



Dear DAHLA Members,

September brings four straight weekends of festivals and events to Durango — good news for occupancy, but worth planning staffing and inventory around early. Here's what's on the calendar this month, plus a look ahead to October through December.

September at a Glance

SEPT 3–6

Four Corners Motorcycle Rally

La Plata County Fairgrounds & Durango Harley-Davidson

For the 33rd year running, Durango kicks off September the way it kicks off Labor Day weekend — with a few thousand motorcycles rolling into town. Riders come from across the Four Corners and beyond for four days of flat-track racing, stunt shows, bike shows, and group rides anchored at Durango Harley-Davidson, and the rally has grown into one of downtown's biggest fundraising weekends, with proceeds benefiting Building Homes for Heroes, Toys for Tots, and other local causes. For member properties, this is about as close to a guaranteed full house as September gets.

EVENT DETAILS: FOURCORNERSMOTORCYCLERALLY.COM →

SEPT 4

True Western Roundup (Iron Horse Rodeo)

La Plata County Fairgrounds

The fairgrounds host a special Iron Horse Rodeo tie-in to the True Western Roundup right in the middle of motorcycle rally weekend — saddle bronc, barrel racing, mutton bustin', and bull riding on top of the rally traffic already filling town. It's a one-two punch worth flagging to front-desk staff fielding "what's going on this weekend" questions.

EVENT DETAILS: TRUEWESTERNROUNDUP.COM →

SEPT 11

Durango Devo Film Fest

Chapman Hill

Now in its 8th year, the Devo Film Fest turns Chapman Hill into an open-air screening room for amateur and professional cycling and outdoor-adventure short films — a fundraiser for Durango Devo's youth mountain bike programs. It's a lower-key, local-and-regional crowd rather than a big overnight draw, but a good one to know about if guests ask what's happening midweek.

EVENT DETAILS: DURANGODEVO.COM/FILM-FEST →

SEPT 12

Lake Nighthorse Triathlon

Lake Nighthorse

Athletes descend on Lake Nighthorse for sprint and Olympic-distance swim-bike-run races, with competitors and their families often arriving Friday to scout the course and staying through Saturday night to recover and celebrate. Triathlon weekends tend to bring an early-to-bed, early-checkout crowd — worth noting for breakfast and amenity planning.

EVENT DETAILS: TRISIGNUP.COM →

SEPT 17

Chocolate Fantasia

La Plata County Fairgrounds & Event Center

Local chefs, bakeries, and home chocolatiers compete for bragging rights at this long-running community fundraiser, with proceeds supporting Volunteers of America Colorado's shelter programs, including the Durango Community Shelter and Southwest Safehouse. It's a devoted-local-following evening rather than a big lodging driver, but a nice one to mention to guests looking for something to do after a day on the trails.

EVENT DETAILS: VOACOLORADO.ORG →

SEPT 17

Mesa Verde Entrance Fee-Free Day

Mesa Verde National Park

Same day as Chocolate Fantasia, Mesa Verde waives its entrance fee — one of only a handful of fee-free days on the park's calendar each year. Expect a bump in day-trip questions at the front desk; it's worth having park hours and shuttle information on hand, since fee-free days tend to draw heavier-than-usual crowds to the cliff dwelling tours.

PARK INFO: [NPS.GOV/MEVE](https://www.nps.gov/meve) →

SEPT 18

Autumn Gallery Walk

Downtown Durango & the Smiley Building

Twelve downtown galleries and the Smiley Building throw open their doors from 5–8 p.m. for an evening of art, live music, and refreshments — a low-key, entirely walkable event that's easy to recommend to guests staying downtown who want an evening out without a car.

EVENT DETAILS: [DURANGOARTGALLERIES.COM](https://durangoartgalleries.com) →

SEPT 19

Purgatory Oktoberfest

Purgatory Resort

Purgatory Resort kicks off fall with seasonal brews, brats, pretzels, and live music on the patio — a one-day mountain celebration that's become a reliable warm-up act for the resort's winter season. It's more of a regional day-trip draw than an overnight one, but a good excuse to remind guests the mountain is still very much open in September.

EVENT DETAILS: [PURGATORY.SKI](https://www.purgatory.ski) →

SEPT 19–20

Autumn Arts Festival

2nd Avenue, Downtown Durango

Nearly 100 artist booths line 2nd Avenue for the 32nd annual Autumn Arts Festival, a Durango Arts Center fundraiser that's grown into one of the region's top-ranked fine art and craft shows, drawing an estimated 8,000 visitors over the weekend. Paired with the Gallery Walk the night before, it makes for one of September's strongest back-to-back weekends — worth blocking rooms early.

EVENT DETAILS: [DURANGOARTS.ORG](https://durangoarts.org) →

SEPT 24–27

San Juan Songwriters Festival

Venues throughout Downtown Durango

Brand new for 2026, the inaugural San Juan Songwriters Festival brings Nashville hitmakers and Hall of Fame songwriters to intimate "listening room" venues around downtown, including the Diamond Belle Saloon inside the Strater Hotel and the D&SNG Railroad Museum. As a first-year event from the nonprofit iAM MUSIC, it's an unknown quantity for demand forecasting — but multi-night music festivals in comparable markets typically bring a multi-night-stay crowd, so it's worth watching closely.

EVENT DETAILS: [SANJUANSONGWRITERSFESTIVAL.COM](https://sanjuansongwritersfestival.com) →

SEPT 26–27

Oktoberfest at Buckley Park & WholeExpo

Buckley Park / La Plata County Fairgrounds

Two very different crowds converge on the same weekend: a two-day Oktoberfest at Buckley Park benefiting the Durango Farmers Market brings beer, food, and live music downtown, while WholeExpo takes over the fairgrounds with its long-running showcase of holistic health and wellness — dozens of exhibitors and workshops strong. Guests asking about "the festival downtown" and "the expo at the fairgrounds" this weekend are asking about two separate things — worth knowing both.

OKTOBERFEST: [DURANGOFARMERSMARKET.COM](https://durangofarmersmarket.com) → **WHOLEEXPO:** [DURANGO.COM/EVENT/WHOLEEXPO](https://durango.com/event/wholeexpo) →

SEPT 30 – OCT 4

Durango Cowboy Gathering Begins

Venues across Durango, including the Doubletree and Strater

September closes with the opening night of the 36th annual Durango Cowboy Gathering, which runs through the first weekend of October and closes with Colorado's largest motorless parade after a 7:30 a.m. chuckwagon breakfast. It's one of the biggest multi-night bookings on DAHLA's calendar — guests are already reserving ahead, so now's the time to lock in availability if you haven't already.

EVENT DETAILS: [DURANGOCOWBOYGATHERING.ORG](https://durangocowboygathering.org) →

Weekly & ongoing: Durango Farmers Market (Saturdays, TBK Bank lot, through Oct 31) and First Fridays downtown art walk continue throughout the month.

Reminder: Don't forget the upcoming Visit Durango & Tourism Advisory Commission Working Group sessions on Thursday, August 27 — a chance for the lodging community to weigh in directly on marketing, metrics, and destination management. See the DAHLA Events & Meetings page at durangolodging.org/events/ for full details and RSVP information.

Looking Ahead: October – December

October

OCT 16–18

Devo Days Bike Festival

Purgatory Resort

OCT 16–18

Animas Valley Balloon Rally

Downtown & Animas Valley

OCT 23–31

The Rocky Horror Show

Durango Arts Center

OCT 27

Mesa Verde Fee-Free Day

Mesa Verde National Park

OCT 29

Halloween Bike Parade & Powerhouse Party

Animas River Trail

OCT 31

Children's Halloween Trick-or-Treat & Carnival

Downtown Durango

November

NOV 11

Mesa Verde Fee-Free Day

Mesa Verde National Park

NOV 20 – JAN 2

The Polar Express Train

Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad

NOV 21

Harvest Market

TBK Bank Parking Lot

NOV 26

Turkey Trot

Fort Lewis College

December

DEC 4–6

Holiday Arts & Crafts Festival

La Plata County Fairgrounds

DEC 12

Holiday Farmer's Market

La Plata County Fairgrounds

ONGOING

The Polar Express Train continues

Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad

NEW

Two new features just launched on durangolodging.org. You're reading the first issue of our new **Newsletters** page — every future issue will be archived there for members and staff to reference anytime.

We've also rebuilt the **Events & Meetings** page with full descriptions and an official-website link for every major regional event (the Iron Horse Bicycle Classic, Cowboy Gathering, the D&SNG Railroad, and Purgatory's ski season), plus a running list of DAHLA board meetings and working sessions. Bookmark durangolodging.org/events/ — it's the fastest way to see what's driving demand each month.

As always, thank you for everything you do to welcome Durango's visitors. Questions about this newsletter or ideas for future issues? Reach us at info@durangolodging.org.

— The DAHLA Board