

PRESS RELEASE

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UGRWCD ANNOUNCES THE DEPLOYMENT OF GAP WEATHER RADAR IN GUNNISON COUNTY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 6, 2024, Gunnison, CO - The Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District (UGRWCD) will host a community educational presentation and public viewing of Gunnison County's new gap doppler weather radar on Thursday, August 15th at noon in the UGRWCD parking lot at 210 West Spencer Avenue, Gunnison. A complimentary light lunch of sandwich wraps and drinks will be provided, and members of the public are welcome.

After the educational viewing, the weather radar equipment, sponsored by the Western Water & Weather Intelligence Center (W3IC), a 501 (c) (3) and operated and maintained by Advanced Radar Company (ARC) out of Frederick, Colorado, will be moved to its home on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) property on Big Mesa west of Gunnison. According to Vern Tharp, W3IC President, "Our mission is to form a series of Public-Private Partnerships designed to provide timely water, weather and climate intelligence and forecasting tools to support effective local decision making in rural cities and counties throughout the Western States where the federal government has simply failed to do so."

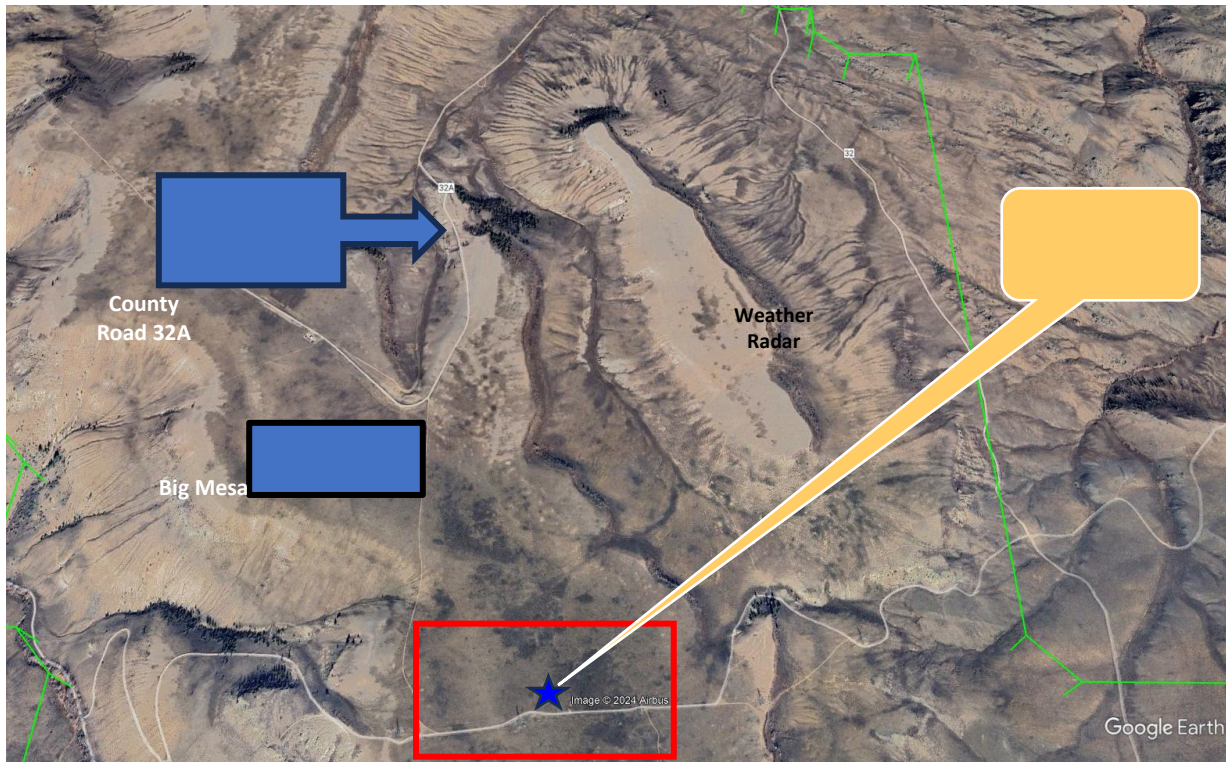
"This unit will be a solid state dual polar X band weather radar with a narrow beam width for precision data accumulation and with the operational capabilities and range for full coverage in this critical water basin. This data will be used to generate a series of water resource, fire detection, wind and weather-related forecasting products which will result in significant enhancements for weather services in Gunnison County and a critical area in the headwaters of the Colorado River Basin," said Neil Brackin, President of ARC.



The Doppler radar unit which will be temporarily mounted on a thirty-foot trailer.

UGRWCD General Manager Sonja Chavez explained that this has been a project in planning for several years between the District, W3IC, Gunnison County, the BLM and other beneficiaries.

“All of us who live in this valley recognize that there have been gaps in accurate weather data and forecasts,” said Chavez. “Not only can this radar help our agency improve our annual streamflow forecasting capabilities, it also benefits our regional airport, recreational tourism, rural flight for life services, wildland fire detection and fighting, agricultural producers and critical scientific and hydrologic research happening in our headwater community, to name a few.”



Location of Gunnison Gap Doppler Radar on Big Mesa/BLM Property

Chavez said the radar unit will be on display so that government and corporate leaders and the general public can see it up close and ask questions about its operation capabilities. “We are looking forward to our partnership with W3IC and having this equipment and the forecasting and decision support tools it produces for all of our constituents,” said Chavez. “We hope folks will stop by!”

Continuing to build upon 65 years of positive impact in our community, the UGRWCD was created in 1959 by a vote of the taxpayers of this basin to “conserve, protect, and defend” the waters of the Upper Gunnison River Basin.