

Mine leader blasts detractors

Claim-GV stands by message

Dave Moller, Grass Valley Union, 11-3-09

The president of the Idaho-Maryland Mine in Grass Valley said Tuesday the main group battling the effort was using misleading information to kill the proposed reopening of the famous underground gold producer of long ago.

“They're saying there's going to be huge superstacks with stuff blowing back over the city,” mine President David Watkinson said Tuesday. “They made up the numbers and then the photo.”

The rendition on Claim-GV's website is altered way beyond reality, Watkinson said. If the proposed ceramics plant using mine waste is built, it might give off some steam, but only 20 to 30 feet high, he added, and mine operations won't utilize smokestacks either.

“We would have flues about five feet off the roof,” Watkins said. “If we refine gold, we'll have a flue with scrubbers on it to handle it, you can't do anything without major pollution controls.”

Meanwhile, Claim-GV leaders stood by a rendition of the mine on its Web site showing large plumes of what appears to be smoke and steam billowing into the air and in the direction of downtown Grass Valley as accurate.

While the rendition appears to have large smoke stacks in a small form, enlarged versions show steam shooting high into the air out of no stacks, according to Ralph Silberstein and Bob Bogart of CLAIM-GV.

Both said the high plumes would be caused by the extreme force the mine will push steam out of the ceramics plant, according to the environmental report. According to the report, the six short stacks would put out 4,400 cubic feet of steam per minute at almost 1,300 degrees.

Silberstein said the rendition of the Claim-GV Web site shows the steam going into downtown Grass Valley, but “it blows in several directions there,” and could have been shown in any direction.

“Their rendition doesn't show a headframe, or any tailings,” from a working mine, Silberstein said.

Both Silberstein and Bogart also said Idaho-Maryland wasn't completely forthcoming in a recent statement about dropping Dunn Capital Partners as a possible source to funds to keep the reopening effort going.

In a press release issued Oct. 21 that The Union was unaware of, Dunn blamed Idaho-Maryland for the deal falling apart and said concerns from groups like Claim-GV spurred them.

“The decision was several-fold, based on review of Emgold's proposed Idaho-Maryland Mine project's impact to an urban location, citizen petitions, the risk of water loss to local wells, the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act and hydrologist reports,” Dunn said. Emgold is the Canadian parent company of the Idaho-Maryland Mining Corporation.

“In combination of inadequate support documents to prove the adherence of California's Environmental Quality Act, Dunn Capital had no choice but to end talks with Emgold,” the release said.

Watkinson said in October that negotiations partially stopped when Idaho-Maryland learned Dunn was being sued by a firm for not coming through with a similar funding plan for them.

“We are at a loss to understand the motivation behind this concoction of falsehoods and can only assume that it represents a malicious attempt to cause financial damage to Emgold and its shareholders,” Watkinson said in a counter-press release.

The mine leader also claimed a 2006 survey done by the city showed 72 percent were for it. Claim-GV contends the survey was done before any major impacts were known from the environmental report.