

Issue Brief: What Happens to Modena?

In addition to its popularity as a destination for railroad and ghost town enthusiasts, explorers, and obsidian hunters, Modena is a populated settlement. Though the residents of this settlement stand to bear the brunt of many of the worst impacts of the proposed surface mining in Modena Canyon, they have been given no notice of the plan, and no public hearing of the hazards they may be facing.

At the February 5 public hearing before the Iron County Planning Commission, Russell Limb (PCI) said he was trying to arrange for access to a rail spur in Modena instead of trucking crushed volcanic tuff to Cedar City for shipment, as stated in their applications to the County and the State Division of Oil, Gas, and Mining. This alternate approach would allow an 80 ft. dump truck into the settlement of Modena to load crushed silicates onto rail cars every 15-20 minutes, 11 hours a day, for years.

The County says this is not relevant to the Conditional Use Permit review, which is supposed to assess foreseeable impacts on public health, safety and welfare. So the noise, air quality and safety hazards imposed on the people in Modena won't get a hearing, and won't be considered.

