

Second TEA Party planned for Pullman

Organizers hope event encourages attendees to put message into action

By Hillary Hamm Daily News staff writer

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Jeff Williams isn't sure everyone got the message during the area's first Taxed Enough Already parties in April.

Williams said the roughly 500 people who participated in the events in Moscow and Pullman understand the need for accountability in government, fiscal responsibility and standing strong by the Constitution.

Now he wants to spread the word even more and start a revolution among people willing to challenge their elected officials.

A second TEA Party Protest/Freedom Rally will take place in Pine Street Plaza in downtown Pullman at 4 p.m. Saturday.

Williams said he hopes more people show up for the second nonpartisan event, meant to give area residents the opportunity to speak out about the federal stimulus package, bank and automaker bailouts and other issues that have led "more and more people to feel disenfranchised" by the federal and state governments taking away the power of the free market and Americans' liberties and freedoms.

"Every time you inject the government into our lives at such a massive scale, whether ... we notice it at the time or not, liberty and freedom do suffer," said Williams, chairman of the Palouse 9.12 Project and a Pullman City Council candidate. "If you lose trust with the American people, it's over.

"In this country we don't have a shortage of talent of ideas ... and the ability to get stuff done, but we do have a shortage of trust," he added. "It's hard to get people engaged when they think they're just going to be ignored."

Ethan Wright, a UI student and TEA Party organizer, said the continuous government spending since the end of George W. Bush's final term makes him fear for the future of his two children.

"It's not right," he said. "I have two daughters and we're spending their money before they even have a chance to earn it."

Wright said part of the TEA Party movement is the expectation that government remain true to the Constitution, which was put in place to "enforce the government, by law, to respect the people."

"It seems that government has gotten too complicated for their own sake," he said. "I think we've gone away from those ground rules. We feel that the true limited government aspect of the Constitution needs to be respected more."

"The government is taking its own initiative to enforce things when the market, or the will of the people, should guide things."

Williams said he hopes the second rally generates more community support and helps ward off fundamental change in the country.

"It's not one event to solve all the world's problems," he said. "Among the people there at the first one, the point was made. We know how we feel. It's preaching to the choir ... but this may give people a chance to meet again, people that have changed their opinions."

Williams said even more importantly, the second Tea Party is a chance to make some change.

"It's moving from, 'Yeah, we're pissed off,' to 'What comes next?' " he said. "Just being mad or frustrated isn't enough. One step toward that answer is, 'Get off your butt, get off the couch and go do something.' ... Every one of these rallies is just a step in the process."

Williams said another TEA Party, a name that may be changed to "Freedom Rally," is slated to take place in Moscow in September.

Hillary Hamm can be reached at (208) 882-5561, ext. 307, or by e-mail at hhamm@dnews.com.