

# *La Plata County* **CONNECTIONS**

FALL 2023

## **MAKING THE GRADE**

**A Q&A WITH YOUR ROAD  
& BRIDGE DEPARTMENT**

**LA PLATA COUNTY'S  
"JAIL DADDY"**

**PEOPLE-POWERED  
COUNTY GOVERNMENT**



*La Plata County*  
Colorado

ACCOUNTABILITY · INTEGRITY · RESPECT



## La Plata County CONNECTIONS

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## Welcome to La Plata County Connections!



**W**hether you're new to La Plata County, a lifelong resident or someone in between, there's something for you in this latest edition of Connections magazine.

You'll meet Jerry Rodri, who's had a positive influence on countless inmates at the La Plata County Jail over his 38 years on the job. He's just one of more than 450 employees in La Plata County, and we thought it would be fun to introduce you to just a few of them - off the job with their pets - something different for the centerfold this year!

Our incredible staff works hard to make La Plata County one of the most desirable places in Colorado to visit and live. That means keeping our residents and guests safe, and our Sheriff's Office does so with an array

of equipment you can see in a photo spread in this issue. And safety is also the top priority of our Road & Bridge department. No one who drives our roads should miss the great Q&A with Mike Canterbury and Recy Reider from R&B who lay out in detail how the department maintains more than 650 miles of county roads year-round.

We'll also highlight a couple of La Plata County's 30 boards and commissions, invaluable groups of volunteer residents appointed by the Board of County Commissioners. And speaking of the BoCC, we've also included a report card of how the Commissioners allotted the County's share of its American Rescue Plan Act funds to benefit La Plata County residents.

We are proud of La Plata County's story and our people who bring our core values of accountability, integrity and respect into everything they do every day.

*Thanks for reading and enjoy.*



[www.co.laplata.co.us/jobs](http://www.co.laplata.co.us/jobs)



**Diane**

*Finance Controller*

"I value being able to be creative and innovative; this allows me to take initiative to get things accomplished. I feel appreciated for the work I provide to La Plata County."



**Ryan**

*Sheriff's Deputy*

"I love my job because I love supporting the community and serving the people of La Plata County."

## WE ARE HIRING!

Some perks of the job:

Great benefits package! ✓

\$20/hour county minimum wage! ✓

Paid Parental Leave! ✓

2022 Certified Healthy Workplace! ✓





# By the People FOR THE PEOPLE

## LA PLATA COUNTY'S BOARDS & COMMISSIONS GIVE RESIDENTS A VOICE IN GOVERNMENT

It may come as a surprise to no one that government doesn't always have all the answers. And when La Plata County government staff needs an answer, often the best way to find those answers lies in the knowledge and experience of the very residents we serve. That's why the La Plata County Board of County Commissioners established 30 boards and commissions comprised of county residents, all volunteer, to offer expertise and make recommendations to county staff to help fill in the gaps. In this and each ensuing edition of *Connections* magazine, we'll highlight a few of these important groups.

### LONG TERM FINANCE COMMITTEE

Even the professionals can use some expert advice now and then. And when it comes to finances, there aren't many experts with the kind of resume that Richard Butler brings to La Plata County's Long Term Finance Committee.

"Given my background, when I heard about this committee helping to advise the county, it really interested me and it seemed to make sense," Butler said of his decision to join the volunteer advisory board.

The Long Term Finance Committee is comprised of nine of the best money minds in the region, and their duties are vital to the economic sustainability of La Plata County government. They identify potential financial threats as well as opportunities, make recommendations to maintain and preserve the county's fiscal soundness, and review capital improvement programs and how to best fund them. It's an at-times daunting task, but Butler said he and his comrades are up to the task.

"The thing I really like is we've got a really good group who care about the county, we have good debates and rarely agree on anything 100 percent, but we always get to a consensus we can support," he said.

Butler credits not only his fellow committee members but also the county's full-

time financial staff for many recent successes during turbulent financial times. It was the Long Term Finance Committee, for example, who recommended saving money while the oil and gas industry was booming, leaving valuable reserves in the coffers as that industry has declined regionally in recent years.



**LONG TERM FINANCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS:**  
Thomas Breed (alternate), Wayne Brown,  
Richard Butler, Ron Corkish, Diane Doney  
(alternate), Ken Fusco, Gary Masner,  
Tim Miller, Sidney Zink

"Adam (Rogers, the county's finance director) is great to work with and it's been a good back-and-forth relationship with the staff and the Board of County Commissioners, who always ask great questions of us," he said. "We have smart, dedicated people and it's a really fun group to be a part of."

### HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW COMMISSION

La Plata County has a rich historical legacy and fortunately for those who value such things, there is a group of people dedicated to preserving it.

Dr. Andrew Gulliford was the driving force to create the County's Historic Preservation Review Commission (HPRC) almost 20 years ago, and as the chair he has never let go of the reins. La Plata County residents, long-timers and newbies alike, should all be grateful that he's leading the charge.

"Too much of historic preservation was and is Durango centric," Gulliford said of his motivation. "And they have their own very good review board but we really wanted to cover the county and our ranching traditions, our agriculture, mining and other historic sites like churches and cemeteries – these are all the things we look at."

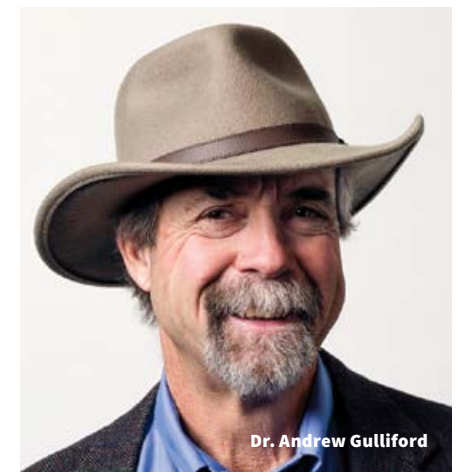
The HPRC has several primary functions. Chief among them is to help residents and landowners receive Historic Landmark designation for their property. Doing so has economic benefits for the owners as well as less tangible but often invaluable benefits to other county residents. Colorado historic properties can be listed on a county, state or national historic register with increasingly stringent criteria for each level. But funding from the Colorado state historic fund is also available at the county level. So for an old structure that's in more or less good shape but needs some work, the HPRC could help.

"If we list it, then you're eligible for state historic funds for an assessment, and maybe even some actual work on it. And that's pretty exciting," Gulliford said.

And if anyone needs help in deciding if their property is, indeed, historic, then Gulliford is the one to ask. The Fort Lewis College Professor of History (who leads a Historic Preservation Minor degree program if you're REALLY interested) has written, co-written and edited more than a dozen books on local and regional history so he knows where to look when it comes to finding potential candidates for preservation status. The HPRC also has gotten involved in the planning process when it comes to new development in the county.

"So we're interested not only in saving things but in providing incentives for new developers to not knock down historic structures and so forth," Gulliford said. "So in that sense we're being proactive, trying to get ahead of things, so that we really can look at historic values in the county."

When it comes to preserving history, nothing is too big or too small. Durango's Main Avenue and the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad have received National Historic Register status, but every canal, fence, bridge, ranchland, orchard and building still standing from La Plata County's

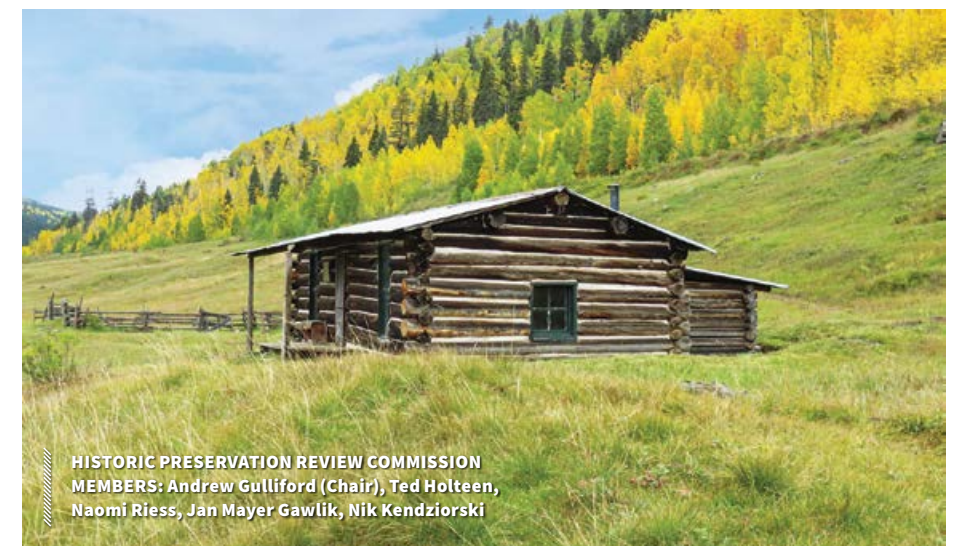


Dr. Andrew Gulliford

early days – at least 50 years or more, anyway – as well as countless Tribal and Indigenous cultural sites may be eligible for state or county preservation and the (possible) accompanying financial benefits.

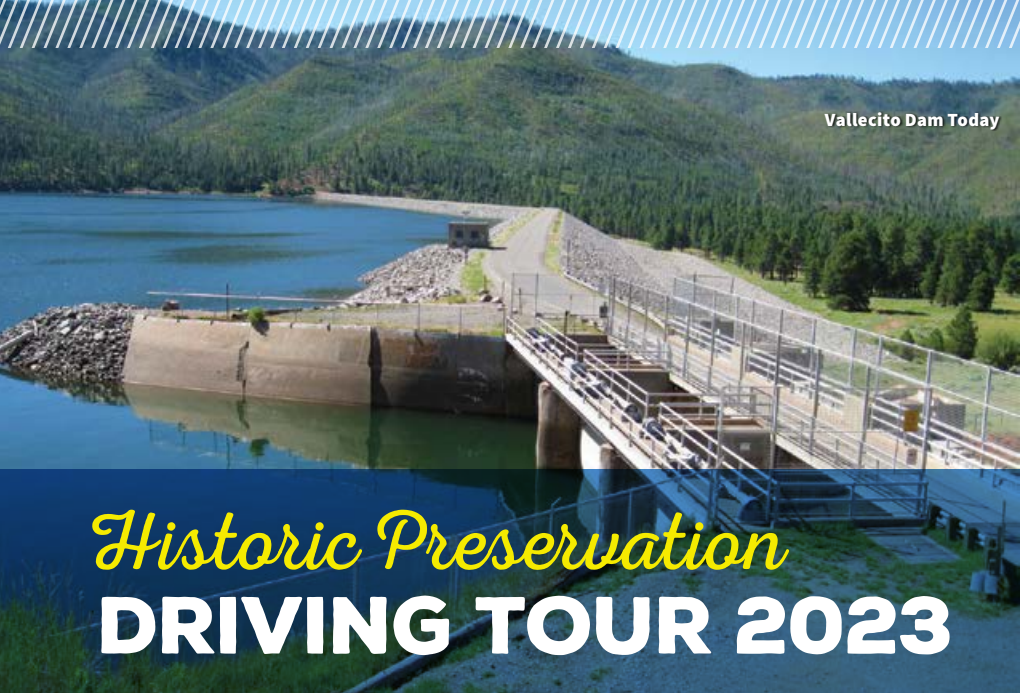
"If folks really want to preserve things the way they are, this is one way to do it," Gulliford said. "And it's voluntary. It doesn't affect you or your taxes but it really shows to your friends in the community that you value history and that your property is historic."

To learn more, see the 100 Historical Sites in La Plata County or to see if your property may be eligible for historic preservation status, visit the La Plata County website under the Planning Department tab.



**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW COMMISSION MEMBERS:** Andrew Gulliford (Chair), Ted Holteen, Naomi Riess, Jan Mayer Gawlik, Nik Kendziorowski





# Historic Preservation DRIVING TOUR 2023

In each of the last non-pandemic years since 2014, Gulliford and the HPRC have led a historic preservation driving tour of selected sites and areas in La Plata County. Previous tours have included Bayfield, area cemeteries, the Old Fort Lewis site, Hermosa, Tiffany & Allison, and the Hesperus and Mayday mines. After two years of virtual tours and a complete hiatus in 2020, the in-person tour will resume Saturday, September 30 with a visit to the Vallecito area.

The driving tour will include a full day of hiking, lectures and visits to all of the points of interest around the reservoir. And it's all free – a registration link will be available on the County website soon!



## TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

12:30 – Gather

1:00 – Presentations Begin

1. History of the Valley before the Dam: Andy Gulliford
2. Building the Dam: Ken Buck
3. Missionary Ridge Fire: Mark Stiles SJMA
4. Weminuche Wilderness: Mark Stiles SJMA
5. Today / Recreation: Lisa Bourque

3:30 – Wrap Up & Distribute Mini-Driving Tours on your own

## MINI DRIVING AND HIKING TOURS

- Pine River Valley, CR 501, Teelewahket Ranch Overview
- Vallecito Creek, CR 500, Trailheads
- Tour of Carvings
- Walking / Viewing the Dam
- Lemon Reservoir and Transfer Park
- Miller Mountain Road

## JOIN A BOARD OR COMMISSION

La Plata County's resident Boards & Commissions with number of members (current vacancies in parentheses). If you'd like more information or to apply for one of our boards & commissions, visit [co.laplata.co.us/apply](https://co.laplata.co.us/apply).

Board of Adjustment .....	5
Board of Health .....	5
Board of Review .....	9 (3v)
Citizens Review Panel for Child Welfare Grievances .....	7
Community Corrections Board .....	16
Core Services – Therapeutic & Life Skills Committee .....	12 (3v)
Durango Hills Road Improvement District Advisory Committee .....	7
Durango Public Library Board .....	5 (1v)
Durango-La Plata County Airport Commission .....	9
Extension Advisory Committee .....	11 (1v)
Fire Code Adoption & Revision Commission .....	9
Fire Code Board of Appeals .....	5 (1v)
Historic Preservation Review Commission .....	7 (2v)
Ignacio Community Library District Board .....	7
Ignacio, Allison, Oxford Cemetery District Committee .....	3 (1v)
Lake Durango Water Authority .....	3
Living with Wildlife Advisory Board .....	8 (2v)
Lodging Tax Panel .....	5
Long-Term Finance Committee .....	9 (2v)
Multi-Event Center Commission .....	12 (4v)
Pine River Cemetery District Committee .....	3
Pine River Public Library District Board .....	7
Planning Commission .....	8 (1v)
San Juan Basin Area Agency on Aging Board .....	15
Southwest Basin Roundtable .....	1
Southwest La Plata Library District Board .....	7
Southwestern Water Conservation District .....	1
Undesirable Plant & Rodent Advisory Commission .....	9 (3v)
Wildfire Advisory Board .....	14
Wildfire & Watershed Protection Fund Advisory Committee .....	7 (1v)

## KEEPING IT LOCAL

## UPDATE: LA PLATA COUNTY'S ARPA DOLLARS ARE MONEY WELL-SPENT

In the last issue of La Plata County Connections, we detailed how The La Plata County Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) approved projects for funding which originated under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA), also called the COVID-19 Stimulus Package. ARPA is a \$1.9 trillion economic stimulus bill to speed up the United States' recovery from the economic and health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing recession.

After designating parts of the total funds to countywide Broadband improvement and housing projects, La Plata County partnered with the Community Foundation Serving Southwest Colorado to distribute approximately \$3.365 million to organizations working to mitigate the social impacts of the pandemic. As of August, 2023, approximately \$2 million of that total has been distributed, with another \$775,000 scheduled for 2024 and the final \$408,000 slated to be expended in 2025.

### THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS HAVE RECEIVED THEIR COMPLETE FUNDING:

- **Community Language Resource Group** – \$115,000
- **Ignacio Community Library** (Dewey the Bookmobile vehicle & programs) – \$190,000
- **La Plata County Collaborative Management** – Wrap-Around Service with a focus on displaced families from Purple Cliffs (Partner with La Plata Youth Services and Department of Human Services) – \$25,000
- **Local First Foundation** – Mental Health & Economic Support for La Plata County residents – \$25,000
- **Manna, LPFCC, Old Fort, Good Food Collective, Durango Food Bank** – Address food growth systems, and distribution center.
- **Wellness in Nature Collaborative** (San Juan Mountains Assoc., La Plata Open Space, SW Conservation Corps, Mountain Studies Institute) – \$350,000
- **Housing Solutions of the Southwest** – Install a new well to provide safe and reliable water to 61-unit single family housing project – \$55,000
- **La Plata West Water Authority** – Water Fill Station (West side of the county) – \$100,000



### THESE PROJECTS ARE UNDERWAY BUT NOT YET COMPLETED:

- **Oak Tree Youth Resources** – Wrap-around services that will support housing dollars, focus on homeless youth – \$28,560 of \$40,000 granted; balance of \$11,440 in 2024.
- **La Plata Food Equity Coalition EAT FAIR** – \$590,000 granted; balance of \$210,000 in 2024
- **United Way – Team UP for students** – \$205,000 granted; balance of \$145,000 in 2024
- **La Plata Youth Services** – The Hub Therapeutic Program – \$208,333 granted; equal amounts will be granted in 2024 & 2025
- **Resilient Colorado** – Addressing trauma, compassion fatigue, moral distress, and work burnout. "Train the trainer" format – \$100,000 granted; equal amounts will be granted in 2024 & 2025
- **Pine River Shares** – Pine River Valley food security – \$38,335 granted; balance of \$351,665 TBD

To learn more, visit [co.laplata.co.us](https://co.laplata.co.us) and search "ARPA".



# A LEGACY OF SERVICE

**JERRY RODRI HAS BEEN SERVING UP HOT MEALS WITH A SIDE OF SMILES AT THE COUNTY JAIL FOR 34 YEARS**

There's no substitute for experience, and few people on the La Plata County payroll have more of it than Jerry Rodri.

"Jerry keeps it real and he's very sweet," said "Amy," an Axis Health System worker who asked for anonymity but was quick to let her feelings for Rodri be known. "He's a very caring soul and he's like family for all of us – for the inmates and the staff."

Rodri has been the Correctional Food Service Manager since 1989. He's one of only a few civilians who work full-time in the jail and has picked up a moniker that he's come to embrace over the years. "I'm the Jail Daddy," Rodri said proudly. "I run the jail."

While at least one high-ranking official in the Sheriff's Office would likely dispute that last claim, there's more than a bit of truth to it. Rodri's primary function is to oversee the work that inmate workers do. Inmates do all of the physical work in both the kitchen and

the laundry, and Rodri also oversees crews that work outside the jail walls on projects like fire mitigation and work at the Durango-La Plata Senior Center.

"We try to do things in such a fashion as to instill pride in workers, not just slap some garbage together and throw it on a tray and get it out of here," Rodri said. "I try to train these guys to really learn how to cook – about half the restaurants in Durango have my guys in their kitchens and it's a really great opportunity to maybe help some of these guys a little. They are human beings, every last one. In a situation like this, it's kind of easy to forget that. It's kind of easy to disavow their humanity and it's not cool at all. We're not here to judge these people. I'm here to feed these people and make sure they have clean clothes. That's it. They judge him down on Second Avenue (at the County Courthouse) and that's totally out of our venue here. When we get them in here,

our main thing is to keep everybody safe, keep everybody healthy, and keep everybody calm. If we can do that by serving a decent meal, then that is money well spent."

Rodri's unique blend of compassion and strict discipline is reflected in the efficiency with which his crews go about their tasks. The kitchen at the La Plata County jail is cleaner than any commercial kitchen in the county, as Rodri's culinary team of about 25 workers tear the whole operation down from top to bottom every week and scrub every element used in the cooking process. All of the workers must be approved by a selection committee of deputies who evaluate their records and all must always be on their best behavior – no wolf whistles, backwards or sideways hats, rap music, sagging pants or foul language.

"The main thing is being smarter than the donkey you're trying to ride," Rodri says of his ongoing challenges. "These guys know

me, they know I've been here forever and they know I'm fair and honest, but they also know you don't mess with me. Because I just can't have it."

More than three decades spent inside the jail walls can take a toll on anyone, and Rodri is no different. He did take a year off about a decade or so ago, because as he said, "even a rock crumbles once in a while, and man, I had to take some time to get back up."

"When you think about it, it's just the most bizarre thing. You're stuck in here. This is the most unnatural situation on the face of the earth. It truly is. You've got 25 young men in here, no women; you work together, go to the bathroom together, shower together – hell, you're with each other more than I'm with my wife, you know? So naturally you're gonna get upset, plus nobody wants to be here. Not the staff, not the inmates."

But he's also certain that the system in place in the jail is much better than the alternative found in many institutions where food and laundry services are often contracted out to third party companies. Rodri believes that many such operations aren't as concerned about the jail population as they are the com-

pany's bottom line.

"My job is to make sure than no deputy ever has to face a beating because I served a horrible meal," he said. "And that's never happened. Thank God our administration is not interested in going for the absolute cheapest way which would be contracting a food service, and they could meet my numbers but then we would have officers going to the hos-

pital. I don't want to see that, ever. Working for the county I feel that this administration we have treats me like a professional. It's a weird profession, but I'm a master at it and they're very supportive of me and also they leave me alone. And that's a good thing because when a man has 40 years of experience you usually don't need to follow him around with a dustpan, you know?"

*We try to do things in such a fashion as to instill pride in workers, not just slap some garbage together and throw it on a tray and get it out of here. I try to train these guys to really learn how to cook – about half the restaurants in Durango have my guys in their kitchens and it's a really great opportunity to maybe help some of these guys a little.*

**—Jerry Rodri, Correctional Food Service Manager, La Plata County Jail**







# A Q&A WITH YOUR ROAD & BRIDGE DEPARTMENT

With more than 600 miles of county roads connecting 56,000 La Plata County residents, few departments hear more from our residents than the Road & Bridge department. We asked Mike Canterbury, the R&B Superintendent who supervises about 30 departmental employees, and Recy Reider, the R&B Deputy Administrator and Engineering Office Manager – and the one who’s usually answering the phone – to answer some of their most frequently heard questions here in the pages of *Connections* magazine.

The La Plata County Road & Bridge Department includes four district teams - Durango, Ignacio, Bayfield and Marvel. Each team works four 10-hour days, Monday through Thursday in the summer. Each team has one team leader or supervisor and three employees who are equipment operators. There are two specialized teams for drainage and road improvement. The drainage team has five employees and works on specialized projects like culvert maintenance and repair.

The road improvement team has seven employees and does crack sealing, chip seal\* and asphalt projects, as well as hauling and placing all gravel products. When any employee is out on any type of leave (sick, vacation, personal, etc.) it has a significant impact on productivity. For example, three employees on a district team can no longer run one water truck, one magnesium chloride truck and two graders to apply mag chloride and grade the gravel road. We are always

looking for new quality employees to join the La Plata County team, but the county has experienced the same hiring challenges as many in the private and public sector. When R&B undertakes a major project, all 30 of the R&B employees are joined to work as one team to complete chip seals or asphalt overlays. This approach results in significant saving for the county over using a contractor, but it does take the crews out of their districts for the duration of that project.

## What projects are R&B working on for the rest of 2023?

### Double Pin Chip seals on:

- CR 301 which is 2.2 miles
- CR 304 which is 1 mile
- The North end of CR 501 which is 2.5 miles, from end of pavement to Elk Point Lodge

### Single Chip seals on:

- CR 243 for 3.5 miles
- CR 240 from CR 243 intersection South to start of 2022 overlay
- CR 100 from CR 134 West to Hwy 140
- CR 321 from Hwy 151 South to CR 322
- CR 501 from MM 2 North to CR 240

### Asphalt Overlays on:

- CR 521 from end of 2022 project South for .5 miles
- CR 124 from end of 2022 project South for .5 miles
- CR 501, By contract, end of pavement South for 3 miles.

## What are the cost comparisons?

For pavement, a typical mill & overlay costs about \$600,000 per mile if it is completed by a contractor. The cost for R&B to pave a mile is less than half (but again, such large-scale projects require the entire R&B team at the expense of individual district projects).

There are two types of chip seal. One is called a single chip seal and is used to maintain existing paved roads and should be done about every five to seven years. The other is a double pin and is used to treat a gravel road. Contract cost for a double pin is a little less than half the cost of asphalt pavement, and for R&B about a third to half the cost of contracting chip seal.

The gravel cost of maintenance can vary greatly, from about \$1,500 to \$10,000/mile/year depending on volume and type of traffic. That (and safety) is part of the logic behind paving gravel roads when the average daily trips (ADT) exceed 400.

## Why can't you pave all the county roads?

The R&B department's funding is tied to property tax mil levies, which have not been increased since the late 1980s. That provides significantly less funding than needed to adequately maintain and upgrade existing roads, which is why we have a backlog of high maintenance gravel roads. The annual budget is approved by the Board of County Commissioners in December each year and based on the availability of funds, some funds (usually sales tax) can be directed to supplement the road maintenance and capital improvements budget, but otherwise our funds are as provided mainly by local property taxes and highway user tax funds (gas tax).

## Why can't you get more money? I pay taxes.

Currently the county receives about \$24 a year in property tax per residential household for road and bridge maintenance. For perspec-



\*Chip seal is a road resurfacing treatment that utilizes asphalt and an aggregate and is a cost-effective alternative to a full asphalt or concrete resurfacing, especially on rural roads.



tive, the individual contribution would not even cover the cost to fill one asphalt pothole.

The Board of County Commissioners presented a ballot question to the voters in 2015 and again in 2016 to raise county property taxes specifically for the Road & Bridge Fund. Unfortunately, both ballot efforts failed by a narrow margin, and La Plata County still has the fourth lowest mil levy rate out of 64 counties in the State.

Historically, we have been successful in obtaining grant funding, mostly from the state in the form of energy/mineral impact assistance fund grants; however, those grants are typically limited to mitigating road impacts associated with energy (gas and oil) development in La Plata County. With the recent decline in energy development in La Plata County we also experience a decline in related road impacts, but also a decline in state grant funding.

### ***How does the county prioritize county roads for grading?***

Usually based on need, and worst first. We also prioritize by traffic counts, mail and bus routes.

### ***How often do you grade county roads?***

It depends on the volume of traffic and weather. Some roads are graded once a year and some can be as much as three or four times a year. Otherwise, the districts grade in order by county road number and move across their area.

Magnesium chloride is used for dust control and is used about once a year on most of the higher ADT roads. In some cases, we water the road on the way to and from where we are grading to keep the dust down temporarily until we can get to that road to grade.

Occasionally, borrow ditches are “pulled”

to deepen and recover gravel when grading gravel roads. This is when you see a grader and the blade is vertical and on the edge of the road.

### ***Why do you not use a roller to compact County Roads?***

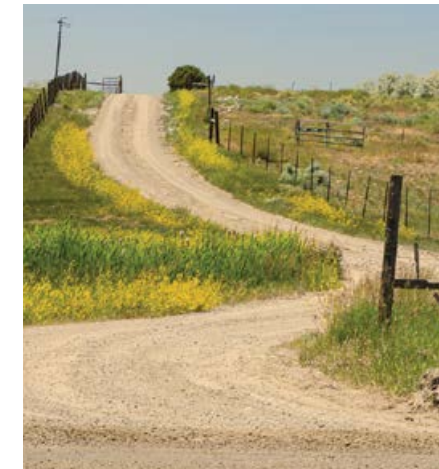
We have new roller compactors behind motor graders to make compaction more efficient. This technique is significantly more cost effective than a self-propelled pneumatic roller and the cost of an employee to run another piece of equipment.

### ***Why isn't the grader digging deeper into the road to remove potholes?***

Occasionally they do a quick touch up on roads and may not grade as deep as they normally would as they are trying to alleviate the major potholes temporarily.

### ***Why does wash boarding occur?***

Driver behavior. This is caused by bouncing of wheels, which is worse at higher speeds. We recommend slowing down and following the speed limit to extend the life of the grade.



### ***How can I find if my county road is on the list for repair/maintenance?***

An updated calendar can be found on the La Plata County website under the Road & Bridge department.

Please be aware that grading can change daily depending on priorities, flooding, fire, weather, water, equipment and personnel availability. The online schedule is subject to change and is updated weekly. Under normal conditions, grading usually takes one day per two miles of gravel road. During the summer months all districts grade by order of road, i.e. – C.R. 300, 301, 302 etc. The order can change depending on priority. Please be patient as we have about 431 miles of gravel roads to grade. Once graded, PLEASE drive slowly to extend the life of the grade work.

### ***How often do you check ditches and culverts?***

We currently have one inspector, which limits our ability to inspect culverts more often. District Leaders and workers inspect culverts as time allows.



## **A FEW WORDS ABOUT WINTER MAINTENANCE:**

- In the winter, the district teams work normally from 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. When there is a storm forecasted, they move to a 12-hour shift rotation for high-speed plows. High speed plows plow asphalt roads and work alternating 12-hour shifts. They can plow a designated route twice in one shift. Grader operators on gravel roads are set up on a route system and plow their route once in a 24-hour period.
- To keep more than 600 miles of county roads clear, crews drive in excess of 1,500 miles for every winter snow storm.
- Our main county roads are vital to public safety and the smooth flow of traffic, and therefore, receive priority maintenance; these roads include County Roads 240, 501, 141, 210 and 310/318. During winter storms, many of our high-traffic paved roads are plowed and sanded several times a day, as conditions require. Gravel roads served by motor graders are generally plowed once per day. Low volume roads are not plowed until major roadways have been cleared. For additional information a “Snow Removal Priority Levels” map is posted on the County Road and Bridge web site.
- The county road right-of-way averages 30 feet out each side from the centerline of the roadway. This area is needed for snow storage, drainage and signage. At times, it is necessary to plow snow well off the road into the right-of-way to make room for the next storm. Homeowners and residents should be cautious about landscaping and placing objects in the right-of-way (such as mailboxes, fences, and trash containers), which could be damaged by snowplows or plowed snow. While snowplow drivers are careful to avoid contact with items in the right-of-way whenever possible, citizens are solely responsible for any damage which may result to mailboxes, fences, and trash containers or other items which are located in the County right-of-way and obstruct snowplows. This is both a safety and efficiency issue: plowing your roads takes longer when snowplow drivers must work around obstructions. The R&B Department can suggest a mailbox post design that allows adequate clearance for snowplows.
- Homeowners and residents are responsible for maintaining their own driveways and parking areas. The berm created at the adjoining driveway is also the owner's responsibility and cannot be avoided or maintained by the county drivers. When moving snow, do not store snow in the right-of-way. All snow moved should be put on private property. Also, please avoid blowing or plowing snow onto or across the county road.
- Winter snow compounds parking problems for all; however, citizens must be aware that it is unlawful to park on county roads and county rights-of-way, if the parked vehicle obstructs snow removal activities.



# OUR *Finest* FRIENDS

La Plata County's 400+ employees are real people who live and play here just like all of the residents they serve at work every day. And just like many residents, county employees also love their pets – big or small, furry or feathered – here are some of the folks who keep things running smoothly and the unsung heroes waiting for them when they get home!

**1** La Plata County Sheriff's Deputy **Justin Wynne** & Moby.

**2** Administrative Analyst **Sarah Jacobson** & Shadow.

**3** **Logan Kinser-Martin**, Licensing Coordinator, holding Juan while Tyrone looks on.

**4** Regardless of which way the political winds may blow, La Plata County Commissioner **Marsha Porter-Norton** knows she'll always have Wilson's vote.

**5** Accounting Supervisor **Sarah Rome** has a housecat (Madeline, not shown) and Marley, who spends his time at the family's ski shop. Marley's even got his own Instagram page!

**6** Senior Administrative Assistant **Mary Caldwell** is very popular around the County Administration Building; even more so when Floyd comes to visit!

**7** County Clerk & Recorder **Tiffany Lee** & Eddie.

**8** County Assessor **Carrie Woodson** with her two besties, brown & white Stella and the black & white Bea.

**9** Captain **Todd Hitti** of the La Plata County Sheriff's office with Bailey Bear.

**10** Assistant Finance Director **Diane Burrell** sits atop her mule Woodrow while Paisley tries to keep up.

**11** **Darren Wayman** is the county's Risk Manager, flanked by Bugs, to his right, and Cora.

**12** **Amber Fredricks** is a Senior Administrative Assistant in the Human Services Department and rescued Copper and Sophie (who's not shown because she doesn't sit still for photos) from the La Plata County Humane Society. "We are SO LUCKY to get to love them!"

**13** Lieutenant **Tom Cowing** and Bowie.

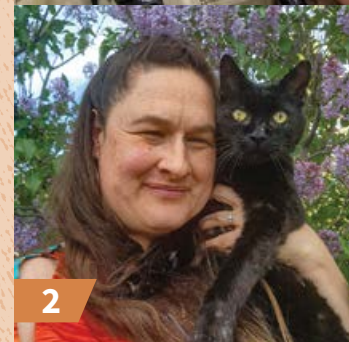
**14** Road & Bridge equipment operator **Jeanne Matthews** got Chubs when she was a kitten and they've been inseparable ever since.

**15** Eggs or no eggs, Detective John Munch is loved by **Alison Layman**, the coordinator of the Wildfire & Watershed Protection Fund.

**16** A cameo photobomb by Danny DeVito mars an otherwise picture perfect portrait by Digital Media Specialist **Jasmine Beaubien** (who took most of the photos in this magazine!) and Gwen.

**17** Only Tillie sat still long enough for a photo on a recent trip to Moab by **Angela Reynolds**, Senior Administrative Assistant at the La Plata County Fairgrounds. Two other dogs and a cat stayed out of camera range.

**18** Clearly a classic film buff, equipment operator **Channing Martinez** named his cat and dog Smokey & Bandit.





# TOOLS OF THE TRADE

## THE LA PLATA COUNTY SHERIFF’S OFFICE ALWAYS HAS THE RIGHT TOOL FOR THE JOB

Whether on-road or off, on the water, on the snow or in the air, your La Plata County Sheriff’s Office has no problem fulfilling its “Protect & Serve” pledge. Bad guys on the run? There’s a drone for that. And the same drone can be used to find good guys – and gals – lost in La

Plata County. That’s the case with most of the high-tech and heavy duty equipment that the Sheriff’s Office has on hand; it serves the dual purpose of assisting in law enforcement while also providing invaluable resources for public safety.



This armored Ford F-550 6.7-liter tactical vehicle is fully street legal and provides life-saving protection in dangerous situations for La Plata County Sheriff’s deputies as well as law enforcement professionals in San Juan, Montezuma, Archuleta and Dolores counties through an intergovernmental agreement. The vehicle arrived in January and is expected to have a 15 to 20-year lifespan.

This boat can quickly be trailered between Lemon, Vallecito, Navajo and Nighthorse reservoirs to allow deputies and divers to assist with search and rescue and law enforcement operations on and beneath the water.



Deputy Henrik Krog with the Sheriff’s Office displays one from the fleet of drones that he and several other licensed pilots operate. Drones are equipped with high-resolution and night-vision cameras to give birds-eye views to assist deputies in searches and surveillance.



Winter presents its own challenges for the Sheriff’s department. A fleet of snowmobiles allows deputies to reach areas throughout La Plata County that become inaccessible to most vehicles when the snow falls. And SKIBYK ski bikes allow deputies to patrol the slopes of Purgatory without compromising their off-slope mobility by having to wear ski boots.





# GETTING OLDER, *Living Younger*

## SENIOR SERVICES MAKE THE GOLDEN YEARS THE BEST YEARS FOR LA PLATA COUNTY'S YOUNG AT HEART

Colorado's population is aging, and La Plata County is no different than the rest of the state. Currently, one in five Coloradans is age 60 or older but that will increase by a million people to account for more than 25 percent of Colorado's population by 2050. Here in La Plata County, already 21 percent of the population is over the age of 65 and even before the pandemic, projections called for the residents in



La Plata County between the ages of 65 and 74 to increase by 31 percent between 2018 and 2025. For those over the age of 85, the increase is expected to be 39 percent.\*

But statistics aside, folks 60 and over in this part of the state tend to stay as active as any of their younger peers and La Plata County ensures that there's plenty for people to do. And there's also plenty of help – and a hot meal - available for those who need that, too.

The County's Senior Services are based at the Durango-La Plata Senior Center and led by Center Director Vicki Maestas. In the days before the pandemic the Senior Center welcomed about 300 people each day through its doors. Things aren't quite back to that norm, but Maestas says she and her staff are back to seeing between 150 and 200 people a day with the numbers increasing by the week.

"I come for the hugs and the friendships," said Joan Crawford (not that Joan Crawford), who was befriended by Kathleen Federspiel almost immediately upon her first visit to the Senior Center about a year ago. "It's just a lot of fun, it's entertaining and it gets me out of the house," Crawford said.

The Senior Center hosts a full calendar of events for all levels of activity and mobility every month and serves up more than 50,000 meals every year, all in addition to providing a slate of other helpful services for older residents like transportation and help with chores around the house like minor repairs, housecleaning, snow removal and yard work. (Call 970-382-6428 to learn more.)



La Plata County seniors can arrange for reliable transportation to doctor appointments, pharmacies, the post office and many other errands. Transportation services are provided for a suggested donation based on the distance traveled. To schedule a ride, call (970) 759-6309.



The Durango-La Plata Senior Center serves hot meals five days a week at their Main Avenue location. Meals also are delivered twice weekly to the Bayfield Senior Center and every Monday to the Marvel Methodist Church.

### SENIOR SERVICES MEAL DEAL

- A donation of \$5 is suggested for seniors 60+ and caregivers at each location. No one will EVER be refused a meal if unable to pay.
- Lunches are served at the Pine River Senior Center in Bayfield, 111 Southwest St., at noon on Wednesdays and Fridays. Meals must be reserved by 9 a.m. by calling 970-884-5415.
- Grab & Go Meals at the Marvel Methodist Church, 103 C.R. 133, every Monday at 11:30. Call 970-382-6435 by 3 p.m. on the preceding Friday to reserve your lunch.
- Meals on Wheels home delivery is available for those who can't make it to the Senior Center (suggested \$4 donation). Call 970-382-6435 to learn more or sign up.

### ON-SITE ACTIVITIES AT THE DURANGO-LA PLATA SENIOR CENTER

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
<b>Tai Chi</b> 9:30 a.m.	<b>Tai Chi for Arthritis/ Fall Prevention</b> 9:30 a.m.	<b>Intermediate Tai Chi</b> 9:30 a.m.	<b>Beginning Tai Chi</b> 9 a.m.	<b>Zumba</b> 9:30 a.m.
<b>Chair Yoga</b> 10:45 a.m.	<b>Zumba</b> 9:30 a.m.	<b>Knitting &amp; Crocheting</b> 9:30 a.m.	<b>Watch Your Step w/ hand weights &amp; resistance bands</b> 10:30 a.m.	<b>Knitting &amp; Crocheting</b> 9:30 a.m.
<b>Be Fit Be Able</b> 1:30 p.m.	<b>Watch Your Step w/ hand weights &amp; resistance bands</b> 10:30 a.m.	<b>"Movement &amp; More"</b> 10 a.m.	<b>Chair Yoga</b> 10:45 a.m.	<b>Chair Yoga</b> 10:45 a.m.
<b>Class fees are \$6.50 per class or for additional savings, purchase a punch pass: \$70.00 for 12 punches (\$5.92/class) or \$90.00 for 20 punches (\$4.50/class). First class is free! Fitness scholarships are available to qualified applicants. Punch passes can be used for any activity</b>	<b>Chair Yoga</b> 10:45 a.m.	<b>Tai Chi for Arthritis/ Fall Prevention</b> 10:30 a.m.	<b>Line Dancing</b> 1:30 p.m.	<b>Friday Night Square Dance</b> 6:30-9 p.m.
	<b>Be Fit Be Able</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tues. 11:30 a.m.	<b>Chair Yoga</b> 10:45 a.m.		
	<b>Line Dancing</b> 1:30 p.m.	<b>Connecting w/ Crafts</b> 1 p.m.		
		<b>Be Fit Be Able</b> 1:30 p.m.		

If you'd like more information or to take advantage of the many services available at the Durango-La Plata Senior Center, or if you're interested in volunteering your time, please visit [co.laplata.co.us/services/health\\_and\\_human\\_services/senior\\_services/index.php](https://co.laplata.co.us/services/health_and_human_services/senior_services/index.php). Additionally, please scan this QR code to see a video showing all that's available at the Durango-La Plata County Senior Center.





# Family Matters for HEALTH WITHOUT BARRIERS



**R**aising a family anywhere is no easy task, and it's no different here in La Plata County. But the County's Colorado State University Extension office is offering help for those taking on the challenge through the Health without Barriers (Salud sin Barreras) program. A team of facilitators from the community work with families with kids and teens ages 11 to 19, providing a program that supports youth and their families to feel less stressed and build healthy lifestyle habits.

Health Without Barriers/Salud Sin Barreras is a 6-week whole-family program with a focus on developing attainable healthy lifestyle goals collaboratively. It's designed to provide interactive health and wellness education, family support, hands-on cooking

and nutrition, and teens learn healthy skills for navigating stress. Health without Barriers uses an evidenced-based mindfulness program that teaches teens simple techniques that can be used anytime and anywhere to manage stress. By becoming more aware of themselves and others they build resiliency to many types of stress.

The program convenes twice a week for six weeks and is split up into two sessions, Family Night and Cooking Matters. Family Night includes a family support class for parents and physical activity and mindfulness classes for teens. In addition, any siblings attending, depending on age, can participate in a preschool curriculum or game-based physical activity.

On the second night, teens and mentors come together to participate in a hands-on cooking class. Lessons include label reading, taste testing, food preparation and shopping. The program is offered at no cost to participants, dinner is provided, and all family members are welcome to join.

Health Without Barriers concluded its third cohort in Durango in July, and the first presented bilingually, at the La Plata County Fairgrounds. This program will be offered three to four times a year at locations throughout the county. The next program will be in Bayfield from Oct. 3 to Nov. 9. Stay tuned, as Health Without Barriers will also be available in Montezuma and Archuleta Counties in the future.



English

The next class for Health Without Barriers will be held from Oct. 3 to Nov. 9. Pre-registration is required; visit [bitly.ws/wt7U](https://bitly.ws/wt7U) or use the QR code here to register.



Spanish

## Asuntos Familiares para SALUD SIN BARRERAS

**C**riar una familia en cualquier lugar no es una labor fácil, incluso aquí en el Condado de La Plata. Pero la oficina de Extensión de Colorado State University del Condado está ofreciendo ayuda a quienes han aceptado el desafío mediante el programa de Salud sin Barreras (Health without Barriers). Un equipo de facilitadores de la comunidad trabaja con familias que tienen niños y adolescentes de edades entre 11 y 19, proporcionando programas que apoyan a los jóvenes y a sus familias para que se sientan menos estresados y adquieran hábitos de vida sana.

El programa se reúne dos veces por semana durante seis semanas y se divide en dos sesiones, Noche Familiar y Temas de Cocina. La Noche Familiar incluye una clase de apoyo familiar para los padres y actividad física y clases de consciencia para los adolescentes. Además, cualquier hermano(a) que asista, dependiendo de la edad, puede participar en un currículo de preescolar o una actividad física basada en juego.

En la segunda noche, los adolescentes y los mentores se reúnen para participar en una clase de cocina práctica. Las lecciones incluyen lectura de etiquetas, pruebas de sabor, preparación de comida y compra de víveres. El programa se ofrece sin costo a los participantes, se provee cena y todos los miembros de la familia pueden participar.

Salud sin Barreras concluyó su tercer grupo en Durango en julio, y el primero presentó de manera bilingüe en el Recinto Ferial del Condado de La Plata y continuará teniendo sesiones en las ubicaciones más accesibles a muchas familias. El próximo programa será en Bayfield e iniciará en octubre y hay planes para ofrecer el programa en otros lugares del Condado de La Plata y en los Condados de Montezuma y Archuleta.

Salud sin Barreras o Health Without Barriers es un programa de 6 semanas para toda la familia que se enfoca en el desarrollo colaborativo de metas alcanzables de vida sana. Está diseñado para proveer educación interactiva de salud y bienestar, apoyo familiar, cocina y nutrición práctica y los adolescentes aprenden habilidades saludables para navegar el estrés. Los adolescentes enfrentan niveles altos de estrés y Salud sin Barreras utiliza un programa de atención basado en evidencia que enseña a los adolescentes técnicas fáciles de aprender para estar más conscientes de sí mismos y de los demás mientras se vuelven más resilientes a todo tipo de estrés.





WHO DOES WHAT?

We get it, figuring out who does what when a problem arises can be confusing. Is it the local government of where you live, La Plata County or another organization all together? The map below gives an overview of what services are provided by each of those entities so you know whom to call.

LA PLATA COUNTY  
970-382-6200

- » Animal Control
- » Child & Family Services
- » Economic Development
- » Elections & Voter Registration
- » Emergency Management
- » Health & Human Services
- » Justice System
- » Marriage & Civil Union Licenses
- » Motor Vehicle Registration
- » Public Safety
- » Senior & Veterans' Services

ADDITIONAL SERVICES FOR UNINCORPORATED AREAS

- » Building Inspections & Permits
- » Code Enforcement
- » Environmental Services
- » Licenses & Permits
- » Road & Bridge Maintenance

CITY OF DURANGO  
970-375-5000

- » Building Inspections & Permits
- » Business Development
- » Code Enforcement
- » Garbage & Recycling
- » Licensing
- » Municipal Court
- » Parks & Recreation
- » Street Maintenance
- » Transportation
- » Water & Sewer Service

TOWN OF BAYFIELD  
970-884-9544

- » Utilities
- » Garbage & Recycling
- » Pine River Senior Center
- » Parks & Recreation
- » Street Maintenance

SAN JUAN BASIN PUBLIC HEALTH

Public and Environmental Health for Archuleta and La Plata counties 970-247-5702

*\*NOTE: La Plata County will stand up its own Public Health Department effective Jan. 1, 2024.*

TOWN OF IGNACIO  
970-563-9494

- » Garbage & Recycling
- » Parks & Recreation
- » Public Safety
- » Water & Sewer service

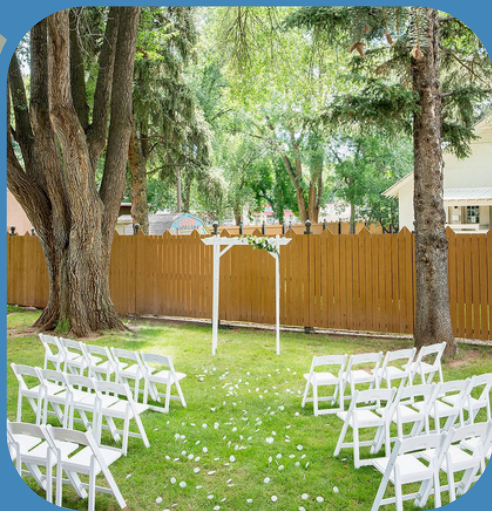
La Plata Electric Association provides electricity throughout La Plata County 970-247-5786

LA PLATA COUNTY  
ARCHULETA COUNTY



LA PLATA COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS  
& Event Center

More than just your fairgrounds, the La Plata County Fairgrounds & Event Center is the perfect in-town location to host your next family reunion, company picnic, or even wedding! The Fairgrounds facilities are priced well below market rates and non-profit rates are also offered. Groups can have their event catered or bring their own food and drinks, with full commercial kitchens also available and there's plenty of free parking!



(970)382-6468

www.co.laplata.co.us







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