

SUU Government Relations & Regional Services

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Utah Rural Summit set for Aug. 12 and 13 in Cedar City

CEDAR CITY — “The Great Recession: Putting It In the Rearview Mirror” is the theme for the 23rd annual Utah Rural Summit, scheduled for Aug. 12 and 13, 2010, at the R. Haze Hunter Conference Center on the campus of Southern Utah University.

“It’s been a tough couple of years, but better times are ahead of us,” said Wesley Curtis, SUU’s Vice President for Government Relations & Regional Services. “Our economy seems to be picking up, and that’s especially good news for rural Utah. This year’s summit will focus on community development that will help rural communities move ahead.”

Guest speakers and the two candidates for Utah governor will discuss economic, community development, and other rural issues during the two-day annual Summit.

Gov. Gary Herbert will share the stage with challenger Peter Corroon in a discussion titled “Issues Facing Rural Utah.” The session constitutes the Summit’s keynote presentation on Thursday, Aug. 12, at 1 p.m. The discussion will feature a question-answer format, and Summit attendees will be able to hear and evaluate the candidates’ positions on rural issues.

Other keynote speakers will include Vaughn Grisham, director of the McLean Institute for Community Development at the University of Mississippi; Dan Ripke, director of the Northeastern California Small Business Development Center; Natalie Gochnour, executive vice president and chief economist for the Salt Lake Chamber; and Lt. Gov. Greg Bell.

Grisham’s address, scheduled for 9 a.m. on Thursday, Aug. 12, is titled, “Extraordinary Results in Ordinary Places.” The author of four books on community development, Grisham will focus on examples of innovative community leaders who have created “break-through” solutions to development dilemmas that have moved their communities forward.

Ripke, who also serves as director of the Center for Economic Development at California State University-Chico, will address the topic, “Growing from Within: Creating Local Jobs through Economic Gardening.”

Ripke’s presentation is scheduled for Friday, Aug. 13, at 8:45 a.m. He will explain how “economic gardening” focuses on identifying and helping small businesses with high potential for growth, and therefore holds promise for rural economic development.

In addition to remarks from Gochnour and Bell, the Summit will feature 11 breakout sessions designed to address rural issues. Breakout sessions will include the following:

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2-2-2

- ◆ **Economic Development Elevated:** Derrick Miller, deputy director of the Governor's Office of Economic Development, and Cameron Martin, associate commissioner of Higher Education, will address the state's role in achieving a higher level of economic development success in both rural and state economies.
- ◆ **Challenges in Utah Agriculture:** Even without the recession, the challenges for agriculture in Utah are daunting. Leonard Blackham, commissioner of the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food, will report on conditions of various sectors of Utah agriculture and discuss new challenges, opportunities, services and programs available to Utah's farmers and ranchers.
- ◆ **Striking the Balance with Public Lands and Natural Resources:** Ted Wilson, director of Gov. Herbert's newly created Balanced Resource Council, and John Harja, director of the Public Lands Policy Coordination Office, will discuss the latest public-lands issues and how the Herbert administration is addressing them.
- ◆ **A Platform and Priorities for Rural Economic Development:** The Governor's Rural Partnership Board will unveil a new comprehensive platform and strategy for rural economic and community development. The session will include a discussion of rural Utah's economic future, and allow attendees to help identify rural Utah's economic development priorities.
- ◆ **Psychological Ownership and Community-Based Conservation — Sage Lessons from Sage-Grouse:** Terry A. Messmer, professor and extension wildlife specialist at Utah State University will present results of a recent survey conducted of western stakeholders involved in sage-grouse conservation planning. The survey provides interesting insights regarding the role of trust in conservation.
- ◆ **Public Transit in Rural America — Why It Matters and How to Make It Work:** Ross Peterson, a senior associate with Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates, will discuss three major trends in the United States that point toward a growing need for improved public transportation in rural areas. Peterson will explain how the trends have been coupled with an increasing commitment from Congress to fund rural public transportation services.
- ◆ **Creating Business Friendly Rural Communities:** Bradley D. Baird, business development manager for the Economic Development Corporation of Utah, will discuss current trends in the business market and particularly how communities can support local business growth while attracting outside investment.
- ◆ **Utah Energy Policy:** Dianne R. Nielson, the governor's energy adviser, will discuss critical energy policies and initiatives including Utah energy development, energy efficiency, recent work on renewable energy resources and transmission, the Western Climate Initiative, and greenhouse gas reductions.
- ◆ **Utah Water — Fact and Fiction:** Michael R. Styler, executive director of the Utah Department of Natural Resources, will discuss current Utah water policy and status, including updates about the state's Colorado River allocation, the Lake Powell pipeline, Snake Valley and the proposed Las Vegas pipeline, and the Utah Watershed Restoration Initiative.

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3-3-3

- ◆ **Rural Utah Success Story:** A three-member panel will explain how Garden City — the backyard summer vacation spot for Utah’s Wasatch Front for nearly 100 years — has become a nationally recognized tourism-driven destination on the edge of Bear Lake in Rich County. Garden City’s year-around population is 400, but in the summer, it grows to approximately 40,000. Panelists will explain how even the smallest and most remote Utah communities can achieve success. The panel includes Mayor John Spuhler of Garden City; Jennifer Sullivan, sovereign lands specialist with the Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands; and Brian Carver, community and economic development director with the Bear River Association of Governments.
- ◆ **More Extraordinary Results in Ordinary Places:** Grisham will expand on his keynote address with more remarkable examples of small-town successes.

In addition to SUU, the Summit is co-sponsored by the Utah Center for Rural Life, the Utah School & Institutional Trust Lands Administration, Rocky Mountain Power, Utah State University Extension, the Governor’s Office of Economic Development, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development.

Registration cost is \$105 for the full conference or \$55 for one day of conference sessions. To register, call 435-586-5455 or visit utahlinks.org/urs/.

Exhibitors may rent space on a first-come, first-served based. Booths cost \$100; they are limited to 10 by 8 feet. To rent exhibit space, contact Kathleen McDowell at mcdowell@suu.edu.