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THE Durango WEEKEND EDITION HERALD

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Loss of insurance subsidies hits Durango's middle class



JERRY MCBRIDE/Durango Herald

Paul Kersch and his wife, Catherine McCarthy, with their dog, Atlas, are seen in the kitchen of their Durango home on Wednesday. The couple opted out of traditional insurance after a sharp premium increase in January following the expiration of Affordable Care Act enhancements.

FALLING off the CLIFF

BY JESSICA BOWMAN
HERALD STAFF WRITER

In January, Durango resident Paul Kersch's monthly health insurance bill jumped

from \$265 to more than \$2,000. He's not alone. Millions of Americans who buy coverage on the individual insurance market – meaning they don't get insurance

"We're in that no man's land, where we make too much to qualify for any help, but we don't make enough to really afford everything that we need as a family."

COLIN SHADELL
DURANGO RESIDENT

through an employer or government program – saw costs rise in 2026 after Congress allowed pandemic-era Affordable Care Act subsidy enhancements to expire. Premiums skyrocketed for many middle-income households that had briefly qualified for financial assistance.

In Colorado, about 225,000 people received the enhanced

subsidies, according to the Division of Insurance.

Among them is Colin Shadell, a Durango-based carpenter, husband and father of two young daughters. His family's monthly premium rose by about \$400 at the same time they lost their federal subsidies, sending their costs from

See **INSURANCE, 8A**

LA PLATA COUNTY

Storm delivers the snowy goods

Residents rejoice, but area expected to hit upper 50s this week

BY SCOUT EDMONDSON
AND ELIZABETH POND
HERALD STAFF WRITER

La Plata County received between 5 and 8 inches of snow as of Saturday morning, according to the National Weather Service office in Grand Junction. But the white-out is over: The NWS forecasts sunny and dry skies for the upcoming week.

Residents and road crews were out in force clearing snow from roads and sidewalks on Friday after at least 6 inches of snow fell that night in the city and up to a foot accumulated in higher elevations of La Plata County.

Purgatory Resort received a foot of snow Thursday to Saturday morning, according to the NWS.

"It kept getting colder each time a system would move through," said Toms Renwick of NWS Grand Junction.

He said three systems or "disturbances" moved through Southwest Colorado. The first was relatively warm; the next was cold, and snow came with it; a third disturbance brought more snow and lingering cold air.

A fourth system arrived, and it is the one responsible for the latest snowfall, he said.

The winter chill won't last long according to forecasts, he said. The Durango area is expected to hit the upper 50s in temperature this week.

Snow days

On Friday, the Durango Police Department announced via Facebook that the Emergency Warming Center would be open

See **SNOW, 8A**

Craig named Citizen of the Year at Southwest Colorado Rocks

Ignacio and Bayfield awardees debuted in rebranded Durango Rocks ceremony

BY CHRISTIAN BURNEY
HERALD STAFF WRITER

Southwest Colorado Rocks, a rebranded version of the Durango Chamber of Commerce's an-

nual Durango Rocks, debuted on Thursday with award categories for the towns of Ignacio and Bayfield.

Business leaders, elected officials and community members

from across La Plata County gathered at the Community Concert Hall at Fort Lewis College on Thursday for the event.

Chamber of Commerce CEO Jeff Dupont said in opening remarks Durango Rocks has celebrated Durango businesses for 40 years, but the rebranded award ceremony is a celebration of peo-

ple and organizations across the region – a sentiment that was punctuated when Clark Craig, mayor of Ignacio, was named 2025 Citizen of the Year.

The new commerce celebration included new Spirit of Ignacio and Bayfield awards, and of course long-standing awards made a return, including the Bill

Mashaw Volunteer of the Year, the Barbara Conrad Leadership La Plata Award, the Ed Morlan Entrepreneur of the Year Award and the Morley Ballantine Women's Leadership Award.

The ceremony ended on awards for Small Business of the

See **ROCKS, 7A**

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