

Ur-Energy's Lost Creek mine set for inspection, then production

Eric Blom
Staff Writer

Ur-Energy is poised to open its new uranium mine this year with the promise of employment in several Wyoming communities, including some from Fremont County, once the North American leader in uranium production.

Human resources director Rich Boberg said his company plans to begin production at its Lost Creek Mine this summer.

He said the Nuclear Regulatory Commission will inspect an on-site uranium processing facility June 24. If and when it passes, the company will be able to occupy the plant and start operations.

The Lost Creek uranium mine lies in a remote location roughly 75 miles southeast of Lander in Sweetwater County.

The Bureau of Land Management's Rawlins Field Office in October approved the last permit for the mine itself, capping a six-year process involving several state and federal agencies.

Earlier this spring Boberg, stood behind a table at the April 25 Fremont County Employment Expo at Central Wyoming College's gym. He was offering uranium-mining jobs to local residents.

"I'm up here because I know there's some good quality candi-

dates we can hire from this area," Boberg said at the expo. It seems his efforts have paid off.

In a recent interview Boberg said his company has hired about six people from Fremont County, including a Lander resident as the mine manager. The hiring process is almost finished, he said.

He said the mine would employ about 61 people and was still hiring for about 20 positions.

His company is almost finished hiring

Three uranium mines within Fremont County are still in the permitting process.

Many of the other employees live in Rawlins, though he said some come from Casper.

The 90-minute commute could be an obstacle for Riverton and Lander residents.

Boberg said Ur-Energy was considering operating a shuttle to transport its workers from Fremont County to mitigate that issue.

The schedule for workers of four days on and four days off also mean less commuting than a five-days-a-week job.

New methods

The new mine will not use traditional open-pit or underground mining techniques, and it calls for workers with different skills from those of typical miners.



A reverse osmosis unit and water treatment and storage tanks are part of the in-situ recovery units nearing completion for the Lost Creek uranium mine.

Ur-Energy

Plans for the Lost Creek Mine include using the in-situ recovery process.

The in-situ method pumps liquid into underground uranium ore to dissolve the mineral.

Wells then draw the uranium-bearing liquid to the surface and into a plant to separate the mineral.

Because of the nature of the work, at the expo Boberg said he was looking for employees with backgrounds in drilling water wells or operating water systems.

Ur-Energy sees the demand for and price of uranium rising and anticipates the industry to mine the mineral will expand. It is planning accordingly.

Boberg said his company is in negotiations to buy Pathfinder Mines, a subsidiary of French energy conglomerate AREVA, and its mines: the Lucky Mc, in the Gas Hills east of Riverton, and the Shirley Basin, 35 miles south of Casper.

"Once that sale is complete, we're going to start working on mining them," he said.

Boberg said obtaining permits for those mines should take less time than Lost Creek mine

because some are already in place, and the first process blazed the trail for the others.

Environmental concerns

Environmental groups including the Lander-based Wyoming Outdoor Council have stated that the mine will hurt wildlife including the sage grouse and Wyoming pocket gopher.

"Neither species is accorded sufficient protections to ensure that it will not need the additional support that would be provided by a federal listing under the Endangered Species Act," WOC Wildlife Program Director Sophie Osborn stated in a letter to the BLM.

Osborn said the mine development would hurt the local sage grouse population and violate an executive order enacted by former Gov. Dave Freudenthal and signed onto by Gov. Matt Mead.

The order is designed to protect the birds and regulate development around them.

Osborn stated plans for the Lost Creek Mine include roads that are too close to sage grouse breeding grounds, according to the executive order.

Cameco cuts ribbon on North Butte Mine in Campbell County

The company expects production to reach about 360,000 pounds in the first year of operation, with 2 million pounds per year in the future.

By Don Warfield
Staff Writer

"We're looking forward to doing a lot of business in Campbell County for a very long time," said Paul Goranson, president of Cameco Resources.

Goranson formally announced the opening of North Butte uranium mine during a reception for legislators, county commissioners and other dignitaries at Gillette College's Technical Education Center May 13.

North Butte is the company's newest in-situ operation, located in the shadow of its namesake in the southwest corner of the county. The mine did indeed get right down to business that same day with the beginning of production from its first well field.

On the community front, Goranson announced a \$20,000 donation to the Campbell County Library Foundation.

It will be matched one to



Cameco veteran Mike Bryson is manager of the new North Butte mine. He previously was operations manager of Smith Ranch mine.

Photo by Don Warfield.

Photo by Don Warfield

one by a grant from the Wyoming Library Challenge fund.

Cameco expects production to reach about 360,000 pounds in the first year of operation, with two million pounds per year in the future. Full-time employment will be about 29, with about another 25 contract personnel.

Please see "Cameco," B-7



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The past 18 months have been extremely exciting for Energy Fuels. In February 2012, we acquired Titan Uranium and the Sheep Mountain Project in Fremont County. In June 2012, we acquired the U.S. assets of Denison Mines, making us the only conventional producer of uranium in the U.S. We expect to produce 1.2 million lbs. of uranium this year.

We recently announced the pending acquisition of Strathmore Minerals, who holds the Gas Hills Project in Fremont and Natrona Counties. We are actively in the process of permitting the Sheep Mountain Project and we see excellent synergies between Sheep Mountain and Gas Hills. We believe that mine production at Sheep Mountain could begin as soon as 2015.

Even though uranium markets are tough right now, we are very optimistic about the future of Energy Fuels. We are on track to become the leading uranium producer in the U.S.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions, and we thank you for your continued support.

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60 144.24	Nd	NEODYMIUM
59 140.91	Pr	PRASEODYMIUM
66 162.50	Dy	DYSPROSIUM
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