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**Annexation requested because District 2 wants school in city limits**

**By Josh Mitchell**

*Staff reporter*

Wyoming law states that for an annexation to occur, the proposed area must be contiguous, or connecting to, current city limits.

This posed a dilemma to School District 2, which wants the new Woodland Park School in the city.

The site for the new school is not contiguous to city limits, so Whitney Benefits Inc. of Sheridan has proposed a one-mile strip of its land as a connector between the current city limits and the school site.

The 500-foot-wide strip would be zoned business and run directly south of Sheridan College.

The city Planning Department and others have said the strip should be zoned residential, not business.

District 2 Superintendent Craig Dougherty said the

school district does not feel responsible for the proposed business strip, saying Whitney Benefits requested the new zoning.

Whitney Benefits Board President Tom Kinnison said the Whitney Board agreed to seek annexation of the one-mile strip as a connector because it didn't want to block the new school.

Kinnison said Whitney had no plans to annex that land before being asked by the school district.

"We wouldn't be annexing anything today if the school didn't need the property," Kinnison said.

So why does the district want the school inside city limits, especially since the current Woodland Park School is in the county?

School District 2 Facilities Director Julie Carroll said being in the city limits means the school will only have to go through the city-approval process for such issues as building codes.

If the site remained in the county, the school would have to receive approval from both the city and county, because the site is within two miles of city limits, Carroll said.

"It's cleaner to deal with one agency," she stated.

Dougherty added that if the school district had to receive city and county approval, it would take longer and possibly delay construction of the new school.

And Carroll said building the school in the county would require a conditional use permit, which could be time-consuming.

The new school is proposed to begin construction in late winter or spring and to open in fall 2009.

Dougherty said it is unknown at this time what will be done with the current Woodland Park School.

He also said the school district has not yet closed on

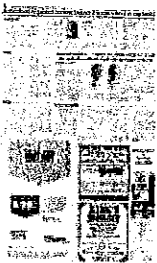


**Quotable**

"We wouldn't be annexing anything today if the school didn't need the property."

*Tom Kinnison,  
Whitney Benefits Board  
President*

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the real estate transaction to purchase 10.45 acres from Whitney Benefits for the new school.

Dougherty would not say how much the school district has offered to pay Whitney for the school site. He said that number will be available when the land sale is final.

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