

Pinon Canyon Delay Possible

It's a fact. History shows it. Military posts in this country always get bigger. The Army's Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site (between La Junta and Trinidad) will be no different. Someday, maybe as much as 15 years down the line, Pinon Canyon will be a major military installation.

These were observations made Tuesday night by Col. Earl Burley, land acquisition officer at Ft. Carson and THE man as far as what's happened to date on the Army's ambitious plan to convert 24,000 acres of semi-arid rangeland into a much-needed training site big enough to allow maneuvers by battalion-size units.

To emphasize what a "major military installation" is, Col. Burley pointed out that Ft. Carson is such an animal and that Ft. Carson annually "pumps \$450 million dollars into the Colorado Springs economy."

Col. Burley, who will be "hanging it up" as of Jan. 31 on a long and impressive Army career, was one of four Ft. Carson officers in La Junta Tuesday for an informal meeting the Army asked La Junta to host in order to give an update on Pinon Canyon.

The meeting was actually more than that. It was intended, also, as an introduction party to give La Junta a chance to get acquainted with Col. Dave Llewellyn, chief of staff at Ft. Carson, and Major Dan Doherty, who is replacing Col. Burley, the two men who will be most responsible for what happens at the Pinon Canyon site in the next couple of years.

Unhappily, the downstairs dining room at the Capri, where Tuesday's meeting was held, was barely half filled. All three Otero County commissioners, Chuck Deaney, Bob Gerler and Bob Bauserman were on hand. La Junta City Manager Carmen Sarlo and Chamber of Commerce President Jake Klein were there, too. But no member of La Junta City Council and only three (including Klein) of 12 Chamber of Commerce directors accepted their invitations to find out first-hand what's happening with the Army at Pinon Canyon.

One thing the Army and residents of both La Junta and Trinidad should be very concerned with, Col. Burley said Tuesday, is the report that the Department of Defense is

considering delaying or even deleting certain elements in the Pinon Canyon development.

They're talking about putting on the back burner three projects totaling around \$6 million, he said. Small peanuts in the multi-billion dollar defense budget, but big bucks when you think about what the Army promised La Junta and Trinidad in the way of economic impact from the Pinon Canyon development.

If these projects are indeed deleted, Col. Burley suggested, La Junta and Trinidad might have been better off if the Pinon Canyon area had remained ranch country.

Spencer Burfis, chairman of the Chamber's Military Affairs committee that set up Tuesday's meeting, told Col. Burley that he and members of his committee will "do what we can" to make sure no part of the Pinon Canyon project is deleted.

Specifically, Burfis said, letters and calls will be sent immediately to Senators Gary Hart and Bill Armstrong and to Representatives Hank Brown and Ray Kogovsek urging them to bring whatever pressure they can to insure Pinon Canyon's development as originally projected.

The three colonels and Major Doherty stayed overnight in La Junta Tuesday, were scheduled for a helicopter tour over the Pinon Canyon site Wednesday morning. At noon today (Wednesday) they were slated for a meeting similar to the one here Tuesday night with city dads and Chamber officials in Trinidad.

4-H Leader Conference

Southeast Area Extension pletions, national report has rescheduled the Area forums, 4-H meeting Leader-Jr. Leader Training management, being a 4-H for Saturday, Feb. 25 at Otero project leader, mini-4-H, and Jr. College in La Junta at 4-H ambassadors.

Wheeler Hall. Training will be 9 a.m. to 3:15 p.m., lunch not provided. offered in parliamentary procedure, decision making, Older 4-H members and 4-H livestock record book com- leaders are welcome

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