

Sustainable Development in Rural Utah: Roundtable


UTAH INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAIN FORUM
PRESENTS:


AN EVENT TO EDUCATE STUDENTS IN URBAN
UTAH ABOUT THE COMPLEXITIES AND
IMPORTANCE OF RURAL UTAH'S ECONOMY,
GROWTH, AND SUSTAINABILITY.

APRIL 19TH, 2019 | 11AM - 1PM


SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
IN RURAL
UTAH:
ROUNDTABLE

EVENT WILL BE HELD IN ROOM: FL120

 **CLUBS**
UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY

 UTAH VALLEY
UVU
UNIVERSITY

TONY MARTINES - CARBON COUNTY COMMISSIONER
NICHOLINA WOMACK - CEO FUTUREINDESIGN
MICHAEL KOURIANOS - MAYOR OF PRICE, UT
CHRISTINE WATKINS - STATE REP. DISTRICT 69
GERI GAMBER - EXEC. DIR. OF SEU/ALG/SUEDD
JOSHUA EMFIELD - DISTRICT DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR
CONGRESSMAN JOHN CURTIS

 UTAH INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAIN FORUM
A COLLECTION OF STUDENT CLUBS AT
UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY

EVENT PLANNED BY LACEE MEYER, VP OF UIMF
WWW.UTAHIMF.ORG

On April 19th, 2019 we had the privilege of attending the Sustainable Development in Rural Utah: Roundtable at Utah Valley University in the Fulton Library. This was an event intended to educate students in urban Utah about the complexities and importance of rural Utah's economy, growth and sustainability. This event was very informative and was brought together by Lacey Meyer, Vice President of the Utah International Mountain Forum at Utah Valley University.

First, we had the honor of hearing from Ms. Geri Gamber, Executive Director of the Southeastern Utah Association of Local Governments/Southeastern Utah Economic Development

District. Ms. Gamber spoke about the struggles rural Utah is currently facing regarding economics and development. Ms. Gamber shared some shocking statistics about the poverty rate in some counties in Utah. San Juan county has a 28.4% rate of poverty, and Grand County has a 17% rate of poverty. She explained that these high numbers are a result of lack of resources, civic culture, and many other issues. Ms. Gamber spoke about a few programs that are being implemented to help reduce the poverty rates in these counties.

Another speaker we heard from was Representative Christine Watkins, state representative of District 69 in Utah. She spoke a lot on San Juan County and the issues in the area. She even went so far as to compare the county to a third world country because of the lack of electricity and clean water. The Native American community in the area also poses a lot of unique challenges in regard to rural communities. She is currently working on finding funding for more technical opportunities for the residents of the rural counties she represents.

The mayor of Price, Utah, Michal Kourianos also spoke on sustainability and education in the community. Mr. Kourianos is not only the mayor, but also works as a supervisor of the power plant in Price, Utah. Mr. Kourianos spoke about the community dependence of the power plant and how the closure of the powerplant could damage the community. He explained that the community needed to diversify so that the closure of the powerplant would not hit the community as hard. Mr. Kourianos also spoke on the Coal County Strike Team. This team is working on developing a plan for a few counties that would help address economic development and health issues. Mr. Kourianos also explained that this team was participating in the Alliance for the American Dream. This is a competition that if won, could provide funding for the proposals to help the economy. This could completely change the economy in these rural communities in Utah.

Overall, I found this event to be extremely informative and interesting. It really opened everyone's eyes to the struggles facing the rural communities here in Utah. The ideas and challenges shared at this event can not only be applied to the mountain communities here in Utah, but all around the world. It was a privilege to hear from those who really care about these rural communities and to hear their ideas on how they can be improved. I also enjoyed seeing all of Lacey's hard work pay off. She did a wonderful job coordinating and planning the entire event.

MacKenzie Williams, UVU student