



## ‘Green’ for long-term care facility

• Governor touts project at fundraising reception here

**By Kristen Salamon**

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“I think this project is a harbinger of things to come for the treatment and perception of how people are supposed to spend their golden years,” Gov. Dave Freudenthal said at Tuesday night’s Green House Living for Sheridan fundraising reception at Sheridan Country Club.

The Green House Living for Sheridan project is approximately \$824,000 short of its fundraising goal. If the organization does not pull together the remaining funds by March 31, it will likely lose an \$891,217 State Loan and Investment Board grant for infrastructure.

“At some point we have to say this isn’t going to work,” Freudenthal said. “Don’t let us get to that point. When it comes to caring, nobody cares more than we do.”

Green House Living for Sheridan would be a long-term-care facility that focuses on “elders continuing their life journey with dignity and respect,” according to the organization’s mission statement.

The Sheridan project would include four homes, with 12 elders living in each home. A small administrative building would also be constructed.

The homes, located on Fifth Street west of the high school in the Cloud Peak Ranch area, would be licensed nursing homes that accept private payments and insurance, as well as Medicaid and Medicare reimbursements.

According to information from Tuesday’s event, it will cost about \$7.6 million to build, staff and open the facility. It is expected that the four homes will employ about 48 people.



The Sheridan Press/Michael Sullivan

Gov. Dave Freudenthal speaks with Doyl Fritz and wife Jaci Fritz of Wolf during a fundraising reception for Green House Living for Sheridan at the Sheridan Country Club on Tuesday.

If the remaining funding is raised, Green House Living for Sheridan organizers expect the facility to open in 2011.

Freudenthal was one of several government officials who attended Tuesday’s event along with state legislators, Sheridan city councilors, Sheridan County commissioners, and representatives for Wyoming U.S. Sens. John Barrasso and Mike Enzi.

Green House Living project coordinator Kay Wallick said she did not have a “bottom line” on how much money was raised Tuesday, but everyone was positive about the results.

“We didn’t raise a whole lot of money, but we made a whole lot of friends,” Wallick said this morning. “A lot of people took pledge cards. I think people may just

need time to think about it.

“We’re all feeling great,” she added. “The exciting thing about last night is that everyone felt how special it is that we could be the first in the country to start a Green House Living project with grass-roots efforts. Everyone felt they were part of that movement.”

Mike Follett, who helped start the Green House project in Billings, also spoke at the event.

Follett, recently brought on as a consultant for the Sheridan project, told attendees that “there is nothing scarier than at the end stage of your life, despite the best intentions of existing nursing homes, being stuck in a big institution.”

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He added, “Green House Living is about capturing the human element.”

Follett also complimented members of the Sheridan project for their drive and commitment.

“A culture is being created for long-term care in the future,” he said. “And here in Sheridan, Wyo.,

you’re rocking the world.”

Green House Living task force member Dr. Sy Thickman also spoke at the fundraiser, highlighting the significance of the Green House movement.

“It is not easy to get started with a new idea,” Thickman said. “Especially one that revolutionizes the idea of nursing home care. ... Let’s be an example.”