

## Wyo Governor, First Lady tour China

By Staff

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CHEYENNE – The governor of the largest coal producing state in the US is visiting the largest consumer and producer of coal in the world this week.

Recognizing China's pivotal role in the global energy marketplace, Gov. Dave Freudenthal said he is eager to discuss the Chinese economy and related energy issues during a visit that began this weekend.

Today Freudenthal met with Chinese officials to discuss future opportunities in tourism, energy and in particular, coalbed methane development. (China is roughly 14 hours ahead of Wyoming time.)

"I thank both officials for their gracious reception and am encouraged by the substantive nature of the discussions," Freudenthal said.

Freudenthal offered to share Wyoming's experience in the containment of underground coal seam fires, which apparently the Chinese are dealing with in some Western provinces. Vice Chairman Zhang Guobao suggested that Wyoming researchers might be interested in the extensive efforts underway at the Coal Energy Research Institute near Tiayuan in Shanxi Province.

The Chinese also have a strong interest in coalbed methane development, though the situations in China and Wyoming are slightly different. China currently uses methane from deep underground coalmines to produce electricity from mine mouth generators, which is then used locally. Plans are being formulated to expand this energy resource.

China is both the world's top coal producer and consumer, and is estimated to put a new power plant on line every 7-10 days.

"China's carbon emissions have an impact on the climate change debate, and ultimately affect the market for Wyoming's energy-related products," Gov. Freudenthal said. "Reducing these emissions has the potential to benefit both Wyoming and China."

On April 17, the governor will tour the GE China Technology Center in Shanghai. Earlier this year, GE and the University of Wyoming announced that they would partner to build a coal gasification research facility in Wyoming.

"GE is clearly committed to discovering ways to continue utilizing coal while also managing carbon," Freudenthal said. "This new facility in Wyoming will undoubtedly share information with other GE facilities, including those in China. It is encouraging to think that solutions to some of these clean coal challenges could be developed with research conducted in Wyoming and sites around the globe."

The Governor and First Lady were invited to visit China by the United

States-Asia Foundation, a non-partisan, non-profit organization that works to foster relationships between the United States and Asia. Travel expenses for the trip will be paid for by the foundation. While in China, the Freudenthals are being hosted by the Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs.

The tour will wrap up with one day in Hong Kong before returning to the United States on April 20.