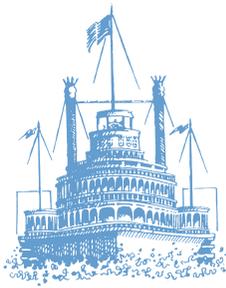


**MONDAY**

JUNE 23, 2008

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, COLORADO

VOL. 20, No. 150



# STEAMBOAT TODAY

ROUTT COUNTY'S DAILY NEWSPAPER

FREE




**Gas prices**  
Cost of a gallon of regular unleaded fuel on Sunday

Fuel Stop	\$4.10
West Kum N Go	\$4.19
7-Eleven	\$4.09
Western Petro	\$4.15
Bob's Conoco	\$4.19
Hilltop Sinclair	\$4.18
Anglers Kum N Go	\$4.19
Ski Haus	\$4.19
Mount Werner Sinclair	\$4.19
Shell	\$4.19
Shop & Hop	\$4.09
<b>State Average</b>	<b>\$3.99</b>
<b>National Average</b>	<b>\$4.07</b>



JOHN F. RUSSELL/STAFF

**Oil extraction equipment is silhouetted on this ridge line** that runs alongside U.S. Highway 40 just outside of Milner in West Routt County. Recently, a Texas-based limited liability company paid about \$30.5 million for sub-surface mineral rights in the area — a sign of expanded interest in oil exploration in the county.

**SPORTS**



## MLB results

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# Interest in oil rising

## Texas company pays \$30.5 million for mineral rights west of Steamboat

**Tom Ross**  
PILOT & TODAY STAFF

**STEAMBOAT SPRINGS**

Driving from Steamboat Springs west to Yampa Valley Regional Airport, it's difficult to envision the giant lake of oil beneath the surface of U.S. Highway 40 and the winding Yampa River.

But the oil is down there, and there are increasing signs that the escalating price of crude is sparking fresh interest in getting at Routt County's natural supply.

Less than two weeks ago, a San Antonio-based limited liability company, NRC-CO 1, created by another LLC in San Antonio, Texas, paid \$30.5 million for sub-

surface mineral rights beneath 12 parcels of land. The parcels are in the vicinity of Milner and the abandoned coal mining town of Mount Harris. Timothy Hasler, a Fort Collins attorney who is the registered agent with the Colorado Secretary of State for NRC-CO 1, declined to characterize his clients' interest in the Routt County mineral rights. The San Antonio entity that created NRC-CO 1 is called NRC Group, LLC.

There is a large Russian holding company also called NRC Group that has interests in oil exploration as well as banking, hotel development and commercial aviation. Hasler said he is unaware of any connection

between the company he represents in Texas and the Russian company.

Routt County Assessor Mike Kerrigan says he sees the evidence of increased interest in energy exploration every day in his office at the Routt County Courthouse.

"For the last month and a half, we've had at least two land men in our office daily," Kerrigan said. "Sometimes, there are five or six. We aren't equipped to handle them, and they take turns," using computers to research the status of mineral leases in the valley west of Steamboat.

Land men, in industry parlance, are agents who seek to tie up oil and mineral leases and then market them to oil explora-

tion companies.

"These people are looking for oil," Kerrigan said.

A Web page maintained by the Colorado Oil and Gas Commission confirms that a well on Wolf Mountain Ranch in North Routt consistently has produced between 5,000 and 7,000 barrels of oil a month since May 2005. That well recently changed hands from Infinity Oil to Forest Oil.

Andy Lydyard told the *Steamboat Pilot & Today* in the summer of 2007 that there could be nearly 200 million barrels of oil — enough to meet U.S. demands for about 10 days —

See **Oil**, back page

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**LOTTO**



Saturday night's Cash 5 numbers: 7-8-9-14-30  
Drawings are held Monday through Saturday.

**WEATHER**



Afternoon storm possible.  
High of 79.  
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