

■ Provo Council revisiting city's vicious-dog law **B4**■ Sandy postpones vote on building-height ordinance **B7**

DESERET NEWS

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LEE BENSON

## New oil boom filling rooms in Uinta Basin

**Editor's note:** Columnist Lee Benson is spending the week bicycling west to east across Utah, from the Nevada line to the Colorado line. His columns will reflect what he sees, hears and experiences along the way.

**D**UCHESNE — Want to get rejected over and over again? Try this: Ask a motel clerk in the Uinta Basin if they have a room for the night.

I got an upclose and personal introduction to the eastern Utah oil boom when I rolled into the Uinta Basin earlier in the day than planned. It wasn't that I'd set any speed records on the 15-mile climb from Helper to the top of Indian Canyon, but that gravity took over on the 29-mile descent and before I knew it, I was in Duchesne before lunch time.

I thought I might as well go ahead and throw down another 30 miles or so along U.S. 40 before the thunderstorms started — and stay in Roosevelt for the night. But before cancelling the room I'd reserved weeks ago at Duchesne's lone motel, the River Inn, I called all three Roosevelt motels and received the same answer three times: no vacancy, no vacancy, no vacancy...

So it was back to Plan A. And it turned out the River Inn was having a special on its \$45 rooms. They're going for \$80. "We fill up pretty much every night," said the desk clerk with the take-it-or-leave-it air of someone who was not bluffing.

The Uinta Basin, from Duchesne to the Colorado border and beyond, is one place that is not wiggling out about the high price of gas, or the high price of anything else, for that matter — unless you want to use "wiggling out" in a positive way.

About four years ago, when a gallon of gas started exceeding \$2, the vast oil and natural gas reserves buried below the basin started looking very profitable. The drilling has been going pretty much nonstop ever since, to the point that there are now thousands of wells operating around the clock, producing both crude oil and liquid gas in unprecedented volume.

It's little Saudi Arabia out here, but with greener surroundings.

The "No Vacancy" signs at the motels in Duchesne, Roosevelt and Vernal — they're especially prevalent Monday through Thursday when the various companies that service the oil fields gobble up most of the rooms — are just one indication of the boom. Another is the traffic along Highway 40. I can personally attest that large trucks carrying not just oil, but everything from trackhoes to outdoor toilets to double-wide trailers, constantly whiz by.

Luckily, the highway's shoulders are wide.

The population is growing so fast it's hard to keep track. Brad Hancock, the city manager for Roosevelt, said that water connections in his town and surrounding countryside have doubled since 2004 — from 1,200 to 2,400.

"Our infrastructure is stretched to the limit. We've got people living in tents," he said. "There might be a few high-end homes for sale, but anything affordable is gone as soon as it's on the market."

But for all the growth, crime isn't up.

"Nobody has the time," smiled Hancock. "Everybody's busier than all get out."

Oil field workers, who run the gamut from manning the drills to driving water trucks to serving as roustabout gofers, work long hours — seven-day, 12-hour-a-day shifts

Please see **BENSON** on B7

# Ragsdale asks lawyer to step down

*Says he wants defense to go different direction*

By Sara Israelsen-Hartley  
Deseret News

**PROVO** — A man accused of fatally shooting his wife in an LDS church parking lot is looking for a new attorney to defend him.

David Ragsdale, 35, who was arrested Jan. 6 after witnesses said he gunned down his wife, Kristy, in a church parking lot in Lehi, recently asked his criminal



Kristy Ragsdale

attorney, Greg Skordas, to step down from the case. Skordas said he received a kind letter from Ragsdale, who is being held in the Utah County Jail on no bail, stating his desire to go in a different direction with his defense. Ragsdale is charged with aggravated murder.

"There's just a difference of

opinion on how to go ahead with the case," Skordas said. "He has a different direction he would like the case to go and felt like another attorney would be appropriate for that."

Ragsdale was recently ordered to stand trial in 4th District Court on three charges — one of aggravated murder, a capital felony, and two charges of aggravated assault.

The aggravated assault charges stem from the risk Ragsdale is accused of creating for other churchgoers. Police recovered



David Ragsdale

several bullets from nearby vehicles that were within feet of a father and his two sons as they walked into the church building. Government prosecutors have until Aug. 1 to declare if they will seek the death penalty. However, prosecutor Craig Johnson said it was very possible they would have

Please see **RAGSDALE** on B7

## DEDICATION



STUART JOHNSON, DESERET NEWS

**LDS Church President Thomas S. Monson, center, laughs at a comment along with Sen. Orrin Hatch, left, and Greg Curtis, speaker of the Utah House, during Tuesday's dedication of Utah Valley University, formerly UVSC, in Orem.**

## Crowd of 1,000 closes the door on UVSC, gives UVU big welcome

*Pres. Monson offers praise of education*

By Elizabeth Stuart  
Deseret News

**OREM** — With an enthusiastic eye to the future, Utah Valley University bid a formal farewell to its status as a state college Tuesday.

About 1,000 people gathered to listen as President Thomas S. Monson of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints offered a dedicatory prayer at the newly named school. Lt. Gov. Gary Herbert, Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, and U.S. Rep. Jim Matheson, D-Utah, shared their thoughts about the school's advancement to university status, along with several

other politicians.

"Literally thousands of students have benefited from this institution," President Monson said.

His remarks emphasized the importance of getting an education. During the dedicatory prayer, he blessed UVU students that they "might recognize the privilege they have to study and learn."

"There is no room in this economy, President Monson said, for unskilled laborers.

"The uneducated need not apply' is the unseen sign on every employment door," he said.

The dedication, which also celebrated the completion of the Digital Learning Center, reminded the church leader of another ceremony he was involved in at the Orem campus.

Thirty-three years ago he watched as the school's first president, Wilson Sorenson, turned the soil, marking the start of construction. At the time, the school was known as Utah Technical College at Provo. President Monson was a member of the State Board of Regents.

"I've been to a lot of dedications here and there," he said, with a half-smile. "Never one quite like this first groundbreaking, though."

Sorenson was tardy to that first groundbreaking and rode in on a horse at the last second. He hitched the horse to the bleachers that had been set up for the ceremony and grabbed the shovel,

Please see **UVU** on B7

## 'Modified closing' is reached in iProvo deal

*Final settlement with Broadweave will take place within 60 days*

By Jens Dana  
Deseret Morning News

**PROVO** — City officials and Broadweave Networks may have reached a "modified closing" in the iProvo transaction Monday night, but City Councilman George Stewart says the deal's not done yet.

"A closing isn't a closing until it's a closing," he said. And as long as it's not closed, the city is exposed to the risk the deal won't go through, he added.

Provo officials and South Jordan-based telecommunications company Broadweave Networks signed closing documents late Monday night to transfer operation of the city-wide fiber optic network. The final settlement will take place within 60 days.

Not every detail has been ironed out, Billings said, but the deal is sealed.

"While everything has not been finalized... the transaction between Provo and Broadweave is, for all intents and purpose, complete," he said.

Billings said the date of the final settlement was delayed to allow potential investors to complete due diligence. Sorenson Capital — a private equity firm — has been evaluating an investment in Broadweave and still needs to complete its analysis of the proposed sale.

Sorenson managing director Fraser Bullock was unavailable for comment, but issued a statement saying, "There proved to be insufficient time

Please see **IPROVO** on B7

## Showtime Utah! entertains with Old West music, show

By Sharon Haddock  
Deseret News

**PLEASANT GROVE** — Parley may be a stereotypical sidekick kind of cowboy but he's still amusing.

He's also a big part of the Old West Dinner Adventure entertainment at Showtime Utah! playing three nights a week.

Parley — otherwise known as Drew Keddington, the show's producer — gets in the way, cracks corny jokes, and even tries to sing

with the band.

All the while, he's stumbling and talking out of the side of his mouth in a sing-song Western way.

Miss Ruby, played by Kristine Bethers on some of the nights (Miss Abby is played by Sarah Peterson and Miss Molley is played by Jennifer Cook) — is the friendly grande dame of the "bar" trying to keep Parley out of trouble and run a respectable establishment at the same time.

Please see **BAND** on B2

ASHLEY LOWERY, DESERET NEWS

**The band Mama's Boys performs at Showtime Utah! in Pleasant Grove on Saturday. The Mama's Boys play blue grass, Western, rock and barbershop.**