

## WBR ARTICLE

### Governor talks stimulus, 'right size' transmission lines

By Dennis E. Curran

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CHEYENNE – Gov. Dave Freudenthal, fresh from a brief trip to the nation's capital, is urging use of federal stimulus funds to help ensure that new electricity transmission lines from Wyoming are the "right size" not only for today's proposed energy loads but future capacity as well.

The governor said the Western Area Power Administration (WAPA), which oversees the electric power grid in the West, is receiving \$3.25 billion in federal economic recovery money, and the governor is advocating using it to leverage larger transmission lines from Wyoming.

"Let's build the right size line ... or at least put in the right-size towers," he told reporters in a news conference today.

Freudenthal explained that there are a half dozen currently proposed transmission lines to carry power from Wyoming to points south and west, mostly to carry electricity produced by wind turbine generators. However, he noted, there are a limited number of acceptable transmission corridors available, and it would be a shame to fill them with relatively low-capacity lines when higher capacity lines will be needed in the future.

He is suggesting that WAPA use stimulus money up front to underwrite helping private utilities build higher capacity lines initially and then repay the federal government when the need for more power is there.

"The problem I have is that if we don't get this organized and build the right size tower, they will end up building a whole series of sub-optimal lines in what are very few realistic corridors for the movement of power out of Wyoming," he said.

He compared it to the initial construction of Interstate Highway 80 through the West in the 1950s. Initially it was underutilized, but had it not been built, we would have found ourselves with "two or three double-lane roads instead of the Interstate. Building it that way, they were ready for the future."

The governor met with a number of congressional and Obama administration leaders during his brief trip to Washington, where he addressed a world conference on coal-to-liquid energy conversion projects, but much of the hour-long news conference this morning was devoted to questions about the federal economic recovery package and its impacts on Wyoming.

Lynne Boomgaarden heads the Wyoming Recovery and Reinvestment Team, which is dealing with the many stimulus opportunities under the recently passed American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). She said the state has established a Web site – <http://wyoming.gov/recovery/> -- to help people track federal stimulus funds.

"You know what we know," the governor said, adding he expects stimulus money to "come out in chunks" from different federal sources at different times.