

Subdivisions create hot topics for taxpayers

By The Associated Press

CHEYENNE - Gov. Dave Freudenthal said Wednesday that developers have passed along some of the true costs of subdividing land in the Wyoming to taxpayers by failing to build adequate roads and water systems.

Freudenthal said he expects that issue and others will be addressed at a conference he has called for next week in Casper on the benefits and challenges of growth in the state.

Called "Building the Wyoming We Want," the two-day conference will feature presentations from Freudenthal as well as other government officials and preservation groups from around the country.

Speaking at his regularly scheduled press conference on Wednesday, Freudenthal said he was pleasantly surprised that the registration limit of 350 people for the conference had already been reached.

He said his office is trying to find room to accommodate more people and said that registration remains open this week.

Rather than raising such concerns to the Legislature during his annual message, Freudenthal said he decided to bring the discussion to the public so residents could make themselves heard.

"We made a tactical decision about a year ago to try to orchestrate this from the bottom up instead of the top down," Freudenthal said. He said he wants to hear from Wyoming residents what they want the state to look like in the future.

"My experience has been since I got into this job is that the citizens of the state are quite animated about what they want the state to be," Freudenthal said.

However, Freudenthal added that while many people voice concern about how other people develop their property, they don't want government interference in what they do with their own land.

"We all want to retain the capacity for me to do what I want," Freudenthal said.

Once subdivisions are approved, Freudenthal said it's common for pressure to mount on local governments, and in turn on the state, to provide water and sewer systems and roads.

"We do not have a system in this state where the full cost of developing is internalized for the purchaser," Freudenthal said.

A legislative committee has already voted to bring forward legislation on statewide subdivision regulations in the session that starts in mid-February. Freudenthal said he doesn't know whether the conference he's organized would tie into that.

The conference is scheduled for Jan. 10-11 at the Krampert Theater at Casper College. Participants must register in advance and pay a \$25 fee.