



# Utah Coal Country Strike Team

An initiative to raise incomes in coal-dependent areas

## Quarterly Report January 2020 - March 2020

### Completed Tasks:

#### **Memorandum of Understanding Signed**

The Utah Coal Country Strike Team signed a first-of-its-kind memorandum between Southeastern Utah Association of Local Governments (SEUALG), Price City, Castle Dale City, Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute at the University of Utah and Utah State University Eastern to promote local leadership and coordination. The Gardner Institute provided \$250,000 in funding to SEUALG for this purpose.

#### **Silicon Slopes East Chapter**

Silicon Slopes and Carbon and Emery counties are capitalizing on Utah's rapidly growing tech industry and the proximity to the Wasatch Front, launching the Silicon Slopes East Chapter in Price City, UT. This Chapter's focus is to showcase what tech looks like in Coal Country, encourage and support remote work and bolster the entrepreneurial spirit that exists in Carbon and Emery counties. On **March 4, 2020**, Silicon Slopes East officially launched by hosting an event for all to attend. Local tech businesses took the stage to explain their business and excitement of being a part of Silicon Slopes East. Also, a charter for the chapter was signed by all those involved, including; Garrett Clark (Silicon Slopes), Mayor Michael Kourianos (Price City), Mayor Danny Van Wagoner (Castle Dale City), Stuart Clason (Utah Association of Counties), Meredith King (Gardner Institute), Commissioner Kent Wilson (Emery County), Commissioner Tony Martines (Carbon County), Max Buckland (Salt Lake Chamber), Jared Anderson (Emery Telcom), Bobby Houston (Intermountain Electronics), Lorie Fowlke (Congressman Curtis' Office), Gary Straquadine (USU Eastern) and Geri Gamber (SEUALG).

#### **Carbon and Emery School Districts**

The Utah Coal Country Strike Team awarded two \$25,000 grants to Carbon and Emery school districts to help fund high-quality computer and information technology teacher training, aligning with the IT Pathways program.

Utilizing this funding, Carbon School District was able to have a teacher certify in Comp TIA Network Plus and is now offering the class at Carbon High School. Curriculum material and practice exam credentials for Comp TIA courses IT Fundamentals and A+ was also purchased for the classes at Carbon High School. Carbon School District plans to use the remaining funds to send the teacher again to get certified in Comp TIA Security Plus, purchase course materials for Comp TIA Security and update the teacher's classroom to include a lab where students can practice skills on a functional network. Also, Carbon High School is currently working with USU Eastern to allow students to take exams in Price rather than traveling to the Wasatch Front to complete the exam.

Emery School District plans to use the Coal Country Strike Team funding to support certifications and training in programming and software development. Emery School District plans to braid funding between Coal Country Strike Team funds and computer science planning grant funds to provide meaningful professional development for computer science integration in K-5. Six to eight teachers will be supported through training and funding for new endorsements to teach additional courses (i.e. creative coding, python, exploring computer science). Coal Country Strike Team funds for 9-12 grade teachers will be for endorsements for IT pathways (programming and software development) and certification training.

### **Price and Castle Dale Cities**

The Utah Coal Country Strike Team awarded two \$75,000 grants to Price City and Casle Dale City to assist with regional economic diversification, downtown beautification, tourism infrastructure and community workspace.

Price City has developed an incentive program for businesses along Price City Main Street. This incentive program includes funding for event held downtown, business facade improvements, fee rebates, installation of wayfinding signage, tactical urbanism projects and new downtown residential unit development.

Castle Dale City has used the funding to eliminate slum and blight from the main street of Castle Dale. This will aid in the redevelopment of Castle Dale Main Street.

### **Coal Country Scholars**

The Utah Coal Country Strike Team has awarded nearly \$200,000 in scholarships to students at Utah State University Eastern to provide workforce training in IT and other industries.

Numerous meetings with USU Eastern, SEUALG and the Gardner Institute was held to ensure the group was selecting students that would add to the workforce in Coal Country. Twenty-eight (28) CTE certifications ranging from automotive/diesel mechanics to IT/Web Development were selected along with thirteen (13) bachelor's degrees ranging from accounting, economics, management to technology systems, social work, and recreation resource management.

## **Ongoing/Upcoming Tasks**

### **Silicon Slopes East Events**

Silicon Slopes East plans to work with local technology businesses in Carbon and Emery counties to hold monthly events. The purpose of these events will be to promote the businesses and showcase the region's assets in the hopes that other technology companies will see Carbon and/or Emery counties as a good fit for an expansion or relocation. The monthly events will also be centered around remote working and aid startup businesses in Coal Country with pertinent training, workshops and clinics.

### **Silicon Slopes East Coworking Space**

Silicon Slopes East has been working with the Southeastern Utah Business Technical and Assistance Center (BTAC) with developing a coworking space in Carbon County (Price, UT) and two coworking spaces in Emery County (Orangeville, UT and Green River, UT). Recently at the end of March, these spaces started construction and have an anticipated opening date of July 1, 2020. The developing of coworking spaces in the region will help with the increase of remote workers that find joy in the recreational activities in Carbon and Emery counties. The Price coworking space at the BTAC will be the home of Silicon Slopes East.

### **Tourism Planning**

The Utah Coal Country Strike Team has been working with the tourism directors in Carbon and Emery counties. Together, the Strike Team with the directors are developing a regional tourism plan and also developing a tourism grant program for tourism related projects in Carbon and Emery counties. Grants have been written - and additional grants continue to be an emphasis - to find funding for the regional tourism plan. Coal Country Strike Team funds of \$75,000 will be used for the tourism grant program. Strike Team staff, tourism directors and elected officials have begun work on creating policies and procedures on how the grant program should operate.

### **Carbon/Emery Regional Economic Diversification Summit**

In April of 2020, Carbon and Emery were to host a Regional Economic Diversification Summit (REDS) event but due to COVID-19, the event was postponed for a later date. Coal Strike Team staff assisted in the planning of the event with Carbon's and Emery's economic development staff. The purpose of the REDS event is to bring federal, State and local stakeholders and prominent business owners together to discuss regional economic diversification efforts and the assets of the two-county region.

## **Media and Communications**

The Utah Coal Country Strike Team staff at SEUALG has worked to develop a monthly newsletter for the Utah Coal Country Strike Team and Silicon Slopes East. These newsletters are to report to the communities and partners that support the two initiatives on the efforts and plans in Coal Country.

In addition to the newsletters, websites have been created for the Coal Country Strike Team and Silicon Slopes East to display current and past information, events, and possible plans with regards to the Coal Country Strike Team and Silicon Slopes East.

Social media has been created with the names of Coal Country Strike Team and Silicon Slopes East and are continuing to be promoted throughout the western United States.

Silicon Slopes East has partnered with ETV 10 News, a local news outlet in southeastern Utah, to create a standing monthly news article portion called the Tech Corner. Monthly, Coal Strike Team staff and others write press releases centered around the Silicon Slopes East events and happenings. This is to promote and gain followers in southeastern Utah.