

## Southwest Utah Planning Authorities Council (SUPAC)

5 January 2010

12:45 to 3:00 p.m.

Canyon Community Center, 125 Lion Blvd, Springdale

1. **Welcome and Introductions** – Wes Curtis welcomed everyone to the meeting. The group toured the Virgin River Program's recovery activities between St. George and Springdale. Many thanks to Steve Meisner, Virgin River Local Program Coordinator.
2. **2010 Legislative Preview** - Wes Curtis presented that Governor Herbert stated we would be kept at the same level and cut 3% for higher education. However, we'll await the results of legislature. There is a movement to have bed and tourism tax repealed and just have a sales tax. It's opposed by most rural counties due to the devastating impact to rural economies. They survive on the bed and tourism tax.

Utah DEQ said their budget is an issue. They will be increasing fees in solid waste to offset budget cuts. There are a couple of acts that are due to sunset and they're looking for reauthorization. They will look at increasing tire recycling fees and other fees to curb the budget cuts.

State forestry reported that the Forest Practices Act is to be revised regarding timber sales on private lands. Currently there is "no teeth" to support reporting private timber sale. They are going to put teeth in it. They are revising the greenbelt. The amount of county taxes changed and landowners will be able to exclude cattle for three years and still be in the greenbelt. The legislature has asked that they reduce by 4 % on salaries.

UDOT has a 3% cut out of personal services reduction and are able to make it by not filling vacated/retired positions. They are not taking a cut for any projects. They received ARRA funds for transportation.

SITLA was told the legislature is raising the question of bonuses being given in the past. There are no bonuses this year – out of sympathy for the rest of the state they are voluntarily taking a 3% reduction. They are working on updating Land Management Act of 1976 and there 14 other bills being presented that might affect SITLA.

FCAOG reported that Highway 9 is designated as scenic byway and they will clarify management plans during this legislative session.

3. **Regional Economic Update** – Lecia Langston, Regional Economist with the Utah Department of Workforce Services presented historical economic trends using graphs and discussed the reason for the economic downturn. It was caused by the "housing bubble." It's been a long recession in actuality. The best indicator of how counties are doing is to review the year over change in non-farm jobs this month to last year same month. If it is an increase than there is job growth. There are two ways to obtain the information and that is through a hard count under those employers paying unemployment insurance on quarterly employment wages; and the current employment survey is taken on a national sample. Washington County is the only survey in Utah. She prefers to use the real non-farm jobs number for a more accurate view of where we are in jobs. According to the graph we are not at the bottom yet of this economic downturn, but the worst of it is over. We really are going to come out of it but recovery will be slow. Beaver County is doing really well for construction jobs and Garfield County showed

promise in this area too due the Ruby's Inn addition. Overall there is a pattern of economic downturns for which we come out of and this time it will just be a slower recovery. This economic snapshot is updated often and can be found at <http://jobs.utah.gov/opencms/wi>

4. **National Park Service Permitting Processes** – Jock Whitworth, Zion NP Superintendent presented the mission and goals: preserve, protect, and conserve the natural resources of parks and leave it unimpaired. This requires a permitting process. It's called the Organic Act. NEPA laws and regulations are followed during the permitting process. All local, state, and federal agencies use the laws and regulations to permit. Many are denied for resource management reasons which reduce resource damage. They look to the Management Act and implementing general management plans for the protection of resources and ensuring that all visitors to part have a quality experience. They have special park uses but again they follow policies and regulations of the Organic Act to make sure that no resource is left damaged nor is the general visiting public impaired in any way. They look at obstructing traffic, noise levels, and they follow also the director's orders for permitting under special circumstances. Each park has different orders and permitting charges. The 1993 Recovery Cost Act – requires to mandate reimbursement for costs. Zion currently permits in the Subway and the Narrows area. Commercial fees are \$150 for application and the national per day filming fee is charged. Photography is \$50 a day. There are no outfitting fees that are specific to trails but an interpretive course is charged at \$250 a year. What triggered a review of fees was a Model T caravan that came through the park requiring a permit and only 50 cars at a time came through so as not to disrupt other visitors in the park and traffic flow. Check out their website for more information and permitting fees.
5. **Zion Canyon Corridor Council (“ZC3”)** - Tom Dansie, Springdale Community Development Director presented that the ZC3 is a partnership among SUU Regional Services, Five County AOG and federal land managers. Thanks to the partners for their support in getting the council together. The area is from LaVerkin through Springdale. They adopted Vision Dixie's goals and mission to “plan regionally and implement locally.” ZC3 provides collaboration among all partners. They conduct planning and outreach and do not dictate policy but emphasize coordination. All along the corridor they have coordination. USU LAEP came up with 3 ways to develop the corridor providing futures analysis. The Corridor Management Plan is being developed and will include what is intrinsic for a National Scenic Byway designation: scenic, cultural, archaeological, historical, natural, and recreational. Having the Transportation Bill reauthorized will secure their funding. They are currently doing a transit feasibility study between LaVerkin and Springdale. UDOT rural transit program funded some of it along with \$500 from SUU Outdoor Initiative funds. Springdale Mayor Pat Cluff thanked Tom Dansie for all his hard work and Wes thanked the mayor for hosting SUPAC in the community center. It was very much appreciated.
6. **Round Table Updates**

Ken Sizemore gave a year-end financial report for SUPAC.

Mike Empey said healthcare is still in the works; there is another stimulus for highways and water projects.

UPDRIP has hired Elissa Black. She will be here February 1<sup>st</sup> and will be supervised by the partnership committee.

Ron Wilson reported that Kelly Washburn is the new community development officer and used to be with *Tree Utah*. They have a UCC crew working along Virgin River – revegetating with Willow.

Pat McQueary USACE haven't seen a decrease in permits; permitted the Washington fields bridge; Southern parkway drive interchange; and the Mall Drive bridge.

Bryan Thiriot announced the annual Senator Bennett rural business conference will be held Feb 18 & 19 in Price

Marreen reported the Senate passed healthcare bill but ours voted against it. They will proceed to immigration bill.

Don Willden announced that Beaver County is in the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase which will be 68 wind turbines. Working on land use bill with the Wilderness Alliance group.

Clare Ramsay announced that Garfield County depends on tourism and we find that they have been up on transient room tax this year. They are opposed to the new bill repealing transient room tax. Clare thanked the BLM and NPS for not having had controlled burns going this year. Air quality and health has improved.

DEQ has changes with the district engineer and there will no longer be two in the southwest. There will only be one and we'll work with Paul Wright. They will keep the office space in case the building industry awakens. Brad Johnson is the deputy director working with Amanda Smith.

Jock reported on 16 months of centennial celebrations and the success of the events. He also announced that Mt. Danxiashan National Park, China, is the sister park to Zion NP. They are working on 2 environmental management projects for sustainability.

Rene Berkhoudt reported GSENM received 5.7 million dollars for visitor center.

Alma Adams said Iron County is held hostage by Prairie Dogs and is excited about the UPDRIP Coordinator hiring. They are also involved in resolving RS2477 road access.

Glen Canyon NRA showed a John Carter Morris movie to 200 people around town.

Jim Crisp – Working with John Willie on the General Plan for Washington County and other SUU Regional Services projects.

Rob McWhorter reported that 3 major power lines are coming from southwest and wind fields of Wyoming for a direct shot into Las Vegas; lines going through Pine Valley across public lands and Dixie Nat'l Forest and the BLM are working on the energy corridor. 7 appeals were settled at the local level. Timber sales are being mitigated.

UDOT will have more presence in Washington County with the first engineer to be assigned in St. George. He's looking to build Southern Parkway; and they have several projects going on. Look at the website [www.udot.gov](http://www.udot.gov)

NRCS reported that Gunlock is finished with watershed and they are working on revegetation; there are 5 debris basins to review after earthquake; coal creek is using earmarked money

and will work on it in March. Panguitch also has money to do design; and Washington County has money for a community garden. The Requests for Equipment deadline is this next week.

7. **Next Meeting:** Tuesday, March 2, 2010 at the Heritage Center Festival Hall in Cedar City. Meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen McDowell