

**Bill Hall**  
**Vernal, Utah Resident**

Interviewer-John Howe

Bill let's start out by talking about oil and gas development here in Vernal. What does it mean to this city?

Bill Hall

Oil and gas development here in the Uinta Basin-Vernal, Roosevelt, Duchesne, and Rangely, Colorado is very important. The oil and gas industry came into this area in the early thirties, and it wasn't much of an impact then, but over the last thirty years oil and gas has kind of been a mainstream of everybody's economy here and their way of survival, and their way of life.

Interviewer-John Howe

What percentage of the town has been laid off here? You were talking about that earlier, how this town has been affected by this slow down?

Bill Hall

Well, by the slow down on the pull out of the leases, a lot of the oil companies have gotten scared and backed off and drilling and oil production and completions have dropped off considerably. Now I've heard rumor that twenty percent of the population of Vernal has actually moved out, and I've noticed when you drive up town it's not nearly as congested. If you go to the stores, you're not waiting in lines that are nearly as long. I know it has definitely had a huge impact on Vernal as a whole, and it's definitely had a huge impact on my work.

Interviewer-John Howe

Tell me about that impact, what kind of impact has it been on your situation?

Bill Hall

The impact of this slowdown on my situation is my workload is dropped off considerably. I could honestly say its right around the ninety six to ninety eight percentiles. I went from working on an average of about twenty-two days a month, on average, down to just one or two.

Interviewer-John Howe

Tell me about your fears. You said if things got worse you might possibly lose your house, or other things. What are you the most worried about in terms of this economy?

Bill Hall

Well the fear factor here on the slowing of the economy is that now the incomes dropped off considerably, and now that the income is not there, the bills are always still there. So now, my biggest fear is losing my home, losing my business. Then of course there's always the credit factor. You know, it takes seven years for your credit to ever become

established again, in that seven-year period you know, you want to buy another home, you're kind of out of luck. So the fear factor right now for me has gone up considerably.

Interviewer-John Howe

Tell me about the impact on your friends. What's happened to some of them?

Bill Hall

The impact on my friends due to this slow down period, is a lot of have moved away, some have gone to Pennsylvania, some gone back to Louisiana; some have gone to North Dakota. One friend just recently has lost his home and has gone to Salt Lake to stay with friends, and currently everything he owns is stored here pretty much at my house. It's like I told him, I hope it's not stored here long because we may be moving all of my stuff.

Interviewer-John Howe

What do you think is the cause of this situation? Who do you blame for it?

Bill Hall

The cause of the slowdown, not I don't think just for our area, but for the nation as a whole, I think big government and greedy people have a lot to do with this, and then of course because of the government we have, the price of oil's gone down on the world market. A little while back they claimed that there was a shortage, and then all of a sudden now there's a glut, and so the price of oil's dropped because of that, and our government, and then the pulling of the leases by Ken Salazar and the Secretary of Energy has definitely had a direct impact on this area. What it's done is it's made all of the investors antsy about whether they should invest in future projects here, and what they should do with their current projects, and I think that's had a huge impact in this area. It's not just one thing; it's kind of a snowball effect of many things.

Interviewer-John Howe

If you had an audience with Secretary Salazar what would you like to say to him?

Bill Hall

If I had a chance to have a one on one interview with Secretary Salazar, first question I would ask him would be "Why? What was the reason for pulling these leases?" Yeah, some say it's the environmental thing, some say it's control, if it's the environmental thing, you know, I'm like everybody else I like the environment. I don't want to see the environment permanently harmed, but I also know for a fact over twenty-nine years of experience in the oil field that the oil field operations and the environment can co-exist.

Interviewer-John Howe

Tell me how they co-exist.

Bill Hall

In my experience in the oil field, the oil field companies a lot of times will come in, they will set up a site, they will do everything necessary to make that site environmentally

friendly during the operation, at the life end of the oil well or the gas well, whatever they have, they'll come in and reclaim that spot sometimes to better condition than what it was. Once the plants grow back in, I can take you to many spots that you will never know that there was ever oil or gas operation on that site.

Interviewer-John Howe

You know you talked a little bit about good people who have been hurt in this situation. Tell me about that situation just a little bit, about good people being hurt by the economic situation.

Bill Hall

The slowdown on the oil and the gas operations due to the fact of the drop of world oil price and the demise of the leases has really affected a lot of good people, and not in just this area, but in this entire region. People that otherwise were good tax paying citizens, paid their bills, you know, lived a good clean life are all a sudden now thrust into an unknown zone.

Interviewer-John Howe

That's exactly what I'm looking for here when you were talking about being taxpaying citizens; those are one of the things you were talking to me yesterday about.

Bill Hall

Well, you know, and it concerns me because you take a good taxpaying citizen, and now you thrust them on the un-employment line with no job, they're losing their homes. It's a known fact, desperate people will do desperate things, and crime will go up.

Interviewer-John Howe

We were talking about good people being hurt by the oil and gas lease situation.

Bill Hall

Through the slowdown of the oil and gas operations in this entire region, and I'm sure as well as the United States as a whole, a lot of good people have been thrust into situations that they otherwise would not have been in. You know, they were good taxpaying citizens, held jobs, they were self-sufficient, the government was not paying their way, and now all of a sudden they're losing their homes, they've lost their jobs. It's desperate times for these people, myself included, and it's a known fact that desperate people will do desperate things, crime has gone up. I've talked to the police department here recently, I've several friends that are on the force, and they said crime has gone up considerably. Loss of jobs, loss of revenue, crime-it just goes hand in hand. So now you've taken productive citizens and turned them into a kind of a desperate situation. I, you know I have children and when times get tough, you know you become desperate, and you'll do things you normally would have not done. I personally, I don't want no severance package; I don't want any handouts from the government. I just want my job back, I just want to go to work, and I can honestly say I speak for thousands of other people.

Interviewer-John Howe

In your opinion, what should be done to remedy this situation?

Bill Hall

Yesterday we were speaking with the commissioner, the county commissioner and he implied that uh there'd been a lot of work done to putting a lot of these packages together for the government purposes, for these oil companies to come in and invest, and I think that Secretary Salazar needs to stick to this plan. They've spent seven years of hard labor putting this all together, and I think we need to go back to plan A and follow the plan, and just stick with the program that was already in place.

Interviewer-John Howe

What would be your situation or your plan B, if you will, if this situation doesn't change, what will you do?

Bill Hall

My situation if this continues on, my plan B would be, I'm not really sure. You know I may have to move, which is not what I really want to do. I may have to file bankruptcy which is definitely a last ditch resort. Moving on in the past might have been an option, but in this day and age, the whole economy is affected with the slowdown. Jobs are few everywhere, so I'm not really sure what I would do at this point, that's definitely going to take some thought.

Interviewer-John Howe

We were talking about Assistant Secretary Hayes meeting and mood of the community. What kind of mood did he find in the community in that meeting?

Bill Hall

A month or so ago, Assistant Secretary Hayes came to Vernal for a meeting over these oil and gas leases, Secretary Salazar was supposed to come, but for whatever reason he did not come. So the meeting with Hayes was at the western park, and over a thousand people showed up. The mood of the people was first of anger, and fear, fear and anger always follow each other. The fear factor here is the loss of jobs, the demise of our community, the demise of the work, and people just literally losing everything they've spent their entire lives on. I, as a self-employed individual in this area, I went to the meeting as well, and a lot of words were spoken. My fears were just as same as the rest, loss of job, and loss of homes. Many of the people in this community have been there their entire lives; they go back five, six, seven generations. My family goes back three generations here in this valley. So the loss of your livelihood, your jobs, the fear of "what's going to happen to my family, my children"? You know or are we going to have to move? Are we going to lose everything? Are we going to starve? You know? Unemployment just doesn't cover a lot of those things, and unemployment's kind of a last ditch effort. So there was a lot of fear factor in there. And Assistant Secretary Hayes was hit with some very tough questions, and R.L Tatmun, a gentleman from over in Roosevelt, he really hit the nail on the head with many of his questions and he was right to the point, and the number one question was 'Why?' "Why was this done to start with"?

The pulling of the leases; that was just a small factor, but that started a giant snowball that created a huge unemployment deficit in this city as well as in this whole region.

Interviewer-John Howe

Tell me just a little bit, you were talking about the oil and gas situation and how it snowballed. Tell me of what you think of Tim DeChristopher's action with the "Bogus bidding", if you will on the oil and gas leases.

Bill Hall

The bogus bidding of oil and gas leases earlier in the year, I think had a profound effect on Ken Salazar's pulling the leases out of this area, and I think this gentleman's goal here by doing these bogus bidding was to pull the opinion of the people so much off the oil field and more onto the environment. Although, you know, if that is the question in hand I'm like a lot of people, I'm for the environment too, I don't want to see the environment damaged or permanently harmed, but there's got to be a fine line there, a fine balance between economics, energy policy, energy usage, and the environment. And I think what he did by going in and bidding on these oil and gas leases with absolutely no intention of ever buying them, he created a huge influx of a downward spiral in our economy. And then the pulling of the seventeen leases in this area that was just another part of the snowball. Basically they kind of created a fear factor among the investors and the people as a whole, and when these investors become fearful of the downward spiraling effect of the economy, they're less apt to want to invest. So they're less apt to want to bring jobs into the area. Once you lose these investors, it is incredibly hard to ever get them back, and this sometimes can take years and years for us to achieve this.

Interviewer-John Howe

What do you think is going to happen to the future of towns like Vernal and the West?

Bill Hall

I don't mean just in the west, but in any of the oil producing areas-Wyoming, Texas, New Mexico, Utah, and Colorado. I think the future is going to definitely lie on our energy needs, now I think the answer definitely is not turning to foreign oil. You know, we may need foreign oil assistance, I think we need as a whole; we need to become more self-efficient. We don't want to get caught up in the trap of being dependent on foreign countries, cause there's going to come a time when this may become our demise. I think as a whole we need to become more self-efficient, and whether this be alternative energy or oil and gas. Alternative energy is not there so we're reliant on oil and gas right now as our number one source of energy, and I think that we need to set goals forth to utilize this, become self-sufficient, so our country as a whole doesn't meet the demise of being under the rule or the thumb of a foreign entity, like the Arabian nations.

Interviewer-John Howe

You were saying your biggest fears, your biggest fears was?

Bill Hall

My biggest fear is I'm afraid that if we become dependent on foreign oil, that sooner or

later, you know, we're going to be so dependent on this that they're going to control us. All they got to do is open a shut off valve and they already control probably twenty percent of our nation's energy. My biggest fear is that we're going to get into a situation here that, let's just say Saudi Arabia or Iraq or any of them Arab nations, they want to pull the plug on us they're definitely going to put the hurt to our country. And my biggest fear is at that point there, what's going to stop them from just walking in here and taking over? Right now, and I don't have exact figures, but it seems like a considerable amount of our country is already owned by foreigners. What's to stop them from just walking in and saying, "You know what, this is mine, and I want it now, you get out". That is one of my biggest fears, and not only that but to our local economy and our people as a whole. You know, right now we're the strongest nation in the world, but if we don't watch out, we're not going to be, and energy is the reason why we're the strongest nation in the world, that, and food. We have the largest food supply in the world, without energy their farmers can't run their tractors, if they can't run their tractors, they can't plow the fields, produce the food. Where' are we going to be then? We're going to be under the thumb of these foreign countries, and that is one of my biggest fears.

Interviewer-John Howe

You were talking about the high percentage of the population doesn't really know where gas and oil comes from. Tell me why that is.

Bill Hall

I would say ninety eight percent of the American population, or the world population for that matter, has no idea where their actual gasoline or their natural gas comes from. They just know they go to the gas station, they stick the pump in their car, and they have instant gasoline, but a lot of them don't understand where that gasoline comes from? You know, it doesn't come from the gas station, it comes from the refinery, but that's not where it comes from the beginning. In the refinery they refine crude oil; gasoline is actually a byproduct of crude oil. Way back before cars were invented gasoline was such a byproduct that they actually dumped it in ditches, threw it in rivers. They didn't want it; they did everything they could to get rid of it, because it was a wasteful byproduct that was not needed. Well anyway, gasoline is such an important part of our society, it's what propels the majority of our vehicles wherever we want to go, but where does this gasoline come from besides at the refinery? It comes from the wellhead. This is where the oil and gas companies, and I, and many of the population of Vernal come into play. We work in the oil fields; this is our main stay of survival. When oil comes out of the ground, it's called crude oil, it's in it's crudest form, at that point there it's shipped to the refinery, whether it be pipeline or trucked, at that point there the refinery refines it down breaking this oil down into many products-kerosene, coke, gasoline, and many things. It's used in so many things, make-ups, plastics, I can give you a whole list of things it is used for, but that's where our gasoline comes from, it's a byproduct of crude oil, and without crude oil we don't have gasoline. Without gasoline we don't have our mode of transportation, we don't have a strong nation, and we're not going to have our food supply. So when people pull up to the gas pump they need to think in their mind, you know what, where does this really come from? It doesn't come from that gas pump, it comes from under the ground, and without oil and gas leases, and drilling, and production, and completion, we're not

going to have this, and this is going to weaken our country.

### **Bill Hall Standup**

Interviewer-John Howe

Tell me what we're seeing behind us. Tell me the significance of this and how it started out, and what it looks like now.

Bill Hall

What we're seeing behind us is open fields, it's a hay field now, but a long time ago they had drilled an oil well here. Probably around twelve, fifteen years ago, and so what we're kind of looking at is the transformation from an oil and gas well site back to its original condition. A lot of what these oil companies do when they're done with the site is they'll reclaim the site back or to better condition than what it was originally. Here behind us you can see this hay field here, and you can see a water wheel lying crossing that hay field. Back here approximately this direction here you can see an orange little thing holding the water wheel line from rolling forward. That is approximately where the oil and gas well was drilled, and you can see how beautifully they reclaimed the land back to its original or better condition.