

**Annexation would be step in Sheridan's expansion toward Big Horn**

**By Josh Mitchell**

*Staff reporter*

Imagine Sheridan's city limits extending all the way to Big Horn.

A 97-acre annexation up for final approval by the City Council on Monday would not take the city limits that far, but it would be a step in that direction.

The annexation could have profound implications for the city's future because it would open up more land that the city could annex.

The land proposed to be annexed is owned by Whitney Benefits Inc. of Sheridan and would include a 64-acre, 500-foot-wide strip zoned for business that

would run down the eastern side of Coffeen Avenue for a mile.

In addition, the site includes 10.45 acres for the new Woodland Park School, and the remaining approximately 23 acres would be zoned residential.

By law, property that is annexed must be contiguous, or connecting, to the city limits. If the City Council approves the annexation Monday, it would mean that more county property is contiguous to the city.

City Associate Planner Elizabeth Wood said this annexation "might lead to future annexations and future growth of the city. It legally opens it up for other property to be annexed."

Mayor Dave Kinskey said he favors the annexation. "I think it's a good thing when a community like Sheridan prospers and grows. One way cities do that is by annexing land."

Whitney Benefits Board President Tom Kinnison said he thinks business zoning is good for the area because, "I think it's good for the community to grow."

Sheridan County Commission Chairman said of the annexation, "It's going to happen sooner or later. The city is definitely going to expand. There is no doubt about it."

As for the city limits extending all the way to Big Horn, Cram said: "It won't happen in the near future. In the next 50 years is not out of the question. It's going to extend out a ways, but it won't go that fast."

Cram said the proposed annexation area was identified as a major growth area in Vision 2020, the 1982 comprehensive plan jointly adopted by the city and county.

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**Quotable**

**"The city is definitely going to expand. There is no doubt about it."**

*Terry Cram, Sheridan County Commission chairman on the proposed annexation of land south of Sheridan College.*

