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Main Street in Price. Local crews have been working around the clock to insure utility line integrity.

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## East Carbon, Sunnyside cities examine reservoir dam issues

By CHARLES MCMANUS  
Sun Advocate reporter

Mining of coal panels near the Grassy Trail Reservoir in Sunnyside has resulted in continuous monitoring of the lake's dam and surrounding areas by mine officials and the University of Utah.

East Carbon Mayor Orlando LaFontaine stated that he and Sunnyside Mayor Bruce Andrews met with the water resources board recently to discuss small landslides, seismic activity and the position of the reservoir's dam.

"The reservoir is currently being monitored by the University of Utah's seismological center and several other organizations," said LaFontaine. "We don't want to start public panic, but we do want to insure the integrity and safety of our dam."

Staff at the University of Utah's Seismological Center confirmed that they have equipment in the area and are monitoring seismic activity.

LaFontaine reported that a slide above the reservoir and possible collapses underneath have apparently pushed the dam as much as three inches up and out.

"Something I want to make clear is that movement has occurred at the dam before and is normal. So there is no reason to get alarmed. But we are taking every precaution and investigating everything," said LaFontaine.

Andrews shared similar sentiments concerning the monitoring.

"We met with the crews from Westridge mine last November and they agreed to continue monitoring the site for another year," said Andrews.

Westridge mine is a co-owned by UtahAmerican Energy and the coal production facility is located northwest of Utah State Road 123.

According to the Sunnyside mayor, Westridge began watching the area as soon as the company started mining the number seven panel.

The panel was located close to the reservoir and reportedly created a cause for some concern from the Utah Division of Oil, Gas and Mining.

DOGMA was also in attendance at the water resources board meeting.

According to Sunnyside and East Carbon officials, Westridge has plans to mine near the reservoir again toward the end of the company's contract in 2012.

Officials challenge the company's plan.

"This is the way I look at it - I don't believe they should be able to mine anywhere near that dam or body of water," said East Carbon Councilmember David Maggio. "Just like Deer Creek was told to stay nearly a mile away from Joe's Valley, I would like to see them have a barrier they cannot cross."

Maggio contended that the Grassy Trail Reservoir is the only source East Carbon and Sunnyside have for culinary water and should be protected.

"What scares me is this - they keep monitoring," said Maggio. "Well, even if they had been monitoring in Louisiana when Katrina hit, the monitors would have been washed away with the people. It is just not acceptable for them to get that close to our reservoir. It is the only water we have."

Andrews does not believe the Westridge operation will get to the panels the company has planned to mine near the site in the future.

"The panels we are talking about are under nearly 3,000 feet of cover. I don't believe they will ever be mined," pointed out the Sunnyside mayor.

The East Carbon and Sunnyside mayors stressed the fact that movement at locations along the area around the lake is normal and there is no reason for local residents to be alarmed.

However, the mayors also stressed that the continued monitoring and the placement of a barrier defining how close Westridge can get to the water storage reservoir is something

Mortensen was hunched over the counter when the parade of speakers began taking the podium to comment on their role in what was lauded as a true collaboration between the county and the state.

A standing-room only crowd of elected officials, natural resources staff and community members listened to the story of a lengthy effort that started at the state level, then wound its way through the county, back through the Utah Legislature and ended with the requisite ribbon-cutting ceremony Thursday.

"Things got started about five years ago," said Dmitrich. "We just pushed and pushed and now we have a facility that addresses the two biggest things in Carbon County - hunting and coal mining."

Utah Rep. Brad King indicated that, when the project was first proposed, it didn't seem feasible.

"It was pitched as a wild idea," said King. "I thought it had a snowball's chance in Helper."

The representative was also concerned that, if approved, the building would end up being a bland structure.

"My biggest fear was that it would end up being a box," said King. "But this building has such character."

It appears attention was paid to create a unique ambiance in the state facility.

Pitched dark wood beams grace the high ceilings, the grace the high ceilings. The back interior wall is stone and, across the way, the other wall is adorned with a stuffed buffalo head and a tundra swan. The concrete floor bears animal and bird prints.

The overall effect produces the feeling of walking into a hunting lodge instead of a sterile government structure.

Apparently, the only thing missing from the vacation getaway feel is a shower, which several employees mentioned wishing had been added to the building.

People attending the grand opening event seemed excited about the new digs and the appreciation spread beyond the employees of the state agencies.

Carbon Commissioner Bill Krompel pointed out that the \$3.1 million building will play an important role not only in the county but throughout southeastern Utah and that the project will serve "as a model for the whole state."

The Carbonville Road project appears to have a number of unique aspects.

The funding was provided to the department of natural resources by Carbon County in a zero-interest loan from the Utah Permanent Community Impact Board, which is to be paid off in 20 years.

"With the package that was presented everyone's gone home happy," said Carbon Commissioner Mike Milovich, who also occupies a seat on the CIB.

In addition to the collaborative funding packet and the distinctive design, the office building has a unique water heating and cooling system which circulates through 27 wells located behind the structure.

The system is expected to pay for itself within five years due to the savings in utility costs, according to state agencies.

While the multimillion dollar project was primarily a county/state partnership, the mayors of Helper, Wellington and Price were on hand to give their kudos and support for the new state office building.

Price Mayor Joe Piccolo stepped up to the podium and commented on the need for such a state office building in southeastern Utah.

"We are an area that is naturally rich in resources," said the Price mayor. "But the richest resource we have is the people in this room. We're continuing to grow as a business hub and we are glad that you are here."

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## Workers trim branches, maintain trees near Price's Main Street



Seth Noyes of Trees Incorporated takes a chain saw to branches that were blocking a power line near

they are interested in seeing happen.

There are 79,500 dams at locations across the United States, according to the 2005 update to the National Inventory of Dams.

Approximately one-third of the dams pose a high or significant hazard to life and property in the event a failure should occur, indicated federal water officials.

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## Castle Valley News Briefs

### **Sen. Bennett's staff to visit several rural communities including Price, Castle Dale**

Representatives from Senator Bob Bennett's office will be visiting locations in Nephi, Castle Dale, Green River and Price Nov. 5 to Nov. 7 to help individuals with federal agency questions and issues, according to a Nov. 2 press release.

Bennett staff members have conducted remote office hours throughout central and southeastern Utah over the past two years meeting one on one with Utahns who have questions pertaining to a federal agency.

Caseworkers are available concerning issues any federal issue with any federal agency including the Internal Revenue Service and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

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### **Castle Valley business woman named employer of the year at annual convention**

A Castle Valley woman was given the honor of Extraordinary Exemplary Employer of the year. Janice Munteer, owner of the Star Theater and Fun Center Grill in Huntington was presented with the award by the state of Utah at a ceremony conducted in Provo.

Over the past two years Munteer has created 10 jobs for individuals in Carbon and Emery counties with a disability. According to job placement specialist Dorothy Carter, Munteer has given 10 individuals a chance to work and progress in a competitive employment environment just as if their disability was not there at all.

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### **Utah's non-farm jobs drop slightly, still remain at top of U.S. employment figures**

Utah's number of non-farm wage and salaried jobs for September continued to drop just a bit, moving down to 4.4 percent growth over the last year, according to information from the Department of Workforce Services.

Even with this slight move downward, Utah remains far and away the best performing state in the nation. Growth remains well above the state's long-term average of 3.3 percent per year.

Approximately 53,500 new jobs have been created in the Utah economy over the past year, raising the total wage and salary employment in Utah to 1,276,200.

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