



**EPIC SHOWDOWN**  
Bayfield boys hoops  
loses in state playoffs **6A**

**ROOS KNOWS**  
There's plenty of events  
this week in the area **3B**

# THE Durango HERALD

SERVING THE HEART OF SOUTHWEST COLORADO | DURANGOHERALD.COM | WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 2026 | \$1.50

**DURANGO**

## Despite debate, city OKs grants

Compañeros head criticized by mayor for ICE outburst

BY CHRISTIAN BURNEY  
HERALD STAFF WRITER

Durango City Council awarded \$135,893 in lodgers tax arts and culture grants last week, including \$10,000 to Compañeros, despite criticism of the nonprofit's co-executive director following an incident last year.

In total, councilors approved funding to 16 organizations in the first round of city grants for 2026.

The annual grant cycle was particularly competitive, with about 50 applications totaling more than \$1 million in requests, said Tommy Crosby, the city's economic opportunity manager.

Among the top winners: Durango Arts Center received \$18,000 for theater and sound enhancement; the Mountain & Valley Wool Association received \$15,400 for its 43rd annual fiber arts festival, workshops and fiber demonstrations; and Annie Bussell received \$12,925 to complete a mural at the Boys & Girls Club of La Plata County.

What began as a routine vote on arts and culture funding became a debate over whether Compañeros should receive a grant after its leader clashed with officials at a public meeting.

In the end, Compañeros: Four Corners Immigrant Resource Center was awarded \$10,000 for a community mural, its annual Latin American Cultural Celebration and expansion of its La Escualita children's art program

See **GRANTS, 8A**

## Famous dino head roars again years after its mysterious origin



JERRY MCBRIDE/Durango Herald photos

Durango's famous dinosaur head sculpture came out of hiding last month when it was donated to *The Durango Herald*, which chronicled its mysterious appearance and theft from the Arc of History rock artwork in 2014. In this photo, the person who donated the head, who requested anonymity, tries it on for size.

# Gone but not extinct

BY CHRISTIAN BURNEY  
HERALD STAFF WRITER

A dinosaur head sculpture thought lost to the halls of time reappeared at *The Durango Herald* offices last month, resurrecting a scandal that shook Durango like thunderous footsteps of the mighty Tyrannosaurus rex.

A benefactor delivered the sculpture along with newspaper articles dated 2014-2015 that documented the sculpture's mysterious appearance and disappearance from a controversial rock art piece once perched in the median of the intersection of U.S. highways 550/160 in Durango – aka the DoubleTree intersection.

The benefactor – the mother

of one child who along with several friends snatched the dinosaur head from atop the art piece called the Arc of History in 2014 – requested anonymity in the interest of preserving her daughter's professional reputation.

She recovered the sculpture from storage where it was entombed for years like fossils trapped between rock layers.

It is almost as well preserved as a mosquito in a prehistoric piece of amber, with only small chips in the material betraying its age. White, pointed fangs line its jaws. Black reptilian slits for pupils contrast with yellow eyes. Mixed blacks, blues and greens bring its

See **DINO HEAD, 8A**



A dinosaur head sculpture mysteriously appeared on the Arc of History, a public art display at the intersection of U.S. highways 550/160, just in time for Halloween in October 2014. The sculpture was stolen by a group of teenagers shortly afterward. It was anonymously handed over to Durango Police Department before being auctioned and displayed at StoneAge Inc. Since then, it disappeared again, only to resurface at *The Durango Herald* in February.

## Accident smashes art installation at Florida roundabout

Driver arrested on suspicion of DUI

BY SCOUT EDMONDSON  
HERALD STAFF WRITER

A Durango woman driving Sunday on Florida Road crashed through the roundabout near Chapman Hill, severely damaging three metal cyclist statues, according to police.

The crash occurred at 9:20 p.m. A Honda Accord appeared to have been traveling southwest toward Durango when it jumped the roundabout when it jumped the statues and came to rest on its driver's side

Police identified the driver as



Dees

Sonya Dees, 38, of Durango.

Dees was uninjured, but at least three of the five statues were damaged. The five, 800-pound cyclist sculptures

were created by Boulder artist Joshua Wiener and installed in August 2012.

Durango Police Department spokeswoman Amanda Garrison said Dees was arrested on suspicion of impaired driving after the crash.

"The driver initially refused to get out of the vehicle but eventually complied with officers," Garrison said in a text message to *The Durango Herald*. "Police



Courtesy of Durango Police Department

A car crashed into "Endurance," a highly visible sculpture by Joshua Wiener in the Florida Road roundabout, on Sunday evening. No injuries were reported.

said the driver showed signs of impairment and admitted to drinking alcohol."

According to an arrest affidavit, Dees was swaying, had bloodshot eyes and had an alcoholic odor on her breath. She also reportedly admitted to having been drinking earlier that night and was found to have three 100

milliliter containers of 99 Brand liqueur in her possession.

"Dees explained that she was driving too fast, went over the curve at the entrance of the roundabout, hit the median and flipped the Honda," the affidavit said.

See **CRASH, 8A**

## Sculptor saddened by damage, open to fix

Former Durangoan constructed piece in part for his brother

BY SCOUT EDMONDSON  
HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Boulder artist who designed and built "Endurance," a collection of cyclist sculptures at the Florida Road roundabout, said he was saddened by the destruction of his work but grateful no one was hurt.

At least three of the sculptures were damaged Sunday night when a driver jumped the roundabout

See **SCULPTURE, 8A**