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## PST Fund Viability Study Completed

### *The final report from the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)*

Privatization of the Petroleum Storage Tank Fund study was presented on November 20 in the Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment Interim Committee. Representative Steve Eliason intends to run legislation that proposes various changes to the fund.

One recommendation, disclosed during October's Underground Storage Tank Advisory Task Force meeting, is to keep the Fund alive and not move all tank owners to private insurance. The report went on to suggest that reducing the surcharge would make fund coverage more competitive with private insurance, and by raising tank fees paid by all owners, the negative equity balance would be reduced even quicker than its current pace.

### Legislative Issues to Watch in 2014

Senator Jim Debakis has teamed up with a couple Utah County retailers and asked the State Revenue and Taxation Interim committee to look into the 2% Allowance given to fuel distributors for evaporation, loss in handling, and expenses of collection. The statute (59-13-207) requires producers and refiners to remit 1% of the allowance to their registered retail dealers. Independent distributors are not required to remit 1% to retailers because they are the state tax collectors, remitting motor fuel taxes monthly to the Utah State Tax Commission, and being subject to accounting and audit costs, and they absorb any losses if a retailer goes belly up.

Cigarette Restrictions are being proposed, including raising the legal age to purchase tobacco products from 19 to 21 years old, and to tax e-cigarettes at a higher state tax rate. There is also a bill to raise the beer tax and dedicate the additional funds to combat underage drinking.

Gas Taxes ... "Utah Roads are not just for commuters, but for commerce; and without a solid infrastructure, new companies will

not want to locate in Utah," is a message that Utah's Chambers of Commerce have been making as they propose an \$11.3 billion transportation funding package, with increased taxes that could include a sales tax and/or county option taxes.

Representative Steve Eliason plans to introduce a bill that would take Motor Fuel Drive Offs out of Utah's criminal code and move the offense to the civil code if a station owner authorizes a gas pump prior to payment being tendered and he suffers a drive off.

He does not want the police (tax payers) to be a collection agency for businesses that should be more accountable for their financial/marketing decisions. He believes this change in the law will: (1) Reduce Crime by pushing all to Pre-pay, (2) Free Up Police Resources, and (3) Save Businesses money.

### Successful Convention at Zermatt Resort

On **September 11-13, 2013**, 120 UPMRA members and associates made the 2013 UPMRA Convention & Trade Show our most successful convention yet. We were in Midway, Utah at the Zermatt Resort in the heart of Utah's Rocky Mountains.

In spite of a 45-minute downpour, our Thursday morning golf tournament was also successful; with most golfers staying to finish the round in beautiful sunny weather. The free Slazenger golf shirts and golf balls were a big hit as well!

The Trade Show space was large enough for pipe and drape booths, which presented well, and Thursday's dinner was well attended (100+) thanks to Crystal Maggelet with Flying J Management, our dinner speaker.

At the Friday general business session, we had two keynote speakers, each speaking about a new refinery being built in Utah! We concluded the convention on Friday just before noon.