

INTERVIEW OF SUSAN FYE

BY ABBY JOHNSON

EUREKA COUNTY

LESSONS LEARNED VIDEO PROJECT

held in

CRESCENT VALLEY, NEVADA

April 21, 2011

1 MS. CLANCY: And Abby Johnson will be conducting
2 the interview. It's April 21, 2011 in Crescent Valley.

3 MS. JOHNSON: I'm Abby Johnson. I'm the Nuclear
4 Waste Advisor for Eureka County. We're doing the Eureka
5 County Lessons Learned Video Project, and we're going to be
6 interviewing Susan Fye.

7 Susan, when did you come to Crescent Valley, and
8 why did you come to Crescent Valley?

9 MS. FYE: We moved to Crescent Valley in 1994, in
10 March, and there were a number of reasons why we came to
11 Crescent Valley. For years, we had come out here exploring
12 various parts of rural Nevada, primarily looking at wild hot
13 springs, and an opportunity to come out to Crescent Valley
14 where we knew there was a hot springs, and we hoped to find
15 our very own. And, that's what happened in March of 1994.

16 MS. JOHNSON: How did you first learn about the
17 Yucca Mountain Project, and the Carlin Rail Corridor?

18 MS. FYE: In the Eighties, I had heard vaguely
19 about Yucca Mountain, but it really wasn't on my
20 consciousness, my radar screen at that point. Moving to
21 Nevada in 1989, we became more and more aware of it, and when
22 Joseph was involved, as I was, in selling crafts and arts, we
23 met some people who were very concerned about Yucca Mountain,
24 and that was in the early Nineties. And, then, of course,
25 when we moved to Crescent Valley, and probably in 1998,

1 became acutely aware of the proposed rail route coming
2 through, or nearby Crescent Valley.

3 MS. JOHNSON: The next thing that happened was the
4 Department of Energy released its Environmental Impact
5 Statement in draft form, and was asking the public to comment
6 on the EIS. I know you were involved in some of the outreach
7 activities and awareness activities relating to that. Can
8 you tell us what you did?

9 MS. FYE: I was involved more behind the scenes, if
10 you will, in a secretarial role. I had communication
11 primarily with you notifying us of when they had planned and
12 scheduled these meetings, which was the first step, to find
13 out exactly when the meeting was going to be.

14 The second step for us was I was a member of the
15 committee, as I say, primarily doing secretarial work,
16 getting the word out to all the committee members and to the
17 community, printing up fliers and distributing them about
18 who, what, when and where, giving them as much information on
19 the fliers as we could.

20 At the committee meeting, in particular because we
21 were a core group, we were very involved in perhaps reading
22 the massive amounts of material that we were getting. We
23 got, for example, one of the books was from the League of
24 Women Voters, which came out I believe in '98 or '99, which
25 is the Nuclear Waste Primer and was, for many people, easier

1 to read because it wasn't volumes and volumes of very
2 technical information. But, reading the Draft, we came up
3 with certain questions, and we wanted those questions asked
4 at the meeting, even if they weren't going to be answered.

5 And, so, part of my job was distributing those
6 questions to citizens who would be able to ask them. And,
7 that's what I did continually.

8 MS. JOHNSON: As I recall, that was a very
9 effective strategy, and those questions were asked again and
10 again.

11 MS. FYE: And, again and again.

12 MS. JOHNSON: And, they were, some of them were
13 rather simple questions.

14 MS. FYE: Yes.

15 MS. JOHNSON: Like who will own the rail line? Who
16 will own the land under the tracks?

17 MS. FYE: Right. And, will it be a dedicated line,
18 or will, in the future, will it then be turned over? Some of
19 the questions were what compensation will you be giving to
20 people who the rail line, proposed rail line will go through
21 their property, or affect their mining claims, or their
22 grazing rights, let alone the property values here in town.
23 Having a nuclear waste train going through your backyard for
24 35 years is probably not a great selling point, if you're
25 comparing property, say, in Lander County where you don't

1 have the train. So, those questions were asked over and over
2 and over again, and we never really got good answers.

3 MS. JOHNSON: The actual day of the Draft
4 Environmental Impact Statement hearing in December of 1999,
5 what do you recall of that day and of the experience of that
6 many hours of hearing?

7 MS. FYE: I was impressed that in fact the
8 committee had managed to get standing room only. Practically
9 the entire day, people stayed, they were interested, they
10 were involved, they were asking their own questions. What I
11 was also impressed with was that this is a diverse community
12 that they don't always agree politically.

13 We had the Western Shoshone Defense Projects versus
14 the mining versus the other grazing rights. They, under the
15 direction of the committee, and was actually stated in at
16 times to them, the preliminary meetings before that we had
17 with the public, was yes, you may have your differences, but
18 this is a common problem. Let's focus on that.

19 At that meeting, there was highly emotional, highly
20 rational also comments, questions that were directed at the
21 problem, not bringing up past differences that these diverse
22 groups had had. And, I was impressed with it, and I think
23 that the officials who came were impressed. They thought
24 this was going to perhaps, in my impression, they seemed that
25 they thought they were just going to roll over us, that we

1 were a bunch of country bumpkins out in the middle of
2 Crescent Valley, in the middle of no where, and they were
3 going to snowball us with statistics that we wouldn't
4 understand. And, it didn't work that way.

5 MS. JOHNSON: My impression is that a combination
6 of the people speaking up and the problems of the many, many
7 parts of the private land in the rail line corridor both were
8 effective ways to tell the Department of Energy that this
9 maybe wasn't the route they thought it was.

10 MS. FYE: Right, that was my impression.

11 MS. JOHNSON: Let's move on to the next question.

12 What is your role here in the community of Crescent
13 Valley?

14 MS. FYE: In Crescent Valley, I have been the
15 Justice of the Peace, first Justice of the Peace pro tem from
16 1998, 1999 and through 2000 when I stood for election. I was
17 elected in 2000 and was unopposed in 2006. At this point, I
18 do plan on running again in 2012. So, I have, shall we say I
19 have to keep a lower profile when it comes to actively
20 participating in whether it be this particular issue or other
21 ones, it goes with the judicial canons that unless it
22 specifically has to do with the judiciary, that your role
23 cannot be out front. They say it's using your judicial
24 position to unfair advantage.

25 MS. JOHNSON: But, at the same time, you must

1 understand the community rather well?

2 MS. FYE: I do in fact. There are a number of
3 individuals and families in this community that came here not
4 necessarily for jobs, there are not that many jobs in
5 Crescent Valley per se, but they liked about Eureka County
6 the shall we say lack of regulation and government control.
7 I'm not saying they're necessarily anti-government, but they
8 are perhaps free thinkers and prefer to work under local
9 rules rather than nationally imposed rules.

10 At the same time, while I'm saying they're
11 independent, they are very concerned about their community,
12 not shall we say environmentalists per se, but it is their
13 home. They have great attachments to it.

14 One of the things that they were really concerned
15 about was if an accident should occur, whether it just be a
16 derailment or construction workers, whatever was going to
17 happen, what would be the emergency response here. And, it
18 wasn't an issue that had been addressed by anyone anywhere.
19 Subsequent to bringing up those concerns, there were some
20 discussions with emergency responders and law enforcement.
21 But, the geographic area is so wide and so sparsely
22 populated, that to get immediate response to a train accident
23 outside of Crescent Valley, could take an hour, which might
24 not be enough time to do anything effective as far as
25 containment would be, let alone if there were injuries

1 involved.

2 Personnel, number of personnel, they'd have to draw
3 from Battle Mountain, Carlin. Eureka is too far away. So,
4 you have to--those concerns were very much in the public's
5 eye, and they were making those questions, too.

6 MS. JOHNSON: And, there's only a volunteer.

7 MS. FYE: Only a volunteer fire department.
8 Staffing as far as law enforcement is, we have a sheriff
9 substation, which is located in the justice facility, along
10 with the court. We have an under-sheriff, and we have two
11 other deputies. Normally, there are two of them on duty, the
12 under-sheriff and a deputy, but they may be called out of the
13 area, for example, up on Interstate 80, or over on State
14 Route 278, and they would be already committed to doing
15 something else. So, if an emergency happened in Crescent
16 Valley, they wouldn't be available.

17 The volunteer fire department, many of them have
18 jobs. They may not be located right here. They may not be
19 working at our mine. They may be working in Battle Mountain
20 or Elko, so you're looking at an hour for anyone to get here.

21 MS. JOHNSON: Let's move on to the next question.

22 The politics of Yucca Mountain right now are
23 uncertain, although that's something that is more the nature
24 of the whole issue of Yucca Mountain. If the Carlin route
25 were to be revived along with the Yucca Mountain Project,

1 what would your reaction be and what do you think the
2 reaction of people in Crescent Valley would be?

3 MS. FYE: If the Yucca Mountain Project were
4 reactivated and the Carlin route were once again being
5 considered, I, my personal reaction would be absolute
6 opposition as a landowner and as a resident of the area. I
7 think that we would then go through the same process that we
8 did in the late Nineties, you know, assessing how the public
9 felt.

10 However, my contacts that I have had with the
11 people in Crescent Valley, as they've gone through these
12 political yes, it's on, no, it's off, yes, it's on, who
13 knows, I believe that the opposition is, in the north county,
14 remains steadfastly in opposition to the Carlin rail route.
15 They don't want a train or trucks going through their county,
16 crossing their property, in close proximity to their
17 properties any more now than they did, what, eleven years
18 ago.

19 MS. JOHNSON: Okay.

20 MS. FYE: Okay.

21 (End of interview of Susan Fye.)

22

23

24

25

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

TRANSCRIBER'S CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the foregoing has been transcribed by me to the best of my ability and constitutes a true and accurate transcript of the mechanically recorded proceedings in this matter.

Dated at Aurora, Colorado, this 1st day of June, 2011.

s/ Mary Chevalier
Mary Chevalier
Federal Reporting Service, Inc.
17454 East Asbury Place
Aurora, Colorado 80013
(303) 751-2777