OFFICE OF GOVERNOR DAVE FREUDENTHAL
State Capitol
Cheyenne, WY 82002
Ph. 307.777.7434

December 29, 2005

******FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE******

Contact: Press Secretary Lara Azar
Office 307.777.7437
Cell 307.421.0197

GOVERNOR APPOINTS TWO TO HEALTH CARE COMMISSION

CHEYENNE, Wyo. -- Gov. Dave Freudenthal has named a small business owner and a former patient advocate to seats on the Wyoming Health Care Commission, bringing that group up to full membership.

The governor's appointments are Barbara Cohee, vice president of C&Y Transportation Co. Inc. in Casper, and Barb Rea (pronounced Ray), a former patient advocate for Wyoming Medical Center.

"These two women are already leaders in their own community who know the troubles facing Wyoming healthcare firsthand," Freudenthal said. "I look forward to continued good work from the commission and am thankful that these two are willing to help make that happen."

Cohee, 56, is a Republican and currently serves as the secretary of the Casper Area Economic Development Association. She has been with C&Y Transportation for 15 years. During that time, she said, she has come to know firsthand the difficulties employers face in providing health insurance for their employees.

"I am truly honored to have been chosen to serve on the Wyoming Healthcare Commission," Cohee said. "Among the many duties I inherited when coming to work for our small, family-owned company was group insurance administration. Attempting to provide adequate healthcare coverage over the years has proven to be difficult at best. A major focus would be to devise ways for small business people to provide appropriate and reasonably priced health insurance for all employees."

Rea, 48, is a Democrat and was founding chairwoman of the new Wyoming Association of Nonprofit Organizations. In addition to her work as a patient advocate, she has served on the Wyoming Medical Center Ethics Forum, written a health assessment for the Natrona County Vision 2000 Committee, and was instrumental in developing several community health improvement programs including, most recently, the Children's Advocacy Project.

"I hope I can help to keep the voice of the consumer and the citizen at the table," Rea said. "Wyoming is in a great position to actually get something very important accomplished here. I'm honored and excited to be included in this work."