

NEWS RELEASE

June 28, 2005

Contact: Jim Springer (801) 538-5324 or (801) 243-9466

ABANDONED MINES POSE HAZARD – STAY OUT! AND STAY ALIVE!

Summer beckons us to the backcountry. Don't allow your sense of adventure to turn what should be a fun outing into a tragedy. There are an estimated 20,000 abandoned mines in Utah, and while they appear to offer adventure, they are in fact filled with danger ready to trap the unwary.

"Abandoned mines are not naturally occurring physical features such as caves, they can be very unstable," explains Mark Mesch, administrator of the Utah Division of Oil, Gas and Mining's Abandoned Mine Reclamation Program. "Cave-ins, toxic air, old explosives, and falls into deep shafts that are difficult to spot in the dark are just some of the hazards you face when you enter an old mine."

Since 1985 there have been five deaths and numerous injuries in abandoned mines in Utah. "Our program closes hundreds of abandoned mines each year," added Mesch. "But, we still have a long way to go so we need to warn people about the dangers of these old mines, and the best thing to do is to just stay out of them."

Additional information is available on the Division of Oil, Gas and Mining website at: <http://www.ogm.utah.gov/amr/>

Also available from the division is a 27-minute movie titled, "**Stay Out! And Stay Alive!**" It is offered on both DVD and VHS tape.