

Minutes of Uintah Basin Regional Council meeting held Aug 19 at Springhill Suites in Vernal

Attending: Randall Bennett, LaNae Alexander, Shelley Fenn, Bill Johnson, Sharon Wilkins, Tammie Lucero, Joe Pepper, Deena Mansfield, Wayne Dunbar, Shirley Weathers, Cody Christensen, Matt Watkins, Paul Hacking, Shelly Ivie

Guests: Senator Kevin Van Tassel, Paul Jackson, Bill Walsh, John Wahl, Andre Salvail

Staff: Bob Gilbert, Peggy Killian, Connie Blaine

Randall welcomed everyone. Thanked Joe for hosting the meeting at the Springhill Suites. Welcomed Senator Van Tassel and Paul Jackson, State Council Chair.

Minutes were reviewed. Tammie motioned approval, Joe seconded. Minutes were approved unanimously.

Joe welcomed everyone to the hotel. He said that September will be our one year anniversary for operations. Was a long cold winter for us, but we are having a good summer. We would like rates to be a little higher.

Randall asked Senator Van Tassel if he would like to address any legislative issues. He said that yesterday at Interim morning where they track the state budget, an update was given as to how things are going. We anticipated being \$150 million in the red for the fiscal year end, but were only \$48 million in the hole. We were very encouraged with this data. For the Basin, the important thing was the severance tax from natural gas. Production was up and has generated significant severance tax revenues. The legislature doesn't anticipate asking departments to reduce any more. The Governor will be applying for the \$140 million from the federal education bill and we should be able to balance the budget. We are finding that many state agencies have done well in adjusting to decreased budgets, and we will continue to look for ways to improve. The economy seems to have flattened, and we don't expect a quick rebound, but a long sustained period of slow growth.

Tammie provided an economic development update for our area. She passed around a white paper about economic 'gardening' which has as a premise that 'growth comes from within' in rural areas. We need to outreach to our businesses and help them grow. Carbon and Emery Counties have used VISTA volunteers and have been very successful in getting Fast Track grants. Rural areas want to get some funding for the outreach activities for businesses. Shelly said she is meeting with DWS management to look at possible financial involvement for the program. Tammie said that agencies visit employers, and a coordinated approach would cut down on the number of visits. Would lead to some efficiencies. The gardening concept has been presented to and supported by GOED. The funding would be set up on a post-performance basis, where any money given to an entity would be after performance (i.e., the interview with business). The concept was presented to Gov and Lt Gov. last week in Cedar City.

Tammie then addressed Enterprize Zones, which have had some issues with audits. There have been several meetings in SLC with the Tax Commission. Need to have some legislative changes made, and we are moving forward with some legislation. Sen Van Tassel said that now one case has been heard

by tax commission. It will get some light on the problem, which will be good. A draft of changes has been circulated, but will need some refinement.

Upcoming Events: The Bingham Energy Center grand opening is Sept 23 and 24. The Concept of Company, an energy exhibit, is Sept 22. The grand opening of the CNG natural gas station in Vernal is set for August 25th. Senator Van Tassel said that will affect some tourism, as those who travel in CNG vehicles need to plan around where they can fill up. The Vernal station is the only one between Denver and SLC.

John Wahl then reported on the Green Energy grant. UBATC is a partner in the energy grant. We are partnering with CEU-USU, and the green programs will be primarily at the Vernal campus, but some will also be offered at the Roosevelt campus. The grant is coordinated by DWS and Salt Lake Community College (SLCC). CNG has been brought into the grant. In mid Sept, instructors will be trained to install CNG conversions in vehicles. A staff person will come onboard to recruit and get program set up. We need CNG programs for diesel engines, and are looking to see what can happen there. Will be a big impact once the diesel component is in place. The grant will give us equipment to work with the CNG conversions, and we will be converting some of the college vehicles to show how it is done. We are involved in developing a statewide curriculum. For the first year, we will use West Virginia curriculum as it is nationally recognized, then use the state curriculum once it is developed by SLCC. Word is getting out about the green programs – we are getting some inquiries. We will begin offering classes in 40-50 hour range starting in October.

The second portion is the grant is green construction, weatherization and retrofit. We will be doing training for construction industry contractors, and meld in with other sources of information/programs. We will also be doing some auditing of buildings. We are thinking of having one day workshops and involve the utilities who are already doing the audits. The goal is to strengthen contractors skills and their workers. Tammie asked if there is a shortage of energy auditors. John said no, Questar and Rocky Mountain Power and some others are doing it and meeting the need. Shelley F. said that Questar does all training inhouse for their auditors.

John added that our program is not doing renewable fuels. Southwest ATC is doing wind energy and solar energy.

Senator Van Tassel reported that Questar and RMP indicated that 25% of homes have participated in their energy surveys and programs, a very good percentage. Shelley said to go to thermwise.com for the programs and forms, which have been very successful. Sharon said that Questar and RMP came out and met with their employees, presented information about energy efficiency, and was very well received. Energy savings in Utah has resulted in enough energy to power 50,000 homes. Randall said we need to set up some opportunities, such as a task force, to go to targeted industries. The goal is to have good collaboration, and get the right people at the table. We can go beyond our regular Council members and involve others. The main objectives for the task forces are: evaluate current demand for skilled and unskilled workers, evaluate current capacity to produce skilled workers, align education programs with skills requirements, and identify and address workforce issues. Develop clear goals and outcomes, have some measurements, action steps and review. Randall reviewed the four task forces. Shelly distributed some information on Targeted Sectors. Shelly passed out a list of industries in demand, and training requirements. Didn't include those that require

four + years of higher education. Task forces need to determine if there is to be expansion, what kind of skills are necessary, have a clear understanding of what industry expectations are. We want to have Council members volunteer to serve on these task forces. DWS and education need to understand what skills are needed for workers.

Companies that are looking to expand also need this information. John said we need OJT training with new industries, as you can't do an OJT when there isn't a company for the job training. Need to have a training program, and UBATC can tailor and provide that training. The task force can provide connection between employers, education and job seekers.

Senator Van Tassel asked if it is a 3 meeting effort. Will it go longer? Shelly says she sees it as an intense day, then maybe one more meeting to solidify. After that, the task force would meet as needed. Randall said we won't have meetings to have meetings. We needed more nurses few years back. Set up task force that involved all healthcare interests, including education. We invited CEO participation as needed. Suggested the healthcare task force meet again and begin to talk about issues. Can base some of the ideas for the new task forces from the healthcare taskforce.

Paul Jackson, State Council Chair, said he was glad to be here. We are trying to create jobs statewide. We want people to have the skills that they need. Do we know where the jobs are? Are these the right ones? Need to have the right people at the table at the right time. There may be opportunity to share ideas/practices between service areas. You can do things faster, cheaper, maybe better than I can do it in SLC. Rural areas have that advantage. Plan needs to get down to specific occupations. Then we are able to give better, specific industry data to Rehab and DWS as they coach people into training and jobs. Sometimes, there is too much of studying the wrong thing at the wrong time. We want to fix that.

Shelly said we will resend out economic plan. Paul J. suggested reviewing the plan briefly at each Council meeting. The plans can drive discussion. Volunteers were then solicited for each of the task forces:

Energy Task Force: Bill, Sharon, Tammy, Shelley, Greg Todd, Newfield, Anadarko, EOG
Jean Mold

Healthcare Task Force: Deena, Randall, USU, Tammie, Wayne, Paul H, Steve Hawkes,
Senator Van Tassel asked: Are we pretty well filled up now in terms of nurses? Paul J said we haven't been in the past. Right now supply is meeting demand. We have relative low vacancy rates. Paul H said the for the first time in years, all LPN and RN graduates haven't found new jobs. Paul J said that in the Wasatch front, shifts and hours are being reduced, and we expect that to continue through 2011. By 2015 – we will be back to high demand. Wayne said we need to give the new nurses some opportunity to be in the industry and maintain licenses. Paul H said that for the first time in a lot of years, we have a full LPN class, had 35 apply that were fully qualified..

Lodging/Tourism – Joe, Nikki Farmer, Irene, Daggett Co Tourism Board, Brian Raymond, Dirk Hatch, could utilize customer service training. Senator Van Tassle said the Dinosaur National Monument will be reopening next year and will affect tourism. Richard Millett – had a good summer at the Monument

Transportation – RNI, Savage, over the road companies such as the one who bought Link, Parsons Staker, automotive shops, Randy Beers, John Wahl

Senator Van Tassel said that a study was done showing the income lost from not moving forward with the 77 leases. The result was the state lost \$100 million per year of ongoing revenue.

Paul H said that we have advisory committees, some are stronger than others. All have 3 at least, and some have 15. Have one for each program. Have a committee for each program in both communities, so there is some duplication. The Committees review accreditation requirements. It would be good to involve task forces, as they might steer discussion back to demand and workforce needs in our communities. If we can cover two meetings with one, we would like to do it. We will have to do a little more advance planning, and take some time in arranging meeting. Industry needs to see the value of the meetings. Shelley Fenn suggested having the meetings at breakfast time in order to make it successful. Bill suggested we start at 8:00 or 7:00 am.

Shelly gave the Area Director's report. Unemployment rates are dropping. Utah is 7.2, and in the Basin. The last unemployment extension, which will run out in November, will likely be the last extension. We are working to get those on UI back to work. Articles have been in newspaper. We have increased our efforts to market to those who are on UI. Are working to help those on UI to develop skills. Focusing on those individuals who are looking for work. We want to re-circulate our economic plan for your review and comment. We are working with Tammie and Irene a lot. The goal is to be globally competitive. Some telemarketing companies are moving back from India.

Connie said the Workforce News is currently in suspension as we look at different ways to present the information. We may expand the information that is presented. Now, we have started a Utah economy blog. We also do county snapshots. These are updated monthly. Bill J said we need to continue to have the data. Also, we need to have focus on helping customers find jobs. People are willing to work now for less dollars, which is why there is a movement to have some call centers come back.

Shelly reported the Youth Council is meeting. We want to have a project that will address drug abuse with youth. May involve partnering with mental health.

The next meeting is set for Nov 18th.

Meeting adjourned at 11:45 am.