



MUSICAL WEEKEND

Choral Society, symphony have packed schedule 1B

READY FOR REGIONALS

Demons baseball hosting playoffs on Saturday 1C

THE Durango HERALD

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AI bodycams, first responder drones and more ahead for DPD



JERRY MCBRIDE/Durango Herald photos

Cmdr. Nick Stasi, with the Durango Police Department, manually opens the cover that houses one of two drones at Durango Fire Protection District Station No. 2. The second drone sits in the covered pedestal behind Stasi.

DURANGO SCHOOL DISTRICT

Could more schools close?

Sunnyside decision delayed; districtwide finances may be studied

BY ELIZABETH POND
HERALD STAFF WRITER

Durango School District Board of Education hit pause this week on deciding whether to consolidate Sunnyside Elementary School with the yet-to-be-built Three Springs Elementary. In doing so, members raised the alarm that other schools may also need to be consolidated to address budget woes.

“We are going to have to make some really difficult decisions – and we will do that – but I want to make sure that we’re doing them holistically, with the whole impact of declining enrollment on all of our schools (considered),” said Board President Kristin Smith. “I actually think we might have to close more than one school, potentially.”

Smith was not the only board member to bring up the possibility of having to close some district schools in the next few years.

“We are going to have to close schools,” said Erika Brown, board vice president. “There is a budget crisis, and we can’t afford to operate the number of schools we have with a fraction of the students that we have left.”

Elementary schools that have had fewer than 300 students for multiple years and utilization below 60% are flagged by the district’s Long Range Planning Committee as candidates for consolidation, board members said. Several schools – not just

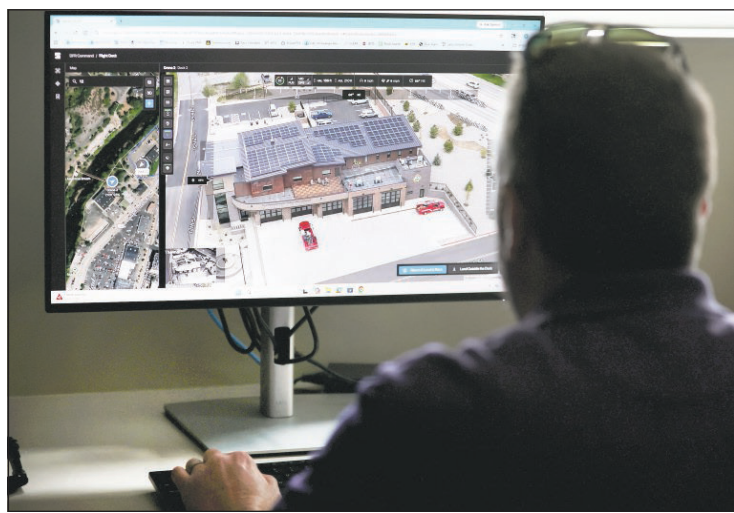
Modern-world policing

BY CHRISTIAN BURNEY
HERALD STAFF WRITER

Artificial intelligence, drone first responders and body cameras that can translate 50 languages aren’t far-flung concepts of some opaque Hollywood future anymore. Even in Durango, they are becoming staples of modern policing.

Durango Police Department is embracing technological advancements in what Police Chief Brice Current described to city councilors earlier this year as a “cautious” yet “progressive” approach.

Since at least April, Current has stressed how DPD’s top priority with new technology



Stasi files one of two drones using a computer at Durango Fire Protection District Station 2. The drones can be operated by computer from just about anywhere.

is reinforcing public safety. He has also addressed residents’ concerns about how

powerful some new technologies, including Flock Safety and other automated license



Watch video

Watch video of a Durango Police Department drone take off and land from the roof of Durango Fire Protection District Station No. 2

plate reader cameras, have become – an ongoing conversation between DPD, the

See **POLICING, 8A**

See **BOARD, 8A**

LA PLATA COUNTY

Does the Code Rights Project have a ‘hidden agenda’?

Organization director says it’s not so secret – County Attorney Sheryl Rogers needs to go

BY JESSIE BOWMAN
HERALD STAFF WRITER

La Plata County commissioners say the Code Rights Project, a citizen group examining the

county’s planning, building and code enforcement processes, has a hidden agenda.

The group’s true objective appears to be removing County Attorney Sheryl Rogers rather

than pursuing comprehensive land-use reform as the group publicly claims, commissioners said Wednesday during a public meeting called to respond to information disseminated by the Code Rights group.

At the start of the Code Rights project, the stated mission was “focused on evidence-based

solutions, not blame.” The solution, at least in large part, is the removal of the county attorney, says Jack Turner, face of the organization.

This is not hidden. “The problem is Sheryl Rogers,” Turner said. He followed up in a written statement: “We absolutely want her to retire and

be replaced by a county attorney who stays in her lane.”

The Code Rights Project mailed advertisements to 29,000 La Plata County residents and purchased a full-page ad in *The Durango Herald* earlier this month.

See **CODE RIGHTS, 8A**

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