



BACK IN BUCKLEY

Concert Hall at the Park kicks off next month 1B

FINISHING FIRST

Casillas, deKay win high school track state titles 1C

Weekend Edition
THE Durango HERALD

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LA PLATA ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

Members elect new board of directors

Candidates ran on transparency and affordability

BY SCOUT EDMONDSON
HERALD STAFF WRITER

Members of the La Plata Electric Association have decided who their new representatives are on the electrical cooperative's board of directors.

On Wednesday, LPEA's members were given the chance to vote in new members for three of the co-op's four districts spanning La Plata and Archuleta counties, as well as learning about LPEA's 2025 annual report and accomplishment.

According to a news release from LPEA, 7,937 out of the 37,748 members cast votes throughout the co-op's four districts, which include Archuleta County, south and west La Plata County, the city of Durango and northern La Plata County.

Voters cast their ballots online or through the mail over the past month and in person at the meeting.

District 1 - Archuleta County

Incumbent Nicole Pitcher won with 1,175 votes, while challenger James Lane received 1,117 votes.



Pitcher

In a statement to *The Durango Herald*, Pitcher said she was incredibly grateful to the members of her district for re-electing her to the board.

"It's been an honor to serve this community during such a pivotal time for LPEA, and I don't take that trust lightly," she said.

Pitcher said the year ahead will be all about execution of decisions focusing on keeping rates affordable, maintaining reliability and strengthening wildfire resilience. Additionally, making thoughtful power supply decisions that balance cost, local control and long-term sustainability are central to her vision for the co-op.

"We have successfully exited

See **LPEA, 8A**



Race draws diverse riders, which is reflected in the bikes they use



JERRY MCBRIDE/Durango Herald

Joel Bouma holds up his Factor Ostro Vam road bike on Thursday that he will ride in the Iron Horse Bicycle Classic road race in the pro men's category.



Courtesy of Joel Bouma

Joel Bouma, left, and his dad, Joe Bouma, stand in the start line of a bike race in Arkansas. Bike racing holds a special place in the Boumas' hearts, largely because of the joy both father and son derive when riding together. The two will race the pro category in Saturday's Iron Horse Bicycle Classic.

The bicycles they ride, the stories they tell

BY SCOUT EDMONDSON
HERALD STAFF WRITER

Cyclists from all walks of life sign up to take part in the Iron Horse Bicycle Classic every May – a hallowed tradition of Durango's cycling scene that goes back to 1971.

They are drawn by the iconic event's five races – the crown jewel being the McDonald's Citizen Tour, in which intrepid cyclists race the train from Durango to Silverton along the 50-mile stretch of U.S. Highway 550, through the low-lying Animas River Valley and over soaring passes in the

San Juan Mountains. Participants range in age, competition and backgrounds, and share one commonality: a passion for pedaling. But the bikes people ride in the Iron Horse can be as diverse as the riders themselves, varying in age, material, size, shape and color. The bikes can also tell stories, about memories of families bonding over the sport, triumphs of past competitions or distances traveled through stunning scenery.

Ahead of this weekend's festivities, here are the stories of some of the riders and their bikes taking part in this year's

See **IRON HORSE, 8A**

DURANGO

At bus stops, volunteers try to shield families from ICE

'Confirmers' alert community members to immigration activity in Southwest Colorado

BY OLIVIA PRENTZEL
THE COLORADO SUN

The sun has not yet spilled onto the roads winding through the Animas Valley as elementary school children, oversized backpacks on their small frames,

gather at the bus stop at the edge of their mobile home park.

In the low light, it's easy for dark, unfamiliar cars to lurk in the shadows.

At 6:10 a.m., E.B. – a woman trained to spot those vehicles – pulls up to the bus stop, just out-

side downtown Durango. She is a volunteer, arriving at dawn to watch for immigration officials as the children head off to school. It's her first stop along a 30-mile loop where trained volunteer "confirmers" stand with children until the bus arrives and wait for them when they're dropped off after school.

There are about 30 such volunteers in La Plata County, joining

the ranks of people across the state whose concerns about often seemingly random immigration enforcement have led them to stand with children, watch as their parents walk them to school or keep a lookout amid the otherwise mundane rhythms of everyday life.

On a fraught national landscape where U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement per-

sonnel have cast a wide net to detain and deport immigrants, and where their tactics have triggered protest and violence, the volunteers push back against the incursion into their community.

Four months have passed since masked immigration officials pulled three Colombian asylum seekers – a father, his

See **CONFIRMERS, 7A**

