

Colorado Legislative Session

- Session ended on May 7, 2025
- Please see the final version of the [Bill Tracking Sheet](#)

Durango Chamber of Commerce Advocacy Update

- The Chamber joined the Colorado Chamber of Commerce and business leaders in supporting Colorado's Firefighting Air Fleet. [In a letter](#) to US Senators Bennett and Hickenlooper and US Representatives DeGette, Neguse, Hurd, Boebert, Crank, Evans, Pettersen & Crow, they urge Congress to support the upgrade of the 302nd Airlift Wing's aging C-130H aircraft to newer C-130Js. Based at Peterson Space Force Base, the 302nd is the only Air Force Reserve Command unit equipped for aerial firefighting, a critical mission as wildfires in Colorado grow more frequent and severe.

Durango/La Plata County Airport Update

- The airport, which has an economic impact of over \$342 million and provides over 1,900 jobs, is continuing to see strong consumer demand. Year to date, there has been an 11% increase in passenger traffic from 2024 to 2025.
- The airport's new baggage claim and arrival area is expected to open in August or September.

County Manager Update

- La Plata County Manager Chuck Stevens will be leaving on May 30, 2025.
- Deputy County Manager Kevin Hall has been named Interim County Manager, effective May 31, 2025.
- As for the search for the new County Manager, the initial application screening will be conducted by Human Resources. Once the initial screening is complete, HR will present a list of qualified candidates to the Board. The Board will review the candidates and select their first round finalists to interview and thereafter name one or more candidates as finalists for the position.

County Sales Tax Survey

- A recent survey indicates La Plata County voters are not supportive of a sales tax increase at this time. The County is considering asking voters for a sales tax increase to assist with repairing and improving county roads, providing more resources for law enforcement and other efforts.
- Polling shows voters generally think taxes and cost of living are already too high and that the government tends to generally waste or mismanage money.

Emergency Communication Center Update

- Durango and La Plata County officials held a joint meeting to address disputes over funding and oversight of the Durango Emergency Communications Center, with a specific focus on the 2024 Client Services Agreement, which the county has refused to sign. The county is concerned over cost control, budgeting input, and unclear ownership of the 911 center facility.
- Since January, the county has withheld \$283K in payments, prompting city officials to call for immediate resolution. County leaders say they're under financial strain and want a more formal governance structure before moving forward.
- City officials are open to revising the agreement and clarifying co-ownership but insist the overdue payments must be made and the 20% administrative fee won't be waived.
- Both sides agreed to resume payments and negotiate the intergovernmental agreement.

Durango Minimum Wage Discussion

- Durango Prosperity Manager Mike French shared with Durango City Council at a study session on a potential increase to the city's minimum wage that a business community survey (195 responses) showed 89% of businesses already pay above minimum wage, and 42% would cut staff or hours if required to raise wages. Heather Otter from Region 9 Economic Development District noted Colorado's minimum wage is \$14.81/hour, but a livable wage in the area is over \$24/hour. Dr. Nathan Peach of Fort Lewis College warned higher wages could reduce jobs for inexperienced workers and raise consumer prices.
- Jeff Dupont, Executive Director of the Durango Chamber of Commerce, argued it's a bad time to raise wages due to labor shortages, tight margins, and regional competition (e.g., Farmington, NM). He emphasized market-driven solutions, concerns about nonprofits and student jobs, and impacts like restaurant closures seen in Denver. He said only 10% of employees earn minimum wage, and they're unlikely to be homebuyers.
- Business Improvement District Executive Director Tim Walsworth stressed using data to make decisions and listening to businesses.
- Durango City Council plans to hold another study session on the topic in future months.

Durango Business Improvement District Update

- The BID has asked City Council to loosen residency requirements for its Board of Directors. Currently, board members must be BID electors, with three of five required to live in Durango. Executive Director Tim Walsworth says those restrictions limit qualified candidates. Under a new proposal, board members could live up to 60 miles away. All members would still have to be BID electors, but only two would need to hold city sales tax licenses. City Council will consider the proposal in a future meeting.

Visit Durango Update

- La Plata County has terminated its tourism marketing contract with Visit Durango as the organization dissolves and transfers operations to the City of Durango. During a meeting this month, officials acknowledged this is a time of transition and said the move to terminate the contract is not adversarial. Visit Durango leaders said they've been working in good faith and have continued marketing efforts. The County Lodgers Tax Panel will continue to work with the City to reexamine how to handle tourism marketing going forward.
- Durango City Council voted to accept a wire transfer of monies from the Visit Durango Board to be spent on tourism by the city's new prosperity office. The transfer is part of the city's merger with Visit Durango. Councilor Koso voted against accepting the funds, saying he believed the allocation included County money.

Downtown's Next Step Update

- Durango will host four public meetings in June to gather input on [Downtown's Next Step](#), each geared toward a different stakeholder group, but all open to the public. City officials are seeking feedback on sidewalk widths, curb extensions, loading zones, and other key design elements. Meetings are scheduled for:
 - June 4 for downtown business owners 8:30 am to 10:30 am at the FLC Center for Innovation
 - June 10 for business employees 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm at 11th Street Station
 - June 16 for residents 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm at the Durango Public Library
 - June 23 for accessibility input 10:00 am to 12:00 pm at the Durango Public Library
- The project is currently 30% complete, with final design expected by year's end.

Planning Projects

- On May 8, 2025, LPC Planning Commission recommended approval of the Ionno Minor Subdivision, a proposal to subdivide a 41.8 acre parcel into 3 lots in the Chapin Subdivision.

- On May 6, 2025, LPC Commissioners approved the Grove at Edgmont Preliminary Plan. This is a preliminary plat to subdivide a 4.38-acre lot located on Edgmont Highlands Drive in the Florida Road Planning District into three single family residential lots with a fourth lot that could be subdivided in a future phase.

Meetings attended April 24-May 22

4/28 - 8 am BOCC Work Session	5/12 - 3 pm Joint BOCC/Durango Council Study Session
4/29 - 8 am RHA Housing Summit	5/13 - 8 am Economic Alliance Investor Meeting
4/20 - 8:30 am BOCC Discussion Time	5/13 - 10 am BOCC Meeting
5/6 - 10 am BOCC Planning Meeting	5/13 - 5:30 pm Durango Parade of Projects
5/6 - 10:30 am BOCC Special Business Meeting	5/19 - 5 pm Durango Comm Dev Commission
5/6 - 2:45 pm Durango Council Study Session	5/21 - 8:30 am BOCC Discussion Time
5/6 - 5:30 pm Durango City Council Meeting	5/22 - 4:00 pm LAC Meeting
5/7 - 8:30 am BOCC Discussion Time	
5/8 - 6 pm LPC Planning Commission	