



Green River Industrial Park announces first tenant



Greg Hunt from Mancos Resources explains the new uranium mill they want to build at the new Green River Industrial Park.

By PATSY STODDARD Editor

An informational meeting was held on Thursday to make an announcement which could have a big impact on the city of Green River. Mancos Resources is looking at the possibility of building a uranium processing plant at the new Mancos Hills Industrial Park. Steve Glass and Greg Hunt from Mancos Resources visited Green River to tell more about the project.

Glass said Mancos Resources will be the first tenants in the new industrial park. They will be renting space from Emery County. The industrial

park is located on SITLA land near the juncture of SR-6 and I-70 on the west end of Green River approximately six miles from town.

Mancos Hills Industrial Park: Mike McCandless the Emery County Economic Development Director explained the industrial park to those present. The park is composed of an area with 3,300 acres of both private and public land.

This park will provide for larger blocks of available land and stabilize the pricing of land during evaluation. A new tax base will be generated from lands that currently generate zero tax dollars. The park can take advantage of federal funds for infrastructure for economic development. The park will pave the way for the generation of new jobs to the area.

Green River City has an industrial park presently which comprises roughly 520 acres, with eight different land owners. Two-hundred forty acres are already owned/controlled by Ecodomaine/Red Leaf. Eighty acres are owned by Green River City, but obligated to High Desert Refining. Eighty acres of private ownership have expressed no interest in selling.

The advantages of the new industrial park lies in the amount of acreage available for a new business to begin. One of the disadvantages manufacturing businesses along the Wasatch Front have discovered is they are being pushed out by growth around them. The acreage available in Green River will allow a business to grow and expand without too many close neighbors.

The new park consists of 2,547 acres of SITLA trust land. Emery County will serve as the developer. There are 800 acres of private properties. Emery County will recruit potential clients and negotiate prices on SITLA land. Private lands will be handled through real estate agents. SITLA lands will be sold to the clients to create a new tax base. New tenants of the park will construct and pay for most improvements. Federal funds will also be targeted for infrastructure.

McCandless stressed the fact that only industrial businesses will be allowed at the site no retail or hospitality businesses. The only request made from Green River City will be the request for culinary water to the businesses at the park.



A map of the new Green River Industrial Park.

The type of businesses the county hopes to attract to the park include mining, processing and transportation, rail served distribution-off-loading, oil and gas services; rigs drilling services; manufacturing/fabrication and power generation. The site is near the railroad and power substation.

McCandless said in the last 12-18 months the companies looking at Green River have expressed their need for large blocks of land. Many businesses from the Wasatch Front are looking at relocation.

McCandless said the county would like to see a revitalization of the Green River downtown. The county envisions the industrial park becoming a part of Green River so the city can realize some tax base from it.

Glass told residents he was a guide and outfitter for many years at Grand Canyon and on the San Juan river. He now helps companies with their environmental impact documents and reclamation plans for mining and related industries. This uranium mill project is the product of a global economy. The need for power generation is increasing across the world. Nuclear power is a very big part of the future of electrical generation. The plant would process 1,200 tons of uranium per day. They would bring in the uranium ore by rail and/or trucks from the local uranium mines. For every ton of ore it produces four pounds of product. The tailings would remain on site. The initial investment will be \$100 million to become operational. The plant would employ 40 people of varying skill levels at competitive wages. A typical labor position could pay approximately \$20 per hour.

Glass spoke much about the legacy they want to leave behind at the end of the project life and they want to plan for that. "It doesn't look like the demand for nuclear energy will go away any time soon," said Glass. The plant will be a wet crushing solvent extraction with dry tailings disposal with a composite cap of the material available on site. Nuclear energy is used all over the world. France gets 80 percent of their energy from nuclear power and the United States 20 percent. There are 438 plants worldwide and 104 of those are in the United States. There are 32 under construction now and 23 of those are in China.

There is a 25 percent shortfall in the fuel required for existing nuclear plants. In 2003, uranium was \$7.50 a pound and it crept up to \$140 a pound in July 2007. It has now leveled out around \$125. There have been 331 uranium leases on 318,000 acres; this resurgence has inundated the Bureau of Land Management with a flood of notices of intent. The BLM has fallen behind in permit approvals.

There is only one uranium mill operating in the United States at this time and that is the White Mesa in San Juan County.

"We want to create a positive legacy where we protect the workers, protect the waters and the environment. We want to protect ground water, the surface and the air," said Glass. "We want to create a long term local and regional economic benefit and give families an opportunity to work near their home."

Glass said that in protecting workers, ventilation is important. Radon gas is by far the most abundant source of harmful radiation exposure. Radon gas causes lung cancer. Glass explained that radon gas is spontaneously generated in bed rock and soils. Radon gas is all over. Glass said they are using studies on radon gas which have been completed to help guide their ability to deal with radon gas.

Mancos Resources has been looking at sites for a year. The Mancos shale is a thick hydroscopic geological unit. Mancos Resources will protect the ground water because the Mancos shale will restrict percolation.



Steve Glass from Mancos Resources speaks at an informational meeting in Green River.

In places where there has been a problem with tailings contaminating water it was due to a leaky liner. The company will also control any dust to address health concerns. The tailings will be dry, but still have a 20 percent moisture content. Evaporation ponds will be set up and any tailings will be covered on a daily basis.

Mancos Resources was looking for a tight geographic area and the Green River site fits. The plant will be screened from the road by small hills. The proximity of the railroad and I-70 were also factors in the decision to locate in Green River. The company has filed on water from the Green River with the state engineer.

The money for the project is secure and investors are calling the company to see if they need funding for the project. Right now the company is in the design and permitting phase.

Glass said the company will be a good neighbor and they don't want to battle with the community. The company will have more informational meetings to keep the community posted as the project moves along.

Glass said the technology has improved considerably from 30 years ago before all the dangers associated with radon gas were discovered. Some people in Monticello used the tailings for cement and plaster for their walls.

McCandless said as businesses move into the industrial park they will bring support businesses with them. Green River residents wondered where the housing would come from for the workers. McCandless said he has been approached by developers who would consider doing housing if the uranium mill project moves forward. The trouble with Green River is there has been so little movement on houses in the area, with only four or five properties being for sale in the city, that it's hard to get a bank to loan money for development in Green River. McCandless said Green River doesn't have a property tax so it's hard to raise money for needed infrastructure improvements. If a company comes in and generates tax revenue then that revenue can help build infrastructure.

Glass said the plant will be two and a half years in the permitting process phase and one year for construction. Uranium is a highly regulated industry.

Green River Mayor Pat Brady said he is very aware that growing pains will accompany any new business venture for Green River. It will be three and a half years before the plant would be up and running, which gives the town time to anticipate and deal with the growth. Brady said the city will work to support housing and the development of streets and services.

Green River citizens attending the meeting still had questions which they hope will be answered as the project progresses. It was clear that Green River residents see the need for growth and development, but they don't want this growth and development to change any of the things they know and love about Green River. The quality of life and the natural scenic environment draws tourists to the area and any development must be able to co-exist with what Green River already has to offer.

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