

Wall touts Sask. to U.S. ambassador

Angela Hall

Leader-Post

Monday, March 31, 2008

REGINA -- Premier Brad Wall continued to woo an American audience Monday, but this time it was on home soil during a visit from the United States ambassador to Canada.

But Wall also told reporters Monday that his Saskatchewan Party government hasn't ruled out the idea of setting up an office south of the border.

Wall and Ambassador David Wilkins had a one-hour meeting at the provincial legislature, where the premier said he again raised his vision of the province as an "energy centre" for North America.

It's a message Wall has also taken to the investment community and American politicians on recent trips to Washington, D.C., and New York City -- and one he said he plans to continue delivering in the U.S.

Wall told reporters the Saskatchewan Party government is "exploring every avenue" to ensure the province is heard in the United States, including the possibility of an office there. Alberta currently has an office in Washington, D.C.

"We're looking at a number of options," Wall said, when asked by a reporter if he would do something similar.

"There's some discussion, for example, that we're having in terms of which U.S. centre - the capital, the seat of the government in Washington or the commerce capital of New York City - is the place to increase our presence," the premier said, as he and Wilkins made brief remarks to reporters following their meeting.

"We're looking at all these different options, whether it's an office or just missions, or a combination, perhaps. We want to make sure we get our message out," Wall said.

Wilkins said Wall's meetings have been well received south of the border, and called the premier a "great salesman" on his recent missions to tout the province's energy potential.

"I think one of the challenges is awareness and I think (the premier) took a big step in that direction of making the right people in Washington know what Saskatchewan has to offer," Wilkins said.

Wall said he raised with Wilkins the potential Saskatchewan has around uranium, and the desire for the province to get G8 approval to be able to pursue uranium enrichment opportunities.



CREDIT: Don Healy, Leader-Post

David Wilkins, ambassador of the United States to Canada, speaks at a luncheon in Regina on Monday.

Wall and Wilkins also discussed the province's concerns around the U.S. farm proposal for country-of-origin labelling, which Canadian cattle and hog producers say would create costly complications that will impact trade.

Wilkins was non-committal as to whether anything will be done to relieve concerns that have been raised by Saskatchewan and other western provinces, but said he heard the premier "loud and clear."

"It's an issue that Canada has rightly expressed some concern about ...," Wilkins said.

Wall said he covered some of the same ground as he has on his recent U.S. trips, adding the message about Saskatchewan's energy potential is one has resonated with every audience.

"There is this real opportunity for our two countries to focus on things like improving our ability to recover more oil from known reserves, to improve energy independence for North America so we're less reliant on overseas sources of oil," Wall said.

ahall@leaderpost.canwest.com

© Leader-Post 2008

CLOSE WINDOW

Copyright © 2008 CanWest Interactive, a division of [CanWest MediaWorks Publications, Inc.](#). All rights reserved.
CanWest Interactive, a division of [CanWest MediaWorks Publications, Inc.](#). All rights reserved.