

Panel to consider special session on budget cuts considered

By The Associated Press

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CHEYENNE: State lawmakers plan to meet in Cheyenne this week to discuss possibly holding a special legislative session on Gov. Dave Freudenthal's state budget reductions.

Freudenthal has identified \$232 million in spending reductions to the state's two-year budget that goes into effect July 1. The cuts are being made amid declining state revenue due to low natural gas prices.

Co-chairmen of the Legislature's Joint Appropriations Committee, Sen. Phil Nicholas, R-Laramie, said he doesn't expect the committee to go through the 80 pages of budget changes line by line.

"All we are doing is getting a report and then at the end making an assessment of whether we would recommend to the legislative leadership if they would want to call a special session," he said.

The committee would make a recommendation to legislative leaders, who would be the ones to decide whether to hold a special session.

Nicholas said he doesn't think Freudenthal wants a special session.

The University of Wyoming is in Nicholas's district. He said a 10 percent reduction in the university budget is appropriate — as much as he would like to see the institution exempted.

The university is different from other state agencies because university trustees ultimately will decide how reductions are handled, he pointed out.

"The university trustees are free to move that money if they think there was a mistake," he said.

Information from: Casper Star-Tribune - Casper, <http://www.trib.com>