

## Third Annual Silverton Business Summit 2026

**Date:** Wednesday, April 29, 2026

**Location:** Silverton, Colorado

**Doors Open:** 12:00 PM

**Program Start:** 12:30 PM



### Event Overview

The Silverton Business Summit brings together local business owners, community leaders, and regional partners to share updates, insights, and opportunities impacting Silverton's economic future. This year's theme *Strengthening Collaboration and Camaraderie within Small Business Communities* focuses on how we can work together to build on recent progress and continue to strengthen our community and economy.

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### 12:00 – 12:25 PM | Arrival & Networking

Arrive early to connect with friends and be a part of the prize giveaway

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### 12:30 – 12:40 PM | Welcome & Opening Remarks

Sarah Moore, Director, San Juan Development Association, will kick-off 2026 Summit

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### 12:40 – 1:15 PM | State of the Town: Where We Are, Where We're Headed

**Presenter:** Elizabeth Stuffings, Town Administrator, will update progress on community priorities and talk about what she's learned in her first couple months with the Town.

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### 1:15 – 1:45 PM | Fire, Water, and our Community

**Panelists:** John Zarkis, Town of Silverton Public Works Director; Jim Donovan, San Juan County Emergency Manager

This session explores the systems, resources, and infrastructure shaping our community. John Zarkis will cover water, infrastructure, and sustainability priorities, and Jim Donovan will discuss fire preparedness and community safety, all in the context of historically low snowpack and constrained state and federal resources.

## 1:45 – 2:15 PM | AI & Innovation Session (30 minute session)

**Presenter:** Andrew Aitken, Center of Rural AI

Andrew Aitken with the Center of Rural AI will discuss how his organization is dedicated to closing the gap between rural and urban communities from passive recipients into active leaders in the AI Economy. Andrew will break down what AI really is and how it can be a useful tool for your small business in Silverton.

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## 2:15 – 2:30 PM | BREAK

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## 2:30 – 3:25 PM | Progress and Pillars in our Place-based Economy

**Panelists:** DeAnne Gallegos, Silverton Chamber of Commerce; Klem Branner, Silverton Singletrack Society; Al Harper, Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad; Lisa Branner, Silverton Creative District.

This panel explores current economic and market conditions, highlights progress across key sectors, and looks ahead to how we can continue working together to strengthen our local economy.

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## 3:30 PM – 4:20 PM | Business Panel Discussion

**Moderator:** Clark Anderson, Community Builders

**Local Business Panel:** Holly Huebner, Trustee Jim Harper; Mario Letayf; Paul Joyce.

Local business owners share perspectives on the current environment for local business and how we navigate challenges and opportunities in our community.

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## 4:25 pm – 5:10 PM | Traveling the Road Ahead, Together

This full group discussion will explore how our community and economy are changing, assess progress and gaps, and identify ways to work together this summer and beyond.

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## 5:15 pm | Closing Comments & Prize Giveaways

Sarah Moore, Director, San Juan Development Association

**Dinner provided by the Osteria and Cash Bar**