

The Douglas County Neighbor Magazine

Vol. 2 Issue 2 | June 2026

Link On Demand:
*Now Arriving
in Parker*



**Closer Recycling,
Safer Community**

GreenWorks to bring biochar and
expanded waste services

Saddle Up *for the*
Fair & Rodeo

**Protecting
Our Children**
from Online Threats



The Douglas County Neighbor Magazine

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Stay Connected

-  www.DouglasCO.gov
-  303-660-7400
-  BOCC@DouglasCO.gov
-     

Scan the QR code to sign up for emails, follow Douglas County on social media and learn how to get involved:



Upcoming Meetings & Events

Board of County Commissioners
Business Meetings &
Land Use Meetings/
Public Hearings
June 9 & 23 | July 14 & 28
Aug. 11 & 25

Planning Commission Meetings
June 15 | July 6 & 20
Aug. 3 & 17

Parks Advisory Board Meeting
June 16 | July 8 | Aug. 12

Board of Health Meeting
June 11

From the Board of County Commissioners

Dear Douglas County Neighbors,

Summer in Douglas County is a special time—our parks, trails, ballfields and community spaces come alive with families, friends and neighbors making memories together. It is also a reminder of why we remain so committed to thoughtful planning and investment to ensure this county continues to be one of the best places in America to live, work and raise a family.

This spring, we celebrated major milestones for the Zebulon Regional Sports Complex, a transformational project that will create new opportunities for youth athletics, recreation and regional tourism for generations to come. At the same time, we continued advancing critical public safety initiatives, including the “Our Children and the Internet” town hall, bringing together law enforcement, educators and community leaders to help parents navigate the growing challenges facing children online, as well as the “Your Home, Family and Wildfire” town hall where experts helped us learn to harden our homes and prepare our families.

We also remain committed to transparency, accountability and meaningful public engagement. Strong communities are built when residents stay informed, involved and connected to the future of their county. While it’s easy in this era to get lost in noise, our focus remains where it belongs: delivering real results for the people of Douglas County.

As our nation approaches America’s 250th birthday and Colorado celebrates 150 years of statehood, we are reminded that the strength of any community is built by people willing to dream boldly, serve selflessly and leave something better behind for the next generation. That spirit continues to define Douglas County today.

We hope you enjoy everything this summer has to offer—from local festivals and youth sports to the County Fair & Rodeo and the incredible beauty that surrounds us every day.

The future of Douglas County is bright, and the best is still ahead. Thank you for the trust you place in us and for the opportunity to serve.



District 1 **Abe Laydon**

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Rueter-Hess Advisory Board Meeting
June 12 | July 10 | Aug. 7

Fair Board Meeting
June 18

Water Commission Meeting
June 22

Historic Preservation Board Meeting
June 24 | July 22 | Aug. 26

Homeless Initiative Meeting
July 9

County Office Closures

June 19 Juneteenth
July 3 Independence Day

Douglas County Fair & Rodeo
July 24 - Aug. 2

View
our full
meetings
and events
calendar:

DouglasCO.gov/calendar





Free Rideshare Program Expands to Stonegate and Parker

Link On Demand began serving portions of Parker on April 8. Additional expansion to Castle Rock planned.

Have you tried the free Link On Demand ride service yet? Link On Demand is Douglas County's free regional rideshare program, now serving portions of Parker in addition to Lone Tree and Highlands Ranch. With more than 100,000 rides provided in Highlands Ranch, this service earns an average 4.9 out of 5 star rating.

Link On Demand is accessible for those with mobility needs, and the service is available to anyone, helping older adults, families and those without regular access to a personal vehicle get where they need to go. Rides are available Monday through Saturday within the service area. Similar to Uber and Lyft, Link On Demand offers a convenient app for requesting rides.

This transportation service represents government partnership at its best. The City of Lone Tree launched the service in 2014 as a fixed circulator route to help employees get from the new RTD Light Rail stations in Lone Tree

to major employers in the area. When RTD light rail expanded in 2019, Lone Tree leaders reevaluated the fixed-route service and transitioned to an on-demand service with the new name, Link On Demand. It's been growing ever since.

In 2024, Douglas County provided funding to expand rides beyond Lone Tree and into Meridian. In 2025, Douglas County expanded the service into Highlands Ranch. Now, Douglas County and the Town of Parker are working together to provide service in portions of Parker.

In 2026, the total investment made by Douglas County is \$4.4 million for continued service in Lone Tree and Highlands Ranch and for the expansion to Parker. Of that \$4.4 million, \$1.2 million expands the service to Parker, with the Town contributing \$250,000.

Funding for the County's portion of the program comes from the Road and Bridge Sales and Use Tax

revenue allocated for Transit and Mobility projects.

The Board of County Commissioners has also presented to Castle Rock Town Council, and the two entities are working on an agreement to expand Link On Demand service to Castle Rock soon. Additional areas of expansion are also being explored.

"Expanding Link On Demand into Castle Rock is another important step toward providing flexible, innovative transportation options that better connect our residents to work, shopping, medical appointments and community destinations," said Commissioner George Teal. "We've seen how much riders value this service in Highlands Ranch and Parker, and we're excited to bring that same convenience and accessibility to even more Douglas County residents." ■

Learn how to
book a ride
DouglasCO.gov/link



Project Zero:

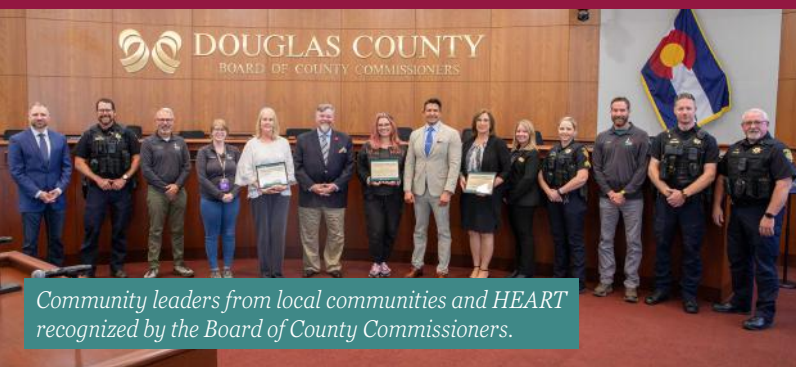
Working compassionately to end homelessness in Douglas County

On Jan. 26, 2026, outreach teams conducting the annual Point in Time (PIT) count identified zero individuals living unsheltered across Highlands Ranch and all other unincorporated areas of the county.

Behind this progress is Douglas County's Homeless Engagement, Assistance and Resource Team (HEART), an innovative program launched in 2022. HEART pairs trained Navigators with Douglas County Sheriff's Deputies to proactively connect individuals experiencing homelessness with services, shelter and long-term support.

The results speak for themselves: in 2025 alone, the HEART team conducted 1,501 proactive outreach attempts, served 332 individuals and helped 327 people access housing or shelter.

"This milestone reflects a community-wide effort—from our HEART team to our local partners and law enforcement," said Commissioner Abe Laydon. "It's something we can all be proud of, and it should motivate other communities to strive in the same direction."



Community leaders from local communities and HEART recognized by the Board of County Commissioners.



Are you or someone you know unhoused?
Visit DouglasCO.gov/HEART or call 303-660-7301 for support.

Countywide, the PIT count shows continued progress. Only four individuals across all of Douglas County were found living unsheltered outdoors, fewer than 50 people staying in vehicles or temporary shelter, and no encampments larger than one person.

Our community also did its part. Thanks to your donations through the Handouts Don't Help campaign, generosity was redirected to nonprofits helping people experiencing homelessness, reducing panhandling.

It's a milestone worth celebrating, and one that reflects what's possible when innovation, compassion and collaboration come together. ■

Number of People Experiencing Homelessness by Community

Castle Pines	0
Franktown	0
Highlands Ranch	0
Larkspur	0
Lone Tree	0
Meridian Village	0
Pinery	0
Roxborough	0
Sedalia	0
Sterling Ranch	0
Stonegate	0
Castle Rock	10
Parker	12

Property Tax Relief for Older Adults

*Explore all
tax programs
for seniors*



Did you know there are programs available specifically to help older adults find ways to save on property taxes? The Douglas County Assessor's Office is making sure every older adult has the tools needed to age well and in place.

The deadline for the Senior Property Tax Exemption is July 15, 2026. You may qualify if:

- You are 65 years or older as of Jan. 1, 2026.
- You are the property owner of record and primary resident for at least 10 years.

This exemption reduces the taxable value of your home by 50% of the first \$200,000 of actual value. Once the Senior Property Tax Exemption is approved, it stays in place until there's a change in ownership or residency. Please note: an applicant or married couple can apply for this exemption on only one property, which is the primary residence.

Visit the Assessor's webpage to learn more about this exemption, other programs for older adults and to get more of your property tax questions answered. ■

Tax Notices

The Douglas County Assessor's Office released Notices of Value on May 1, 2026.

Only properties with a change in value or a change in ownership will receive these notices—which is about 10% of Douglas County property owners.

What you need to know about Douglas County's Retail Theft Ordinance

Colorado law requires anyone who has knowledge a crime has been committed to report that crime to law enforcement. If you witness a crime or know a crime has been committed, please contact law enforcement by:



Calling **911**



Calling the Sheriff's Office:
303-660-7505



Reporting online:
dcsheriff.net/online-reporting



Douglas County law prohibits corporate policies and business practices that prevent reporting retail theft.



Douglas County law requires businesses to retain evidence of a known crime.



Douglas County law prohibits employers from retaliating against an employee that reports a crime.



Douglas County law does not punish individuals who fail to timely report a crime.



Fast, easy reporting.

The Board of Douglas County Commissioners took decisive action to end the practice of people coming to Douglas County and walking out of stores with carts of unpaid goods.





Answering Your Questions About Zebulon Regional Sports Complex

Did you know Douglas County is planning the largest delivery of new sports amenities for children and adults in decades? One piece of that puzzle is the new Zebulon Regional Sports Complex in northwest Douglas County. During the first quarter, the Board of County Commissioners made key decisions to keep the project moving forward.

What is Zebulon?

Zebulon responds to the community's call for additional sports amenities. The new regional sports complex, named for western explorer Zebulon Pike and located on 46 acres in northern Douglas County, will be a hub for youth and adult activities. Phase one could include (but is not limited to) NHL-sized ice hockey rinks, a practice ice rink, multi-sport courts, a 50 meter pool, turf fields, baseball/softball fields, a 15,000 sq. ft. fitness and lifestyle center open to all, an Academy, and a large food hall containing multiple restaurants and retail space. 185 acres of open space will be preserved around Zebulon.

Who is building Zebulon?

Following a competitive public process, Douglas County contracted with KT Development to build, operate, maintain and program the facility. KT Development has a 20-year track record of delivering large-scale community and recreation projects across multiple markets nationwide. Some of their projects include the Blue Sport Stable in Superior, Colorado; BluHawk Sports & Arena in Overland Park, Kansas; River City Sportsplex in Grand Junction, Colorado; and Wings Arena in Greenwich, Connecticut.

How much will Zebulon cost?

KT has provided a guaranteed maximum construction price of \$65 million for the facilities. The total cost of the project, including site development and utilities, is estimated at \$100 million.

How will Zebulon be paid for?

To fund the entire project—including utilities, earthwork and other infrastructure—the County plans to finance up to \$100 million via Certificates of Participation. COPs do not raise taxes and are a common way for governments to finance capital projects. Many local governments across the county and throughout the state have recently used COPs to fund capital projects. The County expects revenue generated from the facility to pay for ongoing operating costs and to repay the County's initial investment in construction.

What's next?

KT will lead program development and initial design throughout 2026. Construction is expected to begin in 2027. ■

**Learn more and
get updates**
DouglasCO.gov/Zebulon



Cone Zone Season

Summer roadwork moves Douglas County forward.

Summer in Douglas County doesn't just mean warmer weather, it signals the height of construction season, when crews take advantage of longer days to improve the roads residents rely on every day. Across the county, several major projects are underway, all aimed at easing congestion, increasing safety and preparing for future growth.

In addition to these large-scale projects, Douglas County continues its annual concrete roadway and sidewalk improvement efforts—repairing aging pavement, enhancing pedestrian access and maintaining neighborhood streets to keep them safe and functional.

“Summer roadwork can be inconvenient, and we know construction delays can test everyone's patience. But these projects are critical investments in the safety and long-term reliability of our transportation system,” said Commissioner Kevin Van Winkle. “We're asking residents to slow down, stay alert and watch for crews working along our roads. A little extra patience and caution goes a long way in helping everyone get home safely.” ■



County Line Road Widening and Reconstruction Project

This multi-agency partnership project is transforming a heavily traveled corridor used by roughly 25,000 drivers daily. The project will expand County Line Road between University and Broadway from two to four lanes, add new sidewalks, and install a traffic signal—creating a safer, more efficient route for commuters and first responders alike. Crews recently reopened a 100-day full closure where they placed 30,000 cubic yards of dirt to raise the roadway—enough to fill an Olympic-sized swimming pool over nine times!

Highlands Ranch Parkway Maintenance and Reconstruction Project

This project is designed to preserve infrastructure and extend the life of the roadway. Temporary lane shifts and reduced speeds are part of the process, as crews complete critical storm sewer and pavement improvements.

Pine Lane and Pine Drive Project

This project began in April to widen roadways, add turn lanes, and install new traffic signals. These improvements are expected to reduce congestion and improve traffic flow in one of the county's growing areas.

Roundabouts on Waterton Road at Middle Fork Street and Eagle River Street

Construction of new roundabouts will reduce delays while keeping traffic moving more efficiently—but drivers should expect temporary lane reductions, detours and shifting traffic patterns through summer 2026.

Explore projects
near you

DouglasCO.gov/ConeZone





Planning Every Drop

Countywide water plan seeks to balance future demand with available supply in one of the state's fastest-growing counties.

Water has always shaped life in Colorado, and in fast-growing communities like ours, planning for it is vital. That's the driving force behind Douglas County's 2050 Water Plan, a long-range strategy currently in development to help support a reliable, sustainable water future for decades to come. While the County does not directly provide water service, relying instead on local municipalities, districts and private providers, this plan is focused on how the County can play a meaningful role through policy, planning and conservation.

In 2023, the Board of County Commissioners created the Douglas County Water Commission, a dedicated group tasked with guiding the planning process, which is now underway. By engaging stakeholders and working alongside water providers, regional partners and community voices, the commission is helping align efforts and better understand the broader water landscape across the county.

At its core, the plan is focused on understanding future water demand and how it aligns with available supply. With a growing population, knowing how much water will be needed, and how providers are planning to meet

that need, is a central focus. The County's role is not to manage or deliver that supply, but to ensure land use decisions and policies impacting unincorporated areas of Douglas County are informed by realistic water availability.

But this isn't just a numbers exercise. The plan will take a comprehensive look at the broader water system largely led by water providers, including infrastructure, storage, conservation, reuse and long-term supply development. At the County level, the focus will likely center on policy recommendations that address water efficiency, consumption and land use practices. County leaders are working closely with municipalities, water providers and regional partners to better understand existing plans and opportunities for collaboration.

The County is currently in an active engagement phase, working with local well users, water providers and stakeholder groups to better understand community-specific challenges and shape early priorities. Broader public input is expected in summer 2026, with a final draft of the plan anticipated

by late 2026. This phased approach ensures the plan reflects both technical expertise and the real-world experience of those who rely on these water systems every day.

One of the biggest challenges? Time. Water projects—often led by providers—can take years or even decades to plan, permit and build. That's why the 2050 horizon isn't as far away as it sounds. Proactive coordination and thoughtful policy decisions today are essential to avoid shortages or costly emergency solutions tomorrow.

"In the end, the 2050 Water Plan is about more than infrastructure: it's about coordination, responsibility and protecting quality of life," said Commissioner George Teal. "By planning ahead, working closely with water providers and advancing policies that encourage responsible water use, Douglas County is helping support a future where water remains a dependable resource for generations to come." ■

Learn more about the
2050 Water Plan
DouglasCO.gov/WaterPlan





Protecting Our Most Vulnerable—Online and Off

New countywide task force seeks to protect children from online predators.

For Douglas County youth, what often begins as a simple friend request can quickly turn into something far more dangerous. Law enforcement is seeing a consistent pattern: a child connects with an adult stranger online, a conversation starts innocently and trust is built. Then it escalates into grooming, requests for explicit images and, in many cases, attempts to meet in person. Too often, those meetings are successful from the perpetrator's perspective.

"Protecting children is one of the most fundamental responsibilities we have as leaders. Through this Task Force, Douglas County is drawing a clear line: we will not allow predators to operate in the shadows," said County Commissioner Abe Laydon. "We are investing in the people, technology and partnerships necessary to find them, stop them and hold them accountable."

The 23rd Judicial District—serving Douglas, Elbert and Lincoln counties—in partnership with the Douglas County Sheriff's Office, has made ICAC enforcement a major priority. In 2024 and 2025, 83 ICAC cases were filed across the District, with more than 150 additional cyber tips under review.

"These numbers confirm what we already knew—this is not a distant problem; it's here in our community," said District Attorney George Brauchler.

"By combining elite digital forensics with relentless investigative work, we are sending a clear message: if you attempt to harm a child in our community, we will find you, and we will hold you accountable," said Sheriff Darren Weekly. "We will continue to pour every necessary resource into ensuring Douglas County remains a safe place for families."

Awareness remains critical. During the recent "Courageous Conversations: Our Children and the Internet" town hall, experts stressed that protecting children online requires partnership among parents, schools, law enforcement and the community. ■

2024

27 ICAC cases filed

by the former 18th Judicial District across Douglas, Elbert and Lincoln counties

2025

56 ICAC cases filed

by the new 23rd Judicial District

↑ 107%

Currently 150+ cyber tips under review

These interactions happen on platforms youth often use every day, including Snapchat, Instagram, WhatsApp, Roblox and Discord. For many kids, online connections feel like real friendships, making these situations even more difficult to recognize and prevent. This reality underscores the urgency behind Douglas County's growing efforts to combat Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC).

Recognizing the need for greater resources, the Board of County Commissioners funded a dedicated ICAC initiative in early 2025. What was once a single dedicated investigator has expanded into multiple full-time investigators across partner agencies, supported by a dedicated prosecutor and the 23rd Regional ICAC Task Force.

Watch the full
**Courageous
Conversation
Town Hall**



Bookmark Our New Website:



www.DouglasCO.gov



Today's online environment makes it harder to tell what is legitimate. Scam emails and convincing copycat websites are increasingly common, and even routine tasks such as paying a bill, checking property records, or finding public health information can raise a moment of hesitation. Is this site real? Is my information safe?

That's why we've recently updated our website domain name to DouglasCO.gov. This new web address reflects a focused effort to strengthen trust, improve security and keep pace with a digital landscape that is not always reliable.

Unlike .com or .org addresses, .gov domains are tightly controlled and issued only to verified government entities, with oversight from federal cybersecurity agencies. When residents see ".gov," it signals that the site is official and secure, not an imitation designed to mislead. That added layer of assurance is especially important as phishing attempts and fraudulent sites continue to grow more sophisticated.

This update also goes beyond the website itself. County email addresses have transitioned to match the new domain as well. This helps ensure that digital communication

from County offices is just as secure and trustworthy as the information on the website.

For residents, the transition is simple. Existing links and bookmarks will continue to work and automatically redirect, so there is nothing new to learn or update.

In a time when trust online can feel uncertain, even small steps that make government services more secure and reliable can make a real difference. ■

How Do I...

Find out about development projects near me?

Curious about development projects in unincorporated Douglas County? The Department of Community Development makes it easy to stay informed through its Project Records Online (PRO) hub at DouglasCO.gov/PRO.

The Department of Community Development supports the Board of County Commissioners' and their decision making processes related to land use. As part of that work, the department manages the County's planning process and provides residents with access to project information.

Residents may learn about proposed planning projects in several ways, including courtesy notices mailed to nearby property owners or Public Hearing signs posted in neighborhoods and throughout the County. These notices include a project number that can be entered into the PRO "Project Search" tool for quick access to project details.

Through PRO, users can review project descriptions, site plans, supporting documents and contact information for the assigned planner. Residents can also submit questions or comments about a project.

Not sure of the project number or address? The PRO "Map Search" feature allows users to explore both active and closed planning projects across unincorporated Douglas County using an interactive map. ■

Explore the
PRO info hub
DouglasCO.gov/PRO



**Have questions about
planning projects or need
assistance using PRO?**

*Community Development
is here to help!*

 303-660-7460

 Planning@DouglasCO.gov

Layers of Time, Seasons for Adventure

Thousands of years of history meet modern-day recreation at Rueter-Hess Reservoir

At first glance, Rueter-Hess Reservoir feels like a natural Douglas County staple: wide open skies, rolling hills and a growing network of trails drawing visitors year-round. But what many residents may not realize is just how new this landscape really is, and how far back its story goes.

Completed in 2012, Rueter-Hess is a fully man-made, off-channel reservoir developed by Parker Water & Sanitation District. The project was born out of necessity in the late 1990s, as local leaders looked ahead to rapid population growth and the need for long-term, sustainable water storage.

While the reservoir itself is modern, the land beneath it tells a much older story. Before construction, the property was home to the Rueter-Hess family, whose name lives on through the reservoir today. Even earlier, the area saw

activity tied to Colorado's mining era. Gold prospecting in nearby Newlin Gulch dates back to the earliest days of settlement, with mining operations continuing into the mid-20th century.

But the deepest history uncovered at Rueter-Hess stretches back thousands of years. As part of the reservoir's development, federally required archaeological surveys revealed extensive evidence of Indigenous life in the area dating as far back as 3000 BC. Researchers identified habitation sites, including pit houses, along with stone tools, ceramics and other artifacts. The location—where the plains meet the foothills along the Palmer Divide—offered access to water, wildlife and a more temperate climate, making it an ideal place for seasonal and possibly longer-term settlement.

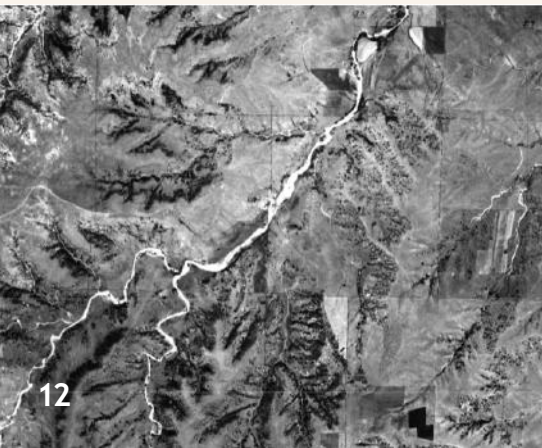
As Rueter-Hess grows in popularity for recreation, preservation

experts emphasize the importance of protecting both the natural landscape and what lies beneath. Archaeological sites are fragile and irreplaceable, and visitors are encouraged to leave the landscape as they found it.

For those interested in learning more, residents are encouraged to visit the Douglas County Virtual Museum or the “Thriving Through Time: Adaptation on the Palmer Divide” exhibit at Parker Water & Sanitation District.

Rueter-Hess Reservoir may be one of Douglas County's newest landmarks, but its story is thousands of years in the making.

Explore
the Virtual
Museum



Summer Starts Here

As summer approaches, Rueter-Hess Reservoir is gearing up for another season of outdoor adventure. Water activities returned in late March, with paddleboarding, kayaking and canoeing among the most popular ways to explore the reservoir. Visitors don't need to be experts to join in. Guests can rent equipment, sign up for paddleboard lessons or even try unique experiences like yoga on the water.

Fishing enthusiasts will also find plenty to love this summer. Whether casting from a kayak or along the shoreline, anglers can explore a variety of productive spots. Windsock Point offers access to deeper water where larger fish tend to gather, while Anglers Draw provides a quieter cove known for largemouth bass. The reservoir's fishing dock is another popular option for those looking to get beyond the shallows.

“[Rueter-Hess] is a rare gem in Douglas County, let alone for the Front Range, and it's highly worth a trip.”

“Fishing at Hess is a quiet and relaxing lake just minutes from town and my home,” says Jim S., a regular angler at Rueter-Hess. “While the fishing is definitely challenging, I always look forward to the chance to land a beautiful walleye or two for a quick picture and then send them back on their way.”

“We're wired differently than most, as we sight fly fish for grass carp,” says fly-fishers David and Stephanie C. “Yet at Rueter-Hess, if you're a fisherman it's ideal for a number of ‘cherished species’ such as Walleye, Bass, Crappie and more—the lake is clean, clear, peaceful, has a few more rules and less accessibility than most (keeping the fishing quality good) and it's close. It's a rare gem in Douglas County, let alone for the Front Range, and it's highly worth a trip.”

Beyond the water, Rueter-Hess is a haven for wildlife and bird lovers. Spring and early summer mark peak migration, bringing a surprising variety of species to the area. Birders often gather at the scenic overlook for wide, unobstructed views, while early mornings along the Coyote Loop Trail offer the chance to spot American white pelicans and hear a chorus of songbirds.

Wildlife sightings are just as rewarding. Visitors may encounter mule deer, pronghorn or even elk in the open grasslands, along with herons, ducks and raptors near the shoreline. Trails like the Newlin's Gold Trail and Incline Challenge provide excellent opportunities to experience these habitats up close, especially during quieter times of day.

Whether you're casting a line, paddling across calm water or simply taking in the view, Rueter-Hess Reservoir offers a refreshing way to connect with nature all summer long. ■



**Reservations are required.
Plan your visit today.**

DouglasCO.gov/RueterHess





Explore Like a Ranger

You're invited to explore Douglas County's 65,000 acres of open space this spring and summer. To help you discover more of our pristine public lands, we're taking some common questions straight to the experts in the field, Douglas County's Open Space and Natural Resources staff.



Open Space Quick Facts

65,000 acres *or* **100** sq. miles
of protected land

Most Popular Open Space:
**Glendale Farm &
Dog Park**

based on 2025 visitation data

Least Discovered Open Space:
Sharptail Ridge

based on 2025 visitation data

200 **Open Space volunteers**
*helped maintain trails, repair terrain
and keep weeds under control in 2025.*

Q. What trails are easiest to hike with a family including small kids?

Ranger Chase: Both Columbine loops offer great views and can be hiked by kids as young as toddlers.

Q. Where's the best sunrise/sunset view?

Ranger Lindsay: The sunrise at Lincoln Mountain is Fantastic!

Ranger Cassidy: Sandstone Ranch is a great spot to catch the golden hour.

Q. Where do we have a good chance of spotting wildlife?

Ranger Kirk: You can see mule deer at almost any Open Space. For elk, try Sharptail. Great chances for high diversity of songbirds at Dupont, Dawson Butte and Sandstone Ranch.

Q. Where's a great place to view wildflowers in bloom this summer?

Rangers Lindsay and Chase: Dawson Butte and Spruce Mountain... great wildflowers at Sandstone and the wildflowers at the top of Lincoln Mountain will surprise you!

Q. What's the best mountain biking trail?

Ranger Kirk: If you want to go a little further out, visit Swallowtail and Ringtail on Nelson Ranch or Pike Hill, you can extend those rides into the Indian Creek area or push to Waterton Canyon if you really want some miles and challenges. ■

A New Era of *Philanthropy*

The Douglas County Foundation manages and distributes charitable resources to help strengthen our community with increased transparency and accounting, while staying aligned with the philanthropic objectives of Douglas County.

You live in a thriving—and giving—community. The Douglas County Foundation is helping ensure our community has resources now, and in the future, to support a lasting legacy of giving and quality of life in Douglas County.

The Douglas County Foundation is an independent charitable organization created to support the health, safety and resilience of Douglas County.



The Foundation receives, manages and distributes charitable resources to address emergency needs and strengthen the community's well-being. Currently, The Foundation manages funds like the Philip S. Miller grants and grants associated with the

Douglas County Opioid Council, the Homeless Initiative, and the Kendrick Castillo Memorial Fund.

In March, the Board of County Commissioners began recruiting the newest members of the Board of Directors for the Foundation.

The Board of Directors will play a foundational role in shaping The Foundation's strategic direction, governance framework, fund-raising strategy and community partnerships. They will support neighbors in times of crisis and strengthen the long-term wellbeing of our community.

"The Douglas County Foundation is a trusted, independent way for charitable resources to be directed where they are needed most—helping address urgent needs today while building a stronger, more resilient Douglas County for the future," said Commissioner

Abe Laydon, whose vision initiated The Foundation. "I'm grateful to our staff and the new Board of Directors for their dedication to this effort. I'm excited to see the increased positive impact it will have for our residents, families and neighborhoods in the years ahead."

There will be several ways for the Douglas County community to connect with and be involved in the meaningful and lasting work of The Foundation. ■

**Visit our
website to
learn more:**



DouglasCountyFoundation.org



When in Doubt, Reach Out

Adult Protection Services in Douglas County goes far beyond crisis management.

It often starts with a quiet concern.

Maybe a neighbor seems more withdrawn than usual. A parent keeps falling for phone scams. A loved one is struggling to manage medications or appointments, and you're not sure how to help or who to call.

In moments like these, many Douglas County residents hesitate. They worry they'll overreact or call the wrong place. But for situations involving adults who may be vulnerable or in crisis, Douglas County's Adult Protection Services (APS) is always ready to support.

APS is a county resource designed to help adults who are experiencing mistreatment, or who may be unable to advocate for themselves, connect with the support they need. While APS often steps in during crisis situations, the team also serves as a trusted starting point for people who simply need guidance and connection to resources.

"Most people don't call because they don't know who to call," said

Douglas County APS Supervisor Michelle Kane. "We want residents to know it's okay to reach out, even if you're unsure."

APS works with adults ages 18 and older, including seniors, individuals with developmental delays, and adults experiencing cognitive impairment or dementia. Their goal is not to take control but to help people remain safe, supported and as independent as possible.

From understanding how to request neurological testing to helping families respond to scams or financial exploitation, the team offers expert guidance and resources during stressful moments. APS can play a key role in helping residents navigate complex systems, like healthcare and financial safety.

"Our goal is always to be least restrictive," Kane said. "We want to help people stay in their homes and live the life they choose."

The APS team also regularly provides trainings for older adults,

caregivers, assisted living staff and other professionals who work with vulnerable adults. These sessions are designed to empower people with practical tools and knowledge before challenges escalate into crises.

As Douglas County's population continues to age, APS remains a vital connection point for residents navigating uncertainty. Whether it's a crisis or just a question, one thing is clear: you don't have to figure it out alone.

When in doubt, reach out. ■

Adult Protection Services Hotline:

303-663-6270

If you're looking for guidance, resources, or just want to ask a question, ask to speak with an APS supervisor.

A Legacy of Support

Taxpayer-supported funds are increasing housing for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

Douglas County voters have been a powerful ally to the Intellectual and Developmental Disability (IDD) Community, supporting a life-changing mill levy in Douglas County for 25 years. The Board of Douglas County Commissioners is celebrating that powerful commitment by using a portion of those funds to continue to increase independent living for the IDD community.

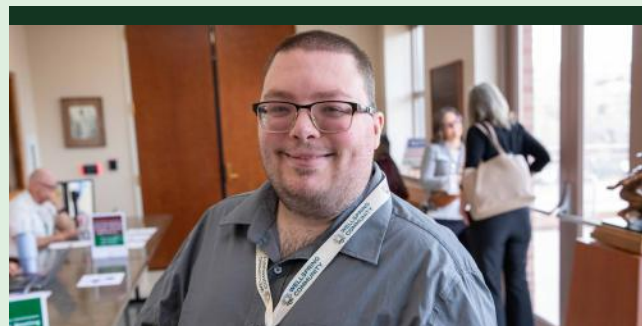
Since 2001, Douglas County has dedicated a one-mill property tax to serve the IDD community. 93% of the revenue supports Developmental Pathways, the County's Community-Centered Board. 5.5% is reserved for a competitive grant program that strengthens local services, and the remaining 1.5% covers Treasurer's fees.

The County announced in early 2026 that \$2.5 million from DDML revenues for the 2026-2028 period would be retained to launch an IDD Supportive Housing Grant Opportunity, expanding opportunities for independent living. Wellspring was identified as the top-ranked applicant. Commissioners voted to approve the grant at their March 24 Business Meeting - paving the way for a new 24-unit, project which will bring total housing units to 66.

Residents moved into Wellspring's Unity on Park in the fall of 2025. Douglas County purchased the former hotel with \$6.4 million of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds and transferred the property to Wellspring for renovations in 2023. The people who live there say having a place to call home completely changed their perspectives, hope for the future and sense of belonging. ■



Q&A with Damon, a resident of Unity on Park



What do you like about living at Unity on Park?

"It's my own space. My apartment makes me feel like I can better express myself as an individual. It also makes me feel more secure and like I have more privacy. I love having my own space."

What do you like to do in your free time?

"I like to watch movies—I'm a huge movie buff. My favorite things to watch are Disney movies and history shows. I'm hoping that I will be able to get out and do more with some of the transportation projects I'm hearing about, like Link On Demand. I would do a lot using Link. I would like to get out into the community more by going to the movies and walking around downtown."



Cutting-Edge “Grappler” Stops Danger in its Tracks

What if a dangerous police chase could be stopped before it even begins? Since its debut, the “Grappler” has already proven its value in real-world situations. In one recent case, deputies partnered with the Colorado State Patrol to stop a suspected DUI driver, using the Grappler to quickly and safely bring the incident to an end, removing a dangerous driver from the roadway without a prolonged pursuit.

Last summer, the Douglas County Sheriff’s Office introduced this specialized vehicle intervention tool, known as the Grappler, a system designed to safely stop fleeing or dangerous drivers while reducing risks to deputies and the public.

The Grappler is mounted to the front of a patrol vehicle and uses a tethered net to securely wrap around a suspect vehicle’s rear tire. Once engaged, the system brings the vehicle to a controlled stop, minimizing the need for high-speed pursuits that can endanger everyone on the road.

The Sheriff’s Office has successfully paired the Grappler with other advanced tools, including drone technology, to enhance situational awareness. In one notable nighttime incident, deputies first deployed the Grappler to disable a suspect’s vehicle; when the suspects fled on foot, drones were immediately launched to track them from above while ground units coordinated a safe response.

These layered technologies are transforming how law enforcement approaches high-risk situations—prioritizing precision and safety over traditional pursuits.

While the videos of these deployments are striking, the mission behind the technology is simple: save lives. By reducing the need for dangerous chases, the Grappler helps protect deputies, suspects and innocent drivers alike.



Watch the
Grappler
in action



As Douglas County continues investing in innovative public safety tools, the Grappler stands out as a powerful example of how technology can make roads safer—one controlled stop at a time. ■



One Less Trip, One Safer Community

The next time you clean out the garage, trim trees in the yard or wonder what to do with old paint cans, Douglas County wants the answer to be simple: load it up and make one trip.

Soon, residents will have a new local option for electronics recycling, yard waste, hazardous household materials and more, all in one place. Just as important, the same site will help turn woody debris from forest health projects into a marketable product that can help fund additional wildfire mitigation.

That is the idea behind GreenWorks, the new recycling hub coming to Douglas County, recently approved by the Board of County Commissioners.

Benefits for Residents

- **Closer Electronics Recycling**
Will eliminate an estimated 400,000 miles of annual resident travel to the current drop-off location.
- **Expanded Hazardous Waste Disposal**
The current annual participation cap will be removed so more residents can safely dispose of difficult-to-recycle household items like paint, cleaners and chemicals.
- **Expanded Slash and Green Waste Drop-off**
Will be available ~300 days per year instead of 30, making cleanup after pruning, landscaping and storms more convenient.
- **Year-round Leaf Drop-off**
Expanded from a few seasonal collection dates.

GreenWorks Timeline

May 2026	Slash and green waste operations expand from one day to six days per week
July 2026	Electronics recycling drop-off opens
Aug. 2026	Household hazardous waste disposal opens
Sept. 2026	Biochar facility begins accepting feedstock

GreenWorks will also include the nation's first county-owned biochar facility. Biochar is a charcoal-like material created by heating wood and other organic material in a low-oxygen environment. At the site, woody debris from wildfire mitigation projects, forest health work and tree removal can be processed locally instead of hauled outside the county.



Rendering of the biochar facility at the GreenWorks site.

That local outlet matters. Lower hauling costs can free up resources for additional forest health projects and help Douglas County expand wildfire mitigation across more acres. The biochar produced will be sold, helping fund facility operations and support ongoing wildfire mitigation work.

“GreenWorks brings together two things that matter to our residents: convenience and safety,” said Commissioner Kevin Van Winkle. “It makes recycling easier in your day-to-day life, while also helping us expand wildfire mitigation efforts across Douglas County.” ■

View service hours
and plan your trip
DouglasCO.gov/GreenWorks



Blasting Into the Next Chapter of Aerospace Innovation

Douglas County continues to build momentum as a hub for aerospace innovation with the upcoming arrival of Sodern, a France-based leader in advanced space technologies.

Expected to begin operations in 2026, the company's decision to relocate to Douglas County reflects both the strength of the region's aerospace ecosystem and the collaborative effort that brought them to Colorado.

"Having lived in Colorado for over 25 years, I am personally convinced it is the ideal location to open our local manufacturing operations."

Tiphaine Louradour,
CEO of Sodern America

Sodern's path to Douglas County involved a coordinated network of partners working to draw businesses to Colorado's Front Range.

State-level recruitment efforts, led by the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade, opened the door for Sodern to consider Colorado for relocation. Then, regional organizations like Denver South and the Douglas County Economic Development Corporation helped the company narrow its search to

Douglas County as it was a good fit for Sodern's culture and goals.

County teams work directly with companies to streamline processes like permitting and site development, helping them move from concept to operation efficiently and without unnecessary delays.

For residents, Sodern's arrival represents more than just a new business. Expected to bring in 20 new jobs, it reinforces Douglas County's place within one of the nation's most dynamic aerospace corridors. Located between Denver and Colorado Springs, Douglas County offers companies access to a unique concentration of industry leaders, military installations and a highly skilled workforce.

Douglas County's excellent quality of life also plays a large role in attracting companies to our community. Douglas County isn't just a place to work, it's a place to feel safe, enjoy the outdoors, stay healthy and thrive.

"With Sodern America now established in the United States, we will be able to respond faster and with greater flexibility to our customers' needs. Having lived in Colorado for over 25 years, I am personally convinced it is the ideal location to open our local manufacturing operations," said

Tiphaine Louradour, CEO of Sodern America.

Sodern's choice to make Douglas County their home represents a cycle of continued investment. As more companies select Douglas County, they bring jobs, talent and economic opportunity. That growth enhances quality of life, making the community even more attractive to future employers.



"We are thrilled to welcome Sodern America, an international aerospace company, to Douglas County! This partnership positions us as a leader in the aerospace industry, showcasing our strategic location, high quality of life and talented workforce. This investment will create new jobs in advanced manufacturing and drive innovation that will enhance our community's future," said Ellie Reynolds, President and CEO of Douglas County Economic Development Corporation.

Sodern's investment is the latest example of this momentum in action. It builds on the County's long-term commitment to support the aerospace industry while highlighting the effectiveness of strong regional partnerships.

For residents, the takeaway is simple: the same qualities that make Douglas County a great place to live are also what make it a place where cutting-edge companies want to be. ■



Get Connected to Fiber Construction in Highlands Ranch

A new hotline and information portal is helping residents stay informed.

If you live in Highlands Ranch and have noticed construction crews installing fiber lines in your neighborhood, you're not alone. Across Highlands Ranch, multiple providers are rapidly expanding high-speed internet infrastructure, and while the work can be disruptive in the short term, it's part of a much larger effort to improve connectivity for residents.

Currently, four companies—BAM Broadband, Forged Fiber, Google Fiber and Comcast—are actively installing fiber throughout the area. This surge in activity isn't random. In Colorado, telecommunications is considered a matter of statewide interest, with legislation designed to encourage competition and expand access to reliable, high-speed internet. The goal is simple: give residents more choices, better service and faster connections.

That also means these companies have the legal right to use public rights-of-way and utility easements to install their infrastructure. Under state law, local governments like Douglas County must remain

“competitively neutral,” meaning they cannot favor one provider over another or prevent them from doing business.

So where does the County fit in? Douglas County's role is focused on oversight, not control. The County issues permits, reviews construction plans and ensures that work in public spaces meets safety and maintenance standards. However, we do not have the authority to stop fiber installation, dictate which companies operate in the area or control construction timelines.

For residents, the benefits of this expansion are significant. Increased competition among providers often leads to better pricing, improved service reliability and faster internet speeds—something that's increasingly essential for remote work, education, streaming and everyday life.

That said, construction can come with temporary inconveniences, from equipment in neighborhoods to impacts on landscaping.

Providers are expected to notify residents at least 48 hours before work begins and are responsible for repairing any damage caused during installation. If you experience issues or did not receive proper notice, contacting the provider directly is often the fastest way to resolve concerns.

If you're unsure which company is working in your area or need help navigating next steps, Douglas County can assist. Visit our website for details, or call our hotline or email us for guidance.

Visit our project page for more details:

719-888-5301

HighlandsRanchFiber@gmail.com



While the pace of construction may feel overwhelming at times, it reflects a long-term investment in the community's digital infrastructure. ■



Saddle Up for Summer

The Douglas County Fair & Rodeo returns July 24 - Aug. 2.

After more than a century of grit, hard work and determination, our community's annual premier event is known as one of the best summer events on the Front Range. Prepare to experience a Fair & Rodeo like you've never seen with more music, a historic drone show, craveable food and boutique shopping. Learn more at DouglasCountyFairandRodeo.com.

July 24 | Trace Adkins

Kick off the 2026 Fair & Rodeo with legendary country music artist Trace Adkins as part of his 30th anniversary tour. Plus, stay tuned for more exciting headliner announcements as we count down to the fair.

July 26 | Farm-to-Table Brunch

Treat your senses to fresh flavors at our Colorado Farm-to-Table brunch, featuring locally-sourced food and the perfect atmosphere for a weekend social.

July 29 | Unbridled Rodeo

Cheer on the stars of our community as they try out roping, wrangling and bull riding. In partnership with Developmental Pathways, this event gives our neighbors with Intellectual and Development Disabilities a unique Fair & Rodeo experience.

July 30 - Aug. 2 | ProRodeo

Find out why all the cowboys and cowgirls can't wait to compete in one of the premiere rodeo stops in the nation.

Summer After Summer

Debbie Mills (*pictured furthest to the right*) was inducted into the Douglas County Hall of Fame in December 2025 for her two decades of dedicated volunteer work and passion for building the Douglas County Fair & Rodeo into a premier event. She was also named Committee Woman of the Year in 2025 by the Women's Professional Rodeo Association. We asked Debbie about some of her favorite experiences with the Fair & Rodeo.



When and why did you join the Fair Board?

In 2005, our oldest daughter took a chance and ran for Douglas County Fair & Rodeo Queen—and she won! We jumped into something completely new. Wanting to make her year special, I started attending Rodeo Committee and Fair Board meetings.

What keeps you coming back each year?

There's something special about watching this event come to life year after year and knowing it's woven into our community's story. Not many things stick around for 108 years! We're blessed with dedicated volunteers, committee members, Directors, and staff who care deeply about making this the best it can be.

What's your favorite Fair & Rodeo memory?

Watching our oldest daughter, Hannah, carry the American flag full speed in that arena of her Queen year in 2006, my heart was so full. Then ten years later, seeing our younger daughter Madelaine representing as Miss Rodeo Colorado in the same arena, presenting Old Glory before a sold-out crowd.

What do you look forward to most each year?

Reconnecting with faces I've known for two decades but might only see once a year; it feels like coming home. We've grown from a modest county fair into something recognized across the state and nationally, while still embracing that small-town feel.

Favorite food at the Fair?

Cherry Dilly Bars, hands down! They're practically fuel for Fair week. Our local Dairy Queen has stood by us for years.

Any advice for young people who want to keep the Western tradition alive here?

Jump into 4-H, learn to rope and ride, put yourself out there, ask questions—there's a whole world waiting and folks ready to help you discover it.

What will folks find at the Douglas County Fair & Rodeo?

A place that welcomes families with open arms and delivers honest fun. Whether you love food, live music, crafts, the outdoors, thrills, or world-class rodeo action—there's a place for you here. ■



A Vision for Veterans, Community, Fellowship and Support

Your donation can help Veterans in Douglas County thrive.

In the nearly 250 years of America's history, the men and women of the armed forces have sacrificed for the good of all. They've helped to protect the values and Constitutional rights that built our nation, our state and Douglas County.

An estimated 27,000 Veterans call Douglas County home.

These service members and their families often live with unique challenges, including physical and mental health needs, which means they also need a place to connect with the resources and fellowship to help them through life after service. ***Heroes Hall will be that place in Douglas County.***

Since 2021, Douglas County Commissioner George Teal—himself a U.S. Army Veteran—has made it a personal mission to champion the creation of this dedicated gathering place for local Veterans.

“In many communities, a Veterans' meeting place is a focal point,” he said. “What better way to honor the service of our Veterans and say, ‘thank you,’ than by giving them a home away from home. A place to be seen, heard and helped when needed.”

What Heroes Hall Will Offer

The planned 14,000-square-foot facility, plus a 7,000-square-foot basement, will serve as a central hub for Veterans and their families. It will be centrally located on a parcel at the Douglas County Fairgrounds and include:

- Offices for the Douglas County Veterans Service Office
- Space for the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars and Douglas County Veterans Monument Foundation
- Event and meeting spaces
- A conference center
- A welcoming environment designed for connection, support and advocacy

In short, Heroes Hall aims to become the beating heart of the county's Veteran community.

Our Call to the Community

The estimated cost of the project is \$19 million, to be funded primarily through private donations from community members like you—over \$5 million has been raised so far. Any amount is welcome and will make an impact. Visit the Heroes Hall Foundation website to learn more and get involved. ■

HeroesHallFoundation.org



Philip S. Miller Building
100 Third Street
Castle Rock, CO 80104

America 250 & Colorado 150 Celebrations



DouglasCO.gov/America250

Ongoing Displays & Exhibits

Exhibit | “Thriving Through
Time: Adaptation on
the Palmer Divide”

All Year | Parker Water

Exhibit | “Tracks Across Our
Land”

All Year | Parker Schoolhouse

Moments That Made Us,
A History Colorado Display
All Year | Philip S. Miller Garage

Upcoming Events

Lecture | Russellville: Land of
Golden Opportunity
June 18 | 7 p.m. | Parker Water

Drone Show at the Douglas
County Fair & Rodeo
July 24 | County Fairgrounds

Douglas County’s
Annual Fall Festival
Sept. 26 | Sandstone Ranch
Open Space

Upcoming Community Events

At Douglas County Fairgrounds

June 13 - Aug. 29	Plum Creek Valley Farmers Market
June 19 - 21	Mile Hi Barrel Horse Racing
Sat., June 20	Whiskey Festival
June 26 - 27	Rocky Mtn. Voice Freedom Festival
Sat., July 4	Rock-It Run
Aug. 14 - 16	Castle Rock Home Show
Aug. 14 - 16	Geocaching Event
Thurs., Aug. 20	Taste of Douglas County
Sat., Aug. 22	Castle Rock Police Touch-A-Truck
Aug. 22 - 23	Thrive Self-Reliance Summit

At Douglas County Libraries

**Howdy, Partner—
Let’s Read!**
*Summer reading program
for all ages with prizes*
June 6 - July 31

DCL Brew Tour
*Earn prizes by visiting
local breweries and cafes*
Aug. 1 - Sept. 30

An Evening with Crime
Author **David Heska
Wanbli Weiden**
July 18 | 6:30 p.m.
DCL Highlands Ranch

**Local Author
Showcase**
Aug. 15 | 1 p.m.
DCL Parker