

Reid's alma mater names academic center after him

By Mark Havnes, Salt Lake City Tribune

CEDAR CITY, Utah – One of the most powerful politicians in the country was at Southern Utah University on Thursday reminiscing about his time at the school he graduated from in 1959 and being recognized with an academic center named in his honor.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid was invited to the Cedar City university, which has named its new Center for Outdoor Engagement after the Nevada Democrat.

When he heard the name of the center, Reid joked: "I thought it was a place where young students could be romantic."

The center will work for the preservation of natural, cultural and historical resources on public lands, further develop public lands alliances with the university, conduct research and service projects and make SUU a national center for the applied study of parks and public lands.

Reid touted his congressional record on public lands in Nevada, noting the creation of the Great Basin National Park, designating wilderness areas and a summit held every year on the clarity of water in Lake Tahoe, which Nevada shares with California.

When asked about those in Utah who believe the federal government has too much power over public lands and want ownership to revert to local control, even if it means invoking eminent domain, Reid had harsh words.

"They need a mental examination," he said. "It is just political drivel."

He said many of the public lands issues were challenged in the 1970s and 1980s during the “Sagebrush Rebellion,” a conservative movement that failed to influence federal environmental policies.

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