



PLAYING WITH TIME

Bayfield students stage 'Phantom Tollbooth' 1B

ACTION LINE

Momma always said 'clean your plate' 2A

THE Durango HERALD

Weekend Edition

FEELING ENERGIZED AFTER LOCAL NEWS DAY | DURANGOHERALD.COM | FRIDAY, APRIL 10, 2026 | \$2.00

S.W. Colorado to celebrate life of Ben Nighthorse Campbell next week

BAYFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT

15 staff members accept buyouts

District projects \$1.39 million in savings for 2026-27

BY ELIZABETH POND
HERALD STAFF WRITER

More than a dozen Bayfield School District staff members have accepted buyouts and will leave their positions amid budget cuts.

The cuts – which include natural attrition, unfilled vacancies and reduced contract work for elementary counselors – were detailed in Board of Education documents and during a special meeting Tuesday.

“Like many districts around our state, the continued decline in student enrollment, rising costs, and flat funding for education have put our budget in a bind,” District Superintendent Dylan Connell told *The Durango Herald* in an email Tuesday.

Seventeen staff members applied for a buyout, and 15 were approved, according to a Salary and Benefit Reduction Report by the district.

Those opting to leave include kindergarten, second, third and fourth grade teachers; a reading interventionist; a STEM teacher; a counselor; and an orchestra teacher. Most staff members are expected to leave in late May, according to the report.

When asked the incentive amounts offered to staff, Connell said the district supplied a “lump sum payment commensurate with their (a staff member’s) years of service to the district.”

See **BAYFIELD, 8A**



JERRY MCBRIDE/Durango Herald file

Sen. Ben Nighthorse Campbell works in the Senate Chamber on Sept. 27, 2004, during his last months in office.

A LIFE REMEMBERED

BY ELIZABETH POND AND JESSICA BOWMAN
HERALD STAFF WRITERS

A memorial service for Ben Nighthorse Campbell, the groundbreaking Native American U.S. senator from Colorado, will be held next week, just over three months after his death.

Campbell, who died in December at age 92, spent much of his life as a prominent figure and regular newsmaker in Southwest Colorado. His work, both as a citizen and a politician, had far-reaching impacts on the people, places and institutions he touched, around the Four Corners and nationally.

Celebration of life livestream

A celebration of life for former U.S. Sen. Ben Nighthorse Campbell of Ignacio will be held Monday at the Sky Ute Casino Event Center in Ignacio. Doors for the pre-ceremony will open at noon,

and the ceremony will run from 1 to 3 p.m., followed by a reception.

The ceremony will be livestreamed on *The Durango Herald's* homepage at www.durangoherald.com.

Born in Auburn, California, Campbell, who was one of 44 chiefs of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe, became known for his Indigenous advocacy; his legislative record; his influence on public lands, water rights and infrastructure; his award-winning jewelry and art pieces; his success in Olympic judo; and his service in the Korean War, among a range of other impacts. A memorial service will be

held from 1 to 3 p.m. Monday at the Sky Ute Casino Event Center in Ignacio. The event will be livestreamed on *The Durango Herald's* website at www.durangoherald.com, technology permitting.

Here’s a look at some of Campbell’s many accomplishments and his lasting impacts.

Jewelry and art influence

Campbell learned to make jewelry from silver coins flattened on

railroad tracks while living in an orphanage in his younger years. He would trade his handmade wares for food and supplies, according to the American Indian College Fund.

He carried that talent and know-how throughout his life, winning more than 200 awards for his art pieces and working with a range of prominent galleries, including Durango’s Toh-Atin Gallery and Sorrel Sky Gallery. To Campbell, his creations were “an extension of what the creator wills,” according to Sorrel Sky’s biography page.

His art pieces – all of which are stamped with the “Morning Star,” a prominent Native American Cheyenne symbol – feature

See **CAMPBELL, 8A**

Durango set to implement water restrictions amid drought

City working to revise management plan to increase its enforcement capabilities

BY CHRISTIAN BURNEY
HERALD STAFF WRITER

The city of Durango plans to implement water restrictions this week or next as it anticipates a difficult water year during ex-

treme drought conditions.

Public Works Director John Harris said the city’s 2020 water supply and drought management plan is somewhat toothless as far as actionable water management steps, and he is working

on a revised plan.

However, expecting the worst drought conditions since 2018, the city cannot wait for the new plan to be completed before enacting water restrictions, he said at Tuesday’s Durango City Council meeting.

Harris said he will recommend revised stage 1 restrictions limiting lawn watering to three days a week and assigning days

by household.

He said Public Works data demonstrate most residents water their lawns about three days a week. The restrictions are intended to spread out demand on the water system on any given day.

“By spreading the irrigation out over a six-day period, people will still be able to irrigate three days a week,” he said. “Maybe

instead of Monday, Wednesday, Friday, it might be Tuesday, Thursday, Sunday.”

Lawn irrigation accounts for 70% of city water use, or about 100 gallons per capita per day, he said. Indoor uses such as showering, washing clothes and drinking water make up the remaining 30% of water use.

See **DROUGHT, 5A**

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