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THE Durango HERALD

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Why is food insecurity in La Plata County such an intractable problem?



Many factors play a role in food insecurity, including higher prices for healthcare, at the grocery store, at the gas pump and for housing. Rural geography, social safety net cuts, government shutdown and international conflict are all other factors.

A COMPLEX WEB

BY JESSIE BOWMAN  
HERALD STAFF WRITER

Community food safety nets across La Plata County have seen some of their busiest months in the past year. To understand why, public health officials, food providers and researchers point to a web of economic, geographic and political forces that have made it increasingly difficult for many families to consistently afford nutritious food. The summer months are particularly difficult. When school lets out, many children

About this series

Thousands of La Plata County residents struggle to consistently access enough nutritious food. This series examines the impacts of the growing affordability crisis and looming cuts to many New Deal-era nutrition and social service programs on the county's fragile food safety net, the widespread impact on the community and the local efforts working to build a more resilient food system. July 17: A broad range of people experience food insecurity in a variety of ways. Today: A look at how the conditions

and circumstances unique to the moment contribute to food insecurity and how communities are bracing for looming challenges. July 31: There are more ways than one to keep people fed and healthy. We examine some of the solutions communities are undertaking, and some areas that still need improvement. Also, learn how Pine River Shares is executing a grassroots approach to address the root of the problem by producing food locally – and keeping it local.

lose access to the free breakfasts and lunches that serve as an important nutrition safety net during the school year. At the same time, the cost of groceries, fuel and other necessities has continued to climb amid ongoing global instability and the lengthy government shutdown that stretched over multiple months last year. "Food insecurity is a combination of factors contributing to the breakdown of the whole food system," said Pam

See WEB, 8A

DURANGO

Madrigal finalist for new position

City manager among top five candidates for Lakewood job

BY GABRIELLE WALLACE  
HERALD STAFF WRITER

Durango City Manager José Madrigal has been named a finalist for the city manager position in Lakewood. "It was an opportunity that I felt I needed to explore," he said, noting a recruiter approached him about the position. Lakewood's previous city manager, Kathy Hodgson, announced her retirement in April. Hodgson worked with the city for almost 46 years, the last 18 of which she served as city manager. The city lies outside Denver with a population of about 157,000 residents as per the U.S. Census Bureau's estimations. The long-term stability Lakewood showcased with its last city manager was a major pull for Madrigal when considering the job. Additionally, Lakewood's proximity to his stepdaughter's college and the city's expanded access to healthcare for his parents drew in Madrigal and his wife. "I want to make sure I'm looking out for my family and the opportunities that might be out there – doesn't necessarily mean that this works out, doesn't



Madrigal

See MADRIGAL, 8A

Nearly 460 miles of rivers in Colo. under fishing restrictions

Portions of Animas, Dolores and San Juan are under at least voluntary closures

BY DAN BOYCE  
COLORADO PUBLIC RADIO

The small town of South Fork is named for a tributary of the Rio Grande River, which joins with the main river in the middle of town. This stretch of the Rio Grande is labeled a "Gold Medal" fishery by the state, meaning fly fishers have a better chance of catching

more and bigger trout. It's typically a prime destination for late afternoon casting right in sight of the nearby golf course. Not this summer. The Rio Grande River running through the town of South Fork is about 87% lower than normal for this time of year. Those trickling flows and well above normal water temperatures have led Colorado Parks

and Wildlife to place a voluntary fishing closure on 74 miles of the Rio Grande from noon until midnight. It's the same story on the nearby Conejos River and the Animas and San Juan rivers further west. And the Dolores River. And the Colorado River. And the Elk and the Eagle and the Yampa and the Gunnison. In fact, CPW has placed mandatory or voluntary closures on portions of 16 rivers and streams. Rick McGuire, owner of Wolf

Creek Anglers in South Fork, said his fishing guide business is down at least 35% this summer. He stopped offering river float trips about a month and a half ago. A few weeks back, he canceled guided wading trips as well. Besides the voluntary closures, he said the fishing just hasn't been very good. And offering trips on the river is not worth the trouble for either the clients or the guides, he said. "July and August can always be tough on freestone rivers in the west," McGuire said,

referring to streams that are sometimes seasonal and based on snowmelt. "Lower water, warmer temperatures, it can be a little more technical," McGuire said. "But not (like what) we're seeing right now. I don't have really anything to compare it to." The scale of the fishing closures in Colorado is unprecedented, at least in the 16-year CPW career of Josh Nehring, deputy assistant director of the

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