





BYU matchup vs. Colorado St.

Lots of familiarity, but it's been awhile

SPORTS, B1

Drenching rains

Flash flooding across New England states

NEWS, A2

Growing outward



Courtesy Meta

A rendering of Meta's data center expansion is shown.

Meta announces expansion of Eagle Mountain data center facility, contributions to community

BY JACOB NIELSON
Daily Herald

Meta announced Monday the expansion of its Eagle Mountain Data Center campus along with contributions to various local entities.

Meta plans to build three new data center buildings, an administration building and a warehouse, according to a company spokesperson.

The Meta Data Center first opened in 2018 and has expanded its campus in several phases since to span more than 500 acres. This latest expansion project is tied to an approval from the Eagle Mountain City Council in October 2025 to expand the facility to the south of its existing campus, a city spokesperson confirmed to the Daily Herald.

The council also approved an amendment to the water agreement for Meta to purchase an additional 125 acre-feet of water, increasing its allocation from 500 to 625 acre-feet.

As part the expansion, Meta said Monday the company will give the Lake Mountain

School District \$600,000 for land acquisition and make a \$1.5 million commitment to the Lake Mountain Education Foundation. Meta will also commit \$450,000 toward the Walden Park Observatory in Eagle Mountain.

The city said the Meta expansion is expected to support roughly 1,200 construction jobs at peak, and add more than 300 operations roles upon completion.

“This is a company that showed up here eight years ago and has kept its commitments to us since,” Eagle Mountain Mayor Jared Gray said in a news release. “Meta’s presence has meant real money for our schools, real improvements to our roads and water systems, and good jobs for people who live here. This expansion means more investment and opportunities for shared success — and it means Eagle Mountain continues to be a place where families can build a future.”

The substantial education investment comes as the Lake Mountain School District prepares to absorb the Eagle Mountain and Saratoga

Springs areas of the dissolving Alpine School District in 2027.

Lake Mountain said the \$600,000 land grant will go toward acquiring roughly three acres for a new elementary school site, representing approximately 30% of the land needed.

“Securing land early is essential to building neighborhood schools that keep pace with our growing community,” LMSD Board President Julie King said in a news release. “Meta’s \$600,000 grant allows us to take proactive, strategic steps today so that we can be better prepared to provide the facilities our students will need in the years ahead.”

LMSD said the \$1.5 million Meta committed to the district’s education foundation will be provided upon the start of vertical construction for the expanded data center. The district said Meta has also committed to an ongoing annual contribution of \$50,000 to the foundation. That commitment is expected to be made before the

See META, A8



Vincent Stanley Benfell III

BYU Kennedy Center director identified as man involved in fatal Provo bike crash

BY JACOB NIELSON
Daily Herald

The director of the Brigham Young University Kennedy Center was identified as the man involved in a fatal bicycle crash in Provo on Sept. 7.

Provo police confirmed Monday that Vincent Stanley Benfell, 63, was struck by a vehicle at the intersection of Lakeview Parkway and the University Avenue Interstate 15 off-ramp.

The BYU Kennedy Center announced Benfell's passing in a social media post last week. He had served as the Kennedy Center's director and as associate international vice president of BYU since 2021.

“Stan was deeply admired, loved and respected,” the post said. “He always had an open door and loved to listen to and learn from students, colleagues and friends. His academic, interpersonal, and spiritual strengths led and shaped the Kennedy Center in lasting ways.”

Prior to serving as director, Benfell was the Kennedy Center's associate director of academics and research and a faculty coordinator for the European Studies program.

He started his BYU career in 1993 in the Department of Comparative Arts and Letters, where he focused on Renaissance and medieval literature, the school said.

New courses are in the works amid state's push for nuclear energy

BY ALIXEL CABRERA
Utah News Dispatch

For University of Utah students, a nuclear engineering track had to do more with healthcare technology and less with the nuclear reactors that Utah elected officials keep mentioning in their speeches when debating energy abundance. But, amid that big push to make the state a major piece in the nuclear energy space, the curriculum is about to change.

The university’s academic senate has approved a revision of the nuclear engineering minor core courses, putting the updated curriculum on track to be open for students in the fall of 2027, pending other university leadership approvals, said Supathorn Phongikaroon, director of the Utah Nuclear Engineering Program at the University of Utah.

“Our minor has been focused a lot on medical physics and isotopes, and then radiochemistry, and a variety of things that relate to instrumentation and radiation detection,” Phongikaroon said. “With the new revision of the course, we are now offering more in terms of nuclear

energy and science, nuclear science and technology. That means that we are offering a little bit more to provide and support the state on workforce development.”

The new curriculum would add seven new classes, Phongikaroon said.

One of the courses is expected to be open to students of other disciplines as a general education class to learn about nuclear energy history and the global impacts of it, Phongikaroon said. There will also be courses on nuclear fuel cycles, as well as nuclear power plants and thermodynamics analysis, biological effects of radiation, nuclear systems and design, and nuclear security and nonproliferation.

The new curriculum won’t replace the current healthcare technology offerings. Students may still pick the route of researching isotopes, radiochemistry and medical physics. This update is an expansion of the school’s portfolio for those interested in energy.

The hope, Phongikaroon said, is to fit the vision of Utah Gov. Spencer Cox’s Operation Gigawatt, an initiative to double energy production

in the state, as well as Utah’s bid to host a nuclear lifecycle innovation campus, a U.S. Department of Energy project to support nuclear fuel operations.

“I hope to see more interest in nuclear energy, and then to see more vibrance of students and people to understand and accept what nuclear is, instead of just listening to the news,” he said. “So hopefully we’ll get more workforce. We’ll get more people who like to learn more about nuclear and be more open, receptive to that.”

As nuclear energy announcements from Utah elected officials increase, so is the student body’s interest in the industry, Phongikaroon said. An introduction to nuclear engineering class, for example, went from having between 20 and 25 enrolled students to almost 50.

The new classes are projected to be open to 30 to 40 students, he said.

Phongikaroon has been at the university for about a year. But, having spent more than a decade in a similar role at the Virginia Commonwealth University, he knows what it’s like to have nuclear energy already implemented in the grid.



Katie McKellar, Utah News Dispatch

Utah Gov. Spencer Cox announces Utah will be applying with the U.S. Department of Energy to host a "nuclear lifecycle innovation campus" in a remote area in northwest Tooele County during a news conference there on Friday, March 27, 2026.

Two nuclear power plants in Virginia produce at least 34% of the state’s electricity, whereas Utah doesn’t have the technology.

“People here are interested in nuclear, but it’s just another infrastructure to add,” Phongikaroon said. “So it’s a different view of the people looking at it (from Virginia), like, is it going to be successful? Is it going

to be just a myth?”

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