# **CELEBRATING 50 YEARS!**

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#### The "Arimo Block" Turns 107!



The Arimo Block as it looked in the 1930's (Photo Courtesy of USU Special Collections).



BRAG purchased the south section of the Arimo Block from Cache County in 2005 (Photo: BRAG, 2013).

Logan's BRAG building has a storied 107-year history. Referred to originally as the Arimo Block, there are three separate buildings connected by a common façade. BRAG owns and occupies the south building.

The Arimo Block is thought to be named after Chief Arimo of the Northern Shoshone Native American Tribe, who was a friend to the early settlers. The buildings in the block were constructed by Nephi Andrews, a local general contractor in 1913 and 1914. Local businesses included Fonnesbeck Knitting Works, A.H. Palmer & Sons, Harris Music Co., Logan City's municipal offices, local attorneys and doctors offices, Christian Scientists, and many others. Prospective tenants were asked to, "...consult J.C. Fonnesbeck, C.M. Harris, and A.H. Palmer for Modern Offices (The Logan Republican, 2/5/1916, http://udn.lib.utah.edu)."

# From the Governing Board Chair

As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of The Bear River Association of Governments, there is much to be proud of. The year 2021 continued to have some challenges for our people, communities, and counties. We have experienced some very unusual circumstances. I am impressed with how the BRAG staff has worked to provide essential services and how the BRAG Governing Board has shown a great deal of unity and cooperation this past year.

Most people are unaware of the effectiveness of the BRAG organization in maintaining local control and at the same time providing economies of scale which makes efficient use of available funds. The opportunity to serve as chairman this past year gave me the opportunity see more clearly details of the services that BRAG provides to our citizens and how essential they are.



BRAG Governing Board Chair and Cache County Council Member Karl

It was good to start looking at Northern Utah as a region which includes our Southern Idaho neighbors. Meeting with them to share ideas was valuable and should provide benefit to the entire area going forward.

I hope that we can continue to serve our tri-county area wisely and efficiently as we work to preserve and enhance our economic and social prosperity.

# Stan Summers Serves as 2021 UAC Chair

Box Elder County Commissioner Stan Summers served as President of the Utah Association of Counties during 2021. The Utah Association of Counties (UAC) is a voluntary, statewide organization whose members are the 29 counties of Utah. The counties, through their elected officials, direct UAC activities in providing services to county officials.

UAC's purpose is to improve the operation of Utah's county governments and thereby improve the quality of services which counties provide to their residents.

Stan was born and raised in east Tremonton and worked while growing up on the family's small dairy farm. He graduated from Bear River High School and



2021 UAC Chair Stan Summers is serving in his third term as County Commissionel for Box Elder County.

Utah State University where he played on the football team. Stan is serving in his third term as a county commissioner.

He and his wife Jennifer have two children and three grandchildren and they presently live in Bothwell.

BRAG's 15-member Governing Board 50

years later includes the following:

#### Then (1971) and Now (2021)

The nine county commissioners who signed the documents that created BRAG on June 23, 1971 included the following:

#### BOX ELDER COUNTY

Don Chase William Packer Malcolm Young

CACHE COUNTY

Todd Weston

Todd Weston William Hyde Marion Olsen

#### RICH COUNTY

Stuart Hopkin Kay Thornock Kay Cook

#### Brigham City Roger Fridal, Mayor of

**CACHE COUNTY** 

Tremonton

David Zook, County Executive Paul Borup, County Council

**BOX ELDER COUNTY** 

Jeff Hadfield, Commissioner

Stan Summers, Commisioner Tyler Vincent, Mayor of

Jeff Scott, Commisioner

Karl Ward, County Council (BRAG Chair)

Holly Daines, Mayor of Logan

Jeff Young, Mayor of Richmond

#### RICH COUNTY

Bill Cox, Commissioner
Jon Lee, Commissioner
Sim Weston, Commissioner
Mike Leonhardt, Mayor of
Garden City
Scott Sabey, Mayor of Woodruff



## BRAG 50-Year Anniversary

### Timeline of Events by Decade



- County Commissioners from Box Elder, Cache and Rich Counties create Utah's first District Health Department in May, and BRAG in June 1971
- First staff is hired; Bruce G. King is appointed Executive Director. The Community Action Agency and Health Planning program become part of BRAG.
- Job Training, Substance Abuse, and Law Enforcement Planning Program are assigned to BRAG. BRAG applies for Comprehensive Mental Health Services funding. Cache County Commissioner Marion Olsen is Chairman.
- Governor Calvin Rampton attends BRAG meeting to encourage regional cooperation. Weatherization Program begins and BRAG receives funding for





- BRAG completes water quality studies for Bear River Basin.
- BRAG begins administering the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program for the region.
- BRAG is assigned new economic development roles including business finance and procurement assistance to be added to long established job training programs. Executive Director Bruce King resigns to serve as Cache County's first elected County Executive under the new form of government. Roger Jones is appointed Executive Director.





- · Regional Housing Authority created for BRAG to administer. Cache County's Darrell L. Gibbons is chairman.
- BRAG receives federal funding to retrain several hundred of the 5,000 workers displaced by major layoffs at Thiokol since 1992.
- Federally funded job training programs administered since 1973 by BRAG and previously by Bear River Community Action Agency were taken by newly created State Department of Workforce Services. Housing rehabilitation loan program begins at BRAG.
- BRAG, along with partners, creates affordable housing developments in Logan and Tremonton.
- Bear River Economic Development District formally designated by the Federal EDA to address regional economic development issues and opportunities.



<u>Regional</u>

**Population** 



- Bear River Heritage Area created to support, protect, and promote local heritage in Southern Idaho and Northern Utah.
- BRAG organizes the Bear River Regional Homeless Council to help address homelessness and creates Bear River Community Services Foundation as a private-non-profit entity.
- Dan Jones presents to the Board results of BRAG's seventh longitudinal general population survey conducted over 30 years.
- In partnership with Bridgerland Applied Technology College (BATC), BRAG begins funding the Business Resource Center to help create jobs.





- BRAG staff completes update to regional Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan, and assists Six County AOG and Tooele County with their plan updates.
- Staff creates natural resources planning tool kit for use in the creation of County Resource Management Plans.
- In the November 2010 BRAG Governing meeting, Congressman Rob Bishop reported that the outlook for ATK is uncertain with the space shuttle program coming to an end.
- Homelessness in the region increases





- 2020 The COVID-19 Pandemic changes everything work, schools, retail, restaurants etc.
- 2021 States, local governments and BRAG receive large amounts of federal funds to help revitalize the economy.
- 2022 Its back, the pandemic that is. Now it's the Omicron variant, but vaccinated people seem to fare better.
- Prioritization, administration, and service delivery of COVID pandemic relief and recovery projects including business retention, community planning and studies, improving broadband access in rural areas, homeless prevention, child care and counseling for families, and Meals on Wheels delivery vehicles.





#### Vietnam Veterans, Not So Popular Then

When the nine county commissioners from Box Elder, Cache, and Rich Counties signed documents to create BRAG in June of 1971, I was serving as a U.S. Army officer with the First Infantry Brigade near the demilitarized zone in South Vietnam.

I was proud to be serving and believed in the cause. I met many fine Vietnamese people who did not want a communist government.

Upon returning home to Utah in early 1972, I began searching for employment with a bachelor's degree and Vietnam service on my resume. Much to my surprise, no jobs were offered. The Vietnam war was very unpopular and the status of "veteran" then appeared to be

I ended up going back to USU to earn a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree. There were some job offers then including one close to home with a new regional government organization called Bear River Association of Governments. After interviewing, I was offered a six-month temporary position for the purpose of incorporating the already established Bear River Community Action Agency as part of BRAG.

Well, that was 48 years ago and I am still with BRAG grateful for the services the organization provides to people and local governments here in Northern Utah.

- Roger C. Jones, BRAG Exec. Director

#### From the Executive Director

Serving as BRAG's Executive Director over the past three decades and in other positions with the regional organization the decade prior has been a great pleasure and honor. The job has not always been easy, but it has been eventful and rewarding. The amazing variety, complexity, and challenges of the work keep the job exciting and never dull.

Over the years I have had the great opportunity to work side-by-side with many dedicated local elected officials who cared deeply about serving their constituents and making their communities and counties better. I have developed lasting professional and personal relationships with state government staff, Utah's other AOG directors, and various agency staff. Also, I cannot say enough about the current and past staff members of BRAG. They care greatly about what they do and they do it well!

BRAG's composition and staff numbers have changed over the years depending upon local

priority needs and available funding. Presently, 55 full and part-time staff are assigned to one or more departments including Aging Services, Community & Economic Development, Housing Authority, Human Services, Housing Rehabilitation & Development,

and Weatherization.



Many communities are stronger because of the planning help and project funding received, along with the thousands of people who received life-changing help from the services provided by the Bear River Association of Governments.

- Roger C. Jones



#### 1918 Pandemic Victims Treated Here

What is now the second floor of the Logan BRAG building was used as a hospital for treatment of those infected during the 1918 influenza pandemic.

During the two-year long pandemic, nearly a third of the global population or 500 million people had been infected in four successive waves.

It is one of the deadliest pandemics in world history with deaths estimated between 17 and 50 million people.

- 2 -

#### Remember the 55 MPH Speed Limit?

In the fall of 1973, in response to the OPEC oil embargo, President Nixon issued an executive order mandating a 55 mph national maximum speed limit. In the following January, Congress made it official and passed a "temporary" one-year continuation of the limit which was not totally repealed until 1995.

The Weatherization Assistance Program that BRAG continues to operate was born out of the 1973 energy crisis, when unemployment and energy prices were exceptionally high. The U.S. Department of Energy provides funding to states, territories, and tribal governments to improve the energy efficiency of the homes of low income families, person with disabilities, and senior citizens.

## Help wanted signs can be found throughout the

entire Bear

River Region

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#### **Cache County's Unemployment Rate One of** the Lowest in the U.S.

By April of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic had not only taken thousands of lives, it also created a substantial economic crisis in the U.S. Many businesses closed locally and throughout the nation, leading to high unemployment rates in Utah and around the country. While Utah's unemployment rates were some of the lowest in the country, many people in our region still lost their jobs or had to close down their local business.

As of November 2021, Cache County shares the second lowest unemployment rate in the state, at 1.4%, with Morgan County. Utah is currently at 2.1%, while the U.S. as a whole is just over 4%.

While, by most standards, this would be great news for residents and local businesses, not all is as blissful as it may seem. "Help Wanted" signs can

be seen dotting local communities on the front of businesses, billboards, and even on the side of public transit buses (see photos below).

In short, there are too many jobs for too few workers. It is estimated that there are two to three available jobs for each person that is currently unemployed.

Issues adding complexity to the local unemployment puzzle include:

- 1) Some employers are offering competitive incentives for new workers; some companies can't afford those or the higher pay necessary
- Baby boomers who retired early because of COVID-19 concerns left major unfilled gaps.
- A lack of child care (especially 24/7) due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Many resigned from their current position to take better paying positions, leaving even more gaps for local businesses.

NAME

Carolyn Reed

Keirstin Meyer

#### **Rapid Growth Continues** in Tremonton

Tremonton City recently approved the annexation of 130 acres for a large residential development to be called Rivers Edge. More than 700 housing units are planned to be built in phases as demand dictates.

The first phase will include single family homes eventually reaching 264 units. Also planned are 224 townhomes and eventually 240 apartments to be built later as needed.

Over the past ten years only Box Elder County's much smaller Mantua Town had a higher rate of growth than Tremonton.

#### Interesting Tidbits in AOG History

- 1960s: Several factors at the national level including expanding urbanization, increasing social problems, an expressed desire by local government officials to manage new federally funded planning and service delivery, along with various academic studies describing the benefits of "sub-state regionalism" led to a movement for locally controlled regional organizations.
- 1970: Governor Calvin L. Rampton issued an executive order establishing eight multi-county districts or regions in Utah: in 1973 the number was reduced to seven.
- 1969-1973: Local government officials in Utah organized seven regional associations of governments with support and encouragement from the state under authority of Utah's Interlocal Cooperation Act of 1965.

NAME

Deborah Crowther

Shawna Peterson

**POSITION** 

Veteran's Service

Registered Nurse

#YRS

DEPARTMENT STAFF

#YRS

**POSITION** 

Fiscal Administrator



# Department **Directors** Carolyn Reed

#### **BEAR RIVER AREA AGENCY ON AGING**

The goal of the Area Agency on Aging is to establish programs that promote a lifetime of dignity and independence by supporting the health, safety, nutrition, and social needs of the senior population in our Tri-County area. We serve individuals aged 60 and older, veterans, and adults with disabilities in Box Elder, Cache and Rich Counties. Our purpose is to implement State and Federal programs that are designed to prevent premature institutionalization and maintain senior citizens as a vital part of our community.



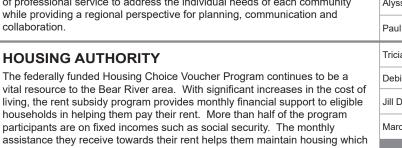
Tricia Fuller

#### COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The BRAG Community and Economic Development Department strives to enhance health and safety, economic opportunity, and quality of life through coordinated and careful planning and prioritization of capital investments and public services in local communities. Our goal is to provide a high level of professional service to address the individual needs of each community while providing a regional perspective for planning, communication and



The federally funded Housing Choice Voucher Program continues to be a vital resource to the Bear River area. With significant increases in the cost of living, the rent subsidy program provides monthly financial support to eligible households in helping them pay their rent. More than half of the program participants are on fixed incomes such as social security. The monthly assistance they receive towards their rent helps them maintain housing which in turn prevents homelessness in the area.



#### HOUSING REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT The Housing Rehabilitation and Development Department at BRAG provides

a variety of housing programs to help ensure that qualified individuals and families with low-to-moderate incomes have safe, decent, and affordable housing and to provide opportunities for and the promotion of affordable housing. The department provides various grants for small emergency home repairs, first time home buyer grants and assistance, and owns/manages several affordable housing developments.



#### **HUMAN SERVICES**

BRAG's Human Services Department serves as a Community Action Agency. Programs include services to help low-income households address homelessness, resolve evictions, increase access to safe and affordable housing, utility assistance, and support in preparing and submitting personal state and federal income taxes. We also coordinate community volunteers and interns in broader efforts to deliver services and fight poverty.



#### **WEATHERIZATION**

The mission of the Weatherization program at BRAG is to reduce energy costs for low-income families, particularly for the elderly, people with disabilities, and children, by improving the energy efficiency of their homes while ensuring their health and safety. The department does this through doing assessments to determine energy waste in a home, and improving energy efficiency through installing insulation, HVAC systems, lighting, appliances, and air sealing.



#### CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION/PERRY CITY OFFICE

All BRAG services listed above are available at the Box Elder County office presently located in Perry. Members of the central administration staff and Perry office staff are shown to the right.

	Melissa Lewis	Aging Waiver Case Manager	26	Jennifer Kay	Ombudsman	2
	Debra Rowarth	New Choices Waiver Case Manager	4	Jamie Hanks	Insurance Specialist	3
	Tara McBurney	New Choices Waiver Case Manager	2	Shelly Andrus	Intake/Referral Coordinator	2
	Brian Carver	Director	15	Camille Price/ Sleight	Heritage Specialist	2
	Zac Covington	Planning Director	15	lan Hallagan	Heritage Specialist	1
	Lara Gale	Regional Growth Specialist	3			
	Alyssa Cronin	Planning and Mobility Specialist	1.5			
	Paul Davis	Business Outreach, Etc.	10			
	Tricia Fuller	Director	31			
	Debi Carlson	Case Manager	22			
	Jill Davis	Case Manager	28			
	Marcela Patch	Case Manager	2			
	Jeff Kearl	Director, Housing Rehab & Dev.	21			
I	Lucas Martin	Director, Human Serv.	6	Tonya Romney	Intake Specialist	2
I	Jaynine Thompson	Human Services Caseworker	3	Susan Wright	Intake Specialist	15
I	Stephanie Carver	Human Services Caseworker	2	Heather Abrams	Intake Specialist	2
I	Josefina Rizzo	Human Services Caseworker	2	Marina Montano	Receptionist	2
	Karina Zarco	Human Services Assistant	2	Kimberly Rodriguez	Intake Specialist	3
	Deanna Newbold	Human Services Assistant	1	Jennifer Rodriguez	VITA, Mobility CSBG Care's Act Assistant	3
	Sydnee Henrie	Human Services Assistant	2	Ronda Kershisnk	Housing Advocate	0.5
	Heather Munoz	Human Services Assistant	0.5	Cheryl Norr	Housing Advocate	0.5
	Florence Preslar	Intake Specialist	15	Danyel Whyte	Intern	0.5
	Nicole Burnard	Intern	0.5	Hope Summers	Intern	0.5
	Jesse Waite	Director	13	Alan McEvoy	Retrofit Installer	3
	Zack Mitchell	Weatherization Auditor	12	Brock Schenk	Retrofit Installer	1
	Mark Romney	Weatherization Crew Supervisor	8			
	Blake Jacobson	Weatherization Field Technician	4			
	Jordan Owens	Retrofit Installer	3			
	Roger Jones	Executive Director	49	Alyssa Jensen	Intake Specialist (Perry)	11
	Karen Merkley	Administrative Director	6	Christine Saun- ders	Intake Specialist (Perry)	15
	Adam Chandler	Controller/Personnel Director	3	Keri Randall	Receptionist (Perry)	6
	Shellie Cook	Financial Assistant	19			
	Michael McCullam	Perry Office Manager	34			



#### More Restaurants, Retail, and Commercial

Logan City, often referred to as the shopping and service center for the tri-county area and southern Idaho, will be seeing more restaurants and retail businesses in 2022. On Main Street, In-N-Out Burger, Zupas, and Dutch Brothers are under construction.

WinCo Supermarket opened just before Thanksgiving 2021 and construction is scheduled to begin in spring of 2022 on a Costco store ten blocks off Main Street in northwest Logan.

Many new commercial buildings including a large FedEx Building are under construction also in northwest Logan on land farmed for decades by the Jones and Quayle families.

Other eateries coming to town in 2022: Chipotle, Tropical Smoothie Cafe and apizza.

### Remembering Those Who Have Passed On

BRAG has been fortunate to have as dedicated staff members hundreds of employees over the past fifty years. Some of the longest serving staff who have passed on in recent years include:

Kent Watson (33 yrs @ BRAG)

Douglas Stark (29 yrs @ BRAG)

Garth Stockton (29 yrs @ BRAG)

Olaf Jenson (28 yrs @ BRAG)

Sandra Nielsen (18 yrs @ BRAG)

Composition, layout and design by Karen Merkley and Zac Covington.



Karen Merkley is BRAG's Administrative Director, and has been with BRAG for 6 Years.



Zac Covington is BRAG's Planning Director and has been with BRAG for almost 15 years.

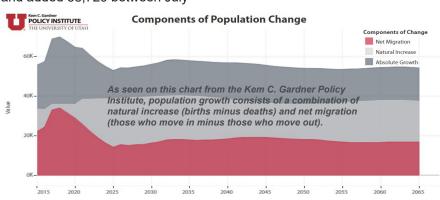
### Our Communities Continue to Grow!

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Utah was the fastest growing state in the country between 2010 and 2020 at 18.4%, adding around half a million residents. Idaho was a close second at 17.3%, and Texas and North Dakota followed at just under 16%.

According to the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute, the state grew by 71,936 people, just in 2020, and added 58,729 between July

6%, respectively, to the state's population. Between 2020 and 2022, the Bear River Region grew by an estimated 9,772 residents, which is around 5% growth in 2 years.

75% of the 26 counties in Utah grew mostly by net migration in 2021. This was unique for many, including Cache County, which had most of their growth in 2020 from natural increase. Box Elder County's net migration in 2021 accounted for 78% of their growth, while Cache County's was 60%, and Rich County's was 56%.



of 2020 and July of 2021. That's around 160 new residents per day! Between 2010 and 2020, net migration accounted for around 77,242 new residents, while 330,489 came from natural increase (births minus deaths).

Locally, Box Elder County grew by 7,691 (15.4%) residents between 2010 and 2020, Cache County grew by 20,498 (18.2%), and Rich County grew by 246 (10.9%). In 2020, while the Bear River Region did not have explosive growth, both Box Elder and Cache Counties contributed 2.3% and

Whether we grow internally from our own children or grandchildren, or by the many people that move to Utah each year, the way in which we grow will be critical. Housing, transportation, air quality, water, critical natural resources, and other resources will need to be planned for in ways that accommodate growth without compromising our current quality of life.

References: U.S. Census; Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute; M. Canhaam and T. Semerad, The Salt Lake Tribune, Sep. 22, 2021; L. Stefanich, KSL.com, Dec. 8, 2021; and D. Romboy, Deseret News, Apr. 26, 2021.



## Nationally Designated Heritage Area

Since 1984, Congress has established 55 national heritage areas (NHAs) to commemorate, conserve, and promote important natural, scenic, historic, cultural, and recreational resources. NHAs are partnerships among the National Park Service (NPS), states, and local communities, in which the NPS supports state and local conservation through federal recognition, seed money, and technical assistance. Unlike lands within the National Park System, which are federally owned and managed, lands within heritage areas typically remain in state, local, or private ownership or a combination thereof. Supporters of heritage areas

assert that NHAs protect lands and traditions and promote tourism and community revitalization. Opponents, however, contend that NHAs may be burdensome or costly to the federal government, or that they may lead to federal control over non-federal lands (Congressional Research Service).

#### History of the Bear River Heritage Area

Through BRAG staff efforts, the Bear River Heritage Area (BRHA) was created in April, 2000, as a way of supporting and protecting our local heritage resources, and bringing more tourism dollars to our region. The BRHA includes seven counties; Box Elder, Cache and Rich in northern Utah, and Bear Lake, Caribou, Franklin and Oneida in southeastern Idaho, all located, in whole or in part, within the Bear River

The Bear River Heritage Area has not received national designation or any federal heritage funding yet. However, on November 2, 2021 the U.S. House of Representatives did pass the Bear River Heritage Area Study Act, a bill introduced and strongly supported by Utah's First District Congressman Blake Moore.

With local, regional, state, and, now, national support, it is hoped that the Bear River Heritage Area will recieve national designation in the near future, and help to preserve local heritage and related businesses even more effectively.



Commision and 2022 BRAG Governing Board Chai Jeff Scott.

#### New Governing Board Chair for 2022

Ushering in the new year as the 2022 BRAG Governing Board Chair is Box Elder County Commissioner Jeff Scott. Jeff was raised in Fielding, Utah, attended Bear River High School, and gradutaed with a dual major from Utah State University in Business and Spanish.

Jeff and his amazing wife Lisa have four children and three grandchildren. They enjoy traveling, spending time at the family cabin, and playing any sport that includes a raquet. Jeff has owned, staffed, and operated Mill Canyon Financial, Inc. since 1992.



Congressman
Rob Bishop
and wife
Jealynn were
honored at
the BRAG
Governing
Board
meeting on
November
29, 2021.

#### Former Congressman Rob Bishop Honored at BRAG Governing Board Meeting

Former U.S. Congressman Rob Bishop was honored at the December 29, 2021 BRAG Governing Board meeting for his 18 years of service (2003-2021).

As a congressman, Bishop was known for his dry sense of humor, background as an educator, and his personal fashion preferences (there were rumors he occasionally wore socks and sandals, but denied when asked).

From a policy standpoint,
Bishop was known for his fierce
advocacy for giving states more
control over federal lands and
management of those lands.
He was also known for being
available to local county and
municipal leaders to address
local issues and needs in his
district. Box Elder County
Commissioner Stan Summers
said that, "It didn't matter what
side you were on, everyone he
talked to respected him (Nancy
Browne, B.E. News Journal)."

### Citizen Participation is Important

Citizen participation in our democracy is very important. BRAG relies heavily on advisory boards to have meaningful input into the decision-making process and to oversee and improve service delivery. Regional boards and councils include the following: Human Services Board, Housing Authority Board, Area Aging Council, Heritage Area Council, Access and Mobility Council and