



# Iron County Water Stewards

## *Recognizing Roy "Pug" Urie*

During his time as an Iron County Commissioner, in the 1990s, Roy "Pug" Urie saw the need for a water conservancy district, and his efforts were critical in forming the Central Iron County Water Conservancy District, which works to find water solutions and ensure the future of the Cedar Valley.

He worked with Joe Melling, who was the Cedar City Manager, to facilitate the entire effort. Together they met with community leaders, discussed the establishment of the District, and found the right people to help with each stage of the process. Property owners were identified, letters were sent out, and signatures were gathered during the 6-year process.

Dane Leavitt, who was recruited by Urie and Joe Melling to help get signatures to form the District, said Urie was a dedicated public servant.

"He worked steadily to help our area prepare for the water needs that we are now seeing," Leavitt said. "He certainly lit the flame and saw the need, and he was an active participant week in and week out as we worked with leaders across the area."

Since the District was signed into existence in 1997, staff and board members have continually sought out solutions to the valley's overdrawn aquifer. They have focused on optimizing the water that is available in the area, through recharge and conservation projects and education efforts. The District is also working to import water from Pine Valley, about 60 miles northwest of the Cedar Valley.

Urie was a member of the Utah Water Resources Board for 17 years, and he served as a city council member. He was a county commissioner for eight years, and later served on the Central Iron County Water Conservancy District Board of Directors.

Urie was featured in a Deseret News article on Nov. 4, 1994, when he was running for re-election to the county commission and working to establish the District. He spoke of his time on the Utah Water Resources Board, which he was still serving on, and said he was glad to be able to help get some good water projects done for the state, including in Iron County.

"I've felt all my life that I needed to put some effort into my community, and I worked in civic groups all of my life, and that aspect has committed me to that kind of service," Urie said in the article. "I'm honest and fair and ... when I make a commitment, I do the best I can to keep it."

Leavitt said Urie was "honest, temperate in his communications, and steadily passionate about our county and its people." He remembered a time, during a terribly dry year, when he and Urie

were among a group of men one Sunday and the conversation turned to complaining about the lack of water.

“Pug quietly listened,” Leavitt recalled. “At an appropriate moment he quietly said, ‘Well, what do you expect? We live in a desert. There will be years like this. We just live with it, do our best today, and better prepare for the future. There will be better years.’ His wisdom quieted the complaints. I miss Pug. He had a rare capacity to bring people together.”

Urie was a Democrat in a traditionally Republican County, but he was loved by people of all political persuasions and cared deeply about the community.

In addition to his contributions to Iron County’s water solutions, he served as a member of the Livestock Show Committee for 45 years, and was a Cedar City Planning Commission member, a member of the three-man committee to build the Woods Ranch Recreational Facility, a Scoutmaster, a Little League umpire, a Rotary Club president, and much more. He served in various capacities in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, helped create the World War II veterans’ memorial, and was serving on the Five County Aging Council at the time of his passing.

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*The purpose of the Iron County Water Stewards program is to recognize community members for contributing to the effort to optimize every drop of water in Iron County. The Central Iron County Water Conservancy District (CICWCD) is actively engaged in education, conservation, reuse and import projects to meet the growing demands on local water supply.*

*For every effort you make to conserve, we consider you a water steward, too. To Get to Know Your H2O, visit <https://cicwcd.org/>.*

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