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CHRISTOPHER TOMLINSON/The Daily Sentinel

Swimmers use the Orchard Mesa Community Center Pool, which was paid for and has been operated under a 1982 agreement that split the costs evenly between School District 51, the city of Grand Junction and Mesa County. The county paid only half its share in 2011 and nothing in 2012, according to its correspondence to the city and school district and documents provided by Mesa County. The city has stepped in to pay the county's share of operating costs, according to the Grand Junction Parks and Recreation director.

County stops pool funds

Mesa commission mulls end to Orchard Mesa facility commitment

By EMILY SHOCKLEY
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The funding future of the Orchard Mesa Community Center Pool is treading water as Grand Junction city councilors and Mesa County commissioners prepare to discuss who should pay for the public facility.

The county, city and School District 51 signed a Memorandum of Understanding and a Memorandum of Agreement in July 1982 agreeing to evenly split construction, renovation and operation costs for the pool facility between the city and the county. The school district became responsible for the pool's electrical costs in 1987.

In 2010, city staff learned the county was not interested in continuing to pay half of the costs for the pool at 2736 Unaweep Ave. There was no formal letter announcing the change, accord-

"The last board (of county commissioners) did not feel it was the role of county government to be in charge of recreation aside from providing places to recreate, like the fairgrounds."
TOM FISHER
Mesa County administrator

"It's a facility we all share in and we should all contribute to. It's not as though (the Mesa County commissioners) don't have the resources to pay for it."
BENNETT BOESCHENSTEIN
Grand Junction city councilman

ing to city Parks and Recreation Director Rob Schoeber. But a letter followed in February 2012 from then-Mesa County Administrator Chantal Unfug to Grand Junction City Manager Rich Englehart and District 51 Superintendent Steve Schultz saying, in

part, "Unfortunately, our adopted 2011 and 2012 budgets do not include funds for the Orchard Mesa Pool and we are proposing that this be the final payment."

The letter indicates it came with a \$44,000 payment for the 2011 budget year. The county's share for that year was supposed

to be \$88,672, according to documents provided by the county. The county also paid \$250 less than its 50 percent share in 2009, \$981 less than its share in 2010 and none of its \$102,203 share in 2012, according to those documents.

Commissioners in those years decided not to fund the pool due to budget constraints and a sentiment that a swimming pool is more aligned with the mission of city government than a county government, County Administrator Tom Fisher said.

"The last board did not feel it was the role of county government to be in charge of recreation aside from providing places to recreate, like the fairgrounds," Fisher said.

The current board is leaning that way as well but is not sure the letter from Unfug was

See **POOL**, page 10A ➤

Airliner flew too slowly before crash

Investigators say jet nearly stalled as it tried to land at San Francisco

WIRE REPORTS

SAN FRANCISCO — The doomed Asiana Airlines jetliner came perilously close to stalling before the pilot made a last-second attempt to abort landing and crashed into a sea-wall bordering a San Francisco International Airport runway, injuring dozens on board and killing two teenage passengers, transportation safety investigators said Sunday.

The airline said the pilot at the controls had little experience flying that type of plane.

Investigators also said they were looking into the possibility that rescue crews ran over one of the two teenagers killed in the crash on Saturday. Officials released the details without explaining why the pilots were flying so slow — or why rescue officials didn't see the girl.

Altogether, 305 of the 307 people aboard made it out alive in what survivors and rescuers described as nothing less than astonishing, after a frightful scene of fire burning inside the



DEBORAH HERSMAN
NTSB chairwoman

"We are not talking about a few knots here or there," said NTSB chairwoman

fuselage, pieces of the aircraft scattered across the runway and people fleeing for their lives.

Preliminary analysis of flight data and cockpit recordings shows that the plane's speed was "below target," said National Transportation Safety Board Chairwoman Deborah Hersman at a media briefing on Sunday.

"The (actual) speed was significantly below" the 137 knots, or 157 mph, the crew had reported to air traffic controllers, Hersman said. "We are not

See **AIRLINER**, page 10A ➤



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS/National Transportation Safety Board

The wreckage of Asiana Airlines Flight 214 sits at San Francisco International Airport. Flight data and communications indicate the jet's engines were at idle when someone on the crew tried to accelerate the aircraft seconds before impact.

How Fruita, Moab began to draw cyclists

By JEFF CASPERSEN
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One's an old uranium-mining town. Another rests smack dab in the middle of oil and gas country.

From unlikely blue-collar roots, two of the planet's premier mountain biking destinations took form.

In 1983, the Groffs — father John and sons Bill and Robin — sought a new business opportunity in the wake of the uranium bust in tiny Moab, Utah.

In the spring of 1995, Troy Rarick and Rondo Buecheler saw potential in little Fruita, Colo., launching a business venture that would help reshape the high-desert hamlet's future.

A dozen years apart, both groups chose to open bike shops. And both shops were at the forefront of mountain

biking movements that vaulted each municipality to international prominence.

Fat-tire innovation

Mountain bikes were very much in their infancy when the Groffs opened Rim Cyclery in 1983.

Bill's son, Kelby, manages the shop these days. He was 10 years old when his grandfather, father and uncle got the chain turning on Rim Cyclery, Moab's first bike shop.

"Oh yeah, I mean, when we started there was no such thing as mountain bikes 30 years ago," Kelby said from within the walls of the iconic shop, which sits inconspicuously about a block off Main Street.

While mountain bikes had yet to be mass-produced, innovative cyclists had long

Mountain biking meccas



CHRISTOPHER TOMLINSON/The Daily Sentinel

Riders climb up Slickrock Trail in the Sand Flats Recreation Area recently near Moab, Utah. Only about 100 miles apart, Moab and Fruita have become internationally known mountain biking destinations.

been slapping fat tires on their steeds by the time the Groffs set up shop, long before mountain biking evolved into a booming industry.

"People were customizing their cruisers with bigger tires," Kelby said. "When people started production of mountain bikes, within a year of being open, we were like, 'Oh, yeah, we know places where you can ride that.' We went up to the slickrock, and

history was made."

These days, bike shops, gear shops and guiding outfits peddling outdoor adventures of all flavors line Main Street, and mountain bikers line the hundreds of miles of trail in the Moab area.

Outdoor recreation and the tourist traffic it lures has replaced mining as the industry that drives Moab.

See **FRUITA**, page 8A ➤

Utah city markets self as multisport playground

By JEFF CASPERSEN
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As Moab nears in the distance on U.S. Highway 191, the billboards advertise adventures of all sorts.

One peddles skydiving, another hot air balloon rides.

Off to the right, dirt bikes kick up clouds of red dust. Mountain bikes and all-terrain vehicles are a ubiquitous sight.

Moab is a desert playground offering excursions of all types.

Pick your adventure. Raft or kayak the Colorado River, hike in a national park, play golf, scale sandstone with your climbing gear or tackle one of countless trails perched atop a dirt bike, ATV or mountain bike. Gear stores and guiding outfits for sports of all sorts line Main Street.

See **PLAYGROUND**, page 8A ➤

MAKING TRACKS TO FRUITA

GO ONLINE TO READ THE ENTIRE SERIES OF STORIES COMPARING MOAB AND FRUITA'S BIKING SCENES

GJSENTINEL.COM

FRUITA: Trail work proceeded without involving the BLM

► Continued from Page One

“We started seeing mountain bike companies spring up, and then more river companies,” said Marian DeLay, executive director of Moab Area Travel Council. “Some river companies have been here for 50 years, but we started seeing more and more of them come here.”

From the motorized crowd with their jeeps, dirt bikes and ATVs to the mountain bikers and rafters, Moab’s tie to tourism kept growing. “It’s just been a steady uphill climb ever since,” DeLay said.

Grand County, which is predominantly public land managed by state or federal agencies, entertains big, big numbers of recreation enthusiasts these days.

According to the National Park Service, 1,070,577 visits were made to Arches National Park in 2012, with an additional 452,952 visits for Canyonlands National Park.

A report put together by the Bureau of Land Management with data tabulated from Oct. 1, 2011, to Sept. 30, 2012, estimated a total of 1,827,678 visits for its 77 Moab field office sites. That factors in visitors partaking in recreation activities of all types.

Moab’s array of outdoors offerings and festivals keeps the

area’s 1,858 hotel rooms, 48 bed and breakfast rooms, 312 condos, 1,230 privately operated campsites or cabins and more than 750 federally designated campsites — numbers provided by the Moab Area Travel Council — hot commodities.

Legions of riders

Rarick recalls being recruited to manage a shop in Moab when the chance to open up

shop in Fruita surfaced.

“I was just thinking, ‘This has got so much potential here,’” he said. “That’s kind of what started it all. We started building trails, and we did the fat tire festival. That’s how we let people know we have awesome biking in

“The BLM kind of got caught behind the eight-ball and said, ‘Wait a minute. You can’t just do that.’”

SCOTT WINANS

President, Colorado Plateau Mountain Bike Trail Association

Fruita. Now, it’s iconic all over the world.”

Eighteen Fruita Fat Tire Festivals later, and Fruita is every bit the mountain biking destination Rarick and fellow mountain biking enthusiasts envisioned. People visit from all corners of the globe to ride Fruita.

That lever pull produced a jackpot.

With a lot of help, of course.

The Colorado Plateau Mountain Bike Trail Association and the Grand Valley’s legions of adventure-craving mountain bikers — luminaries such as Rarick and behind-the-scenes contributors alike — helped shape the first-rate trail sys-



CHRISTOPHER TOMLINSON/The Daily Sentinel

tements that grace the area. Relationships with federal agencies like the BLM and the U.S. Forest Service were cultivated, and old cow trails grew into the beloved singletrack that draws so many to western Colorado for two-wheeled adventure.

“Trail building began on public land without involving the BLM,” Scott Winans, president of the mountain bike trail association, said. “We just started riding cow trails, and making trails and formalizing them, and then that all came to a head as the BLM kind of got caught behind the eight-ball and said, ‘Wait a minute. You

can’t just do that.’

“But it’s already there, and there’s already all this use, so there was a big period of time where that all got reconciled in public forums and, through those beginnings and those years of the mid-’90s to present, mountain biking as an industry and just as a sport has grown dramatically.”

Other hot spots

With Fruita and Moab as examples, other areas are attempting to cash in on the mountain biking phenomenon.

And Rarick is often involved in this process.

Although he sold the down-

town Fruita shop to George Gatseos and Ross Schnell a few years ago, Rarick still advocates for the Over the Edge brand. The company has since set up shop in Hurricane, Utah, Sedona, Ariz., and Melbourne, South Australia. He’s always scouting the globe for spots with mountain biking potential.

“We continue to try to duplicate what happened in Fruita in other spots,” Rarick said.

But it all started with that roll of the dice nearly two decades ago.

“A lot of people don’t understand the fact that Troy and Rondo bought a de-

crepit building,” said Landon Monholland, Over The Edge Fruita’s present-day manager. “That took a lot of risk. Now, everyone thinks, ‘We’ll make our own mecca,’ but they took a big risk.”

Mecca status is what Fruita and Moab have achieved. Fittingly, the dueling mountain biking destinations are linked by the 142-mile Kokopelli’s Trail, which stretches all the way from Loma to Moab.

They once stood side by side as tiny communities with blue-collar cores. These days, they stand side by side as giants atop the mountain biking world.

PLAYGROUND: Visitors might not come just for biking but many experiences, says shop owner

► Continued from Page One

Arches National Park and its awe-inducing red rock formations tower above the city. Canyonlands National Park and its eons-in-the-making rugged beauty sits nearby. Combined, more than 1.5 million people visited the two parks in 2012 according to National Park Service statistics.

In domestic and international circles, Moab is known for it all. Without recreation and the tourism dollars it brings, the old uranium-mining town would have practically nothing to fall back on.

Fruita’s reputation

Fruita is more of a community with killer trails. It boasts only a couple of bike shops.

“Our downtown looks different,” Fruita City Manager Clint Kinney said. “It looks like people live here and do stuff. It’s a community first, a community with a lot of great stuff to do.”

Undeniably, though, the famed singletrack mountain bike trails are a big draw for Fruita and the Grand Valley. Sure, there’s plenty else to keep a tourist occupied in the

“We pretty much have biking and hiking and the river, but Moab’s version of the river is on such a larger scale.”

ANNE KELLER

Former guide in Moab, Utah, now restaurant owner in Fruita

Traffic streams along the main boulevard in Moab, Utah, which boasts 1,858 hotel rooms, 48 bed and breakfast rooms, 312 condos, 1,230 privately operated campsites or cabins and more than 750 federally designated campsites, according to the Moab Area Travel Council. **BELOW:** Mountain bicyclists ride the Slickrock Trail on Sand Flats in the Moab area.

the ATV guys out there and the rock climbing. Moab is this crazy conglomerate for all these sports.

“We pretty much have biking and hiking and the river, but Moab’s version of the river is on such a larger scale.”

Keller knows a thing or two about both tourist destinations. An avid cyclist, she worked as a guide in Moab for a spell before arriving in Fruita nearly a decade ago.

Keller and fellow Hot Tomato owner Jen Zeuner wholly embrace Fruita’s mountain biking culture. They’re regulars on local trails, and both worked at Over the Edge Sports in Fruita



Photos by CHRISTOPHER TOMLINSON/The Daily Sentinel

before making their foray into the pizza business.

Although much of its clientele is local, Hot Tomato is a popular destination for out-of-town mountain bikers in search of sustenance, particularly during peak mountain biking seasons in the spring and fall.

Peak season seemingly knows no bounds in Moab, where a packed festival calendar and multitude of outdoors activities fills up hotel rooms and campgrounds to capacity many weekends.

“We have the river, hiking, climbing and then great biking,” said Scott Newton, owner of Poison Spider Bicycles in Moab. “And I think the parks really help. Arches and Canyonlands really draw. People come here for the parks and then might not necessarily come for biking, but then they experience all of Moab.”

Having two of the country’s more popular and most recognizable national parks in its backyard is a big boost to Moab’s profile as an outdoor recreation destination.

Public land anywhere

Some visitors barely stray from their cars on an Arches visit. Many lace up their hiking shoes for an up-close examination of the park’s imaginative rock formations, which are flavored with shapes and patterns only Mother Nature could mold.

As such, Moab is a hiker’s dream.

“Hiking is probably one of the biggest (draws) because people can use public lands to do it,” said Marian DeLay, executive director of Moab Area Travel Council. “You can be in the parks, on (Bureau of Land Management) land, anywhere.”

And there is so much else to do.

“The river is very popular



in the summertime” DeLay continued. “You see hot-air balloons first thing in the morning. You can go out to the park, and there are so many things to do besides the park. Golfing is extremely popular. There are horseback and mule rides.”

Fruita is more than mountain biking, too. Colorado National Monument, which received 454,510 visits in 2012, and the arch-filled McInnis Canyons National Conserva-

tion Area can be accessed through Fruita. Highline Lake State Park provides a venue for water adventures.

“We’re not trying to be a one-horse town,” Kinney said. “There’s more than mountain biking.”

But Fruita’s identity is very much tied to its world-class mountain biking and, as those billboards alongside U.S. 191 so artfully illustrate, Moab is all about everything.

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