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## Our View: Put money back into the Belvoir

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Cheyenne Councilman Tom Segrave says revenues generated from the city's 18,800-acre Belvoir Ranch should go into the development of that property.

He's right.

Cheyenne bought the property southwest of Cheyenne in 2003 for \$5.9 million. The city purchased the land for two important reasons: possible location of a new landfill and water development.

While the city's intent to build a new landfill hasn't completely gone cold yet, officials are more focused on trash-to-energy solutions rather than building a new facility at the cost of tens of millions of dollars.

To give credit where it is due, tests have shown city officials were right about the water there: Belvoir has added value with those resources, and it could play an important part in Cheyenne's development over the course of the next several decades.

But there's more to the Belvoir than just water and a possible landfill site. The city has been working on putting together a master plan for the ranch that would include recreation opportunities for just about everyone.

The cost of building hiking, biking and horse riding trails along with campsites and other possible recreation opportunities hasn't been determined yet. But that price tag is sure to be in the tens of millions of dollars, if not more.

One possible revenue source could be the county's fifth- and sixth-penny optional sales taxes. But another suggestion is that of Mr. Segrave, who wants to see the revenue from the Belvoir reinvested in the ranch.

And why not? That will keep general fund pressures to a minimum and allow the optional pennies to be used for other important projects.

It doesn't matter if it's wind generation or other forms of revenue, using that revenue to enhance and expand recreational opportunities at the Belvoir would be a wise approach. It also might keep user fees for city residents down in the long run.

If these revenues are not enough to make improvements on the Belvoir at first, the city might have to ask for sales tax money. But that decision doesn't have to be made right away. City officials need to keep their options open.

There has been thought of building a museum, gas station and shopping area along Interstate 80 since the ranch sits parallel to the highway. And other proposals for the property include a golf course and biking, hiking and horseback trails.

The development of the ranch won't happen overnight. Indeed, consultants say it will take 30 years to develop the ranch.

But with Mr. Segrave's idea, Belvoir development will come much quicker. From our perspective, the sooner the better.