



FINAL LOSS

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ACTION LINE

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THE Durango HERALD

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Animas Air Park feasibility study aims to clarify what's possible



JERRY MCBRIDE/Durango Herald file

The road to the left leads up to Animas Air Park south of Durango off La Posta Road (County Road 213). Discussions about developing the area renewed this year after a joint feasibility study was contracted by Economic Development Alliance.

U.S. and Israel attack Iran

Officials say Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was killed

BY BRIAN MELLEY
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The U.S. and Israel attacked Iran on Saturday in what President Donald Trump said was a massive operation to destroy the country's military capabilities and eliminate the threat of it creating a nuclear weapon. Two Israeli officials told The Associated Press that Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was killed.

Iran launched counterattacks, firing drones and missiles at Israel and strikes aimed at U.S. military installations in Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar. The exchanges of fire continued into the night. Iranian state media, citing the Red Crescent, said on Saturday evening that at least 201 people had been killed and more than 700 injured.

The strikes came two days after the latest U.S.-Iran talks as Trump had pressured Tehran for a deal to constrain its nuclear program, building up a fleet of American warships in the

See IRAN, 8A



See TAKEOFF, 8A

READY FOR TAKEOFF?

BY JESSICA BOWMAN
HERALD STAFF WRITER

Visions of an industrial hub in the Animas Air Park area south of Durango have circulated for years among local business leaders.

Progress, however, has been slow.

Now, the economic development alliance, in concert with a group of stakeholders, are renewing efforts to determine what development is possible – and what it would take to make it happen.

In January, the alliance approached StoneAge, La Plata

County, the city of Durango, air park property owners and the Southern Ute Indian Tribe to propose a joint effort to fund a fiscal and economic impact study for the area.

The \$50,000 study will analyze potential tax revenue, job creation and economic benefits relative to existing county services and costs.

All parties supported the effort, including the Southern Ute Indian Tribe, which had previously opposed proposals to annex parts of the La Posta Road area into the city of Durango, including land within the reservation.

While the tribe was in favor of an economic feasibility study, any

development within the reservation boundaries, "must be done in coordination with the consent of the Tribe," spokesperson Summer Begay said in a written statement to *The Durango Herald*.

"It must uphold and protect the tribe's cultural resources, safeguard the environment, preserve our limited water supplies, and fully honor the Tribe's inherent sovereignty," she said.

Preserving the tribe's interests, as well as those of all the other stakeholders, is one of the main goals of the study, Tober said.

Some landowners and business leaders who have long pushed for development remain

skeptical the latest study will produce different results than past efforts. Proposals to expand activity in the Air Park and La Posta Road corridor have repeatedly stalled because of regulatory and infrastructure barriers.

"At this point, anybody that has land that wants to increase the number of employees or visitors or customers or residential staff is stuck," said Jerry Zink, former president of Animas Air Park Property Owners Association board and co-founder of StoneAge.

No one is able to get through

Around THE CORNERS

Activism and altruism: Karen Zink reflects on a life of giving back

Longtime nurse practitioner works to bolster women's health care in La Plata County

BY SCOUT EDMONDSON
HERALD STAFF WRITER

When Karen Zink was told she had breast cancer in late 2025, the diagnosis – and the need for treatment – was hard news. Not because she had learned she had a dreaded disease, but because she had to ask for help.

"It was awful. Absolutely,

positively awful," she said. "I love being the giver. Receiving? Whoa, not so much."

For most of her life, Zink has been the one helping other people, including women going through similar periods of their lives in La Plata County. To be on the other end of that care felt wrong, she said.

The desire to give back to her community led Zink to build

a distinguished nursing and public health career and an impressive record of community engagement.

She worked for 55 years as a registered nurse practitioner. She also helped found one of America's first women-owned women's health clinics, worked to expand health care education in Southwest Colorado and volunteered in community health initiatives including COVID-19 vaccination clinics.

See ZINK, 8A



For most of her life, Karen Zink, a nurse practitioner, has helped others. To be on the other end of that care felt wrong, she said. She is pictured here on Feb. 18.

JERRY MCBRIDE/
Durango Herald

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