

US Senate Race Update

- Julie Gonzales, a Democratic state senator from Denver, has officially entered the 2026 U.S. Senate race, challenging incumbent John Hickenlooper in a Democratic primary. Gonzales is positioning herself as a progressive alternative to Hickenlooper and calling for a bolder, people-focused agenda including universal health care and expanded social programs.

Colorado Employment Update

- Colorado's job growth slowed in September, with the state adding just 500 nonfarm jobs while the unemployment rate edged down to 4.1%, according to the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment. Private employers cut a net 200 jobs for the month, while government payrolls grew by 700. Despite the small monthly gains, revisions to prior months were stronger than initially reported, and overall employment is tracking close to state economic forecasts. Over the past year, job growth has been led by educational and health services and leisure and hospitality, while recent monthly losses were concentrated in construction and trade, transportation, and utilities.

Durango/La Plata County Airport Update

- Director of Aviation Tony Vicari said enplanements in November of 2025 are up 14% year over year, building on the record breaking year of 2024. Demand is strong and resilient - from both locals and visitors.

La Plata County Budget Update

- La Plata County adopted the 2026 Budget including reduced staff benefits. For example, the county will not contribute to staff Health Savings Accounts and paid parental leave has been reduced. Most vacancies are still being held open. The Board of County Commissioners approved \$136 million in expenditures for 2026.

La Plata County Moratorium Update

- The Board of La Plata County Commissioners extended the moratorium on battery energy storage systems (BESS) until January 21, 2026. After a lengthy hearing with more than two dozen public comments, commissioners opted to direct staff to draft additional changes to the land use code related to BESS and setbacks.

La Plata County Housing Update

- La Plata County has retained consultants whose purpose is to establish a broadly supported housing framework and land use development code recommendations that enable the county to increase housing options that are attainable and affordable. This is to help the county meet the requirements of Proposition 123, which voters approved in 2022. Prop 123 created Colorado's Affordable Housing Fund and requires an expedited review process for qualifying developments.
- The consultant's next steps involve stakeholder outreach, creating a draft framework, and a Land Use Code audit before developing recommended code changes and a redline.

Durango Camera System Update

- Police Chief Brice Current briefed city council on the Durango's Flock camera system, which now includes 21 cameras designed to identify license plates tied to individuals already suspected or known to have committed a crime. Current said the system reduces broad or suspicion-based searches, helping protect Fourth Amendment rights by providing more precise information to officers. The update came after residents raised concerns about potential data-sharing with ICE. Current clarified that the city has removed all cooperation with Flock-affiliated agencies that share information with immigration authorities.

Development Projects

- The Board of La Plata County Commissioners approved amendments to the Durango and Florida Mesa District plans to modify the Joint Planning Area Map to include the Silverview Lane area. The approval brings 26 properties into the Joint Planning Area and makes any new developments there subject to review by the City of Durango and La Plata County. It also gives those properties access to city water.
- Durango's Community Development Commission (DCDC) approved Parker's Animal Rescue variance & conditional use permit at 20578 & 20778 Hwy 160 West. The approval allows the development of a new Kennel on the site.
- The DCDC also approved the 669 E 8th Avenue minor subdivision preliminary plan. This allows the owner to subdivide a 12,209 square foot lot into two lots of 6,581 square feet and 5,628 square feet.
- The DCDC denied a variance request by AMERCO Real Estate Company, which was proposing to develop and operate a U-Haul U-Box Warehouse facility at 95 Design Center Road.
- The DCDC approved a proposal by AMERCO and U-Haul to develop and operate a three-story, 108,174 square foot building as a self-storage facility and office for renting moving vehicles in the Southfork area.

Meetings attended November 19 - December 17

11/20 - 6 pm Jointly-seated Planning Commission	12/8 - 5 pm Durango Comm Dev Commission
11/20 - 7 pm LPC Planning Commission	12/9 - 10 am BOCC Business Meeting
11/25 - 10 am BOCC Business Meeting	12/9 - 1 pm BOCC Planning Meeting
11/26 - 8:30 am BOCC Discussion Time	12/11 - 6 pm LPC Planning Commission
12/2 - 2 pm Durango City Council Study Session	12/16 - 10 am BOCC Planning Meeting
12/2 - 5:30 pm Durango City Council Meeting	12/16 - 2 pm Durango City Council Special Meeting
12/8 - 4:30 pm Durango URA Meeting	12/17 - 8:30 am BOCC Discussion Time