



# 6 top prospects who could be called up to majors in August

SPORTS, 1B

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# The Pueblo Chieftain

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# Who's performing at the 2025 Colorado State Fair



Cheap Trick singer Robin Zander performs for a crowd with his band at Pine Knob Music Theatre in Clarkston on Aug. 12. RYAN GARZA, DETROIT FREE PRESS



Country star Clay Walker performs in 2019 at the Montgomery Performing Arts Centre in Montgomery, Alabama. SHANNON HEUPEL/ADVERTISER

**Justin Reutter**  
Pueblo Chieftain  
USA TODAY NETWORK

The 153rd Colorado State Fair begins Friday, Aug. 22, and runs through Monday, Sept. 1.

This year's fair will feature performances by Grammy Award-winning artists, one of the world's most well-known stand-up comedians, country music icons and much more.

The Big R Stores Arena and Southwest Motors Events Center will host a variety of musical acts in addition to rodeo events, a monster truck tour, and a demolition derby.

Here's who's performing at the 2025 Colorado State Fair, and where you can catch their performances.

**Celebration de los Charros, Clay Walker and more at the Big R Arena**

The Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA) Rodeo at the Big R Arena will feature country music performances on the first weekend of the fair.

On Friday, Aug. 22, Cooper Alan, known for hits like his 2024 single "Feel Like Hell," will perform after the 7 p.m. rodeo. Lee Brice, whose catalogue includes his 2024 single "Drinking buddies," will take the stage after the rodeo on Saturday, Aug. 23, and on Sunday, Aug. 24, Clay Walker will perform songs like his 2021 hit "Need a

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LAKE PUEBLO STATE PARK

# 18-year-old dead in presumed drowning

**Tracy Harmon**  
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USA TODAY NETWORK

An 18-year-old man was pulled from Lake Pueblo just before 1 p.m. on Aug. 12 after Colorado Parks and Wildlife officers responded to a report of a possible drowning.

The report came in just before noon, according to a press release from state parks officials. A state parks boat crew with a Pueblo County Sheriff's Office diver on board recovered the male victim and conducted CPR as the boat raced to emergency medical technicians onshore at N-1 Cove Beach.

Medics on the scene pronounced the victim dead just before 1 p.m. Witnesses reported that a man without a life jacket went under in 23 feet of water approximately 65 yards from shore in the east end of the lake near the dam, according to the release.

Water temperatures at the time were in the mid-70s. Park staff were on shore within two minutes of the notification and two CPW boat crews were conducting sonar grid searches within 15 minutes.

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Lake Pueblo State Park Manager Joseph Stadterman speaks about water safety at one of the park's life jacket loaner stations along the lake's south shore on July 3. ZACHARY ALLEN/THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

# Pueblo D60 board tables talk on new charter school

**James Bartolo**  
Pueblo Chieftain  
USA TODAY NETWORK

The Pueblo School District 60 Board of Education voted 3-2 on Aug. 12 to remove an agenda item that could have eventually allowed Stephen Varela and Pueblo Choice Schools to open a new west side charter in 2026.

A prospective charter school is required by state statute to submit an application to a local school board 18 months prior to opening. However, the quashed Aug. 12 agenda item asked the Pueblo D60 board to consider allowing Pueblo Choice Schools to apply before Oct. 1, 2025, and open in the fall of 2026.

Kathy DeNiro, Dennis Maes and Bill Thiebaut were the three Pueblo D60 board directors to vote in favor of removing the agenda item on Aug. 12. The motion to remove was made by Maes and

seconded by Thiebaut.

"One has to ponder the urgency for fast-tracking this particular venture," Maes said on Aug. 12. "The decision to authorize charter school status is of great importance and should be given the time the statute contemplates to reach such a decision."

Efforts to bring a new charter school to the west side follow the June 30 closing of the Chavez Huerta K-12 Preparatory Academy. Varela and others with Pueblo Choice Schools have advocated for a new school on the former Chavez Huerta site that would offer programs like baile folklórico, Chicano studies, a dual-immersion language program and early college.

However, the charter school idea has been scrutinized by others — including former Pueblo D60 Board Presidents Barb Clementi and Tommy Farrell — who questioned Pueblo Choice Schools'



Varela

Farrell, who is campaigning this year to return to the Pueblo D60 board, released a statement on Aug. 7 opposing fast-tracking the charter school application for Pueblo Choice Schools. In his statement, Farrell said that the 18-month timeline ensures "careful review," that Pueblo D60 should be wary of for-profit models, that political ties should not influence board decisions, and that all students deserve "a quality education."

"I share the concern for students in Pueblo's west side," his statement reads. "They deserve strong, stable, high-quality

schools. But that outcome will not be achieved through rushed decisions or questionable partnerships. Real equity requires sustained investment in proven, community-rooted public education."

Varela told the *Chieftain* on Aug. 13 that he and Pueblo Choice Schools were "not quite upset" by the board's decision. He also said that Pueblo Choice Schools is going to "keep pushing forward."

"We're really excited to see something go into that area, the west side, and we think it's going to be a great opportunity for kids over there," Varela said. "We want to have continuity of education and support the educational mission."

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