

Commissioner's Report

May 2008

Prepared for the State Board of Regents and the Utah System of Higher Education

University of Utah

Rio Tinto's Kennecott Utah Copper has donated \$15 million to support the new Utah Museum of Natural History at the University of Utah. This is the largest single corporate donation in the university's history and continues Kennecott's 30-year support of the museum and the U. When it opens in 2011 in Research Park, it will be named the Utah Museum of Natural History at the Rio Tinto Center. The museum is an active research institution that cares for over 1.2 million objects. It provides unique natural history experiences to Utah residents and tourists through traveling and permanent exhibits, special events, and other programs. It also offers a variety of outreach programs to communities and schools throughout Utah, reaching every school district in the state annually. Rio Tinto is the parent company of Utah companies Kennecott Utah Copper, Kennecott Land Company, and Kennecott Exploration.

Utah State University

The Matthew Hillyard Animal, Teaching, and Research Center—the university's newest teaching and research facility—was dedicated May 8. A state-of-the-art and state-of-the-science building, it includes classrooms, offices, several animal physiology and reproduction labs, and a suite of veterinary medicine facilities. The building was made possible by a \$10 million legislative appropriation and collaborative funding efforts of the Utah Agricultural Experiment Station, USU's Department of Animal, Dairy and Veterinary Sciences, USU Extension, and individual animal science researchers. The facility is a symbol of the state and the university's agricultural heritage and commitment to agriculture's future.

Weber State University

For the fourth year in a row, an undergraduate researcher at Weber State University represented the state of Utah on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., as part of the prestigious Undergraduate Research Posters on the Hill event. Lindsay Cole, who graduated summa cum laude in December with a bachelor's degree in zoology, presented her research on nest site selection by Great Salt Lake shorebirds in late April. Her research was one of only 60 projects selected from more than 220 submissions nationwide.

Eight Weber State University students, who graduated this spring with degrees in manufacturing engineering technology, spent nearly a year conceptualizing, designing and building a senior project that vividly illustrates the importance of wearing seat belts. The seat belt convincer—an outreach tool for Utah Highway Patrol—features two separate single-occupancy carriages atop a 26-foot flatbed trailer. The steel frame carriages have drive trains that allow them to collide with each other at a speed of 5 m.p.h.

Snow College

Musicians from all over the world will be descending on Snow College next month for a "Manhattan to the Mountains" Summer Chamber music workshop. The workshop is slated for June 26-July 3 and will feature faculty from the Manhattan School of Music, New York Philharmonic, Metropolitan Opera Orchestra and the Milan Conservatory. "Never has such a group been assembled in the Intermountain West," said Elaine Jorgenson from the Snow College music department. "This is an amazing workshop with top rate instruction."

Utah Valley State College

Summer continues to be a busy time at UVSC. On May 12, approximately 950 high school students from across the state participated in one of seven technical skills competitions as part of the annual Technology Expo. One of these events, the 3D Derby, is a high-tech, large-scale equivalent of a pinewood derby competition. Contestants raced cars they created and drew using 3D solid modeling software and produced on 3D prototyping machines. Contestants were judged on model design and drawing quality, as well as speed. Other skills challenges were held in the areas of drafting, automotives, cabinetry, and robot rally.

Salt Lake Community College

Salt Lake Community College is partnering with USTAR, the Governor's Office of Economic Development, and Utah's Small Business Administration to provide a new resource to help small businesses across the state. Beginning this June, SLCC's Miller Business Resource Center will house an assistance center to help Utah businesses to win a larger share of federal research and development funding. This center will afford companies the resources to increase the number and quality of proposals submitted to the federal government for Small Business Innovation Research and Science Technology Transfer and Research grants.

Utah College of Applied Technology

Dixie Applied Technology College's Medical Assisting students and staff were invited to participate on the medical triage team for this year's St. George Triathlon, held May 10th at the Sand Hollow Reservoir. The day of the race dawned with freezing cold temperatures and high winds which created treacherous conditions for the racers. The triage team saw a lot of action including hypothermia, sprains, breaks, and some major road rash as wind gusts flipped cyclists over and off of their bikes. Event organizers expressed gratitude and appreciation to the DXATC folks for being there and doing such a terrific job. Medical Program Facilitator, Teresa Gardella reports that the DXATC made a great impression and will be invited to participate every year!

Utah Higher Education Assistance Authority

UHEAA Funds Scholarships as Part of Student Outreach Efforts: UHEAA presented two \$1,000 Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement (MESA) scholarships to first-generation college students, Mariana Maldonado from Cyprus High School and Brenda Torres from the Academy for Math, Engineering and Science (AMES). The scholarship may be used at any Utah System of Higher Education institution. Mariana plans a career in medicine, and Brenda looks forward to a career in dentistry.

Utah Educational Savings Plan

The Utah Educational Savings Plan (UESP) launched the *Refer-A-Friend* campaign to Utah account owners encouraging them to refer friends and family to open a UESP account. UESP continues to receive national and local press coverage, with honors received in this year's *Morningstar* review of 529 plans. Numerous local outreach events were attended, including the Rose Park Community Festival and "Week of the Young Child" at Discovery Gateway, educating parents about the state's official 529 plan. Focus continues on increasing the number of participants enrolled in payroll deduction.

Utah Scholars

Assistant Commissioner David S. Doty and Melissa Miller Kincart, Executive Director of Utah Campus Compact and Associate Director of Utah Scholars, hosted a state team at the first National Summit on Academic Rigor on April 29-30 in Boston. Members of the Utah team included: Lisa Vehrenkamp (American Express & Chair of S.L. Chamber's Education Committee), Al Church (Principal at AMES), Dirk Anderson (GOPB), Pearl Wright (Executive Director of Energy Solutions Foundation), and Lorena Riffo Jenson (President of DPR Communications & Chair of the Utah Hispanic Chamber of Commerce). Unfortunately, Mary Shumway (State CTE Director) and Regent Meghan Holbrook were unable to accompany the team as planned. Participants enjoyed noteworthy sessions presented by David Longanecker (President of WICHE), Charles Kolb (President of the Committee of Economic Development), and Roy Romer (former governor of Colorado and Chairman of Strong American Schools). Additionally, the group spent valuable time in team breakout sessions determining priorities and action steps for the state of Utah. This group will continue to meet and advise staff on the development and rollout of the Utah Scholars Initiative.

Utah Campus Compact

On May 13, 2008, the Utah Campus Compact Board approved the strategic plan, "*Deepening our Collective Commitment*," which has been in development for almost a year. The plan called for establishing a Steering Committee to assist the Executive Director and staff in engaging all UCC institutions in the collective mission of the Compact. The Steering Committee will include at least one representative from each member campus, appointed by its President, along with selected others. Members will serve as liaisons to their President and campus and will be responsible, together with the Executive Director and staff, for planning and implementing the annual services/activities of the Compact. The addition of this committee assures strong lines of communication between the Compact and its member campuses.

Additionally, in the month of May, eight of our thirteen member campuses participated in the UCC Annual Student Leaders Retreat "*Strengths in Connections*" at the SUU Mountain Center. Campus community service staff and students participated in a ropes course, campus sharing and best practices dialogues, and networking sessions.