



Cheyenne logistics hub will take advantage of rail, highway links

## Location, location

By TOM MAST - Star-Tribune staff writer | Posted: Sunday, January 10, 2010 12:15 am

The developer of a new industrial and commercial hub in Cheyenne hopes to take advantage of a transportation nexus that encompasses two major railroads and two interstate highways.

The Casper Logistics Hub at Swan Ranch, which is actually located south of Cheyenne, is a first-phase, 900-acre project with room for future growth.

It is located south of I-80 and adjacent to I-25. Union Pacific tracks run along its western border, and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe runs to the east.

The Swan Ranch is owned by Neil McMurry of Casper and his daughters. Granite Peak Development, which also completed a Casper logistics hub, is the developer.

A 1,100-foot rail spur will connect transloading activities inside the park to the Burlington Northern rail system. "It will be the backbone of an industrial park," said Dan Guerttman, Granite Peak's director of finance. The hope is that eventually the Union Pacific Railroad will become active at the hub as well.

Bob West, vice president of Granite Peak's real estate group, said one advantage of the Cheyenne hub will be its proximity to the Front Range of Colorado. He said interest has come from far and wide. The project also has garnered notice in various trade publications.

Guerttman said while the Cheyenne hub may detract from the Casper hub to a limited extent, each will attract different types of businesses due to its respective location.

Casper likely will have more energy related activities, including oil, gas and wind, while Cheyenne will have more manufacturing, warehousing and commercial businesses. The nearby National Center for Atmospheric Research supercomputing center also could encourage technological firms to locate at the site. The center is expected to be on line in 2011.

Total cost of the project is anticipated to be about \$10 million.

A new highway interchange is expected to be completed by next fall. A road through the hub will connect the High Plains interchange to the South College Drive interchange, both on I-25. Reiman Construction is building the High Plains exchange with state and federal money.

In addition, the state of Wyoming has plans to construct a new visitors' center next to the site.

The project as envisioned would be aided by a \$3 million business-committed grant from the Wyoming Business Council. Guerttman said the aim is to ramp up construction in the spring.

The rail spur could begin at about the same time, although who will build the spur hasn't been determined, he added.

The first phase of development will include roads, water, sewer and track. The business-committed grant would help pay for wet utilities and roadways.

One business, California-based Midwestern Pipeline Co., plans to build a plant on 55 acres of the park, and later move its headquarters to Cheyenne as well. The company specializes in double-joint welding of steel pipe, the application of anti-corrosion coatings and other oil and gas industry services.

Rich Fairservis, a principal with Granite Peak Development, said Midwestern Pipeline preferred to locate in Casper due to its central location, but balked when Rocky Mountain Power failed to work with the company in providing the power it would need.

A Rocky Mountain Power spokeswoman said the company does not comment on individual customers or negotiations due to confidential concerns.

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