

County powering energy future

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Millard County continues to play a central role in Utah's energy future. New projects are reshaping the region, bringing growth and opportunity, but also new strains on power and water. UAMPS' proposed natural gas plant is unique in this landscape. While many new projects will rely on the grid, this one strengthens it, producing the reliable, affordable energy Utahns depend on.

UAMPS' facility is being developed to power the communities that already call Millard County home. It will keep the lights on, hospitals open, water pumps running, and homes comfortable when demand is at its highest. More importantly, it will help Utahns remain self-reliant, producing the power we need right here, rather than depending on outside suppliers or markets.

Reliable electricity is the

foundation of modern life, but it doesn't happen automatically; it requires planning and investment. The reality is that our energy and transmission capacity have real limits, and those limits are being tested. Utah added more than 50,000 residents last year, and Millard County has grown steadily over the past decade. This project is one way to ensure the region continues to thrive without sacrificing reliability, affordability, or local control.

Residents are asking important questions about how new projects will affect local resources and the way of life that makes this community unique. UAMPS has been partnering with Millard County for decades, and we are dedicated to making sure your questions and concerns are addressed. Our team is working closely with Millard County's utilities and local leaders to advance shared priorities of reliability, stewardship, and community benefit.

The new plant will be built in a location already served by natural gas pipelines and transmission lines, minimizing new construction and protecting surrounding land. Its air-cooled design makes it water-efficient, using about 70% less water than traditional generation technologies. And once operational, it will provide high-paying jobs for local professionals, ensuring the plant is operated safely, efficiently, and with accountability.

Community input is essential to the success of this project, and while this project is still in its early stages, now is a great time to engage. Millard has long played a key role in powering Utah, and this facility will continue that legacy—strengthening the backbone of the regional grid, supporting local lifestyles, and keeping Utahns in control of their own energy future.

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Road rage driver jailed

An Ogden man was arrested last week after he allegedly brandished a weapon at another driver on I-15.

Kevin Eston Carpenter, 30, was charged and arrested with third-degree felony aggravated assault with a road rage enhancement on Oct. 19.

A probable cause report in the case states Carpenter was called into law enforcement by the alleged victims after he had pulled up beside them, made a vulgar hand gesture, and then brandished a weapon. The victims then pulled off the freeway and filled out a report with law enforcement, giving a description of the suspect and vehicle.

Carpenter was later found and stopped for questioning. Carpenter allegedly told law enforcement the victims had cut him off, forcing him into the median. He did admit to pulling up next to them, and "flipped them off, as he was frustrated with their conduct," but denied ever holding up a firearm, but confirmed one was in his vehicle.

After speaking with the victims again, they allegedly reaffirmed their original report, even admitting they "possibly cut off the Kia," but maintained they both saw Carpenter pointing a weapon at them, even as they slowed to give distance between them and the suspect. The victims even state they witnessed Carpenter allegedly point the firearm behind the passenger side headrest of his vehicle as they moved behind him.

Carpenter was arrested and booked into the Millard County Jail. He made an initial appearance in Fourth District Court last Wednesday. He is scheduled to reappear Nov. 19.

GROUNDWATER: Final environmental impact statement set for Nov. 21 publication, followed by record of decision on Dec. 22

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system.

Millard County officials have joined Juab, Tooele, Beaver, Salt Lake and White Pine, Nev., counties in working against the proposal. The ultimate concern for those protesting the project is the long-term effects such water diversion could have on the health of aquifers connected to Pine Valley.

"My perception is it's one of the most important things," Commissioner Bill Wright said at last Tuesday's regular commission meeting. "This is

an important topic. And we need to try to strategize and get partners and do what we can to be somewhat successful. My opinion is years in the future if we're not successful, we're going to be sorry that we didn't do enough."

County Attorney Elise Harris said part of the agreement between the various counties opposed to the project is to share the costs of hiring an expert hydrologist to act as a witness on behalf of the counties' concerns.

"The responsibility among the counties who signed on to the MOU is that they would split the cost of a hydro-

logist as an expert witness, should it come to that point," she told commissioners.

Wright later made a motion to ratify the agreement among the six counties as well as approving the county's official position on the project's final environmental impact statement. Commissioner Vicki Lyman seconded the motion. Lyman said she was concerned that the county would need to build a strong case against the project, if it moves forward out of environmental review, saying the person managing the review process for the Bureau

of Land Management was from Cedar City and in favor of the water diversion effort.

Wright later said if the county was required to offer more resistance, and more dollars, to prevent the project, then he would be in favor of it.

"Obviously, if we need more effort, I would support anything we need to do," the commissioner said. "It's really an important issue for our county. Not knowing with what's happening with the droughts and the state coming in and maybe restricting some water. This is an important issue for us."

GRANTS: Commissioners concerned not enough people know of opportunity

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didn't distribute the funds the state would seek their return.

During its Oct. 15 meeting, MEDA's board voted to allocate \$258,000 in business grants, \$75,000 for new economic development planning in Delta City and Fillmore, \$25,000 for workforce education, and \$50,000 as part of a contribution to the state's nascent nuclear energy public relations campaign being run by the Office of Energy Development. A further \$28,000 was allocated to business grants next fiscal year.

Seven businesses shared a portion of the \$258,000 allocated to small businesses—these included Outdoor Ops (Predator Armor), Vortex Wireless, Hot Hands Fabrication, Hometown Health and Wellness, Stephenson Honey, The Kid Depot and Kousins

Floral.

Outdoor Ops, Vortex, Hometown Health and Hot Hands received \$50,000 each. Kousins and Stephenson received \$25,000 each. The Kid Depot received \$8,000.

MEDA officials did not reveal in their Oct. 15 meeting exactly how much each company would receive, though they did score each application for a grant based on certain criteria, with Outdoor Ops earning the highest score. Officials also adopted a grant match rule requiring each business to match whatever it received and show proof the funds were spent on what the businesses said they would be spent on in order to receive the funds.

Officials were asked not to score any applications in which they had a conflict of interest. The Chronicle Progress reported a number of likely conflicts in previous

reporting when MEDA agreed to make grants earlier this year.

Jacob Nielson, the county's human resources director and administrator, said the MEDA board also adopted new rules limiting future grants to \$50,000 maximum, with a required match from the company seeking the grant.

Commissioners raised a host of concerns before approving the grants.

Commissioner Trevor Johnson said he was concerned some companies could win more than one grant by applying in subsequent years or under different business names—Outdoor Ops, for example, received a \$100,000 grant earlier this year under its DBA, Predator Armor.

"Do we want to give multiple grants to the same people?" he asked Nielson, who coincidentally disclosed earlier this year a 25-percent

ownership stake in Predator Armor.

"It probably is a board question, right? That you should bring to the board because I don't have that answer," Nielson responded, noting he doesn't get a vote because he does not sit on the board.

Johnson also asked about some applications that were submitted but that did not receive any grant funds. Nielson said there were some applications that simply were not complete and so were not considered.

Strikingly, all of the grant applications accepted were from westside businesses. No applications—except for one submitted by Fillmore City that was rejected because it came from a municipality—were taken from any businesses on the county's east side.

Commissioners Vicki Lyman and Bill Wright said more work needed to be done com-

municating to the public that these grants are even available. MEDA plans on granting \$153,000 in 2026 to small businesses that apply.

"I agree that we should try to spread it out among as many people as possible. And I think there should be a restriction on somebody that's already received the money maybe having to wait a certain amount of time before applying (again)," Lyman said.

Before voting to approve the grants, Lyman noted her own conflict of interest—her son-in-law owns Vortex Wireless.

"I didn't tell him to apply. I didn't even tell him about it. He read about it in the Chronicle," she said, referring to coverage of MEDA's efforts.

Wright later made a motion to accept the recommendation of the MEDA board. Lyman seconded the motion. Johnson voted not to accept the recommendation.