

# SANPETE MESSENGER

DL 127 • NUMBER 38 | WWW.SANPETEMESSENGER.COM | WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2022

**NORTH SANPETE**

- City bans tobacco products on properties **A1**
- District holds 'Hispanic culture celebration' **A6**
- Hawks put down Carbon, 37-7 **A8**

**COUNTYWIDE**

- Dementia Caregiver Conference Oct. 12 **A2**
- Mtn. America Credit Union offers grants **A7**
- Snow takes out Georgia Military, 41-18 **A8**

**CENTRAL, SOUTHERN SANPETE**

- Centerfield closer to getting water rights **A2**
- Templars upset Richfield, 41-21 **A8**
- Bulldogs take region in golf tourney **A9**



## Intermountain makes big land buy in Ephraim

*Will health care company build a major hospital? Probably, but not definitely*

**By Suzanne Dean**  
Publisher

EPHRAIM—Intermountain Health is in the final stages of assembling a 39-acre site in Ephraim Crossing, and also incorporating the Ephraim Public Works Department yard, for a major health care facility.

Aaron Wood, CEO of Sanpete Valley Hospital and a key player in the land search, said an agreement to carve 35 acres out of Ephraim Crossing was concluded Thursday, Sept. 29. The legal land transfer occurred the next day.

pital board, said. "It's exciting that they're willing to risk. It's a huge investment for them. They believe the opportunity is there for them."

Intermountain leaders, including Wood and Parrish, said the health care company wouldn't spend millions on land without plans to build something big. But what?

A press release from the Camino Verde Group, developer of Ephraim Crossing, as well as a press release from Ephraim City quoting Mayor John Scott both used the term "hospital."

But not so fast. "Everything has yet to be determined," Wood said in an interview Friday, Sept. 29.

"It could be a hospital, but to be honest with you, it might not. There will be medical facilities there, and the scope is likely to be a hospital, but what if it turns out that really what we need is outpatient facilities in this county? That's not a high likelihood, but I have to admit it's a possibility."

Lance Madigan, media relations manager for Intermountain, noted the company has developed a medical center in Hurricane that offers emergency and labor-and-delivery services, along with a host of outpatient services, with St. George Medical Center as a backup. "That is a possibility, that is something that is being looked at in a lot of different venues."

Wood said discussion about making Ephraim the center of Intermountain health services in Sanpete County was going on in the top echelons of the company when he became Sanpete Valley Hospital administrator nine years ago.

According to the Ephraim City press release, the city started lobbying for a hospital in 2019.

"When I first became mayor

(See "Hospital?" on A3)



Aaron Wood, CEO of Sanpete Valley Hospital (left) and Ephraim Mayor John Scott are standing in front of a 39-acre site Intermountain Health has acquired for a major health care facility in Ephraim. They are standing near U.S. 89 toward the south end of the Intermountain property.

*Is Ephraim becoming a boom town? Maybe yes, maybe no, but clearly there's lots of interest*

**By Suzanne Dean**  
Publisher

EPHRAIM—Is Ephraim becoming a boomtown?

It depends on your definition of the term, but clearly there's a lot of development interest in the city.

"The temple is driving things," Bryan Kimball, director of community development for Ephraim City, said. "I have people asking questions about it. That's definitely raising the interest level."

The announcement that Intermountain Health has purchased 39 acres for a major health facility, possibly a hospital, will undoubtedly further fuel the interest.

For most of the past 25 years, McDonald's and Subway have been the only fast-food franchises in Ephraim.

Recently, the city has approved zoning permits for an Arby's and a Wendy's. The Arby's is scheduled to go on the northeast corner of a vacant lot that now stretches along the wet side of Main Street from Splish Splash car wash to Tractor Supply. The store will be just to the south of Tractor Supply.

Wendy's has been approved across the street, just east of Walmart, where a



The first of five flourplexes going up on 700 North 100 East, one of more than 80 family units under construction or recently completed in Ephraim. An apartment development that could have up to 80 units has been approved on the same block.

vacant modular building that formerly housed a Cache Valley Bank branch is located.

More than 80 multi-family units have been completed recently or are under construction.

An occupancy permit was granted this week for the 30-unit, three-story mixed commercial and residential building in the Ephraim Business Park east of

Verizon Wireless. The structure has one, two and three-bedroom units renting from \$1,400 to \$1,800 per month. It also has five commercial spaces.

Construction is about to begin on 32 townhomes in Ephraim Crossing. And plans call for Ephraim Crossing as a whole to eventually house about

(See "Boom?" on A3)

## Mt. Pleasant bans tobacco, vaping on city properties

**By Steve Clark**  
Staff writer

MT. PLEASANT—The Mt. Pleasant City responded to citizen complaints about tobacco use on city-owned property last week by enacting a total ban on tobacco use and vaping at parks, the cemetery and recreational facilities.

The agenda for the meeting last Tuesday, Sept. 27 described the intent of the ordinance as prohibiting "...the use of tobacco in any form in the city parks, cemetery and recreational areas within Mt. Pleasant City."

During discussion, language banning vaping

was added.

The action was taken in response to complaints by a group of residents who said they had been seated close enough to smokers that they could smell smoke, and who also claimed to be caught in vape clouds, while attending events held at city properties.

Members of the group, most of whom appeared to be high-school-aged girls, commented at the meeting.

One young woman complained that she smelled smoke at the rodeo grounds during the recent Fourth of July rodeo. Another complained that she was enveloped in a cloud of vape smoke

when she walked past a car at the city park. An adult talked about how harmful second-hand smoke and vape residue could be.

The council seemed receptive to the complaints, and after a short discussion, passed the ordinance unanimsously.

Jack Widdison, co-manager of the ConToy Arena, said people who use the arena don't smoke inside the building. "If someone did light up inside, we'd respectfully ask them to put it out or step outside," he said.

But an ordinance banning tobacco "in any form" would outlaw chewing tobacco and vaping. "That could be a problem," he said. "We do have a

lot of people who chew."

He said that to date he has received no enforcement instructions from the city.

The surprise of the night came at the end of the meeting when it was time for city council reports. Councilman Lynn Beesley, who led off and who only a couple of weeks before was successful in his appeal of his firing as a city employee by Mayor Mike Olsen and Public Works Department supervisor Colter Allan, said he wanted to address what he called "the elephant in the room."

(See "Ban" on A5)

**Quote of the week:**

*"The temple is driving things. I have people asking questions about it. That's definitely raising the interest level."*

—Bryan Kimball, director of community development for Ephraim City, on factors driving development in the city.

Deseret News is discontinuing their distribution through the Messenger at the end of October.

**Sanpete Weather**

Forecast	High/Low	Chance Prec.
Wednesday	75/39, clear	0%
Thursday	76/40, clear	0%
Friday	75/39, clear	0%
Saturday	76/40, clear	0%

**Last Week**

Date	High/Low	Prec.
Sept. 26	84/42	
Sept. 27	86/43	
Sept. 28	81/52	
Sept. 29	79/50	.02"
Sept. 30	72/48	.09"
Oct. 1	73/42	
Oct. 2	77/42	.01"

# Hospital?

(Continued from A1)

over three years ago, bringing a hospital to Ephraim was one of my top priorities," the press release quotes Mayor John Scott as saying. "...Our city manager Shaun Kjar, city staff, city council and I began to meet with Intermountain representatives... At first, they were skeptical, but the idea began to take on a serious nature as we continued conversations.

"Months went by, and others (from Intermountain) came to meet with us. We asked Snow College to write letters of endorsement for the idea of building a full-scale facility in Ephraim City."

## Search for site

Both Wood and the mayor said the search for a site began about a year ago. With assistance from the city, Intermountain started looking at sites. The company's real estate department liked the location in Ephraim Crossing.

Even though Intermountain is not committing to a specific type of facility, the size of the site makes a statement in itself, said Kevin Romney, managing partner in the Ephraim Crossing venture, who is quoted in the Camino Verde press release.

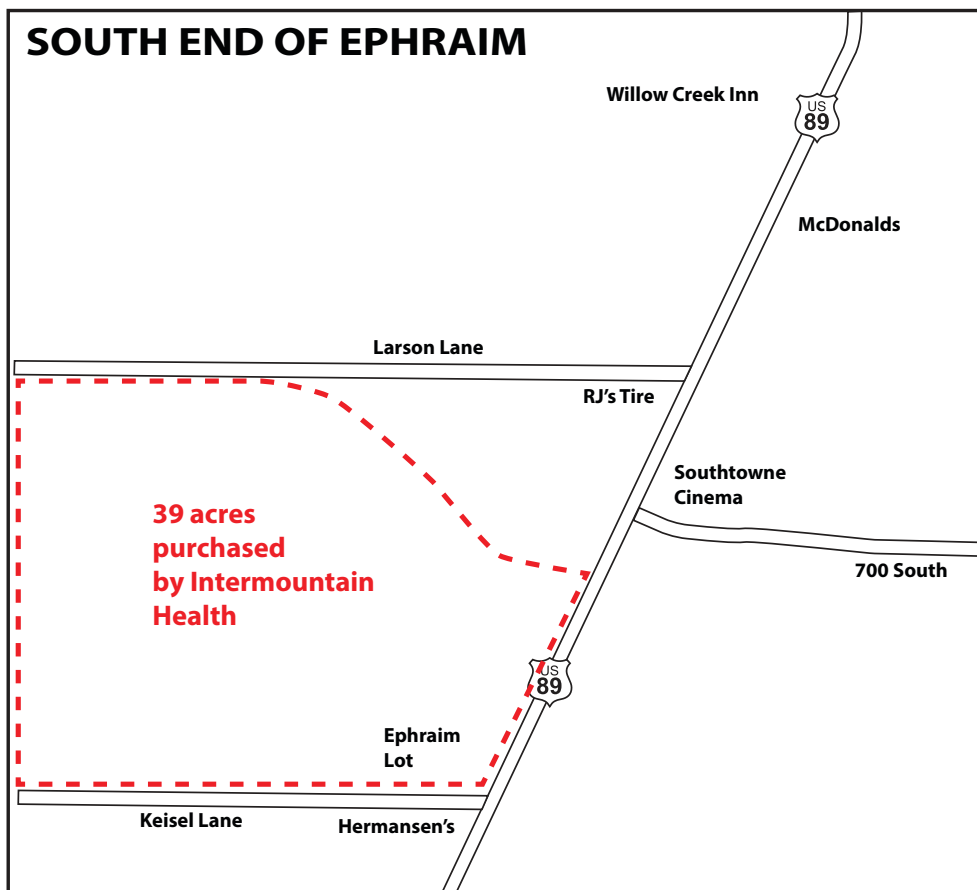
In most of the rural communities where it owns and operates facilities, properties are 9 acres or less, Romney said.

"Right now, this investment by Intermountain will be the largest rural health care investment that we are aware of in the state of Utah," Mayor Scott said, "and I hope it will employ hundreds of people...I am grateful the developers of Ephraim Crossing and Intermountain could reach a deal to bring about this magnificent opportunity."

What happens next?

## Proposal in 2023

Wood said he would like to be ready to bring a proposal to Intermountain's corporate board by the end of 2023. De-



Graphic showing location of 39 acres purchased by Intermountain Health in south end of Ephraim.

sign could start in 2024 and construction in 2025. Construction would take 24-30 months, he said, which would put the opening in 2027 or 2028.

The Sanpete Valley CEO talked about a possible collaboration with Snow College. "The past two presidents of Snow College, both of whom, as an aside, were (Sanpete Valley Hospital) board members, ...were very interested, and we had a number of in-depth discussions, about the potential expansion of Snow College's educational offerings..." Wood said.

## Snow collaboration

He said he could foresee two-year associate-degree programs to train radiology, laboratory, surgical and pharmacy techs.

"For a junior college to provide that, for a small rural hospital to be what I would call a 'pseudo teaching hos-

pital'—I'm going out on a limb here. But if we could do something with Snow College, we could do something on this campus that hasn't been done to my knowledge anywhere in the nation."

Both Parrish, the chair of the Sanpete Valley Hospital board, and Wood, said development plans for the Ephraim site would consider the impact on current facilities on Mt. Pleasant as well as Gunnison Valley Hospital.

What is now Sanpete Valley Hospital "will continue to be a clinic," Parrish said. "It will not be boarded up."

He was asked if the current site would still have an E.R. "I don't know," he said. "Some of these things will be determined as time goes on.... We will continue the building use, you bet."

"There will absolutely be services in Mt. Pleasant," Wood said. He said the current family-practice clinic

might evolve into an urgent-care center with more comprehensive x-ray and laboratory services than in a doctor's office. And potentially, the surgical center built 10 years ago could continue as a same-day surgery site.

However, Wood said, "if we were to build an inpatient facility in Ephraim, it seems unlikely that we would have inpatient services in Mt. Pleasant. Spending the night in the hospital would not be in Mt. Pleasant."

## Impact on Gunnison

Regarding Gunnison Valley Hospital, Wood said, "As we start this process of deciding what services are appropriate in Ephraim, or more to the point, within Sanpete County, we will invite all opinions, all input and be open to all possibilities. If we can work together...I think that's worth exploring. Intermountain wants to do the right thing for

# Growth

(Continued from A1)

700 families in apartments, townhomes and single-family homes.

Five fourplexes (20 units) are going in on 700 North and 100 East near the Bailey Farms Corporate headquarters. In the last couple of weeks, sheathing has gone up on the first structure. The units will have garages on the ground level and living space above the garages.

"There are over 100 units that are still in the wings," Kimball says. One is a 5-acre project on the same block as the fourplexes. The existing zoning permits multifamily housing. In addition, the city has granted a conditional-use permit. "At full build-out, it could have as many as 80 units," Kimball said.

Meanwhile, since the beginning of 2021, building permits have been issued for approximately 30 single-family homes in Ephraim.

With growth almost assuredly on the way, "we're trying to keep ahead of it" by expanding water, power and sewer capacity, Kimball said.

Five years ago, the city had one well, Well No. 1, located in the vicinity of the Snow College west campus. The city now has a second well, Well No. 2 on the south end of town. It is in the process of converting an agricultural well, Well No. 3, located northwest of Walmart, into a culinary well.

Back when the city only had Well No. 1, it could rely on the well for about 720,000 gallons of water per day. Now that it has put a more powerful pump

on Well No. 1 and developed Well No. 2, its wells can generate 1.8 million gallons per day.

"Doubling the water supply in five years has been no small undertaking," Kimball says.

By next summer, Well No. 3 should be producing an additional 1.2 million gallons per day, bringing maximum water availability to 3 million gallons per day.

While the city gets some of its electric power from its hydroelectric plants, most of the power comes from joining other members of the Utah Associated Municipal Power Systems (UAMPS) in buying into power generating projects.

Ephraim has invested in UAMPS wind and solar projects, and in a small-scale nuclear plant in Idaho. The UAMPS investments should provide all

the power Ephraim needs for growth.

Meanwhile, in the past few years, the city has added a substation and retrofitted three existing substations, Kimball said.

He said Rocky Mountain Power and the Ephraim Power Department combined have invested millions in building resiliency into power equipment to prevent the power outages that plagued the city years ago, especially in the summer.

Kimball said the city sewer system is in pretty good shape. In 2014, the city enlarged its lagoon system. It also set up a system to apply treated lagoon water to farmland during the summer when lagoons fill up. And it built a building housing computerized controls.

With those improvements, he said, the system can handle a city population of 18,000, "plus or minus"—and present Ephraim population is less than half that number.

# SANPETE COUNTY HAPPENINGS

## WEDNESDAY, OCT. 5

*Mt. Pleasant Senior dinner*—Uke Crazy entertainment by Sam Blatter and friends, 6 p.m. Pork loin, mashed potatoes/gravy, mixed vegetables, rolls, apple cake, root beer floats. Bring your place settings, and bring a friend to enjoy good food and good company.

*Sanpete Classic cross-country*—Skyline Mountain Resort, first race at 4 p.m., will have 43 high schools participating.

## SATURDAY, SUNDAY, OCT. 8, 9

*Ephraim Stake Conference*—Ephraim Stake Center, Sunday general session will be broadcast to the other ward buildings in the stake. Adult session Saturday at 7 p.m. for all adult members of the stake. Stake Priesthood Leadership meeting at 7 a.m. for bishoprics, clerks, secretaries, Elders Quorum Presidencies, Aaronic Priesthood Youth presidencies, Sunday School presidencies, Ward Mission Leaders, Ward Temple and Family History Leaders. General session at 10 a.m. for all members. The stake presidency invites members to have a personal or family temple experience between now and stake conference. It might be a temple walk with your children, baptisms, or other ordinances.

## TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY, OCT. 11, 12

*Planetarium Show*—Snow College, Natural Science and Mathematics building. Show is "Journey to a Billion Suns" Tues., Weds., 7 and 8 p.m. Shows are free, but please call to reserve your seat. Donations accepted.

## WEDNESDAY, OCT. 12

*Dementia Caregiver Conference*—Six County AOG and other agencies are sponsoring the conference, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Snow College Greenwood Student Center, Rasmussen Room. This conference is an opportunity for caregivers to learn about taking care of themselves and resources available in the community, including VA caregiver support programs. Call Doug Kirkham, Aging Services Six-County AOG at 435-893-0725 to register. The conference is open to the public. There is no cost to attend, but registration is required.

## FRIDAY, OCT. 14

*Snow College Choir*—"In Remembrance," a musical choral concert reflection on lives lived and recently lost, directed by Dr. Michael Huff, at 7:30 p.m. in the Eccles Center Jorgensen Concert Hall. Adults \$10, youth/seniors \$8. Tickets at 283-7478.

## TUESDAY, OCT. 25

*Ice Cream Social*—Ephraim seniors are sponsoring this event at 1 p.m. at 85 W. 100 North. The center hopes everyone will join us! We want to hear from citizens as to what they want to see happen at the center.

**Ephraim Senior Center  
Ice Cream Social  
Tuesday, Oct. 25 - 1 p.m.  
85 W. 100 N., Ephraim**

## CLARIFICATION ...

In the Ephraim story last week about a utility easement, the article said their was a 4-1 vote approving a utility easement in exchange for a future road easement. Councilmember Stevens moved to approve an outside city sewer connection in exchange for a utility's easement and in concurrence with city code and ordinances. The vote was unanimous. Property owner Kendon Sorensen did not agree to give the city an easement for a future road across his property.

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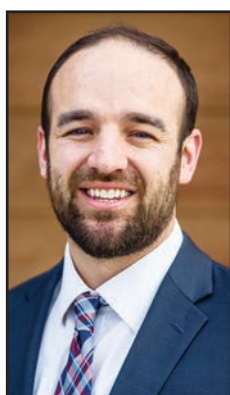
# CENTRAL UTAH EYE

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## WELCOMES DR. BRIAN KIRK

"Dr. Brian Kirk grew up in Blanding, Utah. He received his undergraduate degree from Brigham Young University and attended medical school at the University of Utah. Following his education in Utah, he completed an ophthalmology residency at the University of Missouri. Dr. Kirk now lives in Richfield with his wife and three children. He enjoys running, hunting, fishing, and spending time with his family. He is excited to care for the people of Central Utah!"



DR. BRIAN KIRK

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