

La Plata County Manager Update

- The Board of La Plata County Commissioners have accepted the resignation of Shawna Legarza as County Manager. Legarza was hired in February after previously serving as the County's Director of Emergency Management. Her last day was 9/12/26.

Fire Restrictions

- Fire restrictions in unincorporated La Plata County were lifted thanks to recent rains, higher humidity and cooler temperatures.
- The San Juan National Forest currently lifted fire restrictions as well, effective Wednesday, September 15.
- Stage 1 Fire Restrictions will remain in effect on Bureau of Land Management land through December 31, or until rescinded.
- The city of Durango always maintains Stage 1 Fire Restrictions. Per City Ordinance, there is no Open Burning in the city limits. Exception: recreation, cooking, warming fires on private property.

Oil & Gas Regulations Update

- Colorado's Air Quality Control Commission approved the third and final set of methane rules for oil and gas production, making Colorado the first state to adopt regulations based on the EPA's two-year-old "Quad OC" guidelines.
- The most contested provision requires operators of enclosed combustion devices to monitor gas flow continuously rather than report annually.
- Industry representatives objected to the retrofit costs and noted that the state's own analysis projected no direct emissions reduction. Environmental groups backed the expansion as a way to prevent fugitive emissions.

Tribal Oil & Gas Update

- The BLM and the Southern Ute Indian Tribe are starting a formal planning effort for future development of tribal trust oil and gas in the Mancos Shale, about 7,000 feet down in the San Juan Basin. The planning area covers over 100,000 acres on the Southern Ute Reservation, including about 64,000 acres of tribal trust minerals. There are no federal public lands or minerals involved, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs is a cooperating agency.
- Written comments are due Oct. 9, 2026. The BLM prefers the National NEPA Register, but you can also mail or deliver them to the Tres Rios Field Office in Dolores (attn: Ryan Joyner).
- The BLM presents the plan as support for the Tribe's long-term management of its mineral resources and as a way to meet federal trust responsibilities. It also expects gains in jobs, income, and demand for local services.

South Durango URA Update

- Required plan documents for a 31-parcel area around the Durango Mall have been completed and the 120-day TIF negotiation period with the taxing entities is underway.
- The centerpiece of the possible South Durango URA is a proposed redevelopment by CenterCal, a well-regarded developer backed by the California Teachers' pension fund. The plan would shrink and reactivate the largely vacant mall into about 230,000 square feet of retail, with a grocery anchor, two junior anchors, and outparcels. CenterCal says it faces a roughly \$12 million funding gap, which it wants covered through a sales tax reimbursement.
- The URA estimates the project could generate \$50–66 million in county sales tax over 25 years. That revenue could also help make a 50-unit for-sale workforce townhome project behind Rivergate fully affordable, with any surplus going toward local infrastructure.

- Because the city and county are the only entities that can provide sales tax TIF, they effectively decide whether the project happens. The URA is asking both to commit to an expedited decision by Thanksgiving, ahead of CenterCal's December 1 earnest-money deadline, to avoid a repeat of the failed Kensington deal.
- Final plan adoption would potentially come around Q2 2027, and only if the mall sale actually closes.

Durango Housing Update

- Durango City Council heard an update from the city's Prosperity Office September 15 on Durango's Prop 123 commitment for 2027–2029. (Prop 123, passed by CO voters in 2022, created a permanent statewide funding stream for affordable housing.) The goal is 99 affordable/workforce housing units, all with formal affordability restrictions (deed restrictions or LURAs).
- A few projects are already in the pipeline, including Rivergate Workforce Housing (~50 townhomes) and Lightner Creek Commons (29 townhomes).
- The city hit full compliance with its 2024–2026 Prop 123 targets in August, locking in access to state affordable housing funds for the next three years.

Airport Update

- Starting this fall, Durango-La Plata County Airport will open a Steamworks Brewing Co. "Hub" restaurant past the TSA checkpoint. This is done in partnership with SkyDine, the airport's master concessionaire. SkyDine will staff and run the Hub.

Development Projects

- La Plata County Commissioners approved the Doyle Subdivision Preliminary Plat/Plan on 9/15/26. The Doyles plan to split their 27.93-acre property at 617 County Road 207 into four lots. The land has a main house, three rental cabins, and several farm buildings, all built before the 1970s. Under the plan, Lot 1 (18 acres) keeps the farm buildings and gets a future home. Lots 2 and 3 (about 3 acres each) each keep two existing homes, and Lot 4 (3.8 acres) stays vacant. They were also approved for the second home on Lots 2 and 3 as second dwelling units.
- The BOCC approved amendments to the Glacier Club Tamarron Development Agreement. County planning staff and the Glacier Club development team worked together to produce revisions to Sections 3.6 and 3.7 of the DA to address unclear language, as well as to clarify and simplify requirements for the development of caretaker/guest units within the area governed by the DA.

Meetings attended September 14 - September 24

9/14 - 4:30 pm Durango URA meeting
9/15 - 5:30 pm Durango City Council Meeting
9/16 - 8:30 am BOCC Discussion Time
9/18 - 1 pm CAR Colorado Project Wildfire
9/22 - 10 am BOCC Business Meeting
9/23 - 8:30 am BOCC Discussion Time
9/23 - 2:30 pm La Plata County Budget Presentation