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FRONT RANGE

Musgrave hears officials' issues

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Concerns about illegal immigration and methamphetamine use brought several local officials to a meeting with their local congresswoman Wednesday.

At her meeting with the officials, Rep. Marilyn Musgrave, a Republican from Fort Morgan, said immigration will be a hot political topic this year.

Here is sampling of the concerns the officials presented to Musgrave:

- Sheriff Jim Alderden on immigration: "What would be best is to build a Great Wall of Mexico. It would be cheaper than all the entitlement programs, and we could hire the illegals to build it because it would be cheaper."

Musgrave on the issue: "The Democrats want cheap votes, and the Republicans want cheap labor. There needs to be some burden on employers."

- Alderden on the lack of funding for Immigration and Customs Enforcement: "We spent \$800,000 to house illegals last year (in the Larimer County Detention Center). ... I talked to Attorney General John Suthers,

and he said there's not a more poorly funded agency than Immigration and Customs Enforcement."

Musgrave: "Law enforcement is extremely frustrated with the drain on the system. ... The public assumes when you break the law, something happens."

- Loveland City Councilman Walt Skowron on the national debt: "We're spending \$2 billion a day. ... In 2008, we're going to be in debt to the World Bank by \$8 trillion. That's 85 percent of the Gross National Product. ... This is an economic tsunami that's coming our way."

Musgrave: "If you look at the demographics, you know (Social Security spending) is not sustainable. We're slowing the growth of government."

- Larimer County Commissioner Kathay Rennels on methamphetamines: "We're trying very hard not to keep people in the Detention Center long. ... To get people off of meth takes about 18 months."

Alderden added, "With all of the interest in it, none of us has a solution ... the best rehabilitation rate is 8 percent."

Musgrave: "The number of meth concerns is heartbreaking."