

EI-30126

I have lived in the Uinta Basin for the better part 33 years. In that time, I have wondered many a time as to why the railroad never crossed into the area. In my travels and works around the country I have found that areas with rail tend to have a more sustainable economy because of the things the rail has to offer and brings into those areas.

When looking at areas that have an “inland port”, there is so much more than what is in the Basin. Their economies aren’t based on one single industry, which ours does seem to be. I have heard the complaints about this venture being entirely based upon the oilfield, and though it may be the huge contributor to this it does not stand alone. It opens other options for shipping products and services into the Basin. More products and services mean more options for stores, restaurants and the like. Meaning more people moving to or visiting the Basin. Meaning more money in the Basin.

Because of the Basin and my line of work, when shipping something in a high quantity or of large mass across the country, I tend to think of a nice and shiny Pete driving across the countryside highway but alas there is another option, one of which I tend to lean towards believing is a better option. I would much rather see thirty rail cars of sand chugging into the basin to keep the local industry going than quite so many trucks on the road. Compare a single rail car at around 100 tons of sand to the four to five trucks it would take to haul the same amount of sand in from Craig, Price, Rock Springs or Grand Junction. That not only puts wear and tear on the truck, driver, and highway, but raises the chances of environmental contamination issues due to accidents that could potentially occur and spills happening each time it is handled.

I have heard many people voicing their concerns as to what the railroad would do to the local trucking industry, though in the next breath they are complaining about how many trucks are on the road. This would take some of the truck traffic down, but it would not eliminate it completely. There, of course, would still be plenty of trucking opportunities for whatever comes in by rail, opening an entirely new avenue of work meaning more employment prospects, several of them putting those drivers home in their own beds at night.

Having the oilfield on the side of getting the railroad here makes it see like it is going to be an ecological disaster, but such is not the case. It opens it the avenues of shipping the biproducts of the oilfield at a much less cost logistically, allowing it to be produced at a lower cost, upping the chance of the price of the Utah Black Wax oil per barrel going up. It allows the materials and equipment being used to produce our oil to be shipped at a cheaper rate and costing less for the operators in the long run, opening them up to invest further into the Uinta Basin. Don’t know if many others have noticed this, but when a community helps the oilfield, it helps the community.

I know this all may just be my two cents, and I don’t know if I am on the losing side of this battle or not, but the sake of progression of our Basin I certainly hope not.