

## COLORADO BIZ BEAT:

# La Plata County seeks input on local purchasing policies; newly merged college will help address work force training needs

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Sometimes business owners are so busy running their business, it can be hard to get involved in or follow local issues. But thanks to the electronic age, on-line feedback makes communicating with our local government representatives more feasible. Because once they are elected, they shouldn't stop hearing from us — they continually need to hear from us.



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At this month's LEAD (La Plata Economic Development Action Partnership) meeting, La Plata County Commissioner Kellie Hotter made an appeal for public input on several county projects.

The county has launched the task of updating its Comprehensive Plan; the first phase of the process is "preliminary visioning," according to Hotter. Saturday, July 25 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. is next meeting on the Comp Plan process at the Durango Recreation Center.

"But you do not have to attend an all-day meeting to participate," she said. "There are tool kits on line to reach as many people as possible. The commissioners are so invested in this; we believe in this. We've put a halt on (revising) the Land Use Development Code; we did not want to build that without the appropriate foundation.

"The Land Use Code will be the tool to implement that vision," she added.

According to the go-to Web site for information on this process (laplatacountyplan.com), a county comprehensive plan is a "policy document that describes what county residents want the community to be in the future. A comprehensive plan 'guides' the county's quality of life and land-use direction."

The process will include several means of engaging the community: Topical forums will be scheduled to educate the public on issues facing the county and the options available; Comp Plan kiosks will be set up at local events or stores; or one-on-one meetings can be scheduled with Project Manager Jason Meininger, who has a goal of 75-percent community engagement, said Hotter.

"We've charged Jason to engage the community in a way that none of these meetings have done before," she said.

The county is soliciting input on the issue of procurement. "In order to purchase, the county has to have the will of

the voters, so we really want to get that input now," Hotter said.

The county has 2 percent leeway it can look at when bids come in, explained Hotter. "So if out-of-town people come in under that, that's what we have to do."

A link to the "five-minute" survey can be found at the top of the home page of [www.co.laplata.co.us](http://www.co.laplata.co.us). "We know how valuable it is to spend the money here, with the multiplier effect and buying supplies here,"

Hotter said. "But we need to get a pulse. Please spread the word; we are only as good as the people who reach out."

The survey also asks the same questions for green purchases: What should the threshold be? What is it worth to you?

The deadline for the survey is July 31, said Hotter. So click now.

### Recycling center

The city also is seeking input during several upcoming meetings in July, according to councilor Christina Thompson, who also attended the LEAD meeting. July 23 is the date for a public meeting to solicit ideas and opportunities for a proposed regional recycling center (5:30 p.m. in council chambers).

"We're working hard to make it a collaborative effort — with not just the county, but the whole Region 9 area — to do a regional recycling center, to pull in recycling from all over and actually have some product to export out, like recycled glass, mulch or plastics," said Thompson, "so it becomes a source of revenue as well."

The city is hosting a public forum at 6 p.m. July 22 at the Durango Recreation Center before it creates a draft solar ordinance, which it intends to pass later this year. The goal of the ordinance will be to streamline the solar-installation process to ensure that solar installations are allowable citywide and to promote the use of solar power in Durango.

### Score one for work force

As of July 1, Pueblo Community College and San Juan Basin Technical College are one. The new entity will be known as Southwest Colorado

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