

# The Times - News

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## City administrator answers FAQ about hotel project prior to February 19th public hearing

By Myrna Trauntvein

Times-News Correspondent

Nephi City will hold a public hearing on the hotel project on February 19 at 7 p.m., in the Nephi City Council Chambers located at 21 East 100 North, Nephi.

Nephi City is engaged in a number of economic development strategies to increase the tax base and encourage existing businesses and one of those is seeking to locate a hotel with a conference center in Nephi.

"We have developed an answer sheet which we will have available at the city website," said Seth Atkinson, city administrator. "It is also available on the city's website."

The council reviewed the information which will be included in both those places in an effort to inform the public of the reasons the council has made the decisions they have.

Atkinson said that one of the economic development strategy efforts has been to encourage the development of a mid-tier hotel with an available conference space to Nephi.

"Nephi City has recently made investments to additional recreational facilities and provides substantial assistance to the numerous summer events with the goal of increasing the number of visits to the community," said Atkinson.

son. "The City Council began to look at this hotel possibility back in 2013 and contacted a company who specialized in city economic development to assist with this project."

In 2015 a feasibility study was conducted that showed that, with some public assistance, a mid-tier hotel could locate in Nephi.

The State of Utah allows cities to pursue economic development options like this using a tool called a "Community Reinvestment Area" or CRA. The city set up a CRA for the hotel project in 2017.

The economic incentives set up for this project are as follows:

The governing agency of the CRA would borrow \$1.3 million dollars in a public assistance loan and provide that to a hotel developer for infrastructure improvements on the project. The rest of the project cost would be provided by the hotel developer and is estimated to be around \$7 million.

"The CRA worked with all taxing entities in the area (Juab School District, Nephi City, Juab County, East Juab Water Conservancy District, Juab Special Service Fire District, and the Central Utah Water Conservancy District) to

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## Local business owner voices concern with hotel project

By Myrna Trauntvein

Times-News Correspondent

During the public comment period of the Nephi City Council meeting, one concerned citizen asked to comment on the Hotel Project.

Justin Seely, mayor pro tempore, reminded residents who wanted to make comments during this period that they must address the council and that they will be given three minutes each to do so.

Kevin Howell, National 9 owner, said he would like to make a public comment on the hotel project.

"I am here to protest," said Howell. "I have spoken with a number of you."

He said that the city did not need a hotel and that occupancy rates at local motels already in service were less than both the state and the national averages.

"We would have to rent 74 rooms per night every night to reach the national average," said Howell.

First-quarter occupancy nationally in 2018 increased to 61.1 percent, according to Marcus & Millichap's second-quarter National Hospitality Report, which used STR data. (See: <https://www.hotelmanagement.net/own/occupancy-hits-30-year-high-u-s>).

Howell said that the city did not need a hotel and that he also objected to giving the hotel project city financial backing.

"When I met with Councilman Nathan Memmott he stated their goal was to have 54 percent occupancy (which we feel is not achievable with a new hotel)," said Howell.

"The last reported occupancy from the state for Juab County was 51.8 percent while the state occupancy average is above 65 percent," he said. "Adding more hotel rooms to Nephi will only make Juab County's occupancy numbers go down."

Howell said that, currently in Utah there are 23 counties that report their occupancy figures; of those figures, Juab county ranks in the bottom three.

Howell provided the link where he gathered his information: [https://travel.utah.gov/wp-content/uploads/tourism\\_county\\_profiles\\_2017\\_2018.pdf](https://travel.utah.gov/wp-content/uploads/tourism_county_profiles_2017_2018.pdf)

"They (travel.utah) have yet to publish 2018 figures but in checking with the county the transient room taxes collected for 2018 are 10 percent lower than the previous year, which lines up with our drop in business for 2018," Howell said.

Comments from the council are not made in rebuttal during the public comments period.

The council said, later in the evening, that those seeking the city's answers about the Hotel Project could visit: <https://www.nephi.utah.gov/368/Hotel-Project> or the go to the Facebook page entitled "Nephi City--City Government."



## Recycling services set to begin this spring; residents must sign up to participate

By Myrna Trauntvein

Times-News Correspondent

Recycling of materials that are currently ending up in the county landfill may be possible for those opting into a new service to become available this spring.

"Last year the city issued a Request for Proposals for recycling services in Nephi City," said Seth Atkinson, city administrator. "The city received

one response from a company called Recyclops."

For the service, each resident who wants to be part of the recycling program, will pay \$9.50 per month for 104 bags a year regardless if the resident uses all of the bags. If a resident uses more than 104 bags a year, that resident will pay an additional fee to be determined by Recyclops with the consent of city.

The city reviewed Recyclops' proposal with a subcommittee

made up of council members and staff, said Atkinson. The recommendation from the subcommittee was to pursue the proposal from Recyclops.

Ryan Smith is the owner of Recyclops, said Atkinson.

When the city first received the bid from Smith, he said, the company had agreed to provide service to Mapleton

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## Mona man killed in avalanche in Summit County

A man who died Saturday after being buried in an avalanche while snowmobiling in the Chalk Creek area of Summit County has been identified as 49-year-old Jason Lyman of Mona.

The Summit County Sheriff's Office said Lyman died Saturday in the East Fork of Chalk Creek around midday.

The victim's companions dug him out after 30-40 minutes, when they began CPR, according to Summit County Sheriff's Lt. Andrew Wright. Lifesaving efforts were made for another 40 minutes as Utah Department of Public Safety helicopter arrived and transported Lyman to an Evanston, Wyoming, hospital where he died.

No one else was injured in the incident.

Three snowmobilers, including a 14-year-old boy, were riding in the area of Summit

County when the avalanche was triggered that buried one man, Wright said.

Utah Avalanche Control reported that both the man who was buried and his friend had beacons, but "were not skilled at its use," and neither brought a probe.

Officials received information from an avalanche beacon about 1:20 p.m., Wright said.

A Department of Public Safety helicopter located the victim and transported him to an Evanston medical center, Wright said. The man was declared dead at the hospital as a result of the injuries he suffered from being buried in the avalanche.

The avalanche was an estimated 500-600 feet wide and between four and 10 feet deep at the tip, according to an e-mailed statement from the sheriff's office.

No one else was injured.

Lyman was the second resident of Juab County to die as the result of an avalanche this year.

On Jan 18, an avalanche occurred north of Electric Lake in Emery County. Michael Besendorfer, a backcountry skier, was killed in the avalanche.

According to the Utah Avalanche Center, there have been four fatalities as a result of avalanches in the state this year.

They were: February 9, 2019, Uintas Accident, Chalk Creek, Snowmobiler; February 7, 2019, Southwest Accident, Circleville Mountain, Snowmobiler; (On the same day another Utahian was killed in an avalanche in Bonneville County, Idaho, outside Idaho Falls.) January 25, 2019, Moab Accident: East Face Laurel Peak, Snowmobiler; January 18, 2019, Skyline, Accident: Electric Lake, Skier.



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