

**Monday, October 15, 2007**

Wyoming's world-class dynamic between energy and environmental resources puts it at the forefront of national and world policy-making decisions.

Two years ago Wyoming's coal, oil and natural gas exports amounted to 8.46 quadrillion British thermal heating units per year, according to the Wyoming State Geologic Survey. The state consumed only .4 quadrillion Btu, giving it a net export of 8.06 Btu.

Rob Hurless, energy and telecommunications advisor to Gov. Dave Freudenthal, recently put it this way: Today, the amount of energy that Wyoming exports is equivalent to the energy consumed by every other residential home in all of the United States.

"That's the scale of what we produce," Hurless said. "We are, for better or worse, at ground zero of this discussion."

That means outside forces both nationally and internationally are gunning for influence over resources here. And if you think Wyomingites are in control of the state's destiny in future energy and environmental decisions, just check to see who owns the mineral rights.

So don't mistake that intense ogling: It's the resources everyone wants, not friendly conversation with a down-home Wyomingite.

"Finding the balance," as those who are engaged in the discussion know, doesn't mean energy and climate concerns have to be at odds. Instead, it might better to ponder the question of how much say Wyoming's citizens will have as the nation asks this state to come to its rescue on both fronts.

That's why political leadership will be so critical to Wyoming in the next five years.

It was no love-fest between climate and energy leaders who took part in the University of Wyoming's "Finding the Balance: Energy and Climate" forum last week. But they did agree that it's too dangerous to allow rhetorical spin, narrow special interest and fear guide the policy making on these issues.

While nothing is more powerful than the ballot box, there are several local organizations and programs working these issues, and Wyoming citizens can get involved. Here's a short list:

Wyoming State Legislature: <http://legisweb.state.wy.us>

Wyoming Pipeline Authority: [www.wyopipeline.com](http://www.wyopipeline.com)

Wyoming Infrastructure Authority: [www.wyia.org](http://www.wyia.org)

Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality: <http://deq.state.wy.us>

Wyoming Game and Fish Department: <http://gf.state.wy.us>

Wyoming Oil and Gas Conservation Commission: <http://wogcc.state.wy.us>

Wyoming Environmental Quality Council: <http://deq.state.wy.us/eqc/index.asp>

Energy reporter Dustin Bleizeffer can be reached at (307) 577-6069 or [dustin.bleizeffer@casperstartribune.net](mailto:dustin.bleizeffer@casperstartribune.net). Check out his energy blog, "The Pipeline," at [www.casperstartribune.net](http://www.casperstartribune.net).