

Resident to give talk at China conference

At Expo in Shanxi province, Wendt will discuss controlling carbon emissions.

By Brielle Schaeffer

Jackson Hole resident David Wendt, president of the Jackson Hole Center for Global Affairs, will speak in China Sept. 26 to influence policy on the country's emissions of greenhouse gases.

Wendt and his wife, Olivia Meigs, the center's director of communications, have been invited to the sixth Expo Central China in Shanxi province. The meeting will bring together public and private sector leaders from eight provinces in central China, representing roughly one third of China's 1.3 billion population, the center said in a statement.

One of the major objectives of the country's recent five-year plan is to close the gap in growth between its central and coastal regions.

"This particular conference is focused on central China, where growth has not been as strong as coastal regions," Wendt said Tuesday. The government there "wants to speed up growth, but in the right way, without increasing carbon emissions."

Wendt's speech will focus on ways to reduce carbon emissions resulting from the increased energy needed to fuel economic growth in central China. His remarks will summarize China's recent progress with controlling carbon emissions from coal production and will outline remaining challenges.

Overall, China's expanding energy needs are projected to result in an additional 50 percent of coal-fired electric power capacity in the country over the next decade. That amount would equal the entire coal-fired power capacity of the U.S., according to the center's statement.

This will add as much as 2 billion

tons of carbon dioxide emissions to China's current total of 8 billion tons. The result would bring China's total emissions to 40 percent of the world's total.

"I think it's a huge opportunity for us to voice some of our concerns and share some of our capabilities in Wyoming and here in Jackson," Wendt said. "I'm excited about where China is on these issues and what kinds of mutual interests we have."

Wendt and Meigs also will attend the Carbon Sequestration Leadership Forum to take place Sept. 20 to 23 in Bei-

jing. The forum represents more than 20 governments of coal-producing and coal-consuming countries and is set to address means of capturing and storing carbon dioxide produced by the production and consumption of coal and natural gas.



Wendt

The center's participation in these policy discussions builds on eight years of experience in conducting policy and technical exchanges with China's Shanxi province on the challenge of reducing carbon emissions from coal, the center said. Like Wyoming in the U.S., Shanxi province leads China in coal production, with roughly 750 million tons per year compared with Wyoming's 450 million tons.

There's concern in Jackson about climate change and the greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to it. There are impacts to the environment and public health that can't be ignored, Wendt said, things he's trying to help address during the meeting.

Some eight or nine years ago, the U.S. thought it had more to teach China than China had to teach us, Wendt said.

"Now they've leapfrogged ahead in reducing carbon emissions and clean-coal technologies and coal mine methane extraction," he said.