



Brigham City, Utah's, pride in the nearby Bear River MBR is clear for all who visit the city to see. | Photo courtesy of Brigham City, Utah.

## Dennis Fife, Mayor, Brigham City, Utah

The first thing you'll notice when visiting Brigham City, Utah, is a huge archway across the city's main downtown street proclaiming: "Welcome to Brigham, Gateway to the World's Greatest Wild Bird Refuge." Brigham City (pop. 19,000) is located about 60 miles north of Salt Lake City, and the city's Mayor, Dennis Fife, is clearly proud of his community's strong connection to the nearby Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge. Brigham City business owners get "quite a bit of local business from refuge visitors," according to Fife, who grew up in Brigham City and has lived there much of his life. The popular refuge contributes to local employment for hotel, restaurant, and gas station workers, as well as those who sell hunting, fishing, and bird-watching gear used by Bear River visitors.

The community, in turn, has been very active in supporting the refuge. Among other projects, the city applied for and received a grant of \$25 million from the Federal Highway Administration to improve the road that connects the city and the refuge. "We have a great working relationship with the refuge," says Mayor Fife, who meets regularly with the refuge manager to discuss plans and concerns. "The city annexed the land on which the refuge visitor center sits, and supported the building of the new center." The city also sponsors a wide variety of joint programs with the Bear River refuge, and pays for bus transportation for local schoolchildren who visit the refuge for field trips. The city supports the refuge Friends group, and sponsors hunting and fishing programs on the refuge, among other programs.