

# SUU Government Relations & Regional Services

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### Gov. Herbert and Peter Corroon square off at Utah Rural Summit

CEDAR CITY — Citing reports from the publisher of *Forbes* magazine and other business analysts, Gov. Gary Herbert declared Utah the “fiscally fittest state in the country” during the gubernatorial candidate forum Thursday at the Utah Rural Summit.

“Growth is back in Utah,” Herbert said. “Economic growth is a statewide Utah issue, and the people of Utah are better off when the entire state is healthy.”

Salt Lake County Mayor Peter Corroon, a Democrat challenging Herbert for the governor’s chair Nov. 2, observed that “it’s a critical time for Utah.” He enumerated areas where the state is languishing in education, personal bankruptcies, home foreclosures, and the general economy.

“This race is about leadership,” Corroon said. “We can do better for this state.”

The candidate forum was the centerpiece of Thursday afternoon’s session at the two-day summit, the theme of which is “The Great Recession: Putting it in the Rear-view Mirror.”

The event, sponsored by the Utah Center for Rural Life, is in its 23rd year on the campus of Southern Utah University. It will conclude today.

Herbert spoke optimistically about the state of rural Utah and its economic horizon, pointing to gains in exports, tourism, and small business.

“Utah is No. 1 in America in Small Business Administration loans,” he said. “We’re developing an entrepreneurial spirit here; the best thing we can do is grow from within.”

Corroon said he supports efforts to sustain agriculture, especially smaller family farms, and the traditional energy sector of the economy.

However, he also suggested that Herbert’s administration hasn’t done enough to explore opportunities in renewable energy.

“We can create thousands of new jobs,” he said. “Utah should be a leader in this industry.”

Herbert defended his energy record and policy, arguing that he had been part of the planning and negotiation that brought wind and geothermal power to Utah.

Where economic policy is concerned, both candidates said they preferred a hands-off approach to governing.

“I will listen, I will act, and then I will get out of the way and let local businesses succeed,” Corroon said.

Herbert echoed that sentiment.

“We need to have a bottom-up approach to these issues,” Herbert told some 250 summit patrons. “We need to listen and learn from you.”

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## Gov. Herbert and Peter Corroon square off at Utah Rural Summit 2-2-2

Both candidates spoke of the inherent conflict between public lands and natural resources, and they agreed that the state should have more input over public-land use in Utah.

“But I also believe in collaborative approaches,” Corroon said.

Herbert agreed, pointing to the success of the Balanced Resource Council he created when he was inaugurated a year ago.

“We have state and federal members of all political stripes with diverse perspectives and views on how to manage public lands,” he said. “The results have been impressive — and measureable.”

In particular, Herbert said he is proud of the July 29 agreement between the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance and Bill Barrett Corp. to protect the Desolation Canyon stretch of the Green River even as Barrett develops and extracts substantial natural gas reserves from leases in the area.

“This is a significant breakthrough,” Herbert said. “We worked with all the stakeholders, avoided litigation and moved ahead with a project that will mean millions of dollars in economic development and tax revenue.”

In his introductory remarks to begin the summit Thursday morning, Herbert noted that economic development is a statewide concern, and the people of Utah are better off when the entire state is economically healthy.

“If we’re going to have a healthy Utah, we must have a healthy rural Utah,” he said. “Utah’s future is tied to rural Utah’s future.”

Herbert said the state government’s role in economic development is one of support, not supervision.

“We grow by empowering the private sector and allowing it to create jobs and wealth,” he said. “It is not the state’s job to tell you what you should be when you grow up. I don’t believe in micro-management. I didn’t like it as a county commissioner, and I won’t do it as governor. We will help you; we’ll be your partner. But we won’t do it for you.”

Herbert also quoted statistics from last week’s edition of *Business Facilities*, a popular business trade journal. The magazine ranked Utah No. 1 nationally for quality of life, No. 2 for education climate, and No. 3 for business climate.

“We want to make sure that’s in all 29 counties, not just a few,” he said.

Last week’s announcement that software giant Adobe plans to invest a \$100 million to build a campus in Utah for its newly acquired Omniture business unit indicates that Utah is emerging from the recession, Herbert said.

The move is expected to create some 1,000 new high-tech jobs and other economic opportunities.

In introducing Herbert at the morning session, Lt. Gov. Greg Bell used statistics to underscore the importance of being politically active in rural areas.

Nearly 90 percent of Utah’s population lives in urban areas, Bell said.

“When we elected representatives from rural areas, we have to think of people who understand and can represent rural issues,” he said. “It’s absolutely essential that we keep the connection to rural Utah.”

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## **Gov. Herbert and Peter Corroon square off at Utah Rural Summit**

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At Wednesday's meeting of the Governor's Rural Partnership Board, which he co-chairs, Bell said he strongly recommended resuming legislators' visits to rural sites.

State-funded site visits were suspended for financial reasons, he said, but they are "crucial to showcasing the potential and the needs of rural Utah."

The keynote speaker of Thursday's morning session was Vaughn Grisham, director of the McLean Institute for Community Development and professor emeritus at the University of Mississippi.

Grisham said he studies communities all over the country with ordinary resources that produce extraordinary results.

Quoting management guru Peter Drucker, Grisham said: "The times in which we live are as revolutionary as the times of the industrial revolution. Everything is going to change from this point forward."

In terms of economic development, Grisham said, that means education.

"We have become a knowledge economy," he said. "The key to creating a strong economy is creating a strong educational system. We're not just talking about a high school diploma or a college degree. The key is continuing education; it's to go back and get more education on a regular basis."