

Rare Element Resources Holds Open House



Rare Element Resources' (RER) Board Chairman Jerry Grandy (left) and RER's President and CEO, Ken Mushinski (right) along with Upton Mayor Nick Trandahl at the open house on Tuesday, August 20 at the Upton Community Center.

**By Brittany Trandahl
Gazette Reporter**

The Board of Directors for Rare Element Resources (RER) were in Upton last week, August 20th for their annual shareholders meeting, followed by a community project update presentation and forum. A large crowd of shareholders, investors, community members, and interested parties were present for this event held at the Upton Community Center.

RER Director Paul Hickey provided the opening statements and introductions of the newly elected board members, as well as the entire managing team of RER, and Upton Mayor Nicholas Trandahl. With that, Ken Mushinski, President and Chief Executive Officer began his presentation on RER's progress and the Upton plant, located near the Upton Industrial Site.

Construction on the rare earth recovery and separation demonstration plant in Upton began in December 2023 and is now nearing completion, with operations to begin around October of this year. At full capacity, the plant will employ approximately 20 full time employees for the operations phase of the project which is expected last for up to 12 months.

The pre-assembled equipment that was constructed off-site, in Texas has been delivered to the plant on 12 separate skids with the first one arriving in early May and the final skid was delivered in late July. This was done to shorten the time between assembly and operation and allow for off-site testing before being assembled here in Upton. Each skid arrived fully operational and simply needed to be connected to the others. This project is being overseen by General Atomics (GA), a large private technology company whose affiliate is RER's largest shareholder. This team, including engineers and scientists from all around the world has allowed for significant advancement of the technology needed for a project of this magnitude.

The mining of these essential rare earth minerals will be done in the Bear Lodge Mountains. For reference, this information was sourced from RER's website; 'The Bear Lodge Project is located in central Crook County, in the northwestern portion of the Black Hills uplift. The property is situated in the central Bear Lodge Mountains, a relatively small northwesterly trending range. The project is flanked to the west by the Powder River Basin, famous for

its extensive coal mining and is adjoined by the Great Plains to the southeast. The Bear Lodge Project lies about seven air miles or 12 road miles northwest of Sundance and approximately 22 air miles west of the South Dakota state line.'

The quality and quantity of the mineralization in the Bear Lodge Project make it a world-class mining district with the premier North American mineral deposit and a dependable, long-term source for the rare elements that today's technology demands. The primary goal of this project being the establishment of a US-based rare earth production to lessen and ultimately eliminate the reliance on foreign imports and Chinese dominance of the market. "We are wanting to make a secure supply in the United States," stated Mushinski. "The Bear Lodge Project and Upton Demonstration plant are crucial for those efforts."

The Demonstration plant will encompass the physical processing of the sample materials mined from the Bear Lodge Mountains, followed by chemical processing to extract selected elements. All chemicals will be managed in accordance with federal, state, and local environmental safety regulations.

With ongoing Federal and State support, the Department of Energy (DOE) and Wyoming Energy Authority have committed over \$26 million to the demonstration plant project. As part of the DOE's cost-share agreement for the plant construction and operations, the project team, led by GA submitted an updated budget for approval. This approval is anticipated by September 1. The submitted budget totaled approximately \$53.6 million. Moving towards that approval, the DOE visited the Demonstration Plant in Upton on Thursday, August 22 to meet with team members and conduct an inspection of the plant.

"With an operations manager (Tom Cannon) and contractor (Loebro Construction, Casper) in place, we are now starting to transition from design and construction to operations," stated Mushinski. "All activities are moving us toward the goal of plant startup soon, with a vision to grow this area of Wyoming into a secure, domestic source of rare earth."