



DURANGO ROCKS AWARDS CELEBRATION

Join us March 9th to celebrate!
Congratulations to the following award finalists:

Business of the Year:

Grassburger
Morehart Murphy Regional
Auto Center
Three Springs Durango

Non-Profit of the Year:

HomesFund
iAM Music
La Plata Electric Association
Round Up Foundation

Small Business of the Year:

Adela Flora
Jack-a-Lope Acres
Phoenix Physical Therapy

Spirit of Durango Award:

McDonald's Durango
Pathfinder Chiropractic
Phoenix Recycling

Other awards presented include: Citizen of the Year,
Ed Morlan Entrepreneur of the Year, Leadership La Plata Barbara Conrad
Award, Bill Mashaw Volunteer of the Year, Morley Ballantine Professional
Women's Award, Contribution to the Community Award, Young Professional
of the Year, and Diplomat of the Year.



Click [here](#) for tickets. Discounted price ends Feb. 23rd.

From the CEO's Pen by Jack Llewellyn, Chamber CEO

Celebrating Durango during this Year's Durango Rocks Awards Event Mar. 9th!

All of us at the Chamber are honored to host one night every year, bringing together the community to applaud the achievements of businesses, nonprofit organizations, and leaders. It's an evening of celebration, unity, and community pride.

It's a time-honored event that began more than 40 years ago. Every year, the Chamber solicits nominations from the community for various award categories. We take these nominations to a Selection Committee to review the criteria and the nominations, ultimately selecting the finalists and the recipients. The awards are given based on merit and a demonstration of leadership, achievement, innovation, employee relations, development and resilience. It's a great way to recognize all of these characteristics that, in the end, contribute to the overall betterment of the Durango-area.

This year, the Chamber is hosting the Durango Rocks Awards Ceremony on Thursday, Mar. 9 at the Community Concert Hall at Fort Lewis College, starting at 5pm. We celebrate awards for businesses, small businesses,

and the Spirit of Durango that exemplify commerce and civic leadership, community involvement, and management practices. The nonprofit award goes to an organization that accomplishes noteworthy results on behalf of the community, embodies altruism and respect.

We couldn't hold this event without the support of other organizations! Thank you to our sponsors who, many have supported us over the years, including 1st Southwest Bank, Baird Wealth Management, Colorado Housing & Finance Authority, Durango Area Association of Realtors, Bank of Colorado, A&L Coors, Tafoya Barrett & Associates, Sky Ute Casino and Resort, Fort Lewis College, Mercy Hospital and Region 9.

Again, please join us on Mar. 9th to celebrate Durango. Reserve your seat by going to our website, DurangoBusiness.org now through Mar. 9. Discounted tickets are available only through Feb. 23rd.



2023 Durango Chamber of Commerce Staff

Jack Llewellyn, CEO

Kim Oyler, COO

Jennifer Dickens, Communications Coordinator

Hannah Minkler, Office Assistant

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2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

We'd like to take this opportunity to thank the Chamber Board Members who dedicate their time and services to help reach the short & long-term goals we set every year. In 2023, Chamber board leadership is under board president, Charles Spence with Maynes, Bradford, Shipps, & Sheftel. Many thanks to immediate past president, Vaughn Morris with the Boys and Girls Club of La Plata County, for his leadership on the board. Join us in welcoming our new board members: Brandon Mancini, Melisa Jackson Palmer, Rebekah Click, Joseph Kuzma, Neil Dolder, and Matt Gomez. And thank you to our 700+ members for all you do! Learn more at DurangoBusiness.org.



Charles Spence
Maynes Bradford Shipps Sheftel
President



Vaughn Morris
Boys & Girls Club
Vice President



Diana Murray
ASAP Accounting & Payroll
Secretary



Dr. Karen Cheser
9-R School District



Michael Hennon
The Payroll Department



Brandon Mancini
Mercy Hospital



Melisa Jackson Palmer
Bank of Colorado



Rebekah Click
Durango Motor Company



Melissa Youssef
City of Durango Representative
Durango Land and Homes



Matt Gomez
Diplomat Representative



Neil Dolder
Leadership La Plata
Representative

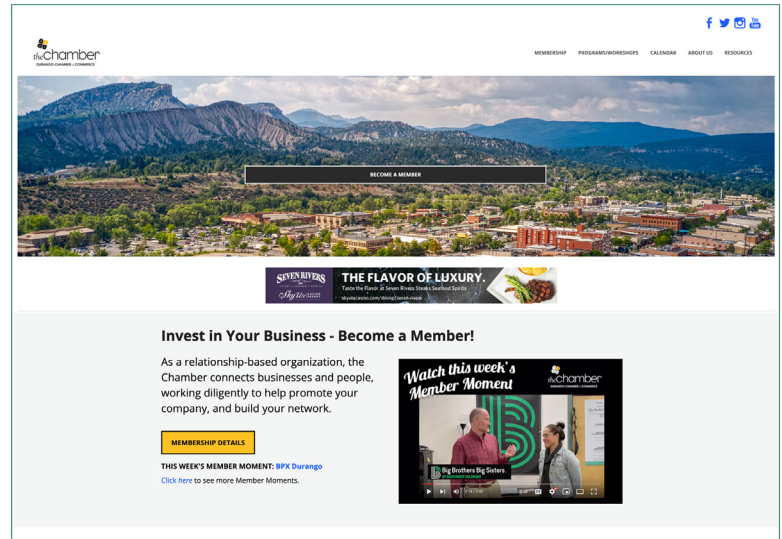


Joseph Kuzma
YPOD Representative

New Value-Based Membership Structure!

The Durango Chamber is now offering value-based memberships with the ability to choose what works best for businesses. The previous structure was a “fair share” model, based on the number of employees with 15 total membership levels. The Chamber has been working on this change for several years, and hasn’t altered its structure in 10+ years, nor has it changed pricing in over 5 years. The current 15 levels are being simplified to 7 and all members are being offered a choice of what’s best for them.

The new Value-Based Membership Structure allows business owners to determine what’s important in their partnership with the Durango Chamber, what their needs are, and how they want to take a leadership role in the business community. The Chamber is also making it easier by featuring investment payments via check, credit card and ACH, and scheduling payments as frequently as monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, or annually. Many of the benefits are also a la carte, so businesses can utilize marketing, advertising, networking, branding and sponsorship opportunities.



The transition began in January 2023, and the Chamber will continue to work from a rolling 12-month year, so member anniversary months remain the same.

Learn more about the new structure and get your questions answered by attending the Chamber’s Value-Based Membership Q&A session on Feb 15 at 8:30am. Join via Zoom or in person, by registering [here](#). Or call us at (970) 247-0312 ext 2

Upcoming Programs & Events!

Find more information [here](#).

Wed, Feb. 15 8:30 – 9:30am New Membership Structure Q&A

Wed., Feb. 22 noon-1pm Lunch & Learn Workshop on Leadership Training

Thurs, Feb. 23 8-10:30am Workforce Housing Forum (discounted tix thru Feb. 13)

Tues, Mar. 7 8-9am Coffee Connections with the Durango Police Department

Thurs, Mar. 9 5pm Durango Rocks Awards Event (discounted tix avail. thru Feb. 23)

Tues, Mar. 14 11:30am – 1:30pm City Council Candidate Forum

Thurs, Mar. 16 5-7pm Business After Hours at Hillcrest Golf Club

What’s Happening with our Chamber Members

Feb 11 Homebuyer Education Class in Durango

Feb. 11 Making A Difference: The Dolph Kuss Story

Feb 13 ServSafe Certified Food Protection Manager Training

Feb. 13 Chamber Night with Fort Lewis College Men’s & Women’s Basketball

Do you want your program or event listed? It’s free through your member online portal. Questions, ask Hannah@durangobusiness.org or call (970) 247-0312

Buck says ...

Buy Durango!



**Mark Your Calendar for
Business After Hours at
Hillcrest Golf Club,
Mar. 16!**



Business After Hours is a fun and meaningful networking event hosted by various members throughout the year. It attracts professionals from all over the Durango area. Join us on March 16th from 5pm to 7pm as Hillcrest Golf Club hosts the next event filled with connections, celebrations and fun! Many thanks to Hillcrest and Star Liquors for providing fantastic door prizes! [Register online & save!](#)

Don't Miss "The Dance of Leadership" with Ellen Babers, Mountain Mesa Training!!

Ellen Babers shares her experience and expertise during the Feb. 22nd Lunch & Learn offers leadership training workshop. Ellen's workshops are always engaging and interactive (although she promises that you don't have to dance in public during this session). Her experience includes developing high performing management teams for the Summer and Winter Olympics and more. Register for just the workshop or the workshop/lunch combo. [Learn more.](#)



Receive Referrals with Leads Group Monthly Meetings!

Wanting more qualified business referrals? Need some support with motivation? Join the Chamber's Leads Group which meets once a month with individual sessions set up beyond the group. Each group offers an exclusive seat from different industry sectors, and all industries are welcome! Limited space is available through the Chamber's two Leads Programs. For information, [learn more here.](#)

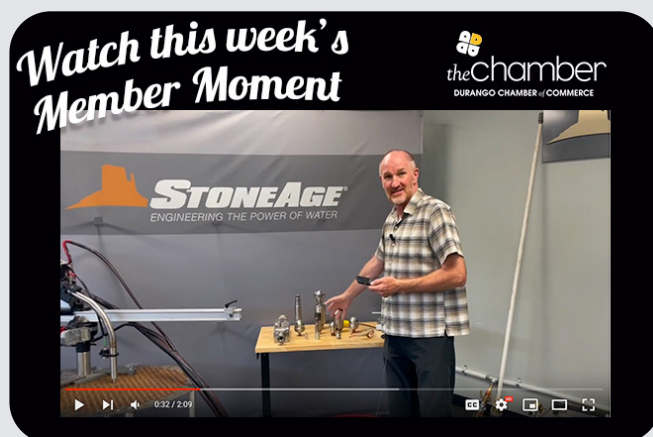
Coffee Connections Mar. 7th Learning Series is with the Durango Police Department!

Don't miss the next monthly learning series with the Durango PD! They will share insights and their expertise with the group on Mar. 7th from 8am to 9am. Coffee Connections Learning Series are free to all Chamber members and we ask that you [reserve your seat online.](#)



Connect with the Community through the Chamber Diplomat Program!

The Chamber Diplomats help support the business community by assisting with member retention, recruiting and engagement. They also meet key business members, build relationships, help celebrate accomplishments, and enhance community involvement. There are a few spots available for 2023! Find out more information, [here.](#)



Watch the latest Member Moment Video featuring [StoneAge.](#)
Find past Member Moment Videos [here](#)

Feb. 23rd Workforce Housing Forum – Join the Discussion!

The Durango Chamber has teamed up with the La Plata County Economic Alliance to discuss one of the biggest issues facing our area. Key partners will join and share their insights and expertise on strategies, solutions, projects, challenges and opportunities for our community. Thank you to Bank of Colorado and the Durango Area Association of Realtors for sponsoring this session. Join us on Thursday, Feb. 23 from 8am to 10:30am. Limited seats are available. [Register here.](#)



City Council Candidate Forum – Tuesday, Mar. 14

Learn about where city council candidates stand on important issues and how they see Durango's future. Join the Durango Chamber and La Plata Forum for this session where all candidates are invited to attend. We are pleased to provide this platform, along with the La Plata Forum, as an opportunity for candidates to express their views openly so the public can make informed decisions. [Reserve your seat today!](#)



Thanks for Attending Creating Reels for Your Business Lunch & Learn!

January's Lunch and Learn was a huge success thanks to Hannah Birdsong, social media & graphic designer at Fort Lewis College, who provided useful tactics on how to create Instagram reels for business. She offered tips and tricks to make creating a reel less intimidating and easy with a few key resources. Thank you, TBK Bank for sponsoring this event.



Thank You, Ohana Physical Therapy, for Hosting Coffee Connections!

Ohana Physical Therapy showcased their newly expanded space and demonstrated how to improve your balance, the importance of pelvic health, solutions for neck and back pain and more. The monthly Coffee Connections Learning Series is hosted on the first Tuesday of the month and explores a wide range of topics, industries and organizations. This is a great chance to network with colleagues, meet new people and understand a new topic within an hour.



YPOD Feature of the Month: Atlee Beam YPOD Board Member

What do you do for a living? I am an insurance agent for AAA Colorado / The Auto Club Group. I sell home, auto, umbrella, and life insurance to AAA members.

What do you love about being a YPOD?

Being connected with the local professional community is important to me for both personal and professional development. I foresee myself working in the area for a long time to come, so I want to learn the most I can about helping people within a community. I appreciate the opportunity to do this as a YPOD board member.

How do you spend your leisure time? I enjoy spending my free time with Michaela, my wonderful girlfriend, and our sweet pup. We like to hike, play fetch, read, and sometimes just relax. I also enjoy gaming, doing anything outside, working out, and learning music.

Fun fact about you: I am a classically trained tenor but I also play the piano and dabble with the violin. Additionally, I like composing music when I can find the time (which is rare but does happen).

Information about the YPODs can be found [here](#).



Featured Leadership La Plata Alumnus: Chuck Stevens

What do you do for a living? County Manager for La Plata County, CO

What LLP class were you in? 2017-2018



What do you love about LLP? The opportunity for lifelong learning and professional development, plus the networking, friendships, and relationships you make along the way.

What do you like about the Chamber? The Eggs and Issues presentations- they offer great speakers and opportunities to hear directly from community leaders.

What do you love about Durango (and La Plata County)? So many things; the people, the mountains, the Animas River, the restaurants/bars, Snowdown, river days, the Iron Horse. I really appreciate the sense of community, and the willingness of community leaders to work together to solve hard problems.

Fun fact about you: I learned to SCUBA dive in the Red Sea

Interested in participating in LLP? Learn more about LLP or become involved in LLP committees, visit [Leadership La Plata.org](http://LeadershipLaPlata.org).

Featured Chamber Diplomat: Nora Stafford Diplomat Secretary

What is your business (or how you spend your time if retired)?

I work at Visit Durango as a visitor service specialist. I am a retired Durango School District teacher, on Manna's Board of Directors and serve as co-chair for the Leadership La Plata Alumni Committee.

How long have you been a DIP? Since April of 2022.

How long have you lived in Durango? I moved to Durango in 1981 after graduating from college and was living in a big city which did not suit me and knew immediately after spending a few days in Durango, it was a place that I could call home.

Tell us about your family: I met my husband, Rob while skiing deep powder at Hesperus Ski Area in 1984. We were also river guides for Durango Rivertrippers. We have been married for 34 years. Rob is a school counselor. We have two grown boys; one lives in Tucson and the other lives in Castle Rock with their 18-month-old boy, Nash. We also have a Siamese cat, two boisterous cockatiels and two aquatic turtles that are over 20 years old.



Why did you become a DIP? I enjoy connecting with new business owners and learning about what they have to offer. I feel that the DIPs provide an excellent avenue to promote businesses and make them more successful.

What is your favorite part of being a DIP? It has been rewarding to meet new people and to volunteer at a variety of community events. Being a DIP has really benefitted my sponsor, Visit Durango by connecting locals and visitors to businesses and services in the community. The Diplomat program is an excellent avenue to boost networking opportunities.

What are your favorite things to do in Durango? I am passionate about riding my bike to help reduce my carbon footprint. I play tennis, hike, paddleboard, kayak, camp and ski at Purgatory. I am in a Brazilian samba band called Batucada de Durango with Stillwater Music.

Fun fact about you: I was Teacher of the Year for Durango School District at the elementary level in 2015. It was an honor to be a teacher for 35 years. It was rewarding and helped shape me as a person.

Learn more about the Diplomat Program [here](#).

Act Now! Ask Your Legislators to Vote NO on HB 23-1118 - It's Bad for Business!

A bill that is making its way through the Colorado State House of Representatives would have crippling effects on restaurants, retailers, manufacturing, the hospitality industry and other businesses. HB 23-1118, the so-called Fair Workweek Employment Standards bill, would eliminate scheduling flexibility for employers & employees, impose minimum pay requirements, "resting requirements" for employees, and offers punitive new fines. The bill fails to consider basic operational needs of businesses.



It creates an unfair burden on businesses of all sizes by imposing work schedules and pay requirements, does not allow for flexibility when changing shifts, and limits the ability to hire new talent. Learn more about this bill by reading the [Colorado Competitive Council's issue brief](#).

The Durango Chamber of Commerce opposes this bill, along with more than 50 groups throughout the state, including the Colorado Chamber of Commerce, Colorado Brewers Guild, Colorado Contractors Association, Colorado Gaming Association, Colorado Hotel & Lodging Association, Colorado Restaurant Association, Rocky Mountain Food Industry Assoc. and more.

The bill will be considered on Thursday, Feb. 16 at 1:30 p.m. in the Colorado House Business Affairs and Labor Committee. Send an email to committee members ([here](#)) with your concerns. You can also [sign up to testify by Zoom or in person at the State Capitol](#).



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ISSUE BRIEF

HB23-1118, Fair Workweek Employment Standards, would eliminate scheduling flexibility for thousands of Colorado businesses and workers and impose punitive new fines

Overview

HB23-1118 requires that employers in food and beverage, retail, franchises, and other businesses:

- Give employees an average number of hours they'd work in a week and pay them a minimum of 15% of those hours, regardless of whether they work the hours.
- Post schedules two weeks in advance. Deviations would require employers to pay "predictability pay," "rest shortfall pay," and other fines.
- Changes in scheduling would require written employee consent.
- The bill bars employers from hiring additional staff until existing employees are scheduled for their desired number of weekly work hours, up to 40 hours a week or 12 hours a day, by penalty of six months of required retention pay to the existing employee.

Why we oppose HB23-1118

- Many businesses require flexibility to meet fluctuating customer demands. The bill fails to recognize the operational realities of many industries and the need to respond to emergencies, weather, manufacturing line slow-downs and more, and attempts to legislate certainty in industries where it cannot exist.
- The flexibility to add, reduce, or change working hours, sometimes on short notice, is why many employees choose jobs in these industries. Flexibility allows them to make extra income when they need it, or to quickly change shifts to respond to personal circumstances like college workload or family care needs.
- This bill will hamstring restaurants, which are still recovering from the pandemic, and average razor-thin profit margins of 3-5%. They simply cannot afford the fees laid out in the bill, and rapidly-changing customer demands mean that they need to retain the ability to quickly adapt staffing in response.
- The hospitality industry continues to face worker shortages, and this bill makes it harder to hire by restricting their ability to hire new employees.
- The fee structure in the bill is punitive and expensive.
- Research has shown that penalizing employers for making schedule adjustments less than two weeks in advance incentivizes them to schedule fewer workers to avoid potential penalties.
- The bill's requirements are far more prescriptive and expensive than recently-adopted scheduling policies adopted in a few cities and in Oregon.
- The bill will lead to costly lawsuits.
- Coming out of the pandemic, employees overwhelmingly say they want more flexibility, not less. Employers have responded by widely adopting remote-work and flex-hour policies where feasible.

This bill is opposed by more than 50 Colorado organizations, including the Colorado Restaurant Association and the Colorado Retail Council. Please urge your legislators to vote no on this heavy-handed and counterproductive bill.

Offering Semi-Retirement to Workers Could Slow Turnover

Retiring Employees Expected to Account for 28% of Office Exits

Latest Results from The Harris Poll

With employee turnover showing no signs of slowing down, offering older workers a chance to delay full retirement may help slow the exodus—even if only momentarily.

This is according to a survey from The Harris Poll commissioned by Express Employment Professionals.

Retiring employees are expected to account for 28% of turnover in 2023, with U.S. hiring managers reporting among those at their company who retired in the past two years, most commonly 60 years of age or older (79%).

However, in an effort to postpone the time of retirement for employees, some have chosen to offer “semi-retirement,” which allows employees to reduce their hours and/or make a flexible schedule (30%).

Employees appear to take advantage of this offering, as nearly 3 in 5 hiring managers whose company offers semi-retirement say the number of employees choosing to semi-retire has remained the same over the past two years (59%) and nearly 2 in 5 reporting the number of those semi-retiring has actually increased (37%).

Given the contribution of retirement to companies’ turnover, it may be wise for more companies to offer semi-retirement in the hopes of retaining members of their workforce.

As baby boomers continue to age and consider retirement, the labor shortage is only going to get worse, according to Express Employment International CEO Bill Stoller.

Managers, Know When to Stop Talking and Start Listening

As a manager, you probably have to talk a lot. You want people to have the guidance and direction they need, of course, and there are plenty of situations where you need to speak your mind. But at some point, talking a lot can turn into overcommunicating. You can end up dominating conversations, which means employees’ perspectives aren’t being heard. To make sure you aren’t talking too much, listen as much as you speak. When someone raises a question in a meeting, invite others to weigh in before you. In fact, don’t contribute your thoughts until several other people have offered theirs. That



Number of Employees Semi-Retiring Over Past Two Years



“Semi-retirement is one solution to allow experienced workers time to train their successors, ensuring a seamless knowledge transfer and business continuity,” he said.

Survey Methodology

The Job Insights survey was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals between Dec. 1 and Dec. 15, 2022, among 1,002 U.S. hiring decision-makers (defined as adults ages 18+ in the U.S. who are employed full-time or self-employed, work at companies with more than one employee, and have full/significant involvement in hiring decisions at their company). Data were weighted where necessary by company size to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in our surveys. The sampling precision of Harris online polls is measured by using a Bayesian credible interval. For this study, the sample data is accurate to within + 3.2 percentage points using a 95% confidence level. This credible interval will be wider among subsets of the surveyed population of interest.

The Durango Express office is located at 321 So Camino Del and serves the Four Corners area. Local businesses and applicants are encouraged to stop by, visit ExpressPros.com/durangoco or call (970) 403-8780.

way everyone is included and feels that their input is valued. You can also schedule regular one-on-one sessions with your team members to encourage open communication. Ask employees about their wants, needs, and concerns — and then hush. You may be surprised how much you learn when you’re saying nothing.



Adapted from “*Don’t Be the Boss Who Talks Too Much*,” by Hjalmar Gislason

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Congratulations to Animas High School!

Animas High School celebrated its new building with a ribbon cutting on January 20th. The new sustainably-designed, solar-powered high school is located on the Fort Lewis College campus and is designed to support innovative project-based learning. Animas originally opened in 2009 in a strip mall on North Main, then moved into modular buildings in the Twin Buttes development from 2012 through Dec. 2022.

During the ribbon-cutting ceremony, they thanked the community and many others for their support to build a new tuition-free charter high school that collaborates with FLC professors and provides increased access to college-level resources.



Enrollment is now open for fall 2023. Interested families can learn more about [enrollment events via the school's website](#). The AHS enrollment lottery is March 6 and the school plans to open additional seats for fall 2023, increasing opportunities for enrollment to meet the demand. Complete the [enrollment form](#) by March 5 to be entered in the lottery.

Animas High School is a small school that embodies educational leadership through innovative programs. Its mission is to prepare all students for college and postsecondary success by creating critical thinkers and engaged citizens through an innovative, student-centered, project-based curriculum.



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& ART HIRAHARA

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Friday March 3 | 5:00PM & 8:00PM

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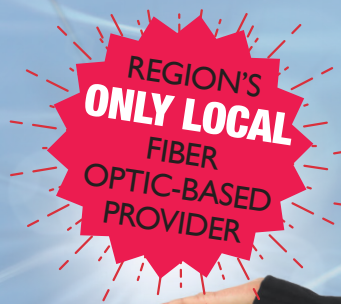
Tickets On Sale at DurangoCoolJazz.com

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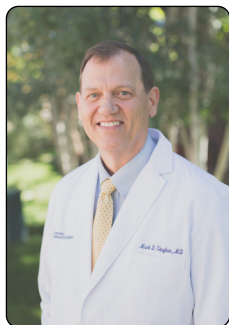
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Business Connection

Durango Dermatology – Dr. Mark Gaughan

By Sara Lynn Valentine

“My parents moved the family to Durango in July 1970 when I was in second grade, after my dad had completed his residency in Galveston, Texas,” Dr. Mark Gaughan, a second-generation Durango dermatologist, says. “His first office was on the north end of Main, in a medical building where a Durango Joe’s kiosk is now. In 1995, he moved to our current location in Bodo. My dad was the 33rd doctor in Durango. My wife, Kelly Sheppard (now Gaughan), moved with her family to Durango in 1969. She was two grades behind me and was my date to Senior Prom. When I joined my dad’s practice in 2001 after finishing my residency at the University of New Mexico, it was a homecoming for both of us. About ten years ago, my dad retired and I took over.”



Durango Dermatology’s mission is to provide the highest dermatological care in a friendly environment. “A big focus is skin cancer,” Dr. Gaughan says. “We are the only practice in the area that offers Mohs Micrographic Surgery for advanced skin cancer.

With Mohs, we can analyze the surgical margins while the patient is still in the office. This results in the highest success rate of any skin cancer surgery.” The majority of skin cancers diagnosed at Durango Dermatology are treated by excision under local anesthetic. Durango Dermatology has an in-house laboratory and can process their own biopsies. The treatment of auto-immune-related skin problems is also an important part of the practice. Plus, Durango Dermatology has three nurses dedicated to aesthetic treatments, providing Botox and fillers along with an array of laser treatments to help reverse sun damage, reduce wrinkles and scar tissues and rejuvenate the skin. There’s even a treatment that freezes fat, causing up to 30% of the fat cells to die. “This is a great alternative to



liposuction, Dr. Gaughan says. “We also do tattoo removal, so we are full-service.”

Durango Dermatology has continued to be a family business through the years, with Dr. Gaughan’s wife and two daughters now working in the practice. “Our staff is an extension of our family,” Dr. Gaughan says, “and many of them have been with us for many years. They make Durango Dermatology what it is. We have three nurses, three physician assistants, two doctors and several medical assistants, as well as front desk staff. We’ve had various other doctors over the years - but it’s sometimes been hard to find a doctor whose family wants to stay long-term in our small town.” Dr. Carmen Julian joined the practice in January and moved with his family from Austin, Texas. They know Durango and love to ski and have vacationed here so they already have local ties.

Durango Dermatology received the Durango Chamber’s ‘Business of the Year’ award in 2018. “The Chamber is a great asset to Durango businesses,” Dr. Gaughan says. “Durango Dermatology has hosted one of the Business After Hours events. We believe in giving back to the community whenever possible.” Learn more about Durango Dermatology at DurangoDermatology.com. You may reach the office at (970) 247-1970.

Interested in HR Topics? Join DAHRM Today!

The Durango Area Human Resource Managers (DAHRM) is partnering with the Durango Chamber this year to host HR Workshops. There are several hot topics featured, in addition to the AUGUST LAW UPDATE.

If you are interested in being a DAHRM member (you don't have to be an HR specialist), individual member dues are \$103 per year, and corporate dues are \$181 per year. Membership includes access to HR workshops & complimentary pizza & a beverage (or bring your own lunch). Discount on the Annual Law Update, and member pricing on specific Chamber programs. Workshop topics are:

- Ask-A-Lawyer (1-hour session)
- Recruiting and Retaining Talent During The Labor Shortage
- Toxic Workplace/Stress Reduction

For more information click [link](#).



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La Plata County Extension: Health Tip of the Month by Nicole Clark

Goal setting with heart health in mind

Next time you feel overworked and in need of a break, give thanks to your heart. This fist-sized muscle is your silent companion working right alongside you and doing its best to keep up with the demands of your life.

When you take a break, go on vacation, or successfully manage stress, your heart also gets a rest. During that joyful calm of relaxation, stress hormones decline, resulting in a drop in blood pressure and heart rate.

But of course, vacations are too few and far between, breaks are skipped and stress is constant. Assuming you'd like to see the story of your life unfold over the course of many more years, what can you do to make your heart's job a tad bit easier? If you thought finding good help at work was challenging, imagine needing to find a replacement for your heart!

Let's start with the low-hanging fruit. It's more than just a cliché, it's good advice. Fruits and vegetables are associated with lower levels of biomarkers that may cause damage to heart cells, cardiac strain and inflammation. Healthy heart goal #1: add at least one fruit or vegetable to your daily diet.

Know your numbers. This includes your lipids, or cholesterol, and your glucose. The good cholesterol is known as HDL (high density lipoprotein), and the bad cholesterol is known as LDL (low density lipoprotein). Push these numbers in the right direction with healthy heart goal #2: add 10 minutes of aerobic activity to your day, especially high-intensity interval training (though talk with your doctor first).

Shake the sodium, but not from the shaker onto your food. For many, reducing sodium can be a way to lower blood pressure (aka hypertension). Be patient, it takes time to get used to the taste of food with less salt, but your palate will change. High-sodium foods

include bread, prepackaged meals, cured meats, and savory snacks. Healthy heart goal #3: eat smaller portions of high-sodium foods, purchase low-sodium versions, or replace some of your prepackaged meals with a homemade version.



Resources to support healthy heart goals:

1. American Heart Association has a selection of easy-to-make, low-cost, heart-healthy recipes.
2. Parks, public spaces, rec centers, stairs or hallways in your home or exercise videos on the internet provide you with options for 10 minutes of activity a day.

References

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<https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/browse-objectives/heart-disease-and-stroke>

<https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/high-blood-pressure/the-facts-about-high-blood-pressure/resistant-hypertension--high-blood-pressure-thats-hard-to-treat>

<https://www.cdc.gov/salt/sources.htm>

La Plata County Extension health programming:
nicole.clark@co.plata.co.us or (970) 382-6461.

ATTENTION LA PLATA COUNTY

RENTERS:

Need help with 1st,
last and security?
Let us help with a
Micro-Loan!

LEASE AGREEMENT

The **La Plata County Workforce Rental Assistance Program** is offering low-cost, fixed rate micro-loans of up to \$5,000 to cover first month's rent, last month's rent and/or a security deposit for eligible La Plata County renters.

Loan Terms:

- \$5,000 Maximum Loan Amount
- Unsecured (no collateral required)
- 2% Annual Percentage Rate*
- Payable over 3 years with monthly principal and interest payments
- *\$5,000 loan amount @ 2% Annual Percentage Rate: 36 monthly payments of \$143.22
- No associated fees or pre-payment penalty.

Requirements:

- NEW lease agreement must be for a minimum of one year. Proof of lease must be provided.
- Borrower must make 80% or less of Area Median Income (AMI) for La Plata County.
- Rental property must be located in La Plata County.
- No minimum FICO score is required.
- This program is First Come First Served and limited to \$150,000.
- Loan will be limited to one loan per residence. Co-borrowers are permitted though loans will be capped at \$5,000.
- No preferred rate reduction for automatic payment.

Questions?

Email: info@fswb.bank

Call: 970-375-1100

Apply today at [FSWB.bank](https://www.fswb.bank)

The La Plata County Workforce Rental Assistance Program is made possible through a partnership between La Plata Economic Development Alliance, La Plata County, City of Durango and First Southwest Bank.



What Our Members Are Saying

The Durango Chamber of Commerce has really beaten all of my expectations. I have been involved with several chambers as I have moved through the years of being a Chiropractor. I like being part of the community and appreciate the programs available. When I moved to Durango I felt that sense of community as soon as I got here, but the chamber really takes that and builds upon it even more. They have events to really feel connected to other businesses in the area with Lunch and Learn events and Coffee Connections. For the younger business members they have YPOD business tours which our office was the destination, so it was great to meet all the up and coming business leaders. The monthly after hours events are also a great

way to meet other business owners in a relaxed environment. They host it at different businesses around town every month so you can check out different places while you mingle. I've personally gotten the most out of the Leads Group where we spend an hour each month getting to know a specific business each month so I know what kind of people they are looking for in their business. It's just been a great way to be a part of the community and they have so much to offer.



*Christopher Keirnan D.C.
Pathfinder Chiropractic*



Gillian Arnwine
Broker Associate
970.749.3704
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FUN-Official Snowdown Business After Hours with Four Corners Broadcasting, The Strater Hotel, Star Liquors, and A&L Coors!

Twas an evening filled with mirth and merriment when the Chamber teamed up with key partners to host the Feb. 1 Business After Hours at the Strater Hotel! This special FUN-Official Snowdown Business After Hours featured Four Corners Broadcasting, a costume contest, beer provided by A&L Coors, wine & door prizes by Star Liquors, plus great giveaways and food from the location host, the Strater Hotel. Costumed attendees had their pictures taken as they entered and participants were able to catch up with colleagues and meet new ones at this well-attended event.



New Members

A&A Summit Cleaning & Services Southwestern Division

Abby Martinez
6403 County Road 107
Salida, CO 81201

[website](#)

Barnum Financial Group - Jake Darsch

Jake Darsch
1 E. 6th Ave Unit 3
Durango, CO 81301

[website](#)

Khara Wolf Design LLC

Khara Wolf
P.O. Box 449
Durango, CO 81302

[website](#)

Move Me to Southwest CO

Rachel Sadler
842 Main Avenue
Durango, CO 81301
Real Estate

Studio Quality

Sylis "Si" Eckhart
863 1/2 Main Ave.
Durango, CO 81301

[website](#)

Graphic Designers

Tegre Corporation

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3W Ranch	Land Title Guarantee Company
Academy Mortgage	Laura's Artisan
Adaptive Sports Association	Liquor World
Allison Ragsdale Photography	Local First
April's Garden	Lone Wolf Cabins & Getaway
Bank of Colorado	Manna - Durango Soup Kitchen
Barefoot	May Palace
Brown's Shoe Fit Company	Maynes Bradford Shipps Sheffel
Business Improvement District	Mile High Plumbing, Inc.
Coldwell Banker	Morehart Murphy Regional Auto Center
Community Connections, Inc.	Mountain Mesa Training
Community Foundation Serving SW Colorado	Mountain Waters Rafting &
Crow Canyon Archaeological Center	Adventure Company, LLC
Cuckoo's Chicken House	Mountain West Insurance &
David Steele	Financial Services, LLC
Directory Plus	Ore House Restaurant
Durango Area Assoc. of Realtors	Peak Physical Therapy of Durango, LLC
Durango Glass	Phoenix Physical Therapy/FootWork, Inc.
Durango Red Cliff Properties, LLC	R. A. Biel Plumbing and Heating
Durango Soda Company, Inc.	Rivergate Pharmacy & Compounding Center
DZC Surveys	Roseberry's Plumbing & Heating
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FCI Constructors, Inc.	San Juan Regional Medical Center
Four Corners Stoves and Spas	Sandy A Lane Consulting
Goff Engineering & Surveying, Inc.	Scrimshaws, Ltd.
Grease Monkey & Car Wash	Sky Ute Casino Resort
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HomesFund	Southwestern Beverage Co.
Honnen Equipment Co.	Steve Gates Architect, LLC
Horse Empower, LLC	Studio B, LLC / Stacy Reville-Dupont, LLC
ImageNet Consulting	SW Colorado Workforce Center
Intelligent Investment Management, LLP	Tafoya Barrett and Associates PC
Jack-A-Lope Acres	The Mark Craig Agency Inc. Colo Farm Bureau
Josh Mischke	Town Plaza Shopping Center
Karen J. Thompson	Vectra Bank
KREZ-TV	Wendy Most Insurance Agency, Inc.
Kroegers Ace Hardware	

LLP Monthly Focus:



Why Emotions Matter at Work. 3 ways to become more emotionally intelligent.

By Stacy Reuille-Dupont, StudioB

Today, I want to talk to you about emotional regulation. I know emotions are not usually the world of business, but they impact your ability to be effective. Since February is often considered the month of hearts, I thought it fitting we talk about how you feel. Let's take a closer look at what emotions are and how to be emotionally intelligent.

What are emotions? Emotions are complex psychological and physiological experiences we have that give us information about our environment. This system includes shifts in physical structures throughout the body along with changes in thoughts.

Our endocrine and neurology systems carry information in the form of chemical, electrical, and atom vibration to all the tissues of the body because of our emotional feelings. This can be helpful or harmful depending on how we manage emotions. Healthy emotional self-management known as emotional regulation.

Emotional information is fast. Simply put, emotions are an intelligence system. Research repeatedly shows us the smartest people in the world are those who are intellectually smart (manipulating information) and those who are emotionally intelligent (understanding social environments).

As information comes into our physical system we are alerted to what is happening around us, often by an emotion first. This gets us to action, sometimes without even thinking. Someone who has emotional intelligence can understand this information, accurately label, then respond to their emotional experience effectively.

It is in responses to emotional information that managers have great opportunities to impact staff and company bottom lines.

A successful leader is neither fearful of emotional vulnerability nor crippled by full team consensus before making a decision. This takes skill. It takes a person who knows themselves and is willing to honestly assess situations and take responsibility for their role in outcomes. It takes a leader who understands the nuances of expressing emotion and is willing to express their own emotions with kindness even when feeling overwhelmed and stuck.

An emotionally skillful leader owns their emotions and does not project their anger, pain, sadness, fear, etc. onto others as a way to let some steam off or discharge uncomfortable feelings. And finally, a skillful leader has good communication



skills able to effectively communicate their inner experience appropriately in the situation. NOTE: this does not mean they are an open book sharing everything without boundaries. They know how to discern what, to who, and when their emotional experiences should be expressed, and then they do so honestly and authentically.

How does one do this you ask?

1. You get good at recognizing your own somatic (body) experience of your emotions. How does your anger feel? Your happy? Your sad?
2. You learn the nuances of your emotions. Are you angry or frustrated? Happy or content? Sad or disappointed? Each nuance asks us to take action in a different way.
3. You allow for vulnerability in your communication. You get good at speaking clearly about your emotional experience and asking for what you want, saying no to what you don't want. The beauty of emotions is once you take appropriate action the emotion dissipates because you got the information you needed.

If all this sounds like a confusing mess or fantastically fun to learn more about, consider joining next year's Leadership La Plata Class to learn more about your own leadership style, how to address conflict, communicate effectively, deal ethically with integrity, and express your emotions effectively and successfully plus meet some amazing people in our community. Visit leadershiplaplata.org for more information about the application process.

Monthly Sponsor:



Author: Stacy Reuille-Dupont, PhD, LAC, CPFT, CNC - [Learn More About Me](#). She owns [Studio B](#) a place to Create.Your.Self. We are passionate about helping people create a vibrant life using psychology and physiology.



Eggs & Issues

Workforce Housing Forum

Thurs., Feb. 23, 8am to 10:30am

Presented by the La Plata County Economic Development Alliance and the Durango Chamber of Commerce.

Learn more about one of the biggest issues facing the area: workforce housing!

Speakers will share their insights & expertise on strategies, projects, challenges, and opportunities for workforce housing solutions.

Speakers:

Mike French, Economic Development Alliance

Eva Henson, City of Durango

Kim Baxter, Regional Housing Alliance

Nicol Killian, Town of Bayfield

Mark Garcia, Town of Ignacio

Marsha Porter Norton, La Plata County

Early Discounted Price: \$27 (Alliance & Chamber Members)

Early Discounted Price: \$37 (non-members)

Discounted pricing ends Feb. 13

Register [here](#) to reserve your seat





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