This adventure guide will help you learn why Uintah County, the heart of Dinosaurland, is a gateway to adventure and excitement.

Complete the activities in this booklet to earn a DINOSAUR HUNTING LICENSE at the back of the booklet.
**Uintah County**

**GEOGRAPHY**

Each paragraph below has a title. Use the info in each paragraph to fill in the blanks of the title and use the titles to discover the secret message on the following page.

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**Uintah County** was named for the Ute Indian Tribe that lived in the basin. It has a total area of 4,501 square miles. **Uintah County** is centered in the Uinta Basin, which is a giant bowl formed by a prehistoric lake called Uinta Lake. The county's diverse geography ranges from high mountain terrain (Uinta Mountains) to the fertile Ashley Valley (site of the county seat), to a rugged canyonland which includes the Dinosaur National Monument, to desolate and largely uninhabited hills in the south (Bookcliffs). As of the 2010 census the population was 32,588. The county seat and largest city is Vernal.

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Uintah County has two *state parks*: Steinaker State Park and Red Fleet State Park. They are located north of Vernal in a region filled with sagebrush flats, semi-desert shrublands and juniper forests. Wildlife includes rabbits, deer, bobcats, coyotes, owls, eagles, and hawks. The climate is arid with hot summers and cold winters. Both *state parks* feature a reservoir and a campground. They provide drinking and irrigation water to the communities in Uintah County. Many recreational opportunities are available at both parks.

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Large sections of the Uintah and Ouray Indian Reservation are located in Uintah County. Tribal headquarters are located in Fort Duchesne. The *reservation* is homeland to the Northern Ute Tribe and is the second largest *reservation* in the United States. The Utes have a tribal membership of 2,970 and over half of its membership live on the *reservation*. They operate their own tribal government and the Utes also operate several businesses. Cattle raising and mining of oil and natural gas are critical sources of money for the tribe.

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**Vernal** is the county seat and largest city of Uintah County. It is located in northeastern Utah about 20 miles from the Colorado border. The city is situated in the lowlands of a high desert area named Ashley Valley at 5,328 ft above sea level. Vernal has a cold semi-arid climate. Average precipitation is 9.23 inches annually. The population of Vernal in 2014 was 10,844.

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The **Uinta Mountains** are part of the Rocky Mountains but are unique because they run east to west. The eastern slope of the **Uinta Mountains** is located in the northwestern part of Uintah County. The Uintas are an area with high mountains (above 12,000 ft), alpine lakes and forests. The **Uinta Mountains** affect our world by providing critical water sources. The Uintas are home to many plants and animals and ranchers rely on the mountain pastures for cattle grazing. The Uintas are also a valuable recreation area.
Dinosaur National Monument is located on the border of Colorado and Utah. The park contains the largest collection of fossilized dinosaur bones from the Jurassic Period. The backcountry is filled with many colorful canyons and ridges. The main geologic formation in the monument that can be seen from Vernal is called Split Mountain. It looks like a mountain that has been cut in half where the Green River exits the canyon.

There is some agriculture in Uintah County. When irrigated, the valleys provide fertile farmland to raise cattle and grow alfalfa and corn. The growing season in Vernal lasts about 4 months.

The Book Cliffs are a series of desert mountains and cliffs in southern Uintah County. They are so named because the cliffs appear similar to a shelf of books. Sage brush, greasewoods and junipers are found at lower elevations of 5,500 ft. while gamble oaks, mountain mahoganies, aspens and douglas firs are at the highest elevations around 8,200 feet. The area is remote with mining remains, several old ranch sites, and lots of wildlife. Visitors may see deer, elk, black bear, blue and sage grouses, numerous hawks, antelope, mountain lions, small mammals, birds, reptiles, and also amphibians.

On the desert plateaus of Uintah County there are layers of sand and shale deep in the earth which hold oil and natural gas. Utah's first oil well was located about 10 miles southeast of Vernal in 1948 and Uintah County has continued to develop production of oil and natural gas.

The Green River is a large and powerful river that flows through the middle of Uintah County. It is a chief tributary of the Colorado River and provides water to large sections of the western United States. The Green provides habitat to many plants and animals and is a world-renowned fishery. The Green is also a popular choice for river rafting.
By the 1500s the UTE Indians had spread throughout the area now known as Uintah County. They traveled through large areas in small groups hunting, fishing and gathering plants. They wore clothes made from animal hides or dried bark and lived in tipis or brush shelters. Utah was named for the Ute Indians. Ute means "Land of the Sun". Uintah County was named after the Uintah Utes Tribe.

In the 1820s and 30s American and French trappers found many beaver and other wildlife in the Basin. A small trading post was built near present-day Whiterocks. Here, trappers could trade their beaver pelts in exchange for supplies. Conflicts with the Utes forced the trappers to abandon the post in 1844.

When the Mormon Pioneers arrived in Utah in 1847 they began to settle everywhere except in the Uintah Basin. Brigham Young sent men to the Uintah Basin. They reported that the area was a wasteland and Young chose not to send settlers. In 1861 Abraham Lincoln created the Uintah Indian Reservation. In the 1880s, the Uncompahgre Reservation was created in the south part of Uintah County. Utes from Utah and Colorado were forced to move to the reservations but as settlers realized the value of the land, the federal government decreased the size of the reservation.

The FREMONT People were some of the first inhabitants of Uintah County. They were hunters and gatherers that also grew corn. It is estimated that they lived here 2,000 to 700 years ago. Evidence of their communities has been discovered in Uintah County and many Fremont Artifacts can be seen in the local museums in Vernal. There are also several locations where visitors can enjoy the spectacular rock art left behind by the Fremont People.

Early explorers, Dominguez and ESCALANTE, passed through Uintah County in 1776 looking for a route to Monterey, California. In his diary, Escalante called the Basin "... a fine plain abounding in pastureage and fertile, arable land, provided it were irrigated...."

A rock inscription in Uintah County made by French TRAPPER, Antoine Robidoux.

John Wesley POWELL, a one-armed Civil War Veteran, floated down the Green River in 1869 and again in 1871. He was able to map the area and take pictures on the second expedition. The knowledge that he gained on these explorations was used to help settle the dry western regions of the U.S.

In 1889 mines were opened to extract the mineral Gilsonite. This mineral resembles shiny black obsidian and was used in many products. Gilsonite mining became the first large commercial enterprise in the Uintah Basin, causing most of its early population growth. The Uintah Railroad was built to transport loads of this rare mineral.

In 1909 archaeologists discovered an amazing quarry of dinosaur bones—150 million years old. The quarry of dinosaur bones is now protected in DINOSAUR National Monument.

Ranchers and farmers had begun to settle in the Ashley Valley (VERNAL City today). In 1880, the territorial legislature created Uintah County.
Use the highlighted words on the previous page as clues to find the answers to this crossword puzzle.

Across
1. Monument
4. Antoine
6. Rock Art
7. Green River
8. Ashley Valley
9. Land of the Sun

Down
2. Lincoln
3. Mining
5. Explorer
Uintah County ECONOMY

The Most Common Industries In Uintah County
Median household income: $67,561

**Other Industry**
Other industries in Uintah County include: construction, transportation, wholesale trade, recreation, and others.

**Retail Trade**
Vernal has many locally owned shops located on Main Street and several large shopping centers.

**Gas, Oil Extraction, and Mining**
Oil and gas have been produced in Uintah County since the mid 1900s and the county continues to be a major producer of energy resources.

**Government**
There are multiple federal and state agencies, county government and city governments that employ almost 1,600 people.

**Healthcare**
Uintah County has one hospital located in Vernal and multiple urgent care and doctor's offices.

**Hotel & Food Services**
Uintah County has a variety of dining options and hotels.

**Education**
Uintah County has 7 elementary schools, 2 middle schools, 3 high schools, 1 charter school and 2 private schools.
All kinds of ADVENTURE and FAMILY FUN can be found in Uintah County. Unscramble the letters below to discover many of the fun opportunities.

htnungi
ifnhsig
gzrsagitan
susaodnir
foofragnid
tobigna
atfrign
seummsu
kinihg
giiknb
Congratulations! You are now an expert on Uintah County. You have earned the privilege to become an official DINOSAUR HUNTER!

Cut out the certificate, fill in your information, and remember to carry this with you on your next visit to Uintah County!