



Connection



Coollest Dog in Durango Contest Wraps Up

BuddyII was crowned the ultimate winner at the August 19th Coolest Dog in Durango Wrap Party held at the dog-friendly Bird's patio. BuddyII along with his human Cathy Roberts excitedly accepted the role of "Coolest Dog in Durango 2020" along with his prize package which included a \$500 gift basket courtesy of Pet Haus, a photo shoot with Allison Ragsdale Photography and of course the coveted photo on the custom Steamworks Brew aptly named "Buddy's Best Kölsch Ale"!

Twizzle, 2nd Place Winner, and his human Rebecca Balboni and 3rd Place Basher with his human Brennan Jurgens were also on hand to receive their prize packages and of course check out their respective photos on the custom Kölsch ale.

Jack Llewellyn, executive director of the Durango Chamber of Commerce, presented Chris Nelson and Emily Phillips of the La Plata County Humane Society with a check for \$8,252 that reflected 25% of the proceeds from the contest.

Thank you to our sponsors and everyone who entered their dog in the contest and all the people who so generously voted!



BuddyII



Twizzle



Basher



Photos Courtesy of Allison Ragsdale Photography - Click to see more



Alpine Bank



Allison Ragsdale
PHOTOGRAPHY

THE Durango HERALD



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*From the Executive Director's pen***Back to School**

Do you remember as kids we dreaded August coming around because that meant we soon HAD to go back to school? Isn't it funny how several months can change our perspectives? Being off-work, stuck at home suddenly has become a real drag (to use a term from an old "seasoned" guy).

Well, as adults let's get back to school. Make these next weeks as productive and positive as they can be. Challenge yourself to learn something new this late summer and into fall. (There are only so many pine needles and oak leaves that one can rake and feel productive.)

I've got some ideas for you...

Play that dusty guitar or even more fun, learn to play ukulele (it's a lot simpler and Denise Leslie is a great instructor.)

Do some art. Many of our graphic designers have pivoted, so they've returned to their first passion of painting pictures and might even offer classes. You too can paint the red cliffs.

Explore brewing beer. I don't want to limit you visiting our local craft brewers, but exploring home brewing is an interesting exercise that will TRULY give you an appreciation for the beers produced by our local breweries.

Take an online course... be it a new computer program (excel for me), or learning a new language or more, it can give you sense that you're moving ahead and not just stagnating, rumbling around in your house, sweeping up dog hair dust bunnies every morning.

Hone your cooking skills. Yes, we are encouraging everyone to still support our restaurants - PLEASE support our restaurants either at the outdoor eating areas or with take-out. BUT, it's still fun to explore new meals. It's an adventure to consider recipes and shop and cook something new once and a while. (Remember, we've got all our fresh ingredients at the Durango Farmers Market right now.) Check with your favorite restaurant, they might send you home with all the fixin's and you cook it.

And speaking of fresh ingredients, now is the time to can. I bought a book on the subject, so I'm going to test my talents. For example, if you haven't noticed, we have a bumper crop

Jack Llewellyn, Chamber Director

of apricots. They're little and wicked, but I've learned that they make great jam or syrup. (OK, I confess, Cherie, my wife made it).

For mental health (but also physical), learn yoga or Tai Chi. These disciplines often involve meditation and learning how to BREATHE. Can we all agree that we probably need to do a little bit of that right now? And there's nothing wrong with working off the calories from all the great food we've now learned to cook.

And what about breathing on the river? Learn to fly fish. It's one of the most tranquil activities, and we have some of the best places in the world to indulge.

Sew... true, that's not going to be me, but we have great quilting stores in this town with amazing fabric. You can create art with fabric. Or make your son or daughter a quilt out of old sports or activities t-shirts.

These are just a few ideas. There are numerous local teachers and business owners who can help you with all of the aforementioned and more to get you off the couch (and binging Netflix).

But if you want to stick to the couch... I admit, I am not a big reader, but challenge yourself to read a book a month. It doesn't have to be work-related. Some I enjoyed: Dean Koontz Intensity, Michael Crichton Airframe, local author Dr. Phillip Duke The Village, and a couple semi-work related, Tommy Spaulding It's Not Just Who You Know and The Heart Led Leader.

Also, The Chamber will be offering a variety of virtual courses, as well as our Lunch & Learn and Tuesday Coffees online for now. Visit www.durangobusiness.org for upcoming chamber sessions.

I'm sure all of us whined sometime during our youth about going "to school." I bet your kids are itching to go back right now, and I can't blame them. Let's make the best of it and do our own personal "back-to-school."

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Purgatory Resort and Chamber of Commerce Partner For Local COVID Relief

Provide Economic Relief to Local Small Businesses

Purgatory Resort officials announced a new partnership between the resort, the Coleman Charitable Foundation (CCF) and the Durango Chamber of Commerce to provide local small businesses with COVID-19 relief. The resort and foundation are collectively donating more than \$60,000 from the ski area's first season pass sale in order to fund the program.

"We are honored and humbled as the recipient of Purgatory and CCF's generous donation. It could not come at a better time with so many impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This will help fund numerous chamber projects as we continue to serve our business community and members" says Executive Director for the Chamber Jack Llewellyn.

The Chamber, a membership-based organization that promotes and supports the local business community through communication, advocacy, education, leadership and financial viability, will form a subcommittee to determine the disbursement of funds. Some of the proposed programs include bolstering a scholarship program and offering a new series of free educational programs.

Llewellyn adds, "I look forward to exploring ways we can assist the greatest number of businesses helping them recover from the pandemic. My hope is being able to offer educational programs to larger numbers of businesses similar to the examples will benefit many."

Some examples of educational topics include: writing resumes, social media, financials in a business unusual environment, health and safety



Pictured from left to right: Diana Murray (Board President, Durango Chamber of Commerce), Steve Elias, Brian Lundstrom, Mitch Dye, Vaughn Morris, Dave Rathbun (General Manager, Purgatory), Jack Llewellyn (Executive Director, Durango Chamber of Commerce)

for employees and their families, COVID-19 liabilities and hosting virtual events. Additional ways to help businesses impacted by the pandemic are being explored.

"COVID-19 has created new challenges for everyone, including all of us at Purgatory," says Dave Rathbun, general manager of Purgatory Resort. "Because we concentrate on having a direct and meaningful impact in our community, it was important for us to find a way to show our support to the local businesses during these difficult times."

Virtual Lunch & Learn

Wednesday, September 23rd

12 Noon - 1 pm

A Guide to Video Marketing

Presented by **Ben Sorensen, Director of Digital Sales, BCI Media**



Please join us on **Wednesday, September 23rd** for a virtual presentation on video marketing. **Ben Sorensen, Director of Digital Sales** with **BCI Media**, will discuss the difference between organic video content and produced video content. Also included will be discussion on how to best use each tactic, and how you can use video marketing to elevate your overall marketing strategy.

[Click to Register](#)

Lunch & Learn will be held **Wednesday, September 23rd, 12 -1pm**. Cost for the session is \$10, but thanks to the generosity of Purgatory Resort this fee is waived and we welcome you to attend for **FREE!** You must register to reserve your spot and receive your zoom invitation. Please use our convenient online registration at www.durangobusiness.org or email rita@durangobusiness.org.



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Support Your Employees Who Can't Return to the Office

Chances are that you have employees who fall into the high-risk group for coronavirus and who may be unwilling or unable to return to an office when you reopen. Managers need to develop a specific plan for these employees. Support their ability to continue working from home, if possible. While working remotely isn't ideal for everyone, the pandemic has shown that it's doable for many — and it can even be beneficial. Allowing high-risk employees to continue to work remotely has the added benefit of reducing the number of people in the office, making everyone on your team safer. Make

sure that any employee who continues to work remotely still feels included. Consider implementing a policy that if one person calls into a meeting, everyone joins by phone, even if it's from their desks. This will allow your remote employees to feel fully included. The ongoing safety and welfare of all employees — but particularly your most vulnerable — needs to be at the top of every manager's priority list. This is an unprecedented moment, and you should be prepared to make unprecedented accommodations.

This tip is adapted from "Office Reentry Plans Must Account for Medically Vulnerable Employees," by Rebecca Zucker



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Virtual Trainings: JOBS, EMPLOYMENT....HOW TO?

Have you thought about updating your resume? Or, are you about to embark on hiring new employees and feel stressed about the interview process? The Durango Chamber of Commerce and Purgatory Resort, in partnership with Erin Dombey, PHR, Leadership Search Director with Y SCOUTS will present three “must see” virtual trainings beginning September 17th.

Session 1 | September 17th 12-1pm

Resume Tips/Tricks & Preparing your social media for interviews

- What should you share on a resume?
- How long should a resume be?
- What is the value of a cover letter?
- STAR methodology and how that translates to your resume and interviewing technique
- Social media and how to prepare yourself

Session 2 | September 24th 12-1pm

Hiring Managers - What to look for on a resume/ Setting up your interview to learn about the person and the impact they will bring.

- Getting to know the person behind the resume - how do do that
- The value of behavioral interviewing
- COVID - what does that mean for new hires
- New salary laws and “ban-the-box” laws - what do you need to know



Session 3 | October 8th 12-1pm

How to interview? Tips for job seekers to stand out in the midst of the masses

- STAR methodology and how to set yourself up to shine in an interview
- How to maneuver through your job search in the midst of COVID
- What are the key questions you should ask in an interview
- Closing is key - if you want the job, ask for it. need to know

Make plans to join us for these very timely and informative seminars. Cost for each session is \$25, but thanks to the generosity of our sponsor Purgatory Resort the fee is waived and you can attend for FREE!

Reservations are required to receive your zoom log in information, so please use our convenient online registration at www.durangobusiness.org or call 970.247.0312.

[click to register](#)



For the recent
Governmental Affairs
Coalition Report
[click here](#)

August Lunch & Learn Thank you

Thank you to Dr. Ashley Lucas with PHD Weight Loss and Nutrition for a very informative and timely presentation at the August Lunch and Learn. Dr. Lucas talked about lifestyle changes that support optimal immunity, behaviors, and health during a viral pandemic. If you would like to learn more about the services offered by PHD Weight Loss and Nutrition visit <https://myphdweightloss.com/location/durango/> or give them a call at 970-764-4133.

Lead a Productive Brainstorm — Remotely

In the age of COVID-19, many of us are no longer physically working together, but we still need to generate ideas collaboratively. Fortunately, you can still lead a productive remote brainstorm session. First, invite a diverse group of contributors. Because you're working remotely, you don't have to limit participants by geography. Identify the roles and expertise you want, and then invite people who fit those descriptions. Make sure you clearly communicate the specific problem the group is trying to solve before the brainstorm begins. This step is especially important when you're working in a remote environment, where

communication is more likely to break down. Finally, structure a process that can unfold over time. In fact, a productive brainstorm doesn't require everyone to be online at the same time: People may generate better, more distinct ideas if they're working independently. So, create a shared document where participants can add their ideas, and then ask them to collectively finalize the most promising ones at the end of the process. Following these simple steps can make the remote work environment an advantage, not an obstacle.

*This tip is adapted from "How to Brainstorm — Remotely,"
by Art Markman*



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First Tuesday of Each Month
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Southwest Health Alliance: Bringing Price Relief and Accountability to Healthcare

By Monique DiGiorgio, Local First Director

The Southwest Health Alliance story began in January 2018 when Local First received impassioned feedback from the local, independent business community at our annual meeting about the rising and unaffordable cost of healthcare. As we began to explore an issue for which we had a limited track record, the importance of the “Look Local” lense in the complex world of healthcare became obvious.

Much like the challenges facing our downtown retail shops, our healthcare system and its local practitioners are threatened by the national trend toward consolidation of providers, which research shows leads to higher prices without measurably improving the quality of care. The corporatization and consolidation of healthcare typically results in fewer independent local healthcare providers in an increasingly complex system that lacks transparency and equity. Decisions are made in far-away corporate headquarters, making it harder to understand how to have a voice in decision-making.

To tackle this trend, Local First teamed up with the local, independent healthcare practitioners of The Durango Network to listen to the community and explore options to support local, independent healthcare in the La Plata County region including Montezuma, Dolores and San Juan counties. Based on our findings from a 2019 community needs assessment the Southwest Health Alliance formed to: 1) increase health literacy in the La Plata County region, and 2) develop a cooperative, local healthcare solution that increases access to care while also reducing insurance premiums.

This is when we found Peak Health Alliance and their innovative healthcare cooperative hailing from the mountains of Summit County, Colorado. Similar to an agricultural cooperative, Peak Health Alliance uses the power of community purchasing to bring down the cost of healthcare while bringing the voice of the community back into the healthcare system to support transparency. The ultimate goal of this cooperative, which is officially licensed by the Colorado Division of Insurance, is to provide affordable, high-quality, and locally responsive health insurance products in the marketplace. As the locally-led partner of Peak Health Alliance, Southwest Health Alliance was formed to expand the purchasing alliance model to the region for the 2021 plan year.

Fast forward to 2020, and we are pleased to announce that our goal of offering this type of plan in the marketplace by January 2021 is on track and heading to the La Plata County region - whether you are a business owner or an individual looking for affordable, local healthcare. With the incredible support and expertise of Peak Health Alliance, we have chosen to work with Bright Health who already offers coverage to Peak members in the northern part of our state. Bright Health will be new to our region for 2021, and we are pleased that our efforts appear to have driven greater marketplace diversity and lower prices in this remote corner of Colorado.

As we prepare for health insurance plans being available for open enrollment in November 2020, we are now talking with the community about the details of engaging with us. We are communicating now with local brokers to ensure they are fully equipped with information regarding the Southwest Health Alliance and Bright Health. Brokers

will continue to assist both individuals and employer groups with their healthcare decision-making. Simultaneously, we are reaching out to 5,000 individuals in the business community that expressed interest in the Southwest Health Alliance plan. We are also speaking to the public at large about unique offerings such as \$0 co-pays for mental health visits.

The Southwest Health Alliance is offering group plans as an ICHRA. An ICHRA is an Individual Coverage Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA) that allows you as a business owner to contribute to your employees' health insurance while providing more flexibility to both you and your employees. ICHRA allows businesses of any size to reimburse employees at varying amounts for their health insurance premiums tax-free. Employees can shop for and select plans that fit them best rather than be limited to the one group plan their employer chose. Businesses could see significant savings on their healthcare costs by switching to ICHRA, the new group coverage option offered by Southwest Health Alliance for 2021.

Along the way, we all get to uphold our values of transparency, choice, local self-reliance, and evidence-based decision-making. We are pleased that the Southwest Health Alliance insurance product will offer a choice of local providers as well as enhanced primary care and mental health benefits, while delivering cost-savings through partnerships with Centura (owner of Mercy Regional Medical Center), Animas Surgical Hospital, and local healthcare providers. We are still hopeful that Southwest Health System in Cortez will agree to join the Bright Health network so that Montezuma County residents can enjoy unfettered access to local care in their community.

You can find out who sits on the Steering Committee of the Southwest Health Alliance, including the Durango Chamber of Commerce, and the incredible support we have received from local governments and corporate sponsors, and how you can engage by visiting the Local First Foundation website. Sign-up for the Southwest Health Alliance newsletter by visiting our new website at <http://southwesthealthalliance.org/> so that you can attend one of our many webinars to learn more about the Southwest Health Alliance before open enrollment on November 1st 2020.

Get involved. The power of a cooperative is in its numbers, so our community needs to rise to the occasion, become informed, and learn what the Southwest Health Alliance has to offer. And, that is not only a way to engage in local healthcare and drive decisions locally, but also a way to reduce your out-of-pocket expense for healthcare. Each dollar our community saves on health insurance is a dollar that can be placed back into the economy on local produce, mortgage payments, and the other costs that make the La Plata County region a great, but expensive place to reside.

With the Southwest Health Alliance, you can now “look local first” in healthcare for the first time-ever. We are pleased to be offering this unique product to the community and look forward to continuing the dialogue in the upcoming months.



Effective Communication is a Sign of Good Leader

By Stacy Reuille-Dupont

One of the most highly rated skills for a leader is to inspire those around them. To inspire others to perform you must have good communication skills. Communication skills are not just about bossing people around. It is actually more about listening. Good listening is not a passive event, it is active. In addition to active listening, a good leader adapts their personal communication style to the audience. They work to communicate with clarity and they know that good communication is not about being right, it is about being effective. Because when you are effective people can come alongside you even when parties do not agree. This is what gets things done.

We've all heard the saying "you've got 2 ears and 1 mouth for a reason", however that can be very difficult to remember. Many people struggle to actively listen to those around them. Instead they are preparing a rebuttal or forming their next point. However, these activities will derail the conversation. Eventually, one or both parties realize they are not being heard and one of two things will happen:

- 1) People will get louder, bolder, and escalate their talking points to try to be heard
- 2) They'll shut down and withdraw.

Neither get you very far.

Active listening includes things like reflecting the other person's words back to them. This is done with just one or two of the words the person just said. It includes paraphrasing. This is done when you do a quick reflection on what was just said using your own words. Usually a good listening stint ends with a nice summary. This is where you say a few sentences about what was just said using your own words and maybe even building on it as the group continues to create conversation. Active listening also includes things like good eye contact, appropriate facial response, and open body posture. These say "I am interested and I am listening". Active listening is about hearing what is said, not just in the words but beyond the verbal exchange.

Another critical skills for good communication is learning how to adapt your communication style to the audience. I am an expressive person, but not everyone in my circle is. My colorful language and high energy can be a lot for some. If I want to communicate effectively with them, I might want to slow down my speech rate, soften my gestures, and lower my voice. This does not mean I am pretending to be someone I am not. I still use my expressive nature, I am just adapting so that my message gets across. This is a way to meet the other person's need to be seen and heard while communicating clearly. If I can do this effectively there is room for both of us in the conversation and both our styles.

Once you are aware of different styles of communication you can easily spot them and learn to adapt your presentation style to those listening to you. This creates a much easier avenue for clarity. And



clarity is needed if you are going to get a team of people to solve a problem together.

For many they learned that communication is all about being the loudest, smartest, and dominant person in the room. They learned that being right means you won. However, effective communication is less about being right and more about listening and clarity. This is an important point because if I can be effective it will be easier for me to meet the other person where they are and shift them in my direction, especially if we are trying to efficiently solve a problem.

The members of the team do not always have to agree to effectively solve a problem, thus it is more important to figure out how to communicate in effective ways to bring the other along side your ideas, goals, and vision. If they are good communicators they'll be doing the same. The problem and solution will evolve as a team effort even when one holds more power and authority over the other.

By working to hear first, bring clarity, and be effective we can drop judgment, let go of fear, stop ridicule, blame, and shaming others to get them to do what we want. Instead we work on inspiring them and opening up what is possible.

Steve Jobs once said, "Management is about persuading people to do things they do not want to do, while leadership is about inspiring people to do things they never thought they could."

This is the realm of great leaders. When a realm of possibility has been opened and the group understands how to communicate clearly and effectively while knowing their contributions will be heard (even if not followed) they step through and create systems, solutions, and ideas not yet imagined.

If you want to learn more about your own communication style and how to spot the style of others and adapt, check out Leadership La Plata. During this year long course you will learn numerous leadership skills and level up your ability to inspire those around you so you become a great leader, too.

Alumni Quote

"Active listening is an important part of good communication. I find the most important part of active listening is to stop thinking about your response. Stop thinking about the next thing you are going to say and instead really listening to hear the other person". *Kelsea Ferrato, LLP Alum Class of 2013-14*

Durango Wood Company | Mike Del Spina

By Sara Lynn (Kuntz) Valentine

Durango Wood Company has been around in one form or another since the late 1950s. Started by Art Gomez, it has changed hands several times over the years. Durango Wood Company's current owner, Ryan Siggins, took over in 2015.

Durango Wood Company is a full-scale architectural millworks operation. Their mission is to help homeowners achieve their visions when building or remodeling a home. "We are not a sawmill or a lumber yard," says Mike Del Spina, General Manager. "Everything we mill is made to order. Our goal is to help homeowners get exactly the look and quality they want within the confines of their budgets. You can come to us with pictures, a Pinterest design board or a motif, if you like... anything that inspires you. We will make it happen. We mill door and window casing, baseboard, crown moldings, trims, traditional and floating stair treads and risers. We make box wraps for beams and duct-work, ceiling paneling and ceiling soffits. We also make beautiful, high-quality siding for houses in subdivisions like Edgemont and Glacier Club. We're building a maple butcher-block kitchen counter top right now, and we also supply a lot of the wood local cabinet makers use."

Additionally, Durango Wood Company makes handcrafted dining, coffee, and side tabletops. They use materials that are easy for builders to work with, as opposed to the products you might buy at a big box store or at a lumber-yard, which have quality issues that often require reworking, or take longer to install. Durango Wood Company's products are made from soft or hard wood, such as oak, cherry, walnut, hickory, maple, Douglas fir and cedar. They can create rustic, classic or contemporary looks.

"We use alder for our standard stain grade and poplar for our standard paint grade," Mike says. "Both of these are upgrades from what you would buy from a lumber company, which means they look better and last longer. Everything is milled right here in Durango. There are very few



companies in the entire country that do what we do." In addition to providing higher quality at reasonable prices, Durango Wood Company makes the process of providing the look homeowners want, without being overwhelmed by choices or limited by what lumberyard can pull off the shelf, very easy. Once a homeowner makes his or her choices, Durango Wood will work closely with the builder or contractor to ensure the details are handled. "Our goal is to make our clients lives easier, without the stress of managing the process," Mike says, "This makes everybody happy."

You can learn more at www.durangowoodcompany.com. You may call Mike at 970-247-2088, or email him at mike@durangowoodcompany.com.

Durango Wood Company appreciates working with the Chamber. "Owner Ryan Siggins believes in supporting local businesses," Mike says. "He buys local and supports local. He's appreciative of all the chamber does for the local economy."

Want to Grow Your Business? Join a Chamber LEADS GROUP!

Email today to join or find out more information!

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Virtual Trainings: JOBS, EMPLOYMENT.... HOW TO? Beginning September 17th

Presented by: **Erin Dombey, PHR**
Leadership Search Director with Y SCOUTS



SESSION 1
SEPTEMBER 17TH
12:00 - 1:00 pm

Resume Tips/Tricks & Preparing your social media for interviews

- What should you share on a resume?
- How long should a resume be?
- What is the value of a cover letter?
- STAR methodology and how that translates to your resume and interviewing technique
- Social media and how to prepare yourself

SESSION 2
SEPTEMBER 24TH
12:00 - 1:00 pm

Hiring Managers - What to look for on a resume/Setting up your interview to learn about the person and the impact they will bring.

- Getting to know the person behind the resume - how do do that
- The value of behavioral interviewing
- COVID - what does that mean for new hires
- New salary laws and "ban-the-box" laws - what do you need to know

SESSION 3
OCTOBER 8TH
12:00 - 1:00 pm

How to interview? Tips for job seekers to stand out in the midst of the masses

- STAR methodology and how to set yourself up to shine in an interview
- How to maneuver through your job search in the midst of COVID
- What are the key questions you should ask in an interview
- Closing is key - if you want the job, ask for it.

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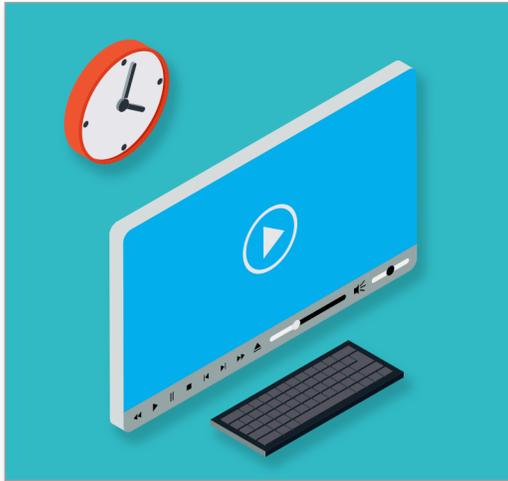
Make plans to join us for these very timely and informative seminars. Cost for each session is \$25, but due to the generosity of our sponsor Purgatory Resort the fee is waived and you can attend for FREE!

Reservations are required to receive your zoom log in information, so please use our convenient online registration at www.durangobusiness.org or call 970.247.0312.

Scholarships Available

The **Durango Chamber of Commerce** is excited to announce a partnership with **Bank of Colorado, 1st Southwest Bank, Purgatory** and **The Payroll Department** to provide scholarships to Chamber members who were impacted by the COVID-19 shut down and now are making hard financial decisions regarding business expenses. This scholarship fund will cover a minimum of six months of Chamber membership dues to members who qualify. If you would like to apply for a scholarship to assist you with your chamber membership dues, please email rita@durangobusiness.org or jack@durangobusiness.org.





Virtual Lunch & Learn A Guide to Video Marketing



Presented by
**Ben Sorensen, Director of
Digital Sales with
with BCI Media**



Please join us on Wednesday, September 23rd for a virtual presentation on video marketing. Ben Sorensen, Director of Digital Sales with BCI Media, will discuss the difference between organic video content and produced video content. Also included will be discussion on how to best use each tactic, and how you can use video marketing to elevate your overall marketing strategy.

SEPTEMBER VIRTUAL LUNCH & LEARN

September 23rd • 12 – 1pm
Cost for the session is \$10, but thanks to the generosity of Purgatory Resort this fee is waived and we welcome you to attend for FREE!

You must register to reserve your spot and receive your zoom invitation. Please use our convenient online registration at www.durangobusiness.org or email rita@durangobusiness.org

click to
register