 signs and report any damage or problems to the Cheyenne County Extension Office at 332-3171. Until next week - Marty

**GOD SAYS**

**But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.**

**I Thessalonians 4:13, 14**

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**Praise the Lord**

**Church of Christ**  
332-2380, Pars. 332-3424  
502 W. Spencer  
Norman Morrow - Minister  
Bible Class 11 a.m.  
Morning Worship 10 a.m.  
Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.

**United Methodist**  
Church Office 332-2292,  
Church 332-2254,  
512 S. Scott  
Pastor Warren Cico  
Early Bird Service 8:30 a.m.  
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.  
Worship 10:30 a.m.

**Seventh-Day Adventist Church**  
785-890-5718 • 3rd & Adams  
Pastor Jerry Nowack  
Sabbath School 9:30  
Morning Worship 10:45

**St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church**  
625 S. River • 332-2680  
Fr. Roger Meitl  
Sunday Mass 10:30 a.m.  
Weekday Mass 8:00 a.m.  
Confessions Sat. 4-4:30

**Salem Lutheran Church**  
332-3002  
Pastor Chris Farmer  
Morning Worship 10:30 a.m.  
Communion 3rd Sunday

**Solid Rock Baptist Church**  
412 S. Denison  
Welcomes You!  
Pastor Allen Coon  
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.  
Worship 10:30  
Prayer Meeting, Wed 7:30 p.m.

**First Christian Church**  
Pastor Jeff Landers  
332-2956 • 118 E. Webster  
Bible Fellowship 9:15 a.m.  
Church Service 10:15 a.m.

**First Baptist Church**  
2nd & Scott • 332-3921  
J.W. Glidewell, Pastor  
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.  
Worship 10:30 a.m.  
Sunday Evening Service 6:30 p.m.,  
Wed. AWANA Club 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

**St. Francis Community Church**  
332-3150  
204 N. Quincy Street  
www.sfccfamily.com  
Pastor: David Butler  
Sunday School 9:15 a.m.  
Worship Service 10:30 a.m.  
Potluck & Communion - Every 2nd Sunday  
Wednesday Bible Study 7 p.m.

**Peace Lutheran Church, AFLC**  
202 N. College  
Pastor Glenn Isernhagen, Interim 332-2928  
Worship 9:30 a.m.  
Communion 1st Sunday of the month

St. Francis Equity

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