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Uinta Basin's air, topic of open meeting with Governor

Salt Lake City, Utah – Governor Gary R. Herbert will meet with federal, state, local and tribal leaders on Wednesday to discuss air quality issues in the Uinta Basin.

The meeting, which is scheduled from 11 a.m. to noon in the Utah State Capitol's Board Room, is open to the public.

At issue is growing concern about maintaining good air quality in a fast-growing region. Currently, the Uinta Basin meets the federal air quality standards for ozone and very fine particles that can be harmful to health.

Maintaining those standards, however, will depend on continued partnerships between the State, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Ute Indian Tribe, County Government, Local Health Department and others.

"We must be proactive in addressing air quality issues in this area of the State," Governor Herbert said. "The complex patchwork of land ownership and regulatory authority makes this difficult, which is why it is so crucial to work with all stakeholders and create a collaborative strategy for success."

Juan Palma, state director for the BLM, and Jim Martin, regional administrator for EPA, are expected to attend the Wednesday meeting.

"I am optimistic that local, state, and federal officials can agree on a unified plan that balances the state's economic needs and protects air quality," Palma said. "I look forward to working with Governor Herbert and others to develop a strategy in the Uinta Basin that allows us to effectively address the area's emerging air quality concerns."

Martin agreed. "I appreciate the pro-active approach to gather the best data and science and have a unified strategy. EPA is committed to finding a path forward."

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