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Properties 'virtually unmarketable'

by Greg Fladager

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A survey by a local realtor may have confirmed the worst suspicions of Stan Mundy, whose home is closest to Chevron's wind farm northeast of Casper.

Glen Taylor, of Equity Brokers in Casper, did a real estate survey Sept. 10, 2010, and concluded properties directly adjacent to the Chevron Wind Towers are now "virtually unmarketable" at "any realistic price."

In his report, Taylor said no residential properties have sold in his three-road survey area since October 2009, and 10 are presently on the market (five that were listed in the past two years didn't sell).

Taylor wrote, "No reasonable buyer would choose a property close to the wind towers over a property that isn't close to wind towers unless the price is so low that the investment would be a no brainer."

Taylor said in his report that rural property close to town is usually in good demand, and noted he's the agent for one parcel in the area. He has had over 50

inquiries on his listing in about two months, but 40 dropped interest after learning about the location.

"In follow-up with the inquiries, the number one reason for not having genuine interest in this property is because of the proximity of the wind towers," Taylor wrote in his report.

Taylor did the survey at the request of Natrona County State Representative Mike Gilmore. Gilmore is a long-time friend of Mundy's, and had asked Taylor for assistance after hearing about Mundy's property situation.

"Some people are saying Stan's just a nut, and he needs to get over it," Gilmore said about Mundy's dispute with the county. "But his issue had some merit, and I felt he might need a little ammunition ... he's not asking for money or anything from the company, he just didn't want those towers, like 800 feet from his house. He has a legitimate complaint."

Noting that the towers are on Chevron's property, Gilmore said, " ... I'm a real private property rights advocate, so much so I fought against the Highway

Properties deemed 'virtually unmarketable.'
Read about a market analysis of Stan Mundy's residence next to Chevron's wind farm in this week's Casper Journal.



Department's wanting to condemn land for snow fences. But the wind is different. It's unique, it's big, it's this massive structure you've got to look through to see the mountain."

Gilmore said wind energy needed to be developed in Wyoming, and that energy companies have jumped into it now because of generous tax breaks. He then added, " ... but the jobs really didn't materialize, and the taxes aren't coming along either ... we've devalued our own property.

"It's something in this next session that maybe we need to look into," he said.

Mundy, meanwhile, said he's looking into several options in his ongoing battle with the county.

He missed his property tax protest hearing before the County Board of Equalization (composed of three county commissioners) when they denied his request to change the date. Mundy told them he would be away attending his daughter's graduation from Army boot camp in South Carolina.

The discussion by the commissioners on changing the hearing date included in Commissioner Barb Peryam calling Mundy a "son of a bitch" and threatening to "sic planning and zoning and code enforcement" on him. The commissioners turned down Mundy's request to reschedule, noting the cost of paying for another official hearing reporter.

"She's apologized to the other commissioners," Mundy said of Peryam's comments, "but she hasn't apologized to me.

"I had called, before this all transpired, to the State Board of Equalization to see if they would hear my tax appeal because I didn't think I could get a fair shake with our commission ... because Rob Hendry is going to profit from wind industry, just like my property value is going to go down because of the wind industry," Mundy said. "I was told the county would have to certify it, and I would have to go through the county to get to state level. I said to heck with it."

After his hearing date change was denied, he wrote a letter to Gov. Dave Freudenthal protesting the situation. A few days ago he received a reply from an aide to the governor, who said they were aware of the events that had transpired, and again told him that legally his property tax protest must begin at the county level.

The letter also stated, however, that, "Your issue with siting was one of the primary drivers for establishing the minimum state setbacks that were passed during the 2010 Wyoming legislative session. The governor's office is well aware that the legislation doesn't help you. However, your advocacy has helped others in similar circumstances."

Mundy says he's not certain now whether he can, or will, request another hearing before the County Board of Equalization.

"I still don't think I can get a fair hearing," he said.