

Sustainable Development in Rural Utah


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

EVENT WILL BE HELD IN ROOM: FL120

SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
IN RURAL
UTAH:
ROUNDTABLE

 **CLUBS**
UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY

 TONY MARTINES - CARBON COUNTY COMMISSIONER
NICHOLINA WOMACK - CEO FUTUREINDESIGN
MICHAEL KOURIANOS - MAYOR OF PRICE, UT
CHRISTINE WATKINS - STATE REP. DISTRICT 49
GERI GAMBER - EXEC. DIR. OF SEU/ALG/SUEDD
JOSHUA EMFIELD - DISTRICT DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR
CONGRESSMAN JOHN CURTIS

 THE UTAH INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAIN FORUM
A COLLECTION OF PEAKS CLUBS
FOUNDED 1988

EVENT PLANNED BY LACEE MEYER, VP OF UIMF

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I attended the Sustainable Development in Rural Utah roundtable at Utah Valley University on April 19th, 2019. Before the conference, I had never given any thought to rural Utah. While doing research for the mid-term elections, many candidates made certain to point out their positions on rural Utah. Still, being the city girl that I am, I did not look any further into it. This roundtable really opened my eyes to the needs of people in my own state that I was completely unaware of. One speaker discussed what public and private life looked like in rural Utah. Another speaker discussed the issues regarding passing legislation that benefits development in rural Utah.

I never realized how marginalized people in rural areas are. They are not incapable of saving themselves, but they are not given the mechanisms to do so. Rather than preaching and trying to act as a savior to people in rural areas, they should be given their own voice and then listened to. I think this can apply to all marginalized people. We often have a desire to help people in worse situations than us but through carelessness and neglect end up hurting them more than helping. It is important to listen carefully to the needs of people we are helping rather than deciding ourselves what they need and then giving that to them.

Ms. Gambler discussed the link between economic development and poverty in rural Utah. Rural areas are growing much slower than urban ones and are therefore subject to higher rates of poverty. Utah legislator, Christine Watkins, the next speaker discussed legislative issues in rural Utah. She said that rural areas have the least amount of state representation. Without representation, nothing that promotes development in rural Utah will be passed. Michael Kurianos, the next speaker, was the mayor of Price and he discussed how the city is becoming more economically sustainable. He talked about how Price's energy was dependent on coal but that this was quickly changing. Changes in economics and energy sources are a problem for many rural cities. Ms. Nicholina Womack, next, talked about an organization called FutureINDesign. The organization focuses on bringing economic opportunities to rural communities by narrowing the digital literacy gap.

The event was made to be very engaging to the audience. The information was mostly presented through presentations and there were lots of anecdotal stories to keep it interesting. Through this event, I got an insight into the facets of daily life for government agencies, elected officials, and citizens in rural areas of Utah. The most important thing I learned from this event is to always look into something before deeming it unworthy of my interest. I have always been very interested in issues relating to the global world but have realized recently that I need to focus more on local issues as well. I am very glad I had the opportunity to become more engaged in my community.

Shea Sawyer, UVU student