

Final paperwork steps transfer fed land to Yerington

Keith Trout, 8:52 a.m. PDT August 21, 2015



(Photo: Keith Trout/Mason Valley News)

A happy group of city of Yerington, Nevada Copper and Lyon County officials watched as Yerington Mayor George Dini signed the recording document Thursday afternoon that made the 10,055 acres of former Bureau of Land Management land become city property.

After this, Yerington will annex this property into the city boundaries and later most of the property will be conveyed to Nevada Copper, part of a previously approved agreement between Yerington and the copper company, so that the city will be able to collect sales tax and net proceeds of mines taxes from Nevada Copper when it begins mining the property.

Earlier in the day, the BLM state office completed the conveyance of the property, which came as a result of federal legislation that called for the conveyance of the property about seven miles southeast of the current Yerington center, by issuing patents on the 10,055 acres of public lands to the city.

"This is a momentous occasion for the city of Yerington and Lyon County," Mayor Dini said. "It's been a long road to get to this point and we have succeeded in overcoming every obstacle and hurdle put in front of us. Lest there be any doubt, the city is ready, and Nevada Copper can start development of this project immediately; we want this project to start as soon as possible."



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Council approves MOA to accelerate land conveyance

[\(http://www.rgj.com/story/news/local/mason-valley/2015/07/20/council-approves-moa-accelerate-land-conveyance/30414739/\)](http://www.rgj.com/story/news/local/mason-valley/2015/07/20/council-approves-moa-accelerate-land-conveyance/30414739/)

"The completion of the conveyance is an example of the effective coordination between the BLM and city of Yerington," said Sierra Front field manager Leon Thomas.

"Yahoo," said Tim Arnold, vice president of operations for Nevada Copper, after the paperwork had been signed and filed with the Lyon County Recorder's office. "Tim Dyhr (Nevada Copper vice president, environmental and external relations) and his crew did an awful lot of hard work. They deserve accolades from the community, along with the city, and our thanks."

He said the next step is for Nevada Copper to obtain the remaining financing for the copper mining project at its Pumpkin Hollow site.

U.S. Sen. Dean Heller and House Rep. Mark Amodei issues releases Thursday applauding the city and Nevada Copper for completing this step. Both were involved since the early days, covering the several years bills were in Congress for the conveyance, before finally being approved and signed by President Barack Obama last December.

"I thank God it's done," Lyon County manager Jeff Page said.

"Now it's the city's problem," he joked.

He said the next major step will be for the city and county "to figure out what to do with all the population" expected to come with the mine construction and operations.

Nevada Copper has projected that it would hire 900 to 1,100 people at full production.

Nevada Copper and the city sought the land conveyance as then with all the land in private property rather than federal, the permitting would go through the state of Nevada rather than through the federal government. Mining company officials have said that could speed up the project by two years.

The city sought the property to add taxable property to the city and so some of the property could be used for economic development, which could continue after the mine leaves, and recreational property.

"It's a great feeling to have been involved in this since the first day," Yerington city manager Dan Newell said after the document signing. "I can't explain the feeling I have. I look forward to getting it (land acquired) annexed into the city. We've gotten this far."

After the annexation, another agreement would be developed between the city and Nevada Copper to convey about 9,130 acres of the 10,055 acres acquired to Nevada Copper for the development of the mine, with the city retaining the remainder for its projects, including a concert site and other recreational purposes, such as an offroad motorcycle facility.

“Congratulations to the city of Yerington and Lyon County for how these lands will free the community to chart its own economic future in ways not readily available to most of Northern Nevada,” Amodei said. “I think this success story stands as an example of how, with some patience and persistence, the legislative process can work when the focus is on the issues and not political sport.

“The Pumpkin Hollow project and the surrounding multiple use development will have economic benefits across western Nevada for years to come.”

“Today is a great day for the city of Yerington, and the entire state of Nevada, as we are finally able to see the hard work committed by various stakeholders come to fruition,” Heller said. “As I have said before, this land conveyance will jumpstart commercial development, mining, energy generation, ranching, and timber work activities while providing a much-needed economic boost to one of the counties hit hardest by the recession.”

The conveyance became law during the 113th Congress as part of a historic package of Northern Nevada lands bills advanced in a bipartisan, transparent process by the entire Nevada Congressional delegation. The conveyance was a part of the Northern Nevada Land Conservation and Economic Development Act, which was section 3009 of the National Defense Authorization Act.

This legislation enabled Yerington to partner with Nevada Copper to purchase, at fair market value, and develop the BLM land surrounding the Pumpkin Hollow project. It also designated approximately 48,000 acres in southern Lyon County as the Wovoka Wilderness Area.

Initially, Congressman Amodei, and later Congressman Steven Horsford, teamed with senators Heller and Harry Reid, to introduce the Lyon County Economic Development and Conservation Act, which eventually became part of the Northern Nevada Lands Act and the Defense Act for final approval.

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