



## DURANGO ROCKS AWARDS CELEBRATION

### Congratulations Award Recipients!

Citizen of the Year

**Gaige Sippy**

Morley Ballantine Award

**Ann Morse**

Spirit of Durango

**Pathfinder Chiropractic**

Young Professional of the Year

**Joseph Kuzma**

Diplomat of the Year

**Brad Cook**

Barbara Conrad Award

**Tracy Cornutt**

Outstanding Contribution  
to the Community

**Kylah & Nick Breeden**

Ed Morlan Entrepreneur of the Year

**Ben Sorensen**

Non-Profit of the Year

**HomesFund**

Small Business of the Year

**Adela Flora**

Bill Mashaw Volunteer of the Year

**Joe Kusar**

Business of the Year

**Morehart Murphy  
Regional Auto Center**



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

## Why Being Involved Is Important

I've heard some people say that they have just one voice. It won't matter if I do or say anything or even vote. Well, I'm here to tell you, it does matter!

Colorado House Bill 1118 was recently considered in committee. This bill would have been devastating to our business community, cost businesses thousands of dollars (if not more), created needless requirements, and would have ultimately cost jobs! It was a complete overreach of government. This bill was handily defeated in committee, in part, because the legislators heard from hundreds of businesses, leaders and organizations, including the Durango Chamber, that this bill would harm businesses, create unintended consequences, and ultimately negatively impact workers. Thank you to our members who contacted the legislative committee members urging them to vote no on this legislation. We could not have done this without your help!

The Durango Chamber has partnered with La Plata Forum to host a City Council Candidate Forum on Tuesday, March 14 at 11:30am. We invite the community to participate in the forum to learn more about the candidates, the issues they see as priorities, and their opinions on challenges facing Durango. Even if you don't live within city limits, you should still be informed and attend. All five candidates will be in attendance and we'll have a slate of questions to ask them. Simply log on to [DurangoBusiness.org](http://DurangoBusiness.org) and click on our calendar of events for details. There are two seats that are open for City Council, and the election is April 4th. Your vote will help shape the future of Durango, so please do your part and make your voice heard.



The Chamber continues to monitor various legislation and policy changes at the federal, state, and local levels. We do this by partnering with other organizations. We're involved with the Western Association of Chamber Executives, the Colorado Chamber, and Colorado Competitive Council to collaborate on statewide issues. At the local level, we have a Legislative Affairs Coalition that monitors local policy discussions and weighs in when appropriate. We're meeting with all our local elected officials about various issues, and we appreciate the good working relationship we've established with them.

How can you be effective? Read, research, and explore ideas. Don't just take something you saw on social media as the gospel. Once you've made an informed decision, participate! This can be through meetings with our county commissioners – they have community office hours when you can meet with them on a designated day, time and location and discuss issues that are important to you. You can submit comments during city council meetings, write letters and send emails. Personalize your letter with a story on how the topic will affect you or your business. Be brief and to the point, and provide your contact information should they want to reach out. Most importantly, be respectful. Elected officials are human, and while sometimes you may not agree with them, some or all of the time, you still need to be courteous. Remember, the Golden Rule is to treat others the way you want to be treated.

## 2023

### CHAMBER BOARD OF DIRECTORS & STAFF

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Jack Llewellyn, Chief Executive Officer  
Kim Oyler, Chief Operations Officer  
Jennifer Dickens, Communications Coordinator  
Hannah Minkler, Office Assistant

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[chamber@durangobusiness.org](mailto:chamber@durangobusiness.org)

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*Jaynes Construction*  
Joseph Kuzma, YPOD Representative  
*The Community Foundation*  
Melissa Youssef, City of Durango Representative  
Matthew Gomez, Diplomat Representative  
*The Payroll Department*

## New Value-Based Membership Structure!

The Durango Chamber is now offering value-based memberships with the ability to choose what works best for your business. 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 5 years. The current 15 levels are being simplified to 7 and all members are being offered a choice to decide 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. Payments can be



scheduled as frequently as monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, or annually. Many of the benefits are 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. If you have any questions, please contact the Chamber. Our team is more than happy to answer any questions. (970) 247-0312 ext 2

## Upcoming Programs & Events!

Find more information [here](#).

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

**Thurs, Mar. 16 11:30am – 12:30pm HR Workshop – Leverage Culture to Recruit & Retain**

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

**Wed., Mar. 29 noon Event Marketing Workshop with Psyche Digital**

**Thurs, Mar. 30 8:30am Get to Know the CEO with Robert Sarlls, Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory**

**Tues., Apr. 4 8-9am Coffee Connections at Manna Soup Kitchen**

**Fri., Jun. 2 – SAVE THE DATE: Girls Gone Golfing at Hillcrest Golf Club**

## What’s Happening with our Chamber Members

**Feb 11 Homebuyer Education Class** in Durango

**May 3 Southwest Colorado [Small Business Conference](#)** at Sky Ute Event Center.

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

*Buck says ...*  
**Buy Durango!**





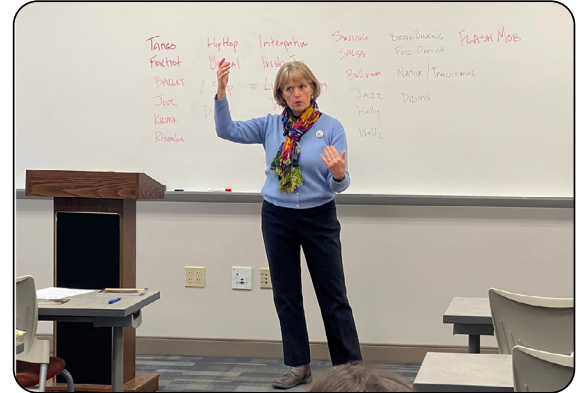
## Supporting Durango's Business Community!

The Chamber, in partnership with the Durango area Association of Realtors and the La Plata Energy Council formed a governmental affairs coalition that participates in meetings and monitors local and state policies and legislation. Each organization educates, advocates for, or opposes issues as they related to each of their membership organization.

If you are interested to learn the policies and legislation that the Legislative Affairs Coalition reviews, see the [latest report here](#).

## Ellen Babers Provided Insightful Learning with her talk on “The Dance of Leadership.”

Relationships are like a dance and are built on some of the same rules and patterns. Ellen Babers shared during the February Lunch & Learn Workshop that the connection you have with others, including coworkers, is similar to various dance styles where sometimes you are the lead and sometimes you are the follower. Thank you, Ellen, for your inspirational talk and perspective on ways to look at leadership and our relationships with each other.



## March's Coffee Connections Learning Series was with the Durango Police Department!

Chief Bob Brammer and his team shared updates on the Durango Police Department and insights on future plans and needs. Thank you for the valuable information and all that you do for our community. Coffee Connections Learning Series are hosted on the first Tuesday of the month and are always free to Chamber members.

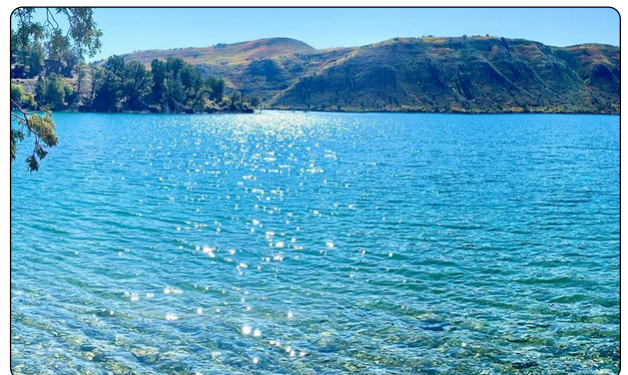


## Lake Nighthorse Opens for the Season March 31!

March 31 – May 7: Non-motorized recreation from 9 am to 4 pm Friday, Saturday, Sunday

- May 12: Daily operations begin
- May 15: motorized recreation begins
- June 3: Wubit Aqua Park opens for the season

For more information on the new aqua park guidelines as well as entrance construction updates, details on how to purchase Lake Nighthorse passes, and seasonal job opportunities, click [here](#).





**Register Now 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!](#)

**NEW! Get to Know the CEO Series with  
Robert Sarlls, Rocky Mountain Chocolate  
Factory – Free to Chamber Members!**

Join us on Thursday, March 30 from 8:30am to 9:30am for the first in the Get to Know the CEO series. This session is free to all Chamber members and will be held at the Center for Innovation in the Main Mall. Mr. Sarlls will share his insights as a CEO, lessons learned, advice for entrepreneurs, what's in store for the future of RMCF, and more. For Mr. Sarlls' bio and more information, visit [DurangoBusiness.org](http://DurangoBusiness.org). While this session is free, we ask that you [reserve your seat](#) as there are capacity limits.



**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. [Learn more here.](#)

**City Council Candidate  
Forum – Tuesday, Mar. 14**



All five of the city council candidates will join us to share their opinions and on important issues and what they see for Durango's future. The Durango Chamber is 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. Election day is right around the corner on April 4.

**Coffee Connections with  
Manna Soup Kitchen on  
Apr. 4th!**



Join the Chamber for a tour of Manna's Community Kitchen with take-out window, food market and resource center. Learn more about the programs and services they offer the community. Hosted by executive director Ann Morse, executive chef Seanan Culloty and resource manager Marissa Hunt. Free to Chamber members on Apr. 4 8am-9am [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, recruitment 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](#).



**YPOD Feature of the Month:**  
**Kessy Dalton**  
**YPOD Board Member**



**What do you do for a living?** I am a realtor with EXIT Realty Home & Ranch. I help my clients pursue their dreams of home ownership, whether it's their 1st home, they're looking to build an investment portfolio, or they're wanting to make a transition out of their current property. I work with buyers and sellers all over southwest Colorado using state-of-the-art tools and technology to help market and identify properties, navigate the sales process, and get them to a successful close.

**Why did you become a YPOD?** I wanted to become a YPOD member because I am passionate about building and nurturing meaningful relationships with local entrepreneurs in the community. It provides me with the opportunity to network and collaborate with like-minded individuals while making an impact in our community. I am able to attend events and meetings focused on engaging with local businesses and organizations, and I believe that this helps me gain valuable insight into the challenges and successes of other local businesses.

**What do you do outside of the office?** You can find me taking my cats for a stroll down Main Street, or snowboarding at Purgatory. I love taking advantage of all of the opportunities Durango has to offer. Text Dalton to 85377 for my mobile business card!

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

**Featured Chamber Diplomat:**  
**Melanie Head**

**How do you spend your time?**

I retired as a Vice President of Sales and Marketing from the medical device industry after 20 years of various sales leadership roles. I started my career as a CPA and then as a CFO before moving to medical devices. I currently consult for established and start-up medical device companies, but my main work now is traveling with my husband in our RV and being a grandma! Yes, retirement is the best!

**How long have you been a DIP?** About 9 months

**How long have you lived in Durango?** We moved to Durango 3 years ago from Pagosa Springs where we had lived for 7 years part time and 3 years full time. We have enjoyed becoming part of the active Durango community.

**Tell us about your family:** My husband, Ralph, and I have been married for 40 years. We were babies when we started dating! We have 3 children and 5 grandchildren, split between San Antonio and Tulsa. We have two fur baby yorkies that travel everywhere with us.

**Why did you become a DIP?** I had an outgoing and vivacious friend who introduced me to the DIP's and I was hooked. Thank you, Sandy!

**Featured Leadership**  
**La Plata Alumnus:**  
**Amanda Erickson**



**What do you do for a living?** Executive Officer for the Durango Area Association of Realtors

**What LLP class were you in?**  
 2021-2022

**What do you love about LLP?** The camaraderie with my classmates, and getting to look behind the scenes at how our community runs and the key players that make it happen. I've learned so much about so many aspects of our community from the programs that help it thrive, the people that give it life, the environment around us, the challenges and successes of local government. The experience has been fulfilling and emotional.

**What has the chamber done for you?** The chamber has kept me connected and helps me grow as a professional.

**What do you love about Durango?** The mountains, the bluest sky you'll ever see... the best people, my friends, my history and my future. It's my home.

**Fun fact about you:** I lived at Purgatory for 13 years as a little girl and grew up on skis. I literally used to have to walk through snowmakers to get to the school bus in the morning, a real uphill both ways kind of story!

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

**What is your favorite part of being a DIP?** Being part of the business community of Durango and gaining an understanding of local business economy and growth opportunities. I have enjoyed the active and dynamic group of individuals that support the Durango Chamber while creating a fun outgoing environment.



**What are your favorite things to do in Durango?** I love the artistic and cultural activities it offers along with everything outdoors! Once mid-July hits, you will find me in the forest foraging for wild mushrooms, one of my favorite summertime activities.

**Fun fact about you:** We have lived in 11 houses after being married, much to my husband's dismay! I would love to be a Gypsie and live in an RV full time, just can't get the hubby on board with this!

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

## 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 (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

For more information click [link](#).



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The Durango Chamber partnered with the La Plata Economic Development Alliance to host the Eggs & Issues Workforce Housing Forum on Feb. 23. Thank you to all who attended and our sponsors, the Bank of Colorado and the Durango Area Association of Realtors.



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## Hiring Remains Strong, But Costly

### 75% of Companies Expected to Bump Employee Pay

#### *Latest Results from The Harris Poll*

Expectations for wage increases have steadily risen over the past few years with 2023 marking their highest level yet. Seventy-five percent of hiring managers predict employees at their companies will receive a bump in pay this year, up from 58% in 2020.

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

Anticipated wage increases were strong at 69% in 2021 and 70% in 2022. This comes at a time when U.S. hiring managers say recruiting over the next year appears encouraging as three quarters (75%) say they feel positively, including feelings of optimism (43%), hopefulness (38%) and confidence (36%).

Three in five (60%) hiring managers say their company plans to increase the number of employees in the first half of 2023 on par with the first and second halves of 2022. Around a third (31%) report their company plans to either stay around the same number of employees or make no change.

Companies with more than 10 employees are the most likely to increase their employee count in the first half of this year. The breakdown of anticipated growth by company size is as follows:

- 2-9 employees: 42%
- 10-49 employees: 60%
- 50-99 employees: 66%
- 100-499 employees: 71%
- 500+ employees: 65%

This continued push to hire is great news for American job seekers. In a recent Express study conducted among more than 2,000 Americans ages 18 and older, close to half (46%) are seeking employment—either actively looking for a new job or browsing job opportunities once in a while.

#### **Reasons for Expansion**

For companies that report plans to increase their number of employees in the first half of this year, many say this increase is due, in part, to the need to manage increased volumes of work (49%). The need to fill positions that are open due to employee turnover (48%), fill newly created positions (44%) and handle expansion into other categories or markets (34%) are also motivating factors for hiring at their companies.

Despite the need for many companies to hire due to the increased workloads, some simply do not have the capacity to do so.

Around half of hiring managers (51%) say they need more employees to manage their workload but do not have the capacity to hire. Interestingly, larger companies with more than 50



employees are more likely than those with 2-9 employees to cite the need for additional workload relief but lack the ability to hire at this time (54% vs. 42%).

#### **Constraining Factors**

For companies that lack the bandwidth to onboard additional employees, more than 2 in 5 (43%) say it is a result of their company adjusting their recruiting/hiring strategy. Others are waiting to see if the workload will level out before hiring additional employees (42%).

Around 3 in 10 say their company does not have enough money in the budget this year (29%) or their upper management has not approved the hiring of additional staff (29%). These sentiments are on par with what U.S. hiring managers reported in the first half of 2022.

Beyond the inability to hire, a few companies are actually planning to reduce their employee count in 2023. Nearly 1 in 10 (7%) hiring managers say their company plans to decrease the number of employees in the first half of 2023. While a small proportion of companies plan to do so, the main reason for this is to reduce costs (75%).

“Balancing overall business costs with necessary hires is critical, and it seems like many employers are taking a wait-and-see approach with market conditions before increasing their headcount,” Express Employment International CEO Bill Stoller said. “But overall, this is great news for job seekers. The majority of businesses need workers, so for those on the sidelines, now is a great time to find the right opportunity.”

#### **Survey Methodology**

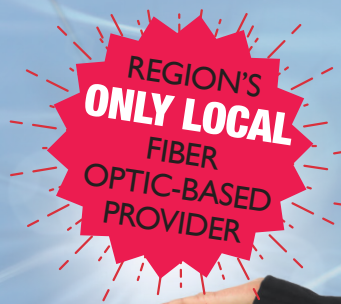
The Job Insights survey was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of Express Employment Professionals between Dec. 1 and Dec. 15, 2022, among 1,002 U.S. hiring decision-makers (defined as adults ages 18+ in the U.S. who are employed full-time or self-employed, work at 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](https://ExpressPros.com/durangoco) or call (970) 403-8780.*



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## Congratulations to Rhonda Muckerman with Durango Jin Shin Jyutsu on Your New Location!

Rhonda Muckerman's Jin Shin Jyutsu practice recently opened a location, and the Chamber Diplomats were there to celebrate with her and others from the Community Wellness Center with a ribbon cutting ceremony.

Rhonda has been a practitioner since 2004 and moved to Durango in 2020. Jin Shin Jyutsu is a unique, non-invasive healing art which brings balance to mind, body and spirit. Rhonda offers 60-minute sessions which promote healing, removing the effects of stress and illness. She's also available to teach self-care classes to private groups, schools, churches and businesses. Rhonda is a musician, conductor and an associate director of the Durango Choral Society. She also authored "Of Song and Water," her memoir that was published last spring.

The Durango Jin Shin Jyutsu is located in the Community Wellness Center at 160 E. 12th Street. For more information, visit [RhondaLMuckerman.com](http://RhondaLMuckerman.com) or call (970) 729-0082.



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## Business Connection

### Bank of Colorado

### Jason Portz, Durango Market President

By Sara Lynn Valentine

During the Great Depression, the one and only bank in rural Palmer, Nebraska had to close its doors. Local brothers, George and Tom Dinsdale, felt they must do something to help their community. In 1938, despite the fact they were farmers rather than businessmen, the brothers opened what became Pinnacle Bank. Over the next 84 years, the Dinsdale family expanded Pinnacle Banks into other communities where there was a need for true community banking. In 1978, they purchased Colorado's oldest state-chartered bank, Bank of Colorado.



"Our mission goes beyond helping our customers reach their financial goals," says Durango's Bank of Colorado President Jason Portz. "We are a very special bank because of our knowledgeable and caring employees, who live in and love this community."

Jason visited and fell in love with Durango on his first trip when he was sixteen. He told his friends then that he would someday live in Durango. The day Jason finished college in Minnesota, he packed his car and drove to northeastern Colorado to stay with a friend, hoping to get his foot in the door with a job in the state.

"Banking was one of the careers I was interested in. My friend had an account at a Bank of Colorado branch in his community and said the people there 'seemed like really good people.' So I met with the branch president. He asked where in Colorado I'd want to be. There was a map on the wall, and I pointed to Durango. He set up an interview and I was hired. I learned all the jobs - credit analyst, personal banker and eventually consumer loans," stated Jason. "After two and a half years they asked me to move to Montrose, where we'd recently acquired some banks, to handle the transition. Nine months later, Durango asked me to come back. That was 2007 and I've been here ever since."

While serving as a vice president, Jason enrolled in a three-year training program at Pacific Coast Banking School. He traveled periodically for abbreviated stints of in-person



classes, completing course work and writing papers after hours back in Durango. He completed the program in 2012 and transitioned to oversee commercial lending in 2019. In January 2022, Jason became market president of the Bank of Colorado in Durango.



Jason is a huge believer in giving back to the community. "Our employees are all involved in community causes. We support them and the organizations they donate their time and energy to. We give \$200,000 to \$250,000 to local nonprofits each year. We want Durango organizations and residents to benefit from our success in the community."

Bank of Colorado supports many organizations, including Durango Education Foundation, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, Fort Lewis College, Boys and Girls Club, United Way, Rotary High Noon, Lions Club, and the Durango Chamber of Commerce.

Jason currently serves on the board of Durango Education Foundation, La Plata County Economic Development Alliance, Durango Industrial Development Foundation, Fort Lewis College Foundation and Colorado Health Facilities Authority. "After living in Durango for nearly 20 years, I've developed lifelong friendships and networks that connect me to the area like family," Jason says.

In addition to juggling a very demanding schedule, Jason manages to ski, hike, and golf and is busy making plans with his fiancée for their upcoming wedding. "The Chamber is a great advocate for small businesses in our community," Jason says. Bank of Colorado sponsors the Chamber's 'Eggs and Issues' and recently hosted a 'Business After Hours' event.

For more information on the Bank of Colorado, visit [www.bankofcolorado.com](http://www.bankofcolorado.com), stop by 1199 Main Avenue, or call (970) 247-5151.



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

### Sweet Facts You'll Want to Know



White and brown sugar are processed, so they must be bad for our health. Honey, maple syrup, and agave come from plants, so they must be at least better for our health. Raw sugar sounds natural and it comes in a brown package, so it's okay. True or not true?

Surely you are pondering this question deeply as you gently stir your coffee or tea; silently hoping the best sweetener is the one dissolving in your cup. And maybe you don't care, so long as [your beverage is perfectly sweet](#). But still, you must be curious.

Consider this fact as you ponder the difference in sweeteners. They are all made of carbon, hydrogen and oxygen. The term "carbo-hydrates" is derived from what they are made of, carbon and water (H<sub>2</sub>O). Be sure to file that one away for the next trivia game.

Now we know all sweeteners are made of three simple elements. When these molecules get in line, they form a short chain, and now they're called simple sugars. Depending on the order and number of carbons, hydrogens and oxygens, we end up with slightly different types of simple sugars. You may have heard of them, they are called glucose, fructose and galactose.

If this concept, which you can't actually see, is causing your brain some strain, I get it. Just know that thanks to glucose, you are able to feed your brain cells. Yay for sugar, brain food! I'd say add another teaspoon to your coffee, but they might pull my registration as a dietitian.

So, back to the facts and the long-awaited answer to the opening question. Like it or not, all of the sweeteners listed above are for all practical purposes, the same. Honey has 5 calories more per teaspoon than table (white) sugar, but it's also sweeter.

As such you might use less, which makes it a wash. During digestion, they all break down and impact blood sugar the same.

Honey periodically shows up in the news as being good for reducing inflammation or as a prebiotic. The evidence is not there to fully support these claims, at least not yet.

Regardless of which sweetener you use, old advice remains sound. Use it in small quantities (< 36 grams/day men, < 25 grams /day for women). If you're an average American, you can [cut your added sugar down by 33%](#) and then be within recommendations.

#### References:

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



## How to Find a Complementary Business to Help Yours Grow

If you're a small- to medium-sized business that is trying to carve out a place for itself in a competitive market, you want to differentiate yourself from the competition. One way to do that is to offer something no one else is doing. You can create a new product or service or go after an untapped market. But if you've already tried all of those and you're looking for something else, it's time to find the peanut butter to your chocolate or the peas to your carrots.

Partnering with another business can help you both offer something to your markets that neither has seen. Here are three ways to find your perfect complementary business so you both can profit.

### Finding the Ideal Business Collaboration

If you're old enough, you may remember the Reese's Peanut Butter Cup commercials that showed two people enjoying very different snacks—one a chocolate bar and one a jar of peanut butter. Inevitably the two collided, one had chocolate in their peanut butter, and one claimed to have peanut butter on their chocolate. But either way, a scrumptious dessert was born. The same can be true of your business.

You don't need a formalized partnership with stakes in one another's business. Instead, you can create special collaborations, offers, or referrals that are mutually beneficial to the businesses and your audiences.

### Brainstorm Businesses That Fit Yours Like Peanut Butter and Chocolate

Make a list of businesses that provide a complementary service or product that you don't offer but would benefit your target market. Ideally, the collaboration between you and this business should create something that other businesses aren't doing. For instance, a bar that doesn't serve food may pair up with a food truck to provide bar patrons with easy access to food while food truck aficionados can enjoy an alcoholic drink. Since some food trucks have sizable followings giving them access to your parking lot or a place to park can bring in new customers for you as well.

### Think About What Your Customers Want

Building on that, make a list of what you hear customers asking for that you don't currently do/offer. Take that list and

decide whether those ideas make sense for your business. You can then decide to offer a new product

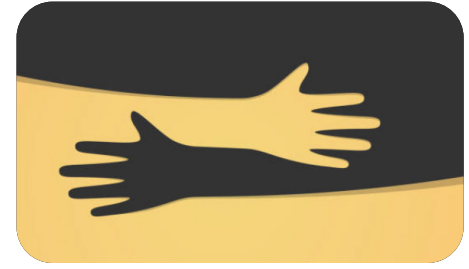
or service line based on those customer requests, or you can collaborate with someone who has already created a successful business doing those things. For instance, if you own a gym, you could create a juice bar on-site or offer a healthy menu planning service. You could also work with someone to fill those needs. Here too there are options. You can rent some of your space to that business or create an affiliate or referral program so your gym members receive discounts for those other products or services at the other business' location.

### Decide What Is Stopping Customers From Buying

Is there something that is prohibiting potential customers from buying from you? What is the wall to purchase? Identify what is holding people back and solve it through collaboration. For instance, if you sell something large like furniture but you don't offer delivery, partnering with a delivery or moving company may increase your sales. Some people don't have the means (strength or room) to bring a large item home. But you may not want the headache of employing movers and covering the insurance. A partnership of this kind can benefit everyone.

Business collaborations can help your business, the collaborator's business, and (both of) your markets. By understanding what your customers need and want, as well as what holds them back from buying, you can create a satisfactory collaboration that benefits everyone and serves to separate you from your competition. This way, you'll gain exposure to a new market or additional customers as well as improve business relationships. If you're not sure how to make connections with other businesses, contact your chamber. They can put you in touch with someone looking to grow in a similar way.

*Christina Metcalf works with small businesses, chambers of commerce, and business professionals who want to make an impression and increase their customer/member base. She loves road trips, hates exclamation points, and is always looking for the perfect quaint beach town that no one has ever heard of. LinkedIn: @christinagsmith*



## New Members

### **Durango Construction Co**

Chris Drummond  
265 Mark Trl  
Durango, CO 81301

[website](#)

Construction/Construction Related

### **Durango Ultrasound**

Laurel Campbell  
270 E 8th Ave  
Durango, CO 81301

[website](#)

### **M&R Service**

Rachel Bartley  
178 Bodo Dr.  
Durango, CO 81303

[website](#)

Plumbing & Drain Cleaning

### **MyStaff Inc**

Virginia Frazey  
1422 Animas Dr  
Durango, CO 81301  
Services

### **Salt & Main Accounting Co.**

Amanda Maynes  
9 Burnett Ct, Suite B  
Durango, United States 81301

### **Soup palette/Lavender Chick Catering Co**

Jennifer Gross  
16 clover place  
Durango, CO 81303

[website](#)

### **Southern Colorado Community Action Agency (SoCoCAA)**

Lori Niewold  
535 Candelaria Drive  
Ignacio, CO 81137

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Asher Custom Homes	Kohler McInnis
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Bob's Johns, Inc.	Mountain Hyperbarics
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Colorado Trails Ranch	Pro Mobile Wash
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Create Art and Tea	Region 9 Economic Development District of SWCO
Dietz Market, Inc.	Rio Epic Outfitters, LLC
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Duranglers, Inc.	SCAPE (Southwest Colorado Accelerator Program for Entrepreneurs)
Durango Arts Center	Shining Star Caregivers, LLC
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Durango Electrical Service, Inc.	Star Liquors
Durango High Noon Rotary	Swan Global Investments
Durango Hot Springs, LLC	Taylor Roberts
Durango Rendezvous, LLC	Taylorred Tours
Durango School District 9-R	Tosch & Associates
Escalante Village	Waste Management of Colorado
Fairfield Inn and Suites	Wells Group of Durango, Inc.
Farha Roofing, LLC	
Four States Tire & Service	
George Johnson	

## LLP Monthly Focus:

### Health is Flexibility. Stop Living in Rigid Routines.

By Stacy Reuille-Dupont, StudioB

As I sit down to write this month's LLP leadership focus, I am coming off the high of Snowdown.

Reflecting on why Snowdown was created: to fix boredom, cabin fever, money issues, and more. I think it fitting to reflect on habits and behaviors we do to quell anxiety about existing.

In psychology, we examine ways a person creates identity, environment, and belief structures through emotion, thought, and action. Along with layers of how they defend those experiences. When they do not like how they feel, they do something to change it.

We humans like predictability. This is because it is efficient and helps avoid danger whether it's a mountain lion or a dangerous (physical or relational) human interaction. As a result, humans find themselves in routines.

This is all fine and good until those routines become trapping experiences of addictive coping. Now before you tune out from the rest of this article, addictive coping is not necessarily a disorder; however, it is trapping in that it's your pacifier. It's the only or easiest thing that fixes your sensations of discontent, powerlessness, and fear.

Addictive coping is anything you do compulsively and obsessively to get rid of feelings and experiences you don't like. These could be behaviors like drinking/drugs, overeating, excessive shopping, gambling, TV, internet, your phone scrolling, etc. They could also be things like work, housecleaning, exercising, giving, and other things most would say are righteous and good. However, when it is the only thing that helps you feel ok about yourself, others, and the world we've got an addictive coping pattern in play.

Usually when I broach this subject people roll their eyes and say, "are you going to take away my afterwork glass of wine" or "I know I shouldn't have this big piece of cake, but ...". The answer is no, but I am going to challenge you to consider why you do what you do.

As leaders, we are the ones who are always looking to improve ourselves. Most people don't do this. They repeat patterns and go about life on autopilot "because it's the way we do things around here." Leaders consider options, challenge structures, innovate, and change the world.

When our value, worth, esteem, and confidence are based on ridged routines to feel alright, leaders have problems, even if not at the level of a disorder.



As leaders, we are the ones pushing the envelope and making the world around us happen. If you are locked into the same ol' same ol' you aren't creating, you are consuming. Leaders create more than they consume.

So today, consider what routines you automatically do and determine if there are other ways to get to the same end goal. Are there places in your life where you could find new ways to socially connect, relax, come up with new ideas, feel valuable in your relationships, stop mental chatter, or sleep and let go. I will tell you a secret, there are always more ways.

In every moment, we have lots of choices, but we get overwhelmed and frozen in possibilities which is why we turn back to our trusty patterns. They work quickly. Bye anxiety, hello feeling effective and good.

Challenge yourself to having more than 3 ways you can accomplish a sense of calm and connected experiences in every situation. This will make sure you aren't locked into routines and will help you be an inspiration and lead those around you to new heights. *If this feels overwhelming seek outside counsel.*

If you are interested in learning more about how you can be a leader who innovates and creates the world around you, consider joining next year's LLP class. Applications are due the end of May. Learn more at [leadershiplaplata.org](http://leadershiplaplata.org)

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.





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