

Utah Update - March 1 2016

UPMRA Day on Capitol Hill

UPMRA members and State Legislators met together on February 24, for our "Day on Capitol Hill" lunch, which we hold annually during the legislative session. This year, **Rep. Paul Ray** spoke about his attempt to tax e-cigarettes (**HB333**) as a tobacco product, where there currently is only a sales tax. The issue has elicited social media threats against Rep. Ray's student coalition, and the bill has not even had a committee hearing. A separate bill attempting to increase to 21, the legal age to purchase tobacco products, failed in committee late in the session.

Rep Mike Schultz spoke to us about **HB251, Speaker Greg Hughes'** Post-employment Restrictions bill, which was amended with the help of the Utah Business Coalition to protect proprietary and confidential information or processes, and then passed unanimously in the House, after a bit of hazing. On Freshman legislator's first bill up for vote, everyone starts out voting no on the bill, and then a minute later, change their votes to yes. The bill is waiting to be introduced in the Senate at this writing.

Rep. Don Ipson also came to our meeting and offered to answer any burning questions. We discussed **Rep Steve Eliason's HB385** that creates \$1000 penalties for fuel transport drivers who fail to connect the vapor collection hose before dropping fuel in an underground tank. We were successful in Committee to amend the bill and change the word "shall" to "may," giving DAQ discretion in assessing a fine, if a violation were to occur, and there was someone from DEQ there to witness the incident. There are no enforcement aspects to the bill, and the bill's language is already in Rule, and has been in place since 2008. But the sponsor testified that he witnessed two instances where drivers did not connect the coaxial hose, and when he questioned them, they expressed no real regret, so he decided to pass a new law.

The Utah legislative session which began on January 25, lasts 45 days, ending on March 10 at midnight. Appropriation meetings took up the bulk of the first two weeks, and Standing Committees were then scheduled through Week 6. Nearly 1,200 bills were initially filed by Utah's 104 legislators, and 784 were numbered and introduced, with a quarter of those bills expected to pass on the last day of the session.

In an early session meeting with Senate Leadership, **Developing Utah's Infrastructure**, for the coming decades is considered a priority. Last year, transportation funding was addressed, so the focus shifts to **financing big water projects** (ie. Lake Powell, Bear River), and **building infrastructure in Rural Utah**, which Leadership would like to see accomplished through public/private partnerships, with banks providing the loans, and Utah's AAA bond rating, an asset the state can leverage.

Internet Sales Tax is being fought in the House, with house leaders calling it a fairness issue with collection the only tricky part. Most in Utah's business community are supportive of a National solution, yet Congress continues to sidestep the issue. Several States have passed internet sales tax laws, including New York, which has litigated the issue up through their State Supreme Court, and now Amazon, the 800 lb internet gorilla, is remitting sales tax to the New York State Tax Commission.

If you aren't yet, stay current on legislative issues, both State and National, by joining the UPMRA Email List. Contact **John at HillMgmt@aol.com** to start receiving updates.

Other UPMRA News...

Doubletree by Hilton to Host 2016 Convention

The UPMRA Convention & Trade Show is set for September 14-16, 2016, at the new Doubletree by Hilton in Park City, formerly the Yarrow, which has been completely remodeled with a new edgy, canyoneering-themed lobby, and lovely upgraded guest rooms with new beds!

Attendees will also have an opportunity to play golf at the new Canyons golf course on Friday, the last day of the convention, and support the UPMRA State PAC Fund.