



# 2025 Year in Review



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This report was prepared for the Douglas County Board of County Commissioners

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2025, Douglas County advanced critical priorities that strengthened public safety, modernized infrastructure, and deepened trust with residents—while maintaining strong fiscal discipline and responsive governance. Guided by the Board of County Commissioners' strategic focus on public safety, transportation, community engagement, and responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars, the County delivered measurable results across core service areas.

Public safety remained the County's top priority. Douglas County enhanced year-round emergency preparedness through continued investment in wildfire mitigation, training, and interagency coordination. Rapid, coordinated responses to multiple wildfire incidents limited impacts, protected lives and property, and reinforced the County's commitment to readiness. Expanded training exercises, prevention efforts, and strategic grants further strengthened resilience and emergency response capabilities.

The County made significant progress on transportation and infrastructure projects that improve safety, mobility, and economic vitality. Completion of major roadway improvements—most notably the U.S. 85 widening—addressed long-standing congestion and safety concerns while supporting regional growth. Ongoing maintenance and capital improvements reflected a balanced approach to immediate needs and long-term planning.

Douglas County continued to engage residents through transparent communication and inclusive outreach. Signature initiatives such as the State of the County, Hall of Fame, live town halls, citizen surveys, and voter engagement efforts provided meaningful opportunities for community input and participation. Countywide communications reached millions of residents and stakeholders, ensuring timely access to accurate information and reinforcing public trust.

The County also advanced community well-being through health, human services, and environmental initiatives. Prevention-focused efforts addressing substance misuse, behavioral health awareness, and sustainability reflected a proactive approach to complex challenges affecting residents and families.

Throughout 2025, Douglas County upheld its commitment to responsible governance and fiscal stewardship. Budget decisions aligned resources with Board priorities, preserved essential services, and positioned the County to meet future demands without compromising accountability.

As Douglas County looks ahead to 2026, the focus remains clear: protect public safety, invest wisely in infrastructure, engage the community with transparency, and deliver high-quality services that reflect the values and expectations of residents. The accomplishments of 2025 demonstrate a County government that is prepared, principled, and responsive—today and into the future. *(Generated in part by AI)*



## BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONER HIGHLIGHTS

- Investments in public safety and transportation infrastructure made up the bulk of Douglas



measures, which Douglas County residents continue to rank as top priorities:

- Total funding for transportation is \$225.1 million (42% of total budget), including \$20 million for the Happy Canyon/Interstate 25 interchange reconstruction and \$6 million to expand the County's free rideshare program, Link on Demand.
- Total funding for public safety is \$139.4 million (32% of total budget), including additional funding for the Wildfire Mitigation Cost-Share Program, contracting a Type 2 rapid response helicopter and Helitack team to combat wildfires, and building a dedicated Helitack Hangar as part of a Firefighting Response and Training Facility. The firefighting facility is the first phase of a larger Regional Joint Public Safety Training Complex.
- Total funding for parks and open space is \$32.6 million (3% of total budget), including \$29.8 million in partnerships with Lone Tree, Parker, Castle Rock, and Sterling Ranch to expand recreational amenities countywide. Plans include: four lighted baseball and soccer fields, four lighted multipurpose fields, two gymnasiums, a competition-sized swimming pool, two playgrounds, outdoor basketball and volleyball courts, 6 miles of soft surface trails and six miles of single-track trails

There are no new full-time positions, and no new fees or fee increases. Property owners can expect to see a 5% reduction in their property tax bill this year, and childcare providers can expect additional property tax relief in 2026 through the Commissioners' Childcare Provider Property Tax Credit.

The [Board of Douglas County Commissioners' Core Priorities](#) are the foundation for the development of the annual budget. These Core Priorities, along with your input, shape the major investments included in the annual budget, including Transportation (42% of the 2026 budget), Public Safety (32%), Health and Human Service (13%), County Services (4%), Historic and Natural Resources (7%), and Economic Foundations (2%). In 2025, the value *Freedom* was added to the diagram.



- **Douglas County Elected Officials took the Oath of Office live Jan. 14, 2025** - At 12:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 14, the elected Douglas County Commissioners were sworn into office. Commissioner Abe Laydon acted as emcee of the ceremony, and District 23 Judicial District Court Judge the Hon. Ryan Stuart administered the oath of office.

Taking the oath of office on Jan. 14 were:

- Re-elected County Commissioner, District II: George Teal
- Elected County Commissioner, District III: Kevin Van Winkle



- The Board of County Commissioners continues to pursue legal and policy measures aimed at enabling cooperation between local law enforcement and federal **immigration** authorities. In 2025, the Board took multiple formal actions to support federal enforcement efforts and oppose state laws that limit information-sharing and intergovernmental agreements related to immigration. ([video](#))



#### Key Highlights:

- Resolution Supporting Federal Immigration Enforcement: In January, the Board unanimously adopted a resolution in support of then President-elect Donald Trump's immigration policies, including the use of federal immigration and customs enforcement for lawful deportations.
- Appeal Filed: Following a 2024 Denver District Court decision to dismiss the County's lawsuit against the State of Colorado, the Board filed an appeal in June challenging three state statutes:
  - R.S. 24-76.6-102, which prohibits local law enforcement from arresting or detaining individuals for civil immigration enforcement;
  - R.S. 24-76.6-103, which restricts probation departments from sharing immigration status information with federal authorities; and
  - R.S. 24-76.7-103, which prohibits intergovernmental agreements with the federal government for immigration enforcement.
- Opposition to Sanctuary Policies: The Board continues to oppose sanctuary laws and policies at both the state and local levels, including the State Legislature's decision to block SB 25-047, which would have allowed cooperation with ICE. The Board also reaffirmed Douglas County's non-sanctuary status following the release of a federal list of sanctuary jurisdictions.
- Public Safety and Legal Immigration: The Board has consistently stated its opposition to illegal immigration, citing public safety risks and the need for local control in law enforcement coordination.

- **Douglas County Hall of Fame** - Launched in early 2025, the Douglas County Hall of Fame celebrates residents who go above and beyond in service to others. From everyday acts of kindness to lifetime achievements, the Hall of Fame recognizes those who positively impact the lives of others and exemplify community spirit. The program is an ongoing effort by the Board of County Commissioners to honor and elevate the people who make Douglas County a better place to live.



#### Key Highlights:

- Community Recognition: Created to honor residents who make a lasting impact through service, leadership and civic engagement.
- Ongoing Nominations: Nominations are accepted year-round via a simple online form open to the public.
- Public Acknowledgment: Honorees are recognized at a Board of County Commissioners Business Meeting and featured on the County's website.
- Challenge Coins: Each inductee receives a challenge coin from each commissioner as a symbol of appreciation and extraordinary service.
- Strong Launch: Two dozen individuals have been honored since the program began, with four formally inducted into the Hall of Fame.

#### County Investment:

- The Hall of Fame program is a low-cost, high-impact initiative supported by internal staff time. The County's investment is focused on outreach, recognition materials (including challenge coins) and promotion through digital platforms.

This initiative reflects the Board's commitment to community engagement, civic pride and honoring those who serve others.

#### **Communications and Public Affairs Support for Douglas County Hall of Fame**



From neighbors who lend a hand without being asked, to students pushing boundaries in the classroom and on the field to local businesses quietly giving back, Douglas County is filled with people making a difference. The Douglas County Hall of Fame celebrated several individuals this quarter on our Hall of Fame webpage, during Business Meetings, and on social media.

Communication Objective: Celebrate and raise awareness of the above and beyond efforts of Douglas County residents.

Results: Across four newsroom stories, there were a total of 934 views, while 27 social media posts generated 73,711 impressions, extending the program's digital reach. Five YouTube videos received a combined total of 975 views, providing additional engagement opportunities. The program's webpage received 371 views, further contributing to digital engagement. Media coverage included six mentions, reaching an estimated 27,050 people and delivering an ad value equivalency of \$9,738, highlighting the program's visibility and community impact.

- **A year of safety, progress and growth – watch the 2025 State of Douglas County presentation**



- Every year, the Board of Douglas County Commissioners reports on annual accomplishments achieved with and through others during the State of the County event. On Thursday, December 11, Commissioners took a look back at 2025. Crime is down. Our largest transportation project ever is complete – and we've made record investments in parks. The [State of the County event](#) highlighted these shared achievement and was aired on our YouTube channel.

#### **Communications and Public Affairs Support for State of the County**



Every year, your Board of Douglas County Commissioners reports back to you on annual accomplishments achieved with and through others during the State of the County event. This year, the theme is “Leading in a community where families flourish and businesses thrive.” Whether it’s investing in public safety, improving transportation, providing services for our most vulnerable, or ensuring Douglas County’s strong water future—partnerships across Douglas County have resulted in achievements that form the foundation for economic prosperity. The State of the County event was held in December 2025. The County’s digital assets were used to share the event with people who could not attend.

**Communication Objectives:** Demonstrate how partnerships drive accomplishments that support a strong and growing economy in Douglas County. The State of the County event annually celebrates and recognizes success accomplished with and through others.

**Results:** The newsroom published two posts, which together generated 245 views. Event attendance was strong, with 405 attendees, showing meaningful in-person or live engagement. On social media, content achieved broad visibility with 3,794 impressions, helping extend awareness beyond direct participants. The event webpage received 248 views, suggesting consistent traffic for event-related information, while the recording was viewed 263 times, demonstrating continued interest from those who were unable to attend live or who revisited the content afterward.

- **Use and Disposition of School Sites** - In the 4th Quarter of 2025, Douglas County rezoned



undeveloped school sites in Highlands Ranch and the Pinery to clarify how they could be used in the event that they are not necessary for school construction. The sites selected are in locations where limited demand for new school facilities exist, and where redevelopment of the land for uses other than low-intensity parks or open spaces would not likely be supported. This effort was undertaken in part to clarify for surrounding landowners how these sites may be used in the future, and to reinvigorate conversations between the School District, the County, and local stakeholders about how best to conserve these sites for public use.

- **Significant Board Communication Tools Utilized in 2025:**

- “The Neighbor” - Douglas County’s Magazine - The Douglas County [Neighbor Magazine](#) is a



print magazine produced by the Douglas County Communication and Public Affairs Department. The magazine is delivered to about 155,000 homes and businesses across Douglas County every quarter. Because the publication is produced fully in-house (writing, design, and photography) the magazine costs 47-cents per issue to print and mail to every Douglas County resident.

- **Communication Objective:** To promote the ‘good news’ happening across the County to all residents.

- **Results:** As part of the magazine distribution, 154,097 copies were mailed to households, providing broad community-wide

reach through print. In addition to print distribution, the magazine generated digital engagement, with 964 web views to the online version. Audience response was further reflected through 139 feedback form submissions, demonstrating that readers not only viewed the content but also took action to share input and engage more deeply with the information provided.

- [Board of County Commissioners Weekly Update](#) - The Board of County Commissioners Weekly Update is sent out each Friday to residents who have opted in to learn more about current Board work and priorities.

- **Communication Objective:** To provide transparent and timely updates to stakeholders on Board activities, decisions, and priorities.
- **Results:** The Weekly Update email reached an audience of 17,047 subscribers and delivered 36 newsletters, resulting in a total of 609,340 emails sent. Engagement remained strong, with an average open rate of 50.8%, indicating that more than half of recipients consistently opened the emails. Click-through activity averaged 1.5%, reflecting steady audience interaction with the content and continued interest in learning more through embedded links. Overall, the results demonstrate solid reach and healthy engagement across the newsletter distribution.

- [Live Town Halls](#) - The Board of County Commissioners regularly hosts Live Town Halls to connect with their community on major topics. In 2025, the Board has hosted four Live Town Halls on: the Douglas County Fairgrounds, Zebulon, Home Rule and Resources for Older Adults.



- **Communication Objectives:**

- Clearly communicate to residents how to join and engage with Live Town Halls.
- Provide residents with clear, up-to-date information on the topic of the Live Town Hall.
- Facilitate an organized and efficient manner for the public to engage with the Board and make their voice heard.

- **Results:** Across four live town halls, community engagement remained strong in-person, via phone and online. Combined, the events drew significant participation, highlighted by the Zebulon town hall with 10,742 attendees, including 250 in-person, and supported by 12 social media posts generating 7,424 impressions and 821

newsroom views. The Home Rule town hall followed with 8,709 attendees, 100 in-person, complemented by seven social media posts that reached 18,017 impressions and 2,270 newsroom views. The Older Adults town hall engaged 4,179 attendees, including 75 In-person, supported by nine social posts earning 6,656 impressions and 446 newsroom views.

- **Bringing federal dollars back to Douglas County** is a top priority for the Board of County Commissioners. Each year, the Board works closely with Colorado's Congressional delegation to advocate for Community Project Funding (CPF) and Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) that addresses the County's most urgent needs from transportation and water infrastructure to public safety. These efforts are paying off, with more than \$18.5 million in federal funding requests made in 2025 alone.

Key Highlights:

- Highway 85 Widening: \$500,000 requested to help eliminate a long-standing bottleneck and enhance public safety and mobility for thousands of daily commuters between Sedalia and Castle Rock.
- Plum Creek to Rueter-Hess Pipeline: \$1.75 million requested to support construction of a transmission pipeline and pump station, improving regional water storage and long-term sustainability.
- Louviers Water System Replacement: \$1.75 million requested to replace 12,000 feet of aging steel pipe, 86 service lines and 15 fire hydrants to ensure safe drinking water and fire protection in the Louviers community.
- Annual D.C. Advocacy Trip: Each year, the Board travels to Washington, D.C., to advocate for Douglas County's needs, building relationships with federal lawmakers and agency leaders.
- Bipartisan Collaboration: Douglas County's success in securing funding stems from partnerships with both Congresswoman Lauren Boebert and U.S. Senators Michael Bennet and John Hickenlooper, maximizing the reach of local advocacy.

- **Entryway Signs** - Significant progress was made on the county's gateway signs. The North sign design (I-25 & Lincoln) is finalized and ready for formal submission to the Colorado Department of Transportation (C-DOT). For the South sign, the board approved a new location at the Palmer Divide Avenue interchange, driven by environmental and cost considerations. The board selected a horizontal design for the South sign to preserve the County motto and ensure effective lighting, directing staff to proceed with this plan. A formal resolution was presented to the Commissioners for approval at the December 9<sup>th</sup> Business Meeting, to be included with the required submission to CDOT for its review. (Image for decorative purposes only)



- **'AAA' Credit Rating Affirmation from S&P Global Ratings** confirms that Douglas County will remain a great place to live, work, and raise a family - Out of more than 3,000 counties in the United States, only a select few achieve the coveted AAA credit rating; Douglas County is one of them. This month, S&P Global Ratings\* reaffirmed [Douglas County's AAA rating](#), the strongest

rating possible, recognizing the County's thriving economy, smart financial practices, and long-term resilience. Douglas County has had an AAA rating since August 2014. ([full story](#))

Douglas County's AAA rating not only reflects the strength of its finances but also its fast-growing economy, strategic location between Denver and Colorado Springs, and proactive planning for challenges like water supply and wildfire mitigation.

- On March 25, the Board of Douglas County Commissioners adopted a resolution to transition



from a statutory form of government to a Home Rule County Charter. Counties that have their own Home Rule Charter are granted greater local control and authority and exemptions from some state laws. Within the nine-step process, citizens had the opportunity to vote twice and provide feedback through three public meetings.

- Communication Objectives: Inform and engage Douglas County stakeholders throughout the nine-step decision-making process.
- Tactics are a mix of digital and earned media and include Douglas County's online newsroom, a new webpage, email distribution, a press conference, earned media spots, and organic social media. Additionally, to keep residents informed, the team created a new email list specifically for Home Rule.
- Results: Newsroom Post Views: 5,806; Social Media Impressions: 54,436; Facebook: 28,764; Instagram: N/A; LinkedIn: 1,594; X: 788; NextDoor: 23,290; Email Open Rate: 50.3%; Home Rule Email List Sign-Ups: 658
- Media: Total number of media mentions: 33; Estimated National Audience: 2,259,458; Estimated National Publicity Value: \$63,003; Estimated Local Audience: 230,077; Estimated Local Publicity Value: \$44,606
- In addition to the live events, the online Home Rule Q&A session drew 3,744 attendees. It was promoted through eight social media posts that received 8,550 impressions and saw 566 newsroom views. Altogether, general social media efforts—36 posts across the town hall series—garnered 40,647 impressions, while the newsroom produced 4,103 views, demonstrating consistent digital engagement throughout the initiative.

- **Annual Audit** - Douglas County continues to set the standard in public financial reporting by completing its 2024 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) well ahead of state and national deadlines. The audit was finalized within four months of year-end, placing the County in the Government Finance Officers Association's (GFOA) prestigious "Four-Month Club," and it was completed with no findings (no deficiencies, significant deficiencies or material weaknesses).

#### Key Highlights:

- Early Completion: The County received its audit opinion on April 22, 2025, well within the GFOA's six-month deadline and the State of Colorado's seven-month deadline.
- Clean Audit: The audit was completed with no findings, demonstrating strong financial controls and reporting practices.

- Robust Federal Oversight: The Single Audit, a compliance audit covering \$33.3 million in federal grants, was also completed without findings.
- New Accounting Standards: New standards from the Governmental Accounting Standards Board were implemented to enhance clarity and standardize compensated absences.
- Fund Reclassification: The Douglas County Health Department was reclassified as a non-major fund as it did not meet the 10% of government funds criteria for major fund disclosure.
- Audit Contract RFP: In line with County policy, a new RFP for audit services was issued; three firms submitted proposals, and interviews are scheduled.

### Communications and Public Affairs Support – 2025 Citizen Survey



Every year, Douglas County completes a statistically significant survey of registered voters. Hill Research Consultants designed and implemented the 2025 survey and analyzed the findings.

#### Communication Objectives:

- Inform residents how they can participate in the survey.
- Clearly communicate the results of the survey and how the Board will use it to consider priorities.

Results: Using a current list and demographic profile of Douglas County registered voters as the sample survey baseline, 3,617 total interviews were conducted April 21 – May 2, 2025. A total of 397 interviews were conducted by phone (9% cell, 2% landline), 3,220 online (11% invited, 78% open-link).

More than 15,000 subscribers to the County's online newsroom were invited to participate via a link directly to the survey the day the survey opened. Additionally, the link was posted on the County's Facebook (12,711 followers), X (15,052 followers), and NextDoor (233,693 members) social media sites.

- **Parade Entries** – Again this year, Douglas County entered the HRCA 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade and the Douglas County Fair and Rodeo parade. The Helitack crew created an exciting kick off for both



events with a helicopter flyover. Public Works featured the Invasive Weed program's new drone and snowplow and other crowd pleasers were the HEART navigators, LINK van, Rueter-Hess water safety vessel and Open Space wagon. In addition, Public Works Operations provided security support to the Douglas County Sheriff's Office by placing two truck barricades at both ends of the parade route on Highlands Ranch Parkway.



## KENDRICK CASTILLO MEMORIAL AND STREET RENAMING

- Kendrick was killed defending classmates during the STEM school shooting in 2019. Through a partnership between the Highlands Ranch Metro District and Douglas County and a successful fundraising effort in conjunction with the Douglas County Community Foundation (DCCF), Kendrick Castillo was memorialized in three ways:
  - A monument designed by Seven Stones Cemetery that was placed in Civic Green Park
  - Renaming Lucent Blvd to Kendrick Castillo Way
  - A robotic program scholarship fund to be administered by DCCF in conjunction with the Castillo family.



The fundraising effort executed in conjunction with the Douglas County Community Foundation and a 9News Word of Thanks campaign raised over \$98,000 for the monument, street signs, and scholarship fund.

Through persistent staff communication efforts and Commissioner Laydon's advocacy with the Governor's Office and CDOT, the County obtained CDOT support and approval for changing highway signs in C-470 right-of-way. Initially estimated to cost over \$1,000,000, staff worked with CDOT representatives to obtain concessions and waivers from CDOT, reducing the sign replacement costs borne by the county to under \$100,000. CDOT manufactured the signs and installed ground-mounted signs. Waivers to letter spacing rules and an allowance for abbreviations significantly reduced the size of replacement signs and allowed for the installation of bolt-on plates over existing signs rather than wholesale sign replacements.



In December 2024, Kendrick's parents, John and Maria Castillo, led a heartfelt celebration of their son's impact, [as part of a formal renaming ceremony](#) surrounded by family, friends, the Board of Douglas County Commissioners, Gov. Jared Polis, Douglas County Sheriff Darren Weekly, and other state and local representatives. The renaming honors not only Kendrick's heroism but also the strength and resilience of his family, who have worked tirelessly to ensure his legacy lives on. The process of changing signs began in late 2024 with the final signs being installed Feb. 21, 2025. **A total of 30 signs were changed in Highlands Ranch and by CDOT along C-470.**



The **Kendrick Castillo Memorial Monument** was officially unveiled on Friday, Nov. 14, at Civic Green Park in Highlands Ranch. Together, we celebrated not only the lasting tribute to a young man whose compassion continues to inspire, but also the unity of a community that came together to make it possible.

Every element of the seven-foot-tall Kendrick Castillo Memorial Monument was designed to reflect Kendrick's core values — his deep faith, love of family and friends, devotion to country, and passion for science and nature:

- A cross and Kendrick's full name, representing faith as the "Foundation of a Hero."

- An engraved American flag wrapping around the column, honoring his love for his country and belief in freedom.
- A bald eagle soaring above mountains beside an image of Kendrick sitting on his beloved Jeep, capturing his adventurous spirit and love of the outdoors.

Surrounding the monument are seven engraved boulders, each holding personal details that tell Kendrick's story — from gears symbolizing his love of robotics, to tire treads from his Jeep, to two of his favorite quotes.

The memorial was made possible through the Douglas County Community Foundation and the Kendrick Castillo Memorial Fund and Oversight Committee — a partnership between the Castillo family, the Douglas County Board of Commissioners, the Highlands Ranch Metro District, and the Douglas County Community Foundation — and through the generosity of community donors whose hearts came together in just days to bring this tribute to life.



## OPIOD SETTLEMENT

- **Regional Opioid Council Funding and Distribution** - Colorado was initially allocated \$400 million



from a \$26 billion nationwide opioid settlement reached in 2021 with pharmaceutical corporations. This settlement aims to curb Colorado's escalating overdose crisis. To distribute these funds effectively, Colorado established 19 regions, with Douglas County designated as Region 12, a single-county region.

Douglas County and all its municipalities signed the Colorado Opioid Settlement Memorandum of Understanding, which outlines the statewide framework for fund distribution. Region 12 formed a Voting Council with representatives from law enforcement, elected officials, public health, human services, and judicial sectors. Additionally, a non-voting Advisory Board of subject matter experts was appointed.

In April 2023, Region 12's first two-year spending plan was approved by the Colorado Opioid Abatement Council, and funds were released. Since then, Colorado's total anticipated settlement amount has grown to \$880 million, with Douglas County/Region 12 projected to receive \$21,849,721.60 through 2038.



In January 2024, Region 12 issued an RFQ to identify providers for programs combating the opioid crisis. By August 2024, \$1,128,889.95 was awarded to seven programs focused on Peer support and case management, transportation, youth prevention, behavior change campaigns for youth and adults and a comprehensive data analysis to support the Community Response Team.

In August 2025, Douglas County/Region 12 awarded \$630,422.14 in grants to three organizations



supporting sober living, peer support, and CRT programs. An additional \$400,000 was granted to the Douglas County Community Foundation to establish and administer the Region 12 Opioid Abatement Emergency Relief Fund, designed to assist organizations facing financial hardship due to budget shortfalls, funding delays, or increased service demand.

On September 25, 2025, the Douglas County Opioid Council launched an adult-focused anti-stigma campaign featuring stories of individuals with lived experience. The campaign aims to break down shame and stigma—key barriers to recovery—and foster a supportive community environment.

**Youth Voices Lead Positive Choices Campaign** - Did you know 94% of Douglas County teens have never misused prescription pain medication? Building on this success, the Douglas County Opioid Council launched a youth-focused public awareness campaign on November 10, 2025, celebrating healthy choices and reinforcing positive social norms among teens who choose to live

substance-free. This initiative not only promotes prevention and resilience but also delivers a critical message: "One Pill Can Kill."

Counterfeit pills containing fentanyl are a growing threat, and even a single pill can be deadly.



The campaign educates youth about these dangers while encouraging informed decisions and peer support. By combining positive reinforcement with life-saving awareness, the campaign aims to protect Douglas County teens and strengthen community efforts to prevent opioid misuse.

### **Communications and Public Affairs Support – Douglas County Opioid Council Public Awareness Campaigns**



The Douglas County Opioid Council launched two public awareness campaigns, one targeting adults and a second targeting youth. The adult campaign aims to reduce stigma and build understanding about opioid use in our community while the youth campaign works to reinforce positive social norms among youth.

#### Communication Objectives:

- Educate target audiences about the opioid crisis, the need for new abatement programs, and the background on the settlement and funding, and the purpose of the Opioid Abatement Council.
- Engage a transparent public process for investing the settlement funding.
- Transparently communicate funding decisions from the Council. Communications include RFP awardees as well as ongoing funding allocations to these organizations as they work to achieve the Council's priorities.
- In a timely manner, communicate updates and advancements resulting from the work of the organizations funded by the Council.
- Work with SE2 to advance public awareness surrounding opioid use and recovery. Ensure public-facing campaigns are tailored for Douglas County's unique community, will effectively raise public awareness and reduce stigma, and will be positively received by residents.

Results: Across two newsroom stories, there were a total of 384 views, and an additional 488 webpage views were generated through related online content, further extending the reach of the initiative. Nine social media posts contributed to broader visibility as well, generating 18,546 impressions. A single YouTube video received 412 views, helping to expand overall digital engagement.

Two press conferences attracted approximately 30 attendees each, including individuals with lived experience, community partners, and members of the media.

Media coverage was particularly strong, with 18 mentions reaching an estimated 2.7 million people and providing an impressive \$1 million in ad value equivalency, underscoring the significant visibility and impact of this initiative.

**Paid Campaign Results:** In November, the Region 12 social media campaigns delivered strong and efficient performance, generating 3.1 million impressions and nearly 19,000 clicks at an average cost per click (CPC) of \$1.24. This blended CPC reflects cost-efficient engagement across platforms, while click-through rates by channel remained steady and continued to outperform established social benchmarks.

A key enhancement during the month was the introduction of video creative, which drove a noticeable increase in engagement across the campaign. The added focus on video helped strengthen overall performance without sacrificing efficiency.

Within the adult campaign, Viant, a software run data-driven campaigns that deliver and measure results in real time, played a central role in driving video impact. The campaign delivered more than 519,000 impressions and nearly 355,000 video completions, resulting in a strong overall video completion rate of 68%. These results highlight effective audience targeting and compelling video content, reinforcing the campaign's ability to capture and hold attention throughout November.

### Response

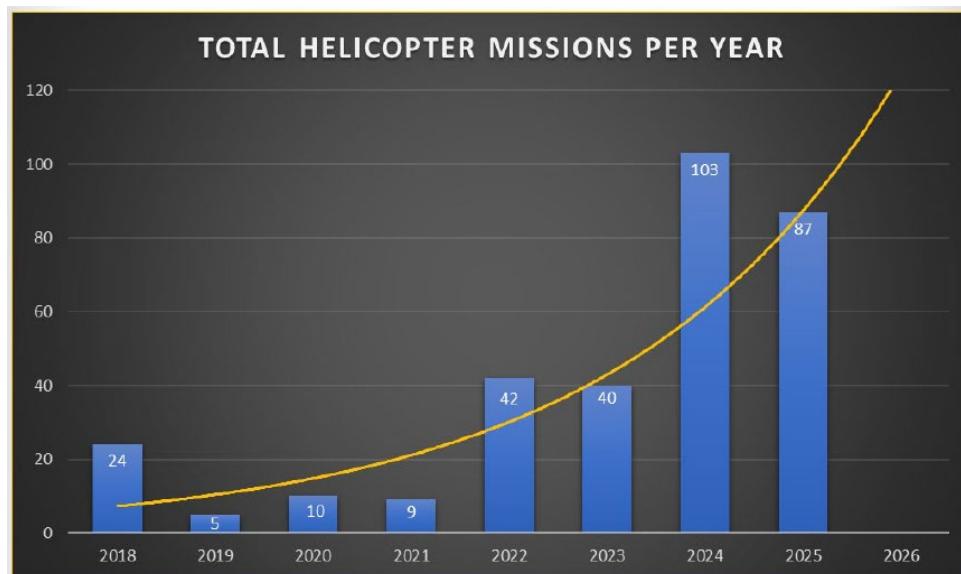
- 2025 was another successful year for the **Douglas County Helitack program**. Helicopter and crew responded to 33 total wildfires this year, including 24 within Douglas County and 9 outside. The vast majority of in-county wildfires were suppressed rapidly, kept small, and held to less than 1 acre. Out-of-County fires were typically much larger incidents threatening homes and critical infrastructure. We responded to Jefferson, Larimer, Park, Grand, Lake, and Chaffee counties in support of those incidents, and recovered all related costs.



When not fighting fires in Douglas County, Emergency Services staff supported national fire efforts and worked towards higher-level fire line qualifications. As a result of these fully-reimbursed national fire deployments, ESU staff accomplished the following professional development and operational qualifications: (1) Air Tactical Group Supervisor, (1) Helicopter Manager, (2) Helicopter Crewmembers, and (1) Faller 2.

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- Year-Round Wildfire Response** - With thousands of lives and billions of dollars in property value at stake, Douglas County takes wildfire risk seriously. In 2025, the Board of County Commissioners invested in cutting-edge tools and year-round resources to ensure faster, smarter wildfire response, especially in remote or high-risk areas ([video](#)).



#### Key Highlights:

- Rapid Aerial Response: A Type 2 firefighting helicopter, capable of carrying 300 gallons per drop, is now available year-round, enabling rapid suppression in areas that ground crews can't reach.

- Real-Time Fire Detection: The County partnered with CORE, Xcel and Pano AI to deploy AI-powered wildfire detection using real-time camera feeds for faster fire identification and response.
- Strategic Coverage: Supports wildfire protection across diverse landscapes, including high-value areas like Sterling Ranch and Highlands Ranch, valued at more than \$2 million and \$30 billion, respectively.
- County Investment: \$1.5 million in 2025

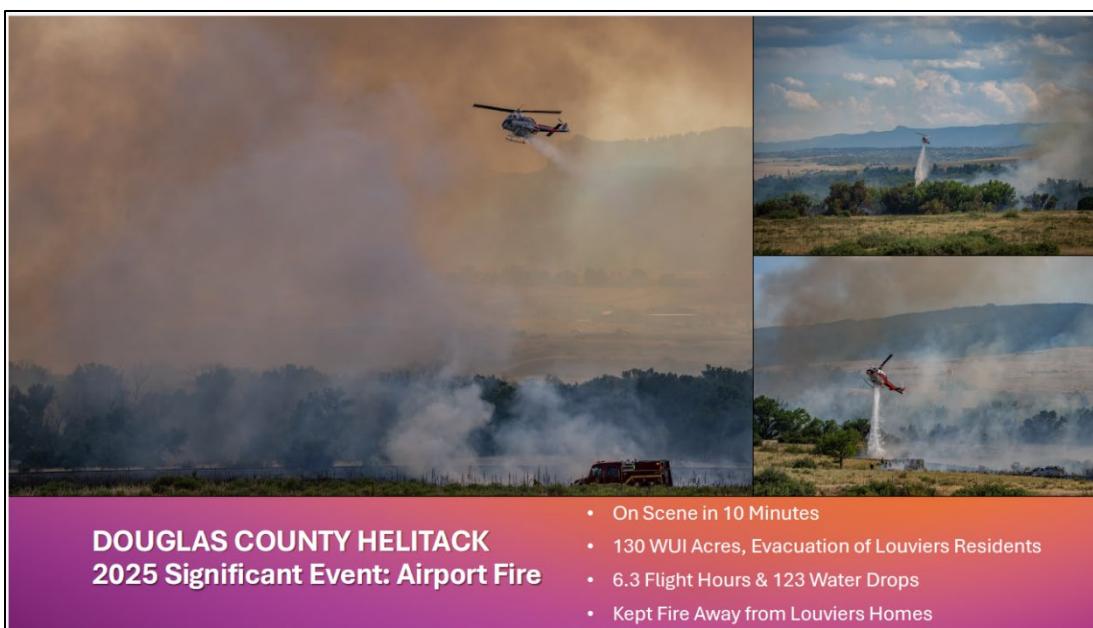
- The most noteworthy fire response of 2025 was the **Airport Fire** on July 13<sup>th</sup>. A passing train sparked numerous small fires on a hot, dry day in dead grass next to the rail line along Highway 85 between Titan and Airport Roads. Due to windy conditions at the time, these fires grew rapidly, joined together, and began threatening industrial properties and the village of Louviers. Douglas County Helibase happens to be located in the nearby area and launched immediately upon being alerted of the fire. Helitack crewmembers coordinated mission priorities and directed water drops. Helicopter 5TA was instrumental in protecting homes in Louviers, keeping the fire out of this populated community. Over two shifts, Douglas County Helicopter 5TA flew 6.3 hours and completed 123 drops totaling 36,900 gallons of water on the Airport Fire. The fire was eventually controlled at about 130 acres with no injuries or significant damage to property.



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Multiple Douglas County departments and staff contributed to the successful outcome for the Louviers community. Open Space and Natural Resources quickly opened property gates providing fire crews with quick access. When the town of Louviers was put under mandatory evacuations, OSNR staff assisted Douglas County Sheriff's Office in going door to door to inform homeowners where to go during the evacuation. Public Works Operations Wildland Fire Heavy Equipment Operators used bull dozers to remove thick vegetation and cut fire lines.



- On Saturday, April 12<sup>th</sup>, OEM, DCSO, Fire Departments and the US Forest Service responded to a



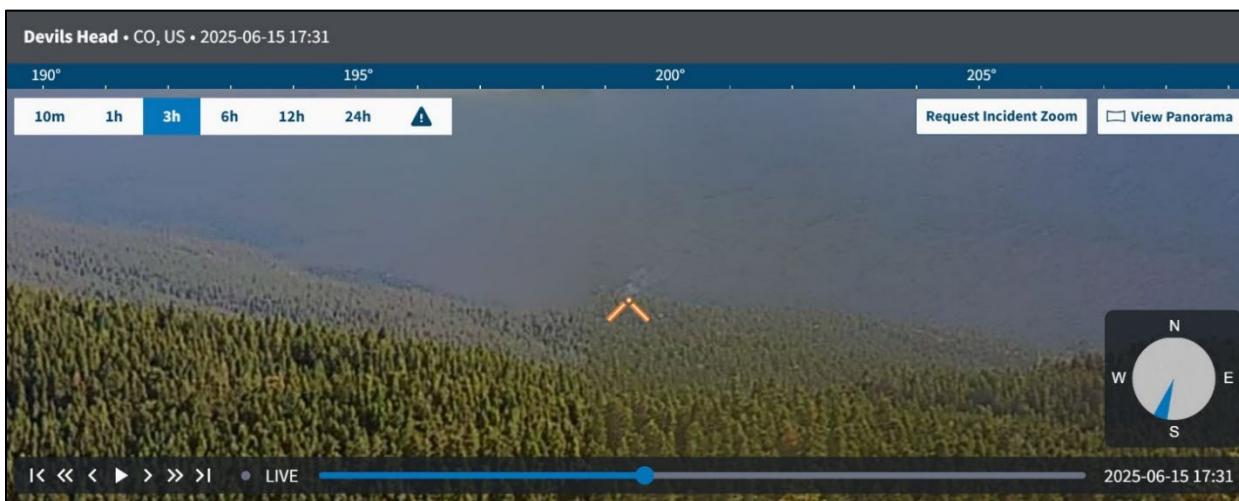
128-acre fire at the Turkey Tracks shooting area in the Pike National Forest. The accidental human-caused fire was fueled by Red Flag Warning conditions and high winds. Campers in the area were temporarily evacuated out of an abundance of caution. There were no injuries or damage to private property, and the fire was 100% contained by Monday, April 14<sup>th</sup>.

- Fire Ponds Program** - Fire pond protections were awarded at three ponds under the new state fire pond program. Staff will continue to manage and develop packages for the future and additional fire ponds in support of and in coordination with Douglas County Office of Emergency Management (OEM).

- Wildland Fire Equipment Operator Team** – In 2025, four employees received their Red Card Certification and met all the physical and training requirements needed to join the Wildland Fire Equipment Operator Team.



- Turtle Mountain Fire** - Douglas County Helitack Crew and H-5TA helicopter responded to a small wildfire on June 17 in the Pike National Forest area of unincorporated Douglas County, about 1.5 miles from the community of North Rainbow Falls. This lightning-caused fire was in very remote terrain, in fairly close proximity to the previous Bridge Gulch fire. Residents of that community were very supportive of our efforts and use of their pond again. Early warning and aggressive response kept this fire small.



- Backcountry Fire** - Lightning from a passing thunderstorm ignited a 5-acre wildfire in the HRCA Backcountry property this afternoon. Aggressive fire attack by the DC Helicopter, DC Bulldozer, South Metro Fire and assisting Fire Departments, Helitack Crew, and resources from the Airport Fire quickly contained this incident. The proximity of our Incident Command Post and already assigned resources on the nearby Airport fire aided in a rapid response. HRCA campers in the area had already taken shelter from



the thunderstorm and were never in danger from the fire. The Backcountry Fire was 100% contained at 5 acres.

- Staff received training and opportunity to collaborate on new product development for **Pano AI Fire Detection Camera systems**. This company provides AI-enhanced wildfire detection and alerting from cameras mounted on towers throughout Douglas County, Colorado, and beyond. The cameras are largely funded by utility companies like CORE and Xcel Energy, and access is given to OEM and fire departments for early alerting and response to wildfires.



### ***Prevention and Preparation***

- **Prescribed Fire at Spruce Meadows Open Space** - On November 12<sup>th</sup>, the Office of Emergency



Management (OEM), in partnership with Open Space and Natural Resources (OSNR), conducted a 384-acre prescribed burn on the Mathews Pasture at Spruce Meadows Open Space. The purpose of the burn was to reduce wildfire risk to nearby communities such as Larkspur, Perry Park, and Palmer Lake, improve wildlife habitat, soil health, and help control invasive species including knapweed, bull thistle, and yellow toadflax. The burn also provided valuable training for local fire and emergency response teams in a non-emergent scenario. Larkspur, Franktown and West Metro Fire Protection Districts, and South Metro Fire Rescue all assisted in the operation. OSNR staff monitored weather conditions - temperature, humidity, and wind during the burn. This effort demonstrates the importance of strong collaboration between county departments and local fire agencies in achieving shared land-management and public-safety goals.

#### **Communications and Public Affairs Support – Prescribed Burn**



Douglas County Emergency Management officials, in partnership with Open Space, Larkspur Fire, and other local agencies, completed the Spruce Meadows prescribed burn on Wednesday, Nov. 12.

#### Communication Objectives:

- Educate the public on what prescribed fire is and how the situation is (dis)similar to those in other western states such as California.
- Describe the benefits of prescribed fires versus unplanned fires.
- Develop consistent, templated, and uniform communications for each prescribed fire event so the public is getting the same message time and again.

#### Results

- The project generated 260 Newsroom post views and received 36,070 social media impressions. Four text alerts were sent to a list of about 80 residents in the area, notifying them of the burn date, progress and when operations were complete. In addition, 175 notification postcards were mailed to nearby property owners to ensure direct outreach and awareness.

- **Wildfire Mitigation Cost-Share Program** - Douglas County's most significant natural hazard, wildfire, requires bold, collaborative solutions. In 2025, the County expanded its Wildfire Mitigation Cost-Share Program, now in its third year. The program helps residents and community organizations create defensible space and reduce wildfire risk through 50% matching funds and expert support. Following the continued success of the County's mitigation incentive programs, the 2025 Wildfire Cost-Share Program again demonstrated high public demand and strong community support.

Key Highlights:

- Program Goals: Accelerate mitigation, reduce barriers, promote shared stewardship and improve emergency response outcomes.
- Financial Support: Match of up to 50% or \$10,000 for homeowners conducting wildfire mitigation work (up to \$25,000 for community organizations).

County Investment:

- \$500,000 plus a \$350,000 Colorado State Forest Service Forest Restoration and Wildfire Risk Mitigation Grant.



*Before (left) and after (right) of a home wildfire-mitigation project.*

This year, Douglas County invested \$764,950, which leveraged a total project value of \$1,539,975 across the county. The program funded 146 projects, including 12 community (HOA) projects—its highest number of community-scale awards to date. Priority areas remained focused on the Home Ignition Zone (HIZ), defensible space creation, and strategic fuel reduction. Applications were scored on risk, feasibility, and community benefit, ensuring funding was allocated to the highest-value mitigation opportunities. The continued growth of the program illustrates its effectiveness in empowering residents and neighborhoods to take proactive steps toward wildfire preparedness.

- **Biochar Facility** - In 2025, the team of staff members from Wildfire Mitigation, Facilities, Public Works Operations, Administration and industry consultants made significant progress in the development of this facility.
  - On July 22, the Board approved a 30 acre land lease, a design contract and three equipment purchase orders.
  - A ground-breaking ceremony was held the following day in order to secure Douglas County's place in history as the first county-owned and operated biochar facility in the US.
  - An IGA with Aurora Water was approved on December 9 to cement a partnership via a \$100,000 contribution.



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The facility is scheduled to open in July 2026 and will process approximately 12,500 tons of liability biomass annually. Once operational, it will:

- Reduce project costs by lowering transportation distances and eliminating tipping fees
- Remove green waste from county landfills
- Provide an accessible disposal option for both contractors and residents
- Generate biochar revenue that directly funds additional county wildfire mitigation projects



This project represents a major step toward creating a sustainable, circular system that supports ongoing forest health, fuels reduction, and innovation in wildfire resilience.

#### Communications and Public Affairs Support – Biochar Facility



Here in Douglas County, wildfire preparedness and resiliency are a top priority. That's why the Board of Douglas County Commissioners is investing in a biochar facility and waste diversion site to protect our communities from wildfire and improve the way we manage waste. Opening in 2026, the Douglas County Biochar and Waste Diversion Site will be the first county-operated biochar facility in the United States, putting Douglas County at the forefront of wildfire risk reduction innovation.

Communication Objective: Continue to position Douglas County as a leader in wildfire mitigation tools and technology.

- Clearly communicate to residents what biochar is, the benefits of a biochar facility, and why the facility will improve quality of life in Douglas County.
- Communicate the benefits of becoming a partner to other jurisdictions.
- Communicate to all audiences that this project is rooted in prioritizing public safety, forest health, citizen convenience, improved resilience, and practicality.
- Inform residents that the biochar site will eventually house all waste collection services.
- Clearly communicate that the facility will only use non-sellable wood and is not intended to compete with businesses in the sector.

Results: The newsroom published two posts that generated 1,920 views. Social media delivered 28,833 impressions and helped drive awareness across digital audiences. Media coverage was particularly impactful, with 19 total media mentions reaching an estimated 6.9 million people and generating an advertising equivalency value of more than \$2.5 million.

- 2025 brought **significant external investment** to Douglas County's wildfire mitigation efforts. The program was awarded two competitive state grants:
  - Forest Restoration and Wildfire Risk Mitigation (FRWRM) Grant – \$350,000, awarded by the Colorado State Forest Service to expand participation in the Wildfire Cost-Share Program.



- Colorado Strategic Wildfire Action Program (COSWAP) Grant – \$1,000,000, awarded by the

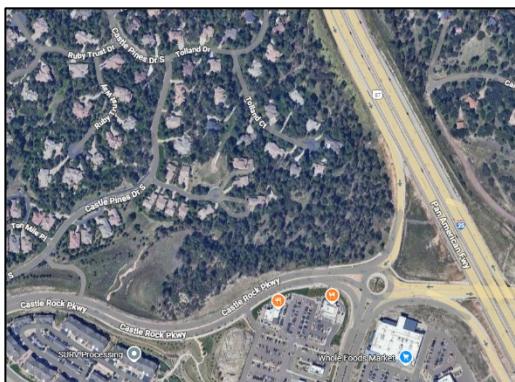


Department of Natural Resources to conduct cross-boundary forest restoration and protect the headwaters of the Chatfield Reservoir. The COSWAP project will treat approximately 500 acres of heavy timber, Gambel oak, and mixed conifer fuels across Douglas County Open Space (Schmidt Property) and nine large adjacent landowners.

These investments greatly expand operational capacity and strengthen watershed resilience across the region.

**Looking Ahead to 2026:** In 2026, Wildfire Mitigation will transition from the Building Division to the Office of Emergency Management under the Sheriff's Office. This move will strengthen the County's prevention capacity, improve coordination with fire agencies, streamline resource use, and create a more unified strategy for wildfire risk reduction. Both major grants are expected to conclude in 2026. The Cost-Share Program is anticipated to continue expanding, and the County's regional biochar facility will open, bringing new operational opportunities for large-scale fuels reduction and biomass management.

- **Partnership With the Town of Castle Rock** - Douglas County partnered with the Town of Castle



Rock and Castle Rock Fire and Rescue to mitigate a 19.31-acre Town-owned property, approximately 10 acres of which are forested. The site is located at the southeast corner of the Village Lakes at Castle Pines community and borders I-25 and Castle Rock Parkway, both known ignition sources. This fuels reduction project provides an important buffer between the Village at Castle Pines and the interstate corridor, enhancing community protection and demonstrating effective interagency collaboration.

- **Castle Rock Wildfire Mitigation** - In March 2025, Douglas County Wildfire Mitigation partnered



with the Town of Castle Rock and Castle Rock Fire to complete wildfire mitigation efforts on a 19-acre parcel of Town-owned land near the Village Lakes at Castle Pines community. Douglas County funded 75% of the project using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to support and advance the County's ongoing cross-boundary collaboration initiatives. The project effectively reduced hazardous fuels and disrupted potential wildfire spread pathways immediately adjacent to residential properties located within the Village Lakes at Castle Pines community.

- **Douglas County Wildfire Action Collaborative (WAC)** - This multi-disciplinary team is lead by Commissioner Abe Laydon and comprised of many local fire and forest management professionals, community partners, municipalities, utilities and Douglas County staff from Emergency Management (OEM), Communications, Building, Open Space and Natural Resources (OSNR), Parks, Planning, Public Works Operations, Sheriff's Office and Administration.

This year, the WAC continued to collaborate in an effort to combat wildfire risk through robust communication, advancing projects with demonstrable community benefits and formal acceptance of shared goals. A multi-pronged approach has been adopted to further maximize and coordinate resources, reduce wildfire fuel on county-owned properties, respond following the “hard, heavy and fast” philosophy to fire activity in the county and in support of our neighboring jurisdictions, and educate citizens on steps they can take to protect their lives and properties. Some highlights were:

- Initiatives and projects supported and advanced to the Board of County Commissioners for consideration were: establishment of a year-round climate controlled helicopter hangar, transfer of the wildfire mitigation section from the Building Division into the OEM, specialized training for heavy equipment operators, and ready-to-act status for Public Works staff during red flag days.
- Some of the issues addressed included: Public Safety Power Shutoff protocols, utilization



of drones to improve efficiency in the identification of hot spots, evacuation drill effectiveness, rising costs of homeowners insurance and lack of coverage, prescribed fire application in Douglas County, significant mitigation projects underway and completed, grant opportunities and awards, debriefing of active fire events, Mitigation Cost-Share program successes, conferences, exercises, proposed WUI and Wildfire Resiliency code updates and corresponding impacts, legislation, State

Forest Health Council discussions, Wildfire Awareness Month, changes to FEMA, website improvements, new and expanded community outreach opportunities, emergency funds available to assist with community recovery efforts and exploration of deploying refurbished fire equipment.

Representatives from Castle Pines North Metro District, City of Aurora, City of Castle Pines, City of Lone Tree, Colorado State Forest Service, Core Electric Cooperative, Denver Water, Douglas County, Douglas County Community Foundation, Douglas County Search and Rescue, Larkspur Fire Protection District, Parker Water and Sanitation District, South Metro Fire Rescue, Town of Castle Rock Fire and Rescue, West Metro Fire Protection District, United States Forest Service, and Xcel Energy have contributed their expertise, time, and support towards county-wide wildfire mitigation efforts including local projects, regional proposals, regulatory considerations, public education campaigns, funding opportunities and exercises.

- Staff attended a **radiological disaster training/exercise** with numerous local, state and federal agency partners. The exercise focused on identifying roles, responsibilities, and relationships

between the various agencies and individuals so that operations could be more effective and public safety enhanced.

- **Firefighting Water Tanker Exercise** – In June, the PW Ops Wildland Fire team participated in a joint exercise with OEM to practice using water tankers for firefighting support. The exercise included filling a firefighting helicopter and supplying tanks for brush trucks and other firefighting apparatus, enhancing preparedness and coordination for emergency response.

- **Community Wildfire Protection Plan** – Douglas County collaborated with the City of Lone Tree, South Metro Fire Rescue, and South Suburban Parks and Recreation District on the City's Community Wildfire Protection Plan, adopted in May 2025.



- A major planning focus area for OEM in 2025 was preparing the County for **Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS)**.



In April of 2024, Xcel Energy implemented a no-notice PSPS that de-energized a portion of Roxborough and Sterling Ranch, with significantly larger impacts to Jefferson and Boulder Counties. The lack of notice, planning, and communication from Xcel during that event caused public outcry and near-environmental catastrophe. Over the remainder of the year, Colorado's

Public Utilities Commission (PUC) and Xcel Energy invested time, money, personnel, and resources into planning a better outcome for the next PSPS. Douglas County OEM worked closely with Xcel Energy staff to draft and agree upon a PSPS guide and playbook that outlines communication protocols and expected actions before, during and after a PSPS event. This work culminated in OEM delivering a Tabletop Exercise for Douglas County elected officials and department directors on May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2025. The tabletop educated participants on what a PSPS is, what they mean for Douglas County, how to prepare for them, and what actions are expected of us and Xcel Energy.

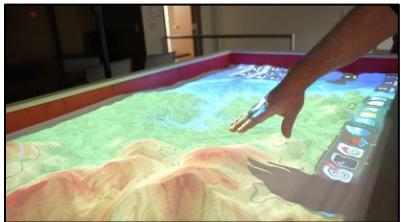
Dividends from planning, preparing, and training for a PSPS came in sooner than anticipated. On



Sunday, December 14, 2025, Xcel Energy announced to Front Range Emergency Managers that their weather and risk forecasters identified a significant wind event and extreme fire danger, resulting in a PSPS to potentially occur on Wednesday, December 17<sup>th</sup>. This announcement and initial briefing followed planning work from the previous year to attempt 72-hour notice of potential PSPS implementation. Over the following two days, OEM initiated the PSPS Playbook, stakeholder briefings, coordination calls, and weather monitoring in preparation for a potential PSPS to impact parts of unincorporated Douglas County and Highlands Ranch.

Douglas County staged additional fire suppression resources and worked with Xcel to limit or eliminate PSPS outages in the County. Ultimately, while several significant wind events, extreme fire danger, and PSPS outages did occur over the course of that week, no PSPS outages impacted Douglas County. OEM staffed the EOC for two days in preparation for extreme fire danger and potential outages, though no significant incidents occurred. Overall, this experience proved the benefit of preparing for disasters before they occur and having a plan in place to respond when they do.

- Staff attended pre-season **wildfire planning and SimTable exercise in Jefferson County**. This



exercise was designed to prepare Douglas and Jefferson County local, state, and federal agencies for large scale wildfires in the coming year. Exercise planners introduced attendees to the Incident Strategic Alignment Process (ISAP), which is a process to better align strategy, tactics, risk, and agency administrator priorities.

## MENTAL HEALTH

- **Community Response Teams** - The Community Response Team (CRT), established in 2017, by the [Douglas County Mental Health Initiative](#), pairs a law enforcement officer with a mental health professional to help adults and youth experiencing a mental health crisis avoid the emergency room or jail and, instead, find the support they need to heal. Each team member fulfills a distinct role to ensure safety, conduct medical clearance, assess mental health, and level of care needs, and facilitate connection to appropriate mental health services during and following a crisis.



The Community Response Teams and [Youth Community Response Teams](#) are unique co-responder partnerships supported by the Board of Douglas County Commissioners, Law Enforcement, Fire/EMS, and Mental Health Providers. The teams follow up on each call and offer a case management component to ensure people connect to services following a crisis. As part of our commitment to care coordination, work is underway to electronically network our immediate partners, especially hospitals.

The CRT program launched in 2017 with two teams. As of 2025, there are nine teams – including officers and deputies from Castle Rock Police, the Douglas County Sheriff's Office, Lone Tree Police, and Parker Police – with response capability seven days a week. Two of those teams focus solely on youth response, covering every school – public, private, and charter – in Douglas County.

In 2025 through October, these Community Response Teams responded to 5,418 emergency and non-emergency calls for service and provided crisis intervention, conducted important follow-ups, safety plans. Data collected thus far shows that time spent per client has almost doubled last year's statistic to 2.5 hours per person. Support for the CRTs is provided through ongoing funding from the Board of Douglas County Commissioners and participating law enforcement and Fire/EMS jurisdictions provide personnel and equipment to the community teams as in-kind program contributions. The Douglas County Community Response Team program also receives a Colorado Office of Behavioral Health grant. Future program goals include measuring successful outcomes and programs with clients during their enrollment.



- **Mental Health First Aid** - As part of the County's ongoing Mental Health Initiative, Douglas County and its partners are expanding access to free Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) trainings. This nationally recognized, evidence-based program equips residents with the skills and confidence to recognize and respond to signs of mental health and substance use challenges, helping individuals get support early, before a crisis occurs.

### Key Highlights:

- Training Provided: In 2024 and 2025, a total of 252 community members completed the full-day MHFA course, with additional sessions planned for later in 2025 and into 2026.
- Proven Impact: Research shows MHFA increases mental health literacy, boosts confidence to help others, reduces stigma and encourages use of care resources.
- Open to the Public: Courses are designed for everyday residents to recognize signs, offer help and connect neighbors to care.
- County Investment
- Program funding is made possible through a grant from the National Council for Mental Wellbeing.
- Collaborative Effort: Delivered in partnership with the Colorado Department of Human Services, Behavioral Health Administration, Arapahoe Community College Sturm Campus, Douglas County Libraries, Highlands Ranch Metro District and other local organizations.

- **The Care Compact Receives National Recognition** - For individuals dealing with complex mental



health, substance use and intellectual or developmental disabilities, compassionate and coordinated care can make all the difference. That's where Douglas County's [Care Compact](#) comes in. This unique program's groundbreaking approach links local agencies, existing case management and care coordination services to support adults who are navigating overlapping mental health challenges.

In recognition of this important work, Douglas County's Care Compact (TCC) program earned a 2025 National Association of Counties (NACo) Achievement Award in the Human Services category. This prestigious honor recognizes innovative, impactful programs that strengthen communities and improve residents' lives.

TCC, established in December 2020, serves Douglas County adults (18+) living with mental health conditions, substance use disorder, intellectual, developmental disability/delay and/or unmet basic needs through a network of case management agencies, healthcare, and social services providers. TCC streamlines care and coordinates services across multiple systems, reduces crisis service utilization, and provides a safety net for people traditionally disconnected from support. Today, the TCC network includes over 20 agencies, has served over 170 adults, made over 900 service connections. In its first year, The Care Compact reduced law enforcement contacts by 53%, crisis responses by 91%, and adult protection reports by 100%. Four years in, those numbers have stayed strong, with crisis calls down 87% after participants leave the program.



The success of the adult program has even inspired a Youth Care Compact Pilot, launched in 2024, which has already helped 24 families connect to 98 critical services.

- **Douglas County Sheriff's Office Welcomes First-Ever SRO Therapy Dog, Guster ([full story](#))** - The



Douglas County Sheriff's Office is proud to officially welcome Guster, a specially trained therapy dog, as the newest member of our robust School Resource Officer (SRO) program. Guster was generously donated by Freedom Service Dogs, marking the first time the nonprofit has placed a therapy dog with a school resource officer. The one-and-a-half-year-old Yellow Labrador Retriever was [officially sworn in](#) by Sheriff Darren Weekly.

## PUBLIC SAFETY

- **Shoplifters Beware: Douglas County is always cracking down on retail crime** - While some



communities across the country are choosing not to address retail theft, your Douglas County leaders are sending a clear and firm message: shoplifting will not be tolerated here. ([full story](#))

At a news conference Dec. 9, Douglas County Sheriff Darren Weekly, 23rd Judicial District Attorney George Brauchler, and Commissioners, Abe Laydon, George Teal and Kevin Van Winkle spoke about local shoplifting trends, the safety risks tied to organized retail theft, and a proposed County ordinance that would give law enforcement a new tool to curb these crimes.

The [news conference](#) also followed the recent Douglas County Retail Theft Summit, hosted by the Sheriff and District Attorney, which gathered regional law enforcement agencies, the County Attorney's Office, the Douglas County Economic Development Corporation, municipal partners and local businesses. Many community members have also asked the County to take additional steps to address increasing large-scale shoplifting.

### Proposed Ordinance

Following the news conference, at their regularly scheduled Business Meeting, the Board of County Commissioners unanimously approved the first reading of an [ordinance](#) intended to support law enforcement and strengthen expectations around retail crime. The ordinance would implement a state law enacted in 1979 requiring individuals or businesses with reasonable grounds to believe a crime has occurred to promptly report it to law enforcement.

### Goals of the ordinance include:

Changing public expectations amid rising leniency toward retail theft in other parts of the state and country

Discouraging any perception that Douglas County is an easy target

Supporting law enforcement by requiring timely reporting and evidence preservation

Encouraging greater collaboration between businesses and investigators

Under the proposal, businesses that are aware of a retail theft incident must report it and cooperate with investigations. Similar laws exist in Texas and Ohio. Enforcement would allow for discretion, ranging from a warning to a citation, with a maximum possible fine of \$1,000.

- In May 2025, the Board of County Commissioners approved a major investment in public safety



by **funding 12 new positions** in the [District Attorney's Office](#). This expansion ensures the office is equipped to meet growing demands from new courtrooms and rising caseloads, while advancing key priorities that protect the most vulnerable in our community.

**Key Highlights:**

- Expanded Capacity: Approved 12 new full-time positions to support new courtrooms and ensure operational readiness.
- Targeted Focus: Enhanced resources for prosecuting human trafficking, domestic violence, internet crimes against children, economic crimes and elder abuse.
- Federal Collaboration: New position enables the DA to embed a prosecutor within the U.S. Attorney's Office, strengthening interagency partnerships.
- County Investment: \$1.6 million beginning in 2026
- Investigation Support: Added capacity improves caseload management and bolsters the effectiveness of the Investigations Division and process servers.
- Strategic Investment: Builds long-term organizational capacity to meet growing demands on the criminal justice system.

• **School Resource Officer Program** - The Douglas County Sheriff's Office School Resource Officer (SRO) program is now the largest in Colorado, with 43 deputies serving schools across unincorporated Douglas County. Thanks to continued investments from the Board of County Commissioners and strong partnerships with schools, these officers provide both safety and mentorship to thousands of students daily. SROs are specially trained to work in the school environment, where they build trust, foster positive relationships and stand ready to respond to any threat while prioritizing prevention and student well-being. ([video](#))



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The Douglas County Sheriff's Office, Castle Rock Police Department, Parker Police and Lone Tree Police Department have formal agreements with Douglas County School District to provide full-time SROs in all middle schools and high schools, and full-time patrol units to service each DCSD elementary school. The Douglas County Sheriff's Office has also recently begun providing SROs in private and charter schools in Highlands Ranch, Castle Pines, and the Parker area. The Castle Rock Police Department partnered with Aspen View Academy and World Compass Academy to provide a full-time SRO to the school fully funded by the school.

The SROs are a uniformed presence in the schools, taking incident and offense reports, investigating crimes that occur on school grounds, and gathering intelligence information about potential threats to the schools. At the same time, the SROs have retained their liaison, educational, and counseling roles, resulting in a full range of interaction with students on a daily basis. DCSD also has armed managerial security personnel who oversee the security specialists and the armed district security patrol units. These armed District staff conduct safety training sessions with each school during each semester and receive extensive training from law enforcement partners in school life safety matters.



**Key Highlights:**

- Largest in the State: With the addition of seven new deputies in 2024, the Sheriff's Office now has 43 SROs dedicated to neighborhood, charter and private schools.

- **Visible Presence:** SROs greet students, support activities, patrol campuses, direct traffic during pick-up and drop-off, and provide day-to-day reassurance to students and families.
- **Student Support:** Officers are trained by the National and Colorado Associations of School Resource Officers and receive annual mental health and special education training, equipping them to address student challenges with compassion.
- **Recognition:** In February 2025, the Board declared School Resource Officer Appreciation Week to honor the deputies serving in schools. Each Commissioner also spent a day shadowing an SRO to better understand their role in safety and mentorship.
- **Life-Saving Impact:** SROs are more than law enforcement officers: they are trusted mentors and first-line mental health responders. Their presence has saved lives, including students in crisis, by building trust to enable honest conversations.

#### County Investment

- \$8 million for the 2024-2025 school year

#### **Communications and Public Affairs Support – SROs**



The 43 men and women of the Douglas County Sheriff's Office who don the uniform to serve specifically in Douglas County schools work to build positive relationships with students and stay up to date on all of the issues and challenges kids face in 2025. This compassion and service to the community are why The Board of Douglas County Commissioners declared Feb. 17 through Feb. 21, 2025, as [School Resource Officer Appreciation Week](#) in Douglas County.

#### Communication Objectives:

- Celebrate the work of School Resource Officers with a resolution in honor of School Resource Officer Appreciation Day
- Remind target audiences of the Board's investment in public safety, and specifically in school safety.

#### Results

- The newsroom post received 160 views, while social media content generated 84,323 impressions. Emails sent directly from the Board achieved an open rate of 47.8%, indicating strong engagement with our audience. Additionally, four YouTube videos were viewed a total of 1,239 times, extending our digital reach further.

- **Electric Vehicle Outreach and Education** - The Metro District has seen a significant increase in user conflict issues with riders of e-vehicles and other park and trail users. In an effort to educate users, DCSO and Metro District Park Rangers provide a presence in the first week of school on common walk to school routes to provide information on rules and regulations to parents and students. While we are still experiencing a high level of complaints the partnership has helped with addressing issues as they arise.
- **Search and Rescue Training** - On Sunday June 29<sup>th</sup>, Douglas County Open Space hosted Douglas County Search and Rescue at Dawson Butte Open Space for a training. The training focused on learning what equipment to grab for different scenarios and what information needs to be passed from the first team on scene to the following team bringing more gear. The training ended in



practicing how to secure an individual in a litter to be transported out of the field. Open Space staff participated in the training and learned valuable lessons from this ongoing partnership.



- **FIRST Task Force** - The FIRST Task Force is a multi-jurisdictional team that includes partnerships with Douglas County Sheriff's Office Financial Crimes Unit, United States Secret Service, United States Postal Service, Lone Tree Police Department, and Castle Rock Police Department. Their primary mission is to detect complex and organized crime rings and bring justice to victims across Douglas County. The unit focuses on criminal offenses, behaviors and street level narcotic trafficking based on repeated patterns and methods.  

- **IMPACT Team** - This is a regional team composed of detectives from participating jurisdictions. The team is charged with investigating crime trends and narcotics investigations to include manufacturing, distribution and trafficking.

- **Public Safety Awareness Events**

In September 2025, the Lone Tree Police Department hosted First Responders Fun Fest, a first responder outreach event at Park Meadows. Participating agencies included Police Departments from Lone Tree, Parker and Castle Rock, South Metro Fire Rescue, Douglas County Sheriff, Colorado State Patrol, South Suburban Park Rangers, and RTD Transit Police.



The Health Department (DCHD) partners with Douglas County Sheriff's Office on their semi-annual DEA National Drug Take Back days. These events provide a safe and convenient way for members of the community to dispose of expired or unused medications. This year's events occurred on April 27th and October 26th and more than 500 pounds of expired prescription and over the counter medications were collected at each event.



Castle Rock Police Department puts on an annual community event called Rally for Hope in September to erase the stigma of suicide and mental health concerns. DCHD had a table at the event in Festival Park to offer resources, support, and friendly conversation for attendees.



- **Flock Safety Update** - With more activity at our trailheads, instances of crime have been on the rise. There have been several vandalism to public property and vehicle break-ins over the past few years.



Open Space and Natural Resources staff spent the beginning of 2025 working to enhance security measures for publicly accessible properties and have implemented a system for a more secure and safe environment for trail users. In the summer, staff deployed trailhead surveillance cameras at 17 Open Space properties. This resource at our trailheads will lead to better public safety and more trust when visiting their Open Spaces. Since the Flock Safety cameras have been installed, staff has provided video evidence to the Douglas County Sheriff's Office and Colorado Parks and Wildlife Officers for infractions that occurred on Douglas County Open Space properties. Flock Safety is currently being used by the Douglas County Sheriff's Office, Castle Rock, Lone Tree, and Parker Police Departments.



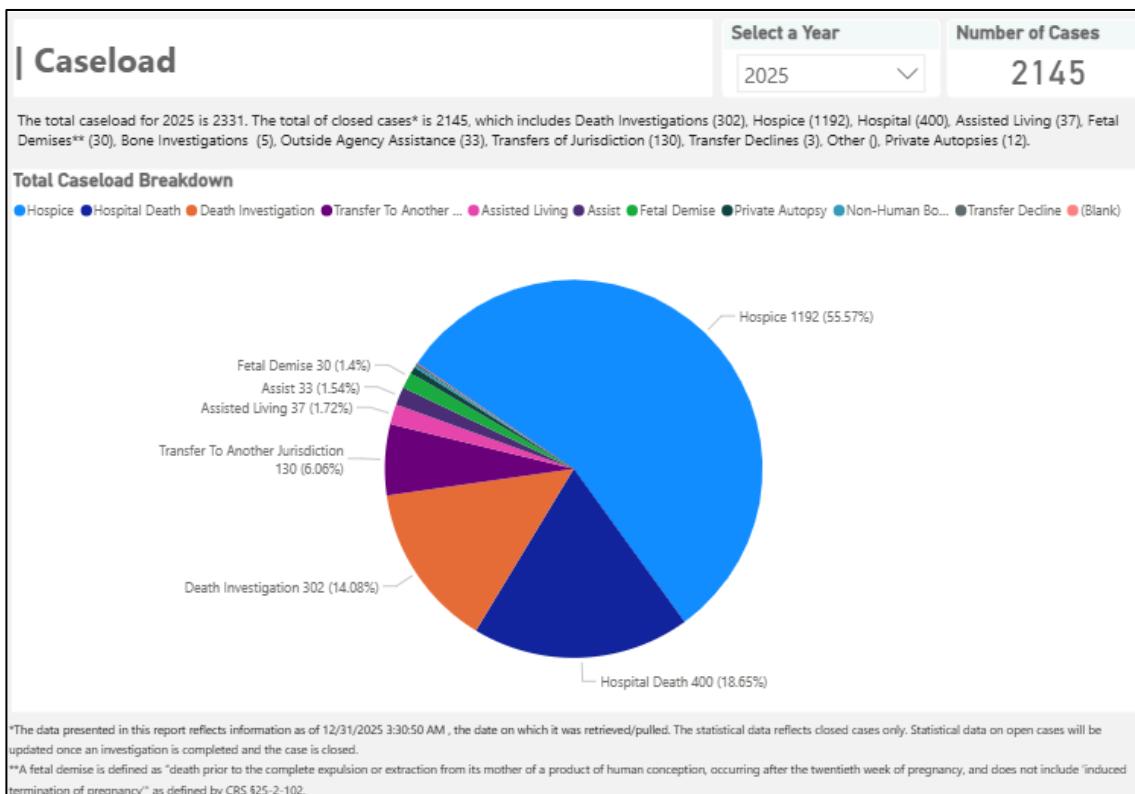
- A collaboration between the Douglas County Open Space and Natural Resources Department and the Town of Larkspur afforded the ability to install a state-of-the-art camera system for **monitoring the Frink Creamery Trailhead**. The system will enhance the safety and security for patrons of that portion of the Colorado Front Range Trail.
- **Douglas County Search and Rescue hosted at Sandstone Ranch** - Douglas County Search and Rescue (SAR) along with Douglas County Sheriff's Office Youth Academy students were hosted at Sandstone Ranch on Tuesday June 3rd for a mock Search and Rescue mission. Students braved cold temperatures and rainy weather to complete their mission. They learned the basics of a SAR mission, assisted with a subject medical assessment, patient packaging and helped with litter carryout. Students also observed how drones support searches, subject communication and experienced a drone Automated External Defibrillator (AED) drop.



- **Emergency Operations Plan** - The Town of Castle Rock updated its Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) in collaboration with Douglas County OEM and other regional partners. As the County Seat, the Town's EOP closely mirrors Douglas County's plan so that if the plan has to be activated, the Town can seamlessly transition to a County-level event.



- **Coroner's End of Year Statistics:**



- **New Parking Restrictions** - Douglas County's [parking ordinances](#) regulate recreational vehicles (RVs), commercial vehicles, and general street parking, with recent updates in 2025 restricting RVs to 72 hours on public roads in specific areas (Highlands Ranch, Chatfield Area, Parker area) and imposing fines for violations, while also addressing commercial vehicle parking and establishing Residential Parking Permit Zones to manage street parking. The County aims to address safety concerns by applying specific rules for trailers, boats, and larger vehicles in neighborhoods.



- OEM staff participated in an exercise with the Army Corps of Engineers practicing our **response to disasters at Chatfield Reservoir**. We left the exercise with stronger relationships and awareness of our critical infrastructure partners.



- **The Office of Emergency Management updates preparedness plans** - Douglas County's Office of



Emergency Management updates its Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) every five years to ensure relevance. A new EOP was officially presented to and adopted by the Board of Douglas County Commissioners at their Sept. 9 Business Meeting.

The 2025 plan is crafted with the unique needs of Douglas County and incorporates best practices and lessons learned since 2021. This includes updates from work done during various wildfires, the 2022 tornado in Highlands Ranch and the 2024 BMW Championship golf tournament in Castle Pines. The EOP is considered a core reference document in emergencies by laying out defined roles, responsibilities and actions for responders, policy makers and the Emergency Operations Center. Read the new [Emergency Operations Plan \(EOP\)](#).

## TRANSPORTATION

### Completed Road Projects

- **US 85 Widening from Highlands Ranch Parkway to C-470** - Douglas County improved one of its busiest corridors to reduce congestion and enhance safety. The [project](#) expands the highway and integrates multimodal features to support drivers, cyclists, pedestrians and transit users. Construction began in fall 2022 and was completed in late summer 2025.

This project focused on widening and reconstructing a segment of US 85 (Santa Fe Drive) from



Highlands Ranch Parkway (HRP) and extending north of C-470 Interchange to Dad Clark Gulch (located approximately 1,200 feet north of County Line Road). The current project involved completely reconstructing US 85, replacing and widening the existing bridge over C-470, and adding continuous auxiliary lanes, new asphalt paving, relocation of utilities, raised medians, curb and gutter, and a new closed storm sewer system with water quality ponds, grade separated trail crossings of US 85 for both the C-470 Trail and the High Line Canal Trail, and provided a multimodal trail along the east of US 85 from HRP to C-470. Construction began in October 2022 and was completed in late August 2025, several months ahead of schedule.

#### Key Highlights:

- Widened Corridor: US 85 expanded from four to six lanes from Highlands Ranch Parkway to just north of County Line Road, plus a rebuilt bridge over C-470. Intersection Upgrades: Major improvements at Highlands Ranch Parkway, Town Center Drive, Blakeland Drive, the C-470 ramps and County Line Road.
- Multimodal Features: New shared-use path on the east side of US 85, underpasses for the C-470 and High Line Canal Trails, enhanced bus stops and new pedestrian links from Wolhurst.
- Continuous Flow Intersections: Added for high-volume turning movements to improve traffic flow and reduce delays.
- Infrastructure Improvements: New paving, raised medians, updated drainage, water quality ponds and utility relocations.
- Collaboration: Managed by Douglas County in coordination with the Colorado Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, the Denver Regional Council of Governments, the Highlands Ranch Metro District and local developers.

County Investment: Douglas County and the Chatfield Basin Developers (Sterling Ranch and Shea Plum Creek PD / Solstice PD): \$76 million; CDOT: \$3.6 million; DRCOG/FHWA: \$29.8 million. Total project cost: \$109 million.

#### Communications and Public Affairs Support – U.S. 85 Completion



In August, the U.S. 85 Widening Project, which began in 2024, was completed ahead of schedule. This project expanded the highway from Highlands Ranch Parkway to north of C-470, enhancing safety and mobility for commuters.

**Communication Objectives:**

Provide residents with timely information on transportation projects that affect their daily commutes.

**Results**

Across 10 newsroom posts, there were a total of 37,729 views, while social media content from the same period generated 688,717 impressions. A single YouTube video received 21,935 views, extending our reach to a digital audience. Media coverage included 5 mentions, reaching 30,388 people and providing an estimated \$10,940 in ad value equivalency. The ribbon-cutting ceremony was attended by approximately 50 people.

- **Chambers Road/Bayou Gulch Road Connection** - One of the most significant transportation



improvements built in Parker in the past 25 years is now open to traffic. It will provide much needed traffic relief to adjacent roadways including Parker Road, Hess Road, Crowfoot Valley Road and Motsenbocker Road. County and Town staff dedicated thousands of hours to the review of plans, inspection of improvements, and countless meetings coordinating this project.

This regional roadway connection, which includes over seven miles of roadway, has been planned for over 30 years and was originally identified as “Parker Road Bypass.” The overall project starts at the intersection of Parker Road/Bayou Gulch Road (near Ponderosa High School) and ends at the intersection of Chambers Road/Lincoln Avenue. Douglas County and Parker Engineering established a conceptual roadway alignment in the 1990s that runs through both jurisdictions. The County and Town worked with numerous developers and multiple property owners over the past three decades to establish the final roadway alignment and intersections. The final segments of this regional roadway were completed in July through the Tanterra and Looking Glass developments in Parker, connecting Chambers Road to Bayou Gulch Road.

- **County Line Road Paving and Resurfacing** - Douglas County has partnered with the City of Centennial to resurface County Line Road (WB Chester to Quebec / EB Quebec to Yosemite) as part of regularly scheduled maintenance work. A portion of the roadway, two percent, is in Douglas County right of-way. Douglas County partnered with the City to complete the final overlay, sharing the cost of the work. The City of Centennial performed the work using contracted paving.



Each agency listed below agreed to fund the portion of the construction that corresponds with the amount of right-of-way within its respective jurisdiction: Douglas County: \$41,000, City of Centennial: \$1.18 million, City of Lone Tree: \$849, 000. The total construction costs for the final asphalt pavement overlay are estimated to be \$2.1 million.

- **West Frontage Road Relocation (AKA Dawson Trails Boulevard)** - Douglas County's portion of the West Frontage Road Relocation Project has been completed. This significant infrastructure project is a portion of the overall Crystal Valley Parkway Interchange Project aimed at improving access and safety in the southern region of Castle Rock to residents and commuters. Douglas County and the Town of Castle Rock have partnered to construct Dawson Trails Boulevard. Construction of Dawson Trails



Boulevard is split into two segments with one section being constructed by Douglas County:

- South section (Douglas County) – Douglas County's section of Dawson Trails Boulevard spans from the Tomah Road/Bear Dance intersection to the southern town limits (approximately 1 mile).
- North section (Town of Castle Rock) – The Town of Castle Rock's section of Dawson Trails Boulevard spans from the southern town limits (which roughly coincides with the location of the Lowell property along the existing West Frontage Road) to the future Crystal Valley interchange.

Now that the improvements to the southern section of Dawson Trails Boulevard are completed, it will provide:

- Widened lanes near Tomah to accommodate an eastbound left turn lane.
- Mill and overlay of the existing Tomah Road pavement.
- Shifted lanes on Bear Dance Drive to align with the new West Frontage Road/Dawson Trails Boulevard alignment.

Douglas County's portion of the project: (Construction) \$9.15 million, (Construction Management, Inspection and Materials testing): \$800,000.

- **Dransfeldt Road Extension** - The Dransfeldt Road Extension was substantially completed and



opened to the public in June 2025. This project was the recipient of the 2025 APWA Colorado Transportation Award for medium-sized communities.

The construction of this multimodal transportation link, which began in March 2024, has been in the works for over 20 years. The project extended Dransfeldt Road south from its former terminus at Twenty Mile Road to

intersect with Motsenbocker Road, just north of Salisbury Park. This fills a crucial gap in the Town's roadway network across Cherry Creek. Additionally, the project includes the construction of the longest bridge the Town of Parker has ever built, spanning Cherry Creek. The initial intergovernmental agreement to fund conceptual roadway and bridge design was executed in 2019. Prior to that, the Town completed various studies, and alternative analyses that focused on meeting project goals such as maximizing the potential for future Salisbury Park expansion, while improving pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and connectivity. The Dransfeldt Road Extension project provides connectivity to business and the Town's core with the expanding residential areas to the south.

- **Quebec Median Improvements** - Douglas County partnered with Highlands Ranch Metro District in 2025 to construct median improvements on Quebec Street between Gleneagles Village Parkway and Ashburn Lane. HRMD contributed \$170K for the improvements which included concrete work and landscaping, and Douglas County managed the contract and repaired curb and gutter in the median.



### Road Projects Underway

- **County Line Road Reconstruction and Widening** - Douglas County, in partnership with the City of Littleton, City of Centennial, and the Denver Regional Council of Governments, started construction on the County Line Road Widening and Reconstruction Project between University and Broadway in September 2025.

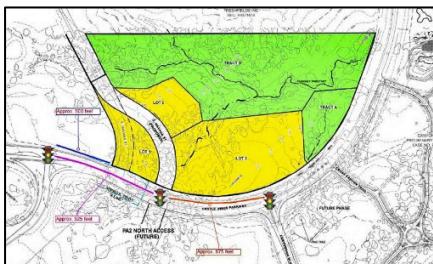


County Line Road separates Douglas and Arapahoe counties and is a major arterial road for residents, businesses and commuters in Highlands Ranch, Littleton, and Centennial. This section of County Line Road between University Boulevard and Broadway averages 25,000 road users each day. The \$34 million project will improve safety and mobility and include one additional travel lane in each direction, a new traffic signal at the Clarkson Street and County Line Road intersection, mill and overlay for the portion of road within the City of Littleton between Phillips Avenue and Broadway, and the addition of new sidewalks, which will increase safety and mobility in the area. Project completion is slated for September 2027.

- **Crowfoot Valley Road Widening** - This current construction project began in May 2025 and is implementing multimodal improvements to a segment of this regional arterial. The project will significantly enhance the safety and mobility for the traveling public in northeast Castle Rock. The project is being led by the Town of Castle Rock, in partnership with Douglas County. An additional vehicle lane is being added in both directions, along with adding bike lanes and sidewalks. Two new traffic signals are also being constructed. Project completion is targeted for the summer of 2026.

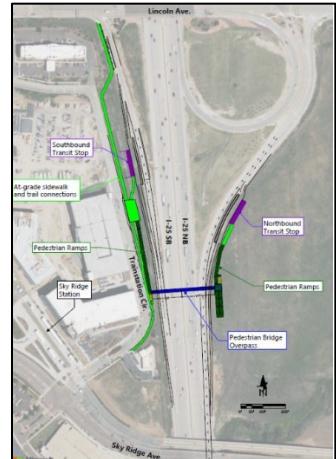


- **Havana and Castle Pines Parkway Realignment** - The County, City, and local property owner worked together to implement a plan to realign South Havana Street (aka I-25 Frontage Road) to connect with Castle Pines Parkway. These improvements will make the intersection safer and create a better overall flow of traffic in the area. The final design and agreements were completed in 2023, and construction started in 2025. The realignment is funded by the developer, and the County contributed \$500,000 to the City of Castle Pines for a new traffic signal.



- **CDOT Mobility Hub at Sky Ridge Station** - CDOT has started construction on the new Mobility Hub station in Lone Tree at Sky Ridge. Mobility Hubs are transportation centers at select locations that emphasize multimodal options, seamless mode-to-mode transitions, real-time passenger information, passenger convenience, and opportunities to create transit-friendly development in surrounding areas. This transit improvement project will consist of constructing slip ramps along the I-25 northbound off-ramp and southbound on-ramp for use by Bustang transit services, a pedestrian bridge over I-25 connecting the two transit stops, and sidewalks.

This project is planned to be complete in 2026. This is a regionally significant project that has multiple funding partners including CDOT, Douglas County, SPMID, and City of Lone Tree.



- **I-25 / Crystal Valley Parkway Interchange** - The Crystal Valley Interchange project is one of Douglas County's highest transportation priorities, designed to improve safety, reduce congestion and create vital east-west connections for the growing southern Castle Rock community. This new I-25 interchange at Crystal Valley Parkway (Exit 179) will provide a crucial link for residents, businesses and emergency services. The project will significantly enhance the safety and mobility for the traveling public in southern Castle Rock while improving access for the residents in unincorporated Douglas County and those traveling the I-25 Corridor. The project is being led by the Town of Castle Rock, in partnership with Douglas County, Colorado Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration and the Dawson Trails developer that recently re-zoned its properties to accommodate 5,850 residential units and 3.2 million sq. ft. of commercial zoning. The project is scheduled to be completed by the summer of 2027.

#### Key Highlights:

- New Interchange at Exit 179: The project includes construction of a new Crystal Valley Parkway bridge over I-25 and the BNSF Railway, with two through lanes in each direction and new northbound and southbound I-25 on-and off-ramps.
- Improved Safety and Connectivity: The new bridge will include sidewalks and multi-use trail connections, improving pedestrian access and linking the local trail system across I-25.
- Next Steps: Crews plan to complete and open the new bridge to through traffic by the end of 2025, once it connects to Dawson Trails Boulevard and the newly constructed West Frontage Road. The existing West Frontage Road will be removed to allow ramp construction to continue.
- Regional Partnership: This project is a joint effort between Douglas County, the Town of Castle Rock and the Colorado Department of Transportation, demonstrating strong regional collaboration to improve infrastructure.

#### County Investment

- \$24 million, plus \$11 million for the related Dawson Trails Boulevard project

- **Lincoln Ave/Jordan Road Widening Project** - Lincoln Avenue is a critical regional roadway that provides multi-modal connectivity to I-25 through multiple jurisdictions. The segment of Lincoln Avenue within the Town of Parker is nearing capacity and traffic congestion will continue to worsen with the anticipated growth in northeast Douglas County. The project partners initiated an Intergovernmental Agreement in 2020 to start the design on the necessary roadway widening and various multi-modal improvements. The project involves the construction of approximately 8,500 feet of roadway widening on Lincoln Avenue from Keystone Blvd. to Parker Rd., along with an additional 1,000 feet of widening on Jordan Rd. from Rockbrook Blvd. to Lincoln Ave. The project also includes thousands of feet of new and widened sidewalks and trail connections. Project construction is underway with anticipated completion in the Fall of 2026.



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### ***Future Road Projects***

- **Perry Park Avenue Railroad Crossing** - The Town of Larkspur, in partnership with Douglas County Department of Public Works and the BNSF Railway to advance repair work needed to address the deteriorating pavement near where the railroad crosses Perry Park Avenue. The proposed future repairs will enhance public safety and improve the flow of traffic through one of the Town's busiest roadways.



- **Hilltop Widening and Construction Project** - In 2020, Douglas County began planning efforts to widen and improve Hilltop Road from Legend High School to Flintwood Road on Singing Hills Drive. It was determined that the current two-lane configuration could no longer effectively accommodate the larger traffic volumes. Improvements to this vital stretch of roadway will increase mobility and safety in the area – ensuring all road users can safely use the Douglas County facilities for years to come.

The design life of this new roadway configuration is 20 years. Construction started on April 16, 2025, and Phase 1 of project is anticipated to be completed in September 2026.

- Phase 1 Schedule: Hilltop Road from Legend High School to Crestview Drive/Village Road
- Phase 2 Schedule: Hilltop Road from Crestview Drive/Village Road to Alpine Drive
  - 2024-2026: Complete final design, ROW acquisitions, and utility relocations in advance of construction.
  - 2027: Construction is anticipated to begin in 2027 (pending funding); and will take 9 to 12 months to construct.
- Phase 3 Schedule: Alpine Drive on Hilltop Road to Flintwood Road on Singing Hills Road
  - 2025-2028: Continue progress on other phases of the project, finalize design, acquire ROW, and relocate utilities.
  - 2029: Construction is anticipated to begin in 2029 (pending funding); and will take 12 to 18 months to construct.



- **Happy Canyon / I-25 Interchange Improvements** - The Happy Canyon / I-25 Interchange requires safety and traffic operation improvements. The existing bridge is nearing the end of its service life, and CDOT will need to replace it in the near future. Based on anticipated growth, traffic congestion is expected to worsen, and additional travel lanes are needed for the increased turning movements expected when entering and exiting the I-25 interchange. The proposed project includes building bike/ped infrastructure where none exists today.

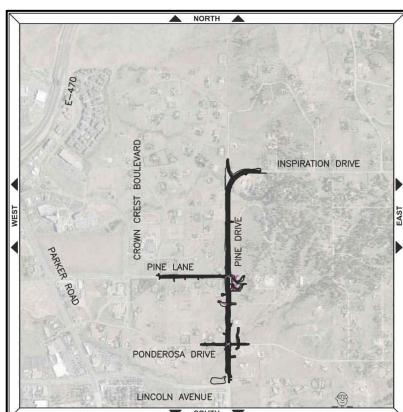


In 2024, the design work continued and the project was selected by DRCOG to receive funding for traffic studies, environmental, and design tasks, which got underway in the summer. Construction is anticipated to cost \$40 million and is planned to begin in 2026 (pending available funding). Construction will include adding slip ramps along the I-25 northbound off-ramp and southbound on-ramp for use by Bustang transit services, a pedestrian bridge connecting the two transit stops, and sidewalks.

- **Roundabout at the Intersection of Monarch Boulevard and Buffalo Trail** - As part of the City's current Monarch Boulevard reconstruction project, the City plans to construct a roundabout at the intersection of Monarch Boulevard and Buffalo Trail that will help improve safety and traffic operations at this intersection as well as at nearby intersections at Winter Berry Drive and Hidden Point Boulevard. The proposed improvements will be located within the City, and will be owned, operated, and maintained by the City.



- **Pine Drive/Pine Lane Improvement Project** – This work will extend the 4-lane roadway section



north from Lincoln Avenue to approximately 700-ft north of the intersection with Pine Lane and includes installing traffic signals at Ponderosa Drive and Pine Lane Intersections.

It will also widen Pine Lane from a 2-lane roadway section (one through lane in each direction) to include a center two-way left-turn lane between Dixon Drive and Pine Drive and provide a westbound right-turn deceleration lane at Dixon Drive.

The proposed improvements will improve safety, traffic operations and reduce congestion. The design plans are about 90 percent complete and construction is anticipated to start in

Spring of 2026, at the earliest.

## Transit

- **Advancing Lincoln Avenue (I-25/Lincoln Avenue Mobility Study)** - The project focuses on identifying long-term multi-modal transportation improvements along Lincoln Avenue between Park Meadows Drive and Oswego Street, including those needed at the I-25 interchange and Havana Street intersection. Lincoln Avenue is a major regional arterial



roadway, providing a critical east-west connection in north-central Douglas County. An updated alternative analysis is currently underway, which will include bike/pedestrian elements that can be constructed in 2027/2028.

- **Integrated Transit and Multimodal Study** - This multi-jurisdictional, regional Integrated Transit and Multimodal Study was published on July 29, 2025. The project was selected to receive funding through the DRCOG Transportation Improvement Program project selection process. The purpose of the study was to expand on previous planning efforts, identify gaps in the County transit and multi-modal transportation network; and recommend pilot projects that can be implemented to maintain and enhance transit access. It was also intended to improve multi-modal mobility; connect vulnerable populations to critical services; reduce greenhouse gas emissions; link community centers/destinations; and provide transit service that is flexible to meet changing demands. Douglas County relied on public input and technical analysis to inform the study. The County worked to understand community needs and how transit – travel by bus, train, light rail, and rideshare – can help people in Douglas County. The information gathered identified places where the current transit network does not connect people to the places they want to go, and potential near- and long-term improvements to the existing system or new connections. The final report:

- Collaborates with municipal partners, organizational partners, and the public,
- Documents existing gaps in the transit and multimodal transportation network,
- Recommends physical and operational improvements,
- Identifies pilot projects to implement, and
- Develops a framework for the sustained enhancement and expansion of transit and multimodal transportation options.

- **Link on Demand Highlands Ranch Expansion**- Link On Demand is a collaboration between the



City of Lone Tree, Douglas County, Denver South and the Regional Transportation District. It launched in 2017 to improve accessibility through a free, app-based micro-transit service. In 2025, the service area was expanded to include Highlands Ranch. The Douglas County Board of

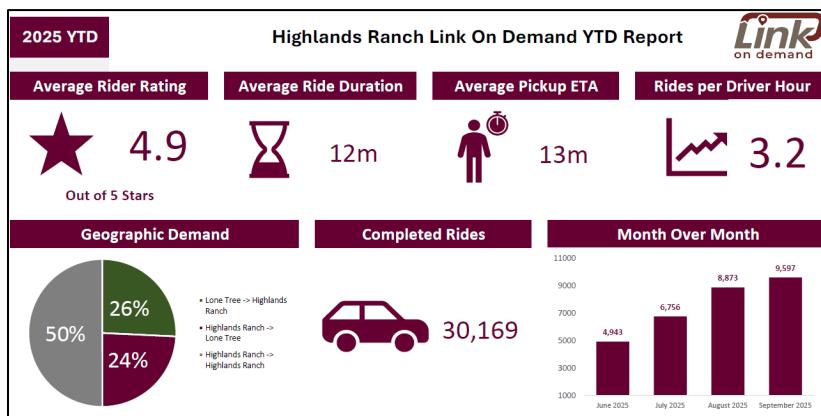
Commissioners approved a contract with Via Transportation Inc. (Via) to provide regional rideshare services to residents of Highlands Ranch. This expansion of regional rideshare builds off the success of Lone Tree's Link on Demand and is available for everyone's use at no cost to the rider anywhere within Lone Tree, Meridian, and Highlands Ranch. Eighteen vehicles are available at peak hours, with four wheelchair accessible vehicles among the fleet. The service launched at the end of May 2025, reflecting a regional commitment to innovation and improved mobility for residents, including older adults and people with disabilities. ([video](#))

**Key Highlights:**

- Contract Awarded: In March 2025, Via Transportation, Inc. was selected to provide microtransit services for \$2.9 million following a competitive RFP process.
- Launch: Service in Highlands Ranch officially launched May 27, 2025, with a ribbon-cutting at Highland Heritage Regional Park.

- Accessibility & Affordability: Rides are free to users and include a mixed fleet of vehicles, including wheelchair-accessible options.
- Performance Metrics: In the first month, 4,943 rides were completed with 97% on-time pickup performance and an average ride duration of 12 minutes.
- User Satisfaction: 1,457 new rider accounts created since launch, with 95% of riders giving the service five-star ratings.
- Community Benefits: Riders now have seamless access to human services, health care, libraries, senior centers, retail centers and RTD transit connections in Highlands Ranch and Lone Tree

#### County Investment: \$2.9 million service agreement with Via



#### **Communications and Public Affairs Support – Link On Demand**

 Beginning May 27, Douglas County residents will have expanded access to the Link-On-Demand, a free rideshare program, now including Highlands Ranch. The service is free, app-based, and designed to support students, seniors and other underserved populations.

A ribbon-cutting event was held on Tuesday, May 27, to publicly celebrate the expansion. Digital marketing was led by Via, using Douglas County's social media accounts. Via has developed a marketing and rider growth strategy, including branding, messaging, audience personas and lifecycle campaigns.

#### Communication Objectives:

- Raise awareness about the service expansion and its key benefits (free, accessible and safe).
- Educate users on how to request a ride through the Link-On-Demand app.
- Promote the ribbon-cutting event to media and community members.
- Highlight the County's leadership in innovative public transportation.
- Provide clear, accessible materials (digital and print) for all user groups.

#### Results

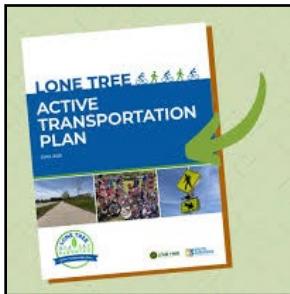
Across three newsroom stories, there were a total of 15,076 views. A single YouTube video received 499 views, contributing to our digital outreach. Media coverage included 12 mentions,

reaching an estimated 78,434 people and providing an estimated \$18,413 in ad value equivalency.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony was attended by approximately 50 people, highlighting community participation in the event. The program also supported 41,286 rides and received 8,185 webpage views, reflecting strong engagement with the service.

Paid campaigns on Meta generated 164,120 impressions across 33,600 accounts, resulting in 2,115 link clicks at a cost of \$0.60 per click. The ads were viewed an average of 4.23 times per account and received 290 reactions, 15 comments, and 67 shares, further demonstrating community interaction and interest.

- **Lone Tree Active Transportation Plan Update** - Douglas County assisted the City with their

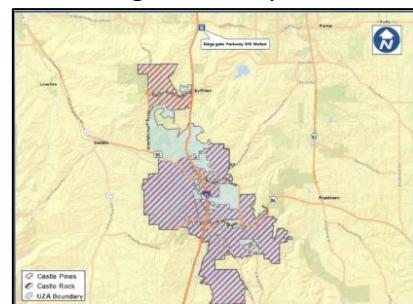


update of the Lone Tree Active Transportation Plan. The plan identifies key opportunities to significantly improve and expand the City's existing active transportation networks as well as support new facilities, policies, and guidelines. The plan envisions Lone Tree as a place with a complete, connected, and comprehensive network of trails, bikeways and walkways that provides safe, comfortable, and convenient connections to everyday destinations such as workplaces, schools, stores, and parks for people of any age or ability.

The network will allow walking, biking, and the use of micromobility to be viable modes of transportation and attractive forms of recreation, promote public health and a sustainable natural environment, and contribute to a high quality of life for area residents. The Plan also considers connections from the city to other areas of Douglas County.

- **Federal Transit Administration Direct Recipient Study for the Newly Formed Castle Rock Small Urbanized Area** - The County and the Town collaborated on the financing and completion of a

direct recipient study for transit funding from the newly formed Castle Rock Small Urbanized Area (UZA). Approximately \$1.8 million will be made available to be awarded for transit annually. The purpose of the study was to fully understand the implications and requirements of being identified as a direct recipient and how the UZA could operate. The study was intended to research all the requirements, responsibilities, pros and cons, and implications of becoming an FTA direct recipient.



The approximate cost of the study is \$80,000. The following partners pledged financial contributions: Town of Castle Rock: \$30,000; City of Castle Pines: \$10,000; and Douglas County: \$40,000. The study was completed on July 31, 2025.

## Traffic Management and Pedestrian Safety

- **C-470 Trail and University Boulevard Pedestrian Grade Separation Project** - The County is



partnering with CDOT to construct a pedestrian/bicycle bridge that will carry the C-470 multi-modal trail over University Blvd. The new bridge will improve pedestrian and cyclist safety by eliminating the need for users of the C-470 Trail to cross University Blvd. at-grade, which currently requires four separate roadway crossings, across a total of eight lanes of traffic. The proposed grade-separated C-470 Trail crossing will also improve traffic operations, since the numerous bicyclists and pedestrians currently crossing at-grade, adversely impact signal progression along University Blvd. and traffic entering or exiting the C-470 ramps, especially on the weekends when trail use is highest. Construction began on January 27, 2025 and was completed by December 31, 2025.

separated C-470 Trail crossing will also improve traffic operations, since the numerous bicyclists and pedestrians currently crossing at-grade, adversely impact signal progression along University Blvd. and traffic entering or exiting the C-470 ramps, especially on the weekends when trail use is highest. Construction began on January 27, 2025 and was completed by December 31, 2025.

- **Colorado Boulevard Bike-Ped Bridge over C-470 Project** - This project will design a bike/pedestrian bridge over C-470, along the east side of Colorado Blvd. This project is needed in order to complete a missing link in our sidewalk / multi-use path system between Siskin Avenue and the C-470 Regional Trail, and the project will improve access to David A. Lorenz Regional Park. This IGA specifies project responsibilities for each party and includes a financial contribution of \$550K in Federal Funds from CDOT, requiring local agency matching funds of \$137,500 from Douglas County. Additionally, the County is responsible for any additional design costs. In August of 2023, the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) selected this project to receive \$550K in federal funds via DRCOG's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) sub-regional project selection process; and these federal funds are to be used for design.

- **The Special Events Permits program** issues permits to community groups for special events that



traverse or have the potential to impact traffic on County roadways. Events typically consist of organized group events for running, bicycling, and parades and occasionally for fireworks and concerts. This year, there were 25 Special Event Permits issued ensuring safe operations for parades, charity runs, recycling events, and community celebrations such as the HRCA 5ks, Highlands Ranch Beer festival and Sterling Ranch Concert Series.

- **Renaissance Festival Traffic Management** - The Town of Larkspur, Douglas County Engineering and Operations Divisions, and the Douglas County Sheriff's Office further strengthened their already successful partnership from last year. This enhanced collaboration led to a marked improvement in traffic conditions surrounding the Colorado Renaissance Festival, with backups and related issues significantly diminished compared to previous years.



- **New Traffic Signals (Hess Road/Tammy Lane and Lincoln Ave/Village Creek Pkwy)** - Due to increased traffic volumes on both Hess Road and Lincoln Avenue, engineering studies indicated that traffic signals were needed at these two intersections to improve safety and access. The County and the Town partnered on the funding of these signals which became operational this past summer. As part of an ongoing partnership related to traffic signal operation, the Town will provide the necessary routine maintenance and operations of both signals.

- **Advancing Pedestrian Safety** - The division prioritized pedestrian safety improvements across the County in 2025. Projects focused on Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs), innovative advance warning systems, and speed management strategies to reduce vehicle-pedestrian conflicts.

- **Poston Parkway and Red-Tail/Firelight Trail Crossing:** Installed new solar-powered RRFBs paired with crosswalk illumination for improved nighttime visibility and continuity with the Firelight Trail system.



- **Ben Franklin Academy:** In coordination with school leadership, a new pedestrian crossing was installed on Plaza Drive consisting of new curb ramps, a median refuge island, RRFBs, and crosswalk markings.

- **Rampart Range Rd at Village Circle East:** Enhanced signage and pavement markings were installed to improve crosswalk visibility near Roxborough Intermediate School, earning community praise.



- **Diamond K Trail Crossing on S. Ranch Rd:** Following a traffic study revealing over 200 daily crossings, staff installed RRFBs, crosswalk markings, and radar speed feedback signs while reducing the speed limit to 30 MPH.

- **Dynamic Chevrons on Inspiration Dr:** Installed Sequential Dynamic Chevron signs and radar feedback displays to address frequent curve crashes, reducing roadway departures by up to 60%.



- **Pavement Marking Enhancements:** Replaced more than 45,000 sq ft of striping on University Boulevard with durable epoxy materials and reflective beads, improving safety and longevity.



Pictured left is the signalized intersection of University Boulevard at Teal Ridge Court. The eastbound travel lanes (shown on the left) show the before picture, use of water-based traffic paint; while the westbound travel lanes (shown on the right) show the after picture, use of the more durable marking.

- **Douglas County Pavement Marking Team:** In 2025, the Traffic Division continued its commitment to maintaining safe and visible roadway markings across Douglas County. This year, crews applied a total of 33,152 gallons of traffic paint on 1,300 lane miles of long-line striping, an increase of 19 miles over the previous year. Additionally, 251,955 pounds of reflective glass beads were applied to enhance nighttime visibility and overall safety.

These efforts reflect the Division's ongoing focus on roadway safety, operational efficiency, and proactive maintenance, ensuring that Douglas County's transportation network remains reliable and well-marked for all users.

- **Traffic Operations and Systems Management**

- Advanced Traffic Signal Performance Measures (ATSPM): Upgraded controllers along University Boulevard to support high-resolution data analytics and corridor optimization. Installation was completed overnight to minimize travel impacts.
- Radar Speed Feedback Sign Program: Deployed 10 rotating radar feedback signs that captured vehicle speed data to guide enforcement and engineering decisions.
- Advance Warning Signs on Lincoln Avenue: In response to this accident pattern, Advance Warning Signs were placed on both approaches to Third Avenue and will be installed for the eastbound approach only for Chambers – due to a primarily eastbound rear-end accident pattern. These signs warn drivers of the impending change of the traffic signals to reduce drivers being caught off-guard and rear-ending drivers stopping in front of them.
- Retroreflective Signal Tape: Applied to all County traffic signals to improve nighttime visibility and reduce crashes.



## Public Works, Operations Division



- Includes Gravel Roads, Potholes, Sidewalk Repair & Maintenance, Snow Removal, Street Sweeping, Household Hazardous Waste Pickup Program, and Noxious Weeds.

Numbers at a Glance	
<b>Population:</b>	<b>393,995</b>
Miles of Paved Roads:	938.8
Miles of Gravel Roads:	274.50
<b>Total Miles of Roads:</b>	<b>1,213.4</b>
Lane Miles of Paved Roads:	3,049.6
Lane Miles of Gravel Roads:	679.2
<b>Total Lane Miles of Roads:</b>	<b>3,728.8</b>
Number of Bridges:	84
Number of Culverts:	28,166
Feet of guardrail:	60,900
<b>Staffing:</b>	<b>85 FTE's</b>
<b>Budget:</b>	<b>\$18,032,433</b>

- **Service Requests** - This year, efforts continued to eliminate the service request backlog. The total backlog was below 30 service requests, with only 12 requests more than two weeks old. This year, Operations received 1,168 new service requests and closed 1,185. Our extensive efforts in project and maintenance planning have allowed us to achieve a 100% completion rate of closed requests.
- **The 2025 Pavement Management projects were completed on time, totaling \$17.6 million.**
  - Asphalt Overlay Project:
    - Paved 117,500 tons of asphalt which included 35,000 tons of high-performance Stone Matrix Asphalt (SMA)
    - Paved 31 centerline miles (86 lane-miles)
    - Paved a residential neighborhood with SMA as a pilot project with the goal of providing a surface that will require minimal maintenance over the next 20 years.

Project Name	Original Contract	Change Orders	Final Cost
Asphalt Overlay	\$11,011,969	\$2,445,515	<b>\$13,457,485</b>

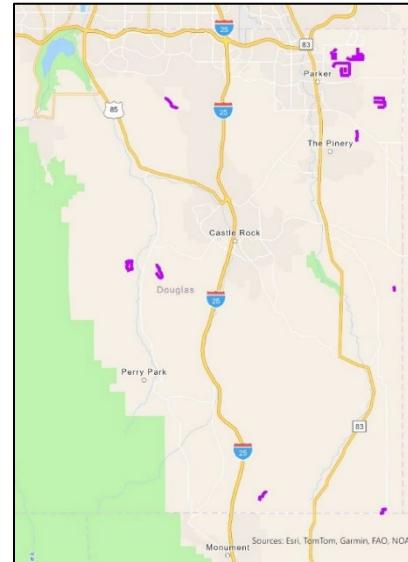
- Sidewalk Repair and ADA Curb Retrofit Project:

- Performed concrete repair work in Bell Cross, Dutch Creek, Lincoln Creek neighborhoods as well as additional areas within Highlands Ranch
- Replaced broken concrete panels on Gleneagles Village Parkway, Plaza Drive, Colorado Boulevard at C470 and on University west of Quebec.
- Installed safety improvement infrastructure at Waterton Rd. and Campfire St., E. Parker Rd. and Miller Rd., and Plaza Dr. at Ben Franklin Academy.

Project Name	Original Contract	Change Orders	Final Cost
Sidewalk Repair	\$2,737,650	\$1,403,455	<b>\$4,141,105</b>

- **Gravel Road Paving Program:** Douglas County maintains over 274 miles of gravel roads, which is 23% of its network. These roads are vital but require frequent grading and generate about 10% of service requests due to dust, mud, and wear. Maintenance of gravel roads also uses more mixed aggregate, a non-renewable resource, per mile, per year than does maintenance of paved roads. (6.5 of the network.). (Image right of 2025 Gravel Road Paving Completions)

With many experienced grader operators nearing retirement and training replacements taking years, Public Works launched a 20-year plan to pave gravel roads as funding allows. The pavement management team has partnered with operations to deliver these projects. Operations provide grading and drainage work, and the pavement management team uses the asphalt overlay contractor to pave the roads.



In 2025, 18 miles were paved, including:

- Grigs Road Phase I Paving Project: Phase I of the Grigs Road paving project, covering the first mile from N. Daniels Park Road to the East-West Regional Trailhead and Pavilion parking lot, was completed in September of this year—ten days ahead of schedule. Grigs Road, a two-mile gravel road and the last gravel connection to Highlands Ranch, had historically required frequent maintenance. Paving this section helps reduce long-term costs while improving safety and driving conditions.

Phase I included extensive earthwork to level grades, installation of new curb and gutter, drainage enhancements with eight new inlet structures, and upgrading metal pipe culverts to reinforced concrete. The surface was paved with Stone Mastic Asphalt (SMA) for durability and performance. A temporary road closure ensured public safety and allowed the contractor to follow an accelerated schedule.



- Palmer Divide Avenue Paving Project: The final phase of construction on Palmer Divide



Avenue, between Black Forest Road and S. East Cherry Creek Road, was completed on June 25, 2025, concluding a multi-year project to extend paving across two miles. The improvements enhance roadway infrastructure in southeast Douglas County, improving connectivity and transportation efficiency. The project, completed in three

phases over four years, had a combined cost of \$2.58 million, reflecting a 20% increase in construction costs during that period.

- **Railroad Crossing Projects** - In collaboration with the Town of Larkspur and Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railroad, completed upgrades to the at-grade railroad crossing at Perry Park Avenue. Serving local residents and providing primary access to Larkspur's summer Renaissance Festival, the crossing received surface improvements funded jointly by Douglas County and BNSF, with BNSF crews performing the work. County Traffic Operations enhanced the crossing with updated pavement markings and signage, improving safety and traffic flow for all users.

Douglas County is under contract with BNSF for improvements to the crossing at Yucca Hills Road. A concrete crossing surface is planned for construction. BNSF will perform the work.

- **Guardrail Repair Program** - The guardrail repair program continues to enhance roadway safety through proactive planning and timely repairs. Management continues to use the comprehensive guardrail inventory. This has allowed staff to prioritize repairs while responding quickly to emergencies. This year, new installations were completed at the following locations: Grace Blvd. and Fairview Pkwy, 671 Hwy 67, and Tomahawk Rd. and E. Cherokee Ln. Collaboration with Risk Management helps secure insurance funding for accident-related damage, ensuring efficient use of County resources and maintaining safe roadways for all users.

- **Road Stabilization Pilot Project** - PW Operations constructed the Gravel Road Stabilization Pilot Project on Greenland Road east of I-25. The project will test the performance of three different gravel road stabilizers placed in one-mile sections to see how they perform over the next several months.



With over 250 miles of gravel roads to maintain, finding the most cost-effective and long-lasting stabilizer for differing traffic, environmental and geometric conditions will help Public Works

continue to provide a high level of performance and customer service to our residents while keeping costs as low as possible.

- **Work Performed on Douglas County Properties or for Partners**

- Bayou Gulch Regional Park (Main Lots): The top layer of asphalt was milled off this 6,000 square foot lot and replaced with a new 2" layer of asphalt. The lot was also restriped.
- Bingham Lake (East and West Lots): The top layer of asphalt was milled off these 31,365 square foot lots and replaced with a new 2" layer of asphalt. The lots were also restriped. (not pictured)
- Pinery Park (East and West Lots): The top layer of asphalt was milled off this 130,000 square foot lot and replaced with a new 2" layer of asphalt and the lot was restriped.
- Daniels Park Trailhead: The top layer of asphalt was milled off these 32,200 square foot lots and replaced with a new 2" layer of asphalt and the lots were restriped.
- Miller Building: Concrete repairs near the north parking lot and around the building were performed, as well as constructing a new 2" top layer of asphalt on the north parking lot. Additionally, a sidewalk section was constructed to add more parking spaces. The parking spaces were constructed by the Town of Castle Rock.
- Wilcox Building: Concrete repairs near the parking lots and around the building were performed, as well as constructing a new 2" top layer of asphalt on both parking lots.
- Louvier's Clubhouse: Due to all the trip hazards that the old flagstone pavers were creating, all the pavers were removed and reset to create a smooth walking surface.
- Douglas County Justice Center: Concrete sidewalk, curb and gutter throughout the facility were repaired and a new 2" top layer of asphalt on the inner parking lot was constructed.
- Douglas County Sheriff's Substation: Concrete sidewalk, curb and gutter throughout the facility were repaired. As well as constructing a new 2" top layer of asphalt on the upper parking lot. (not pictured)
- Glendale Farm: A new concrete cross-pan was constructed to help with erosion and to provide better access for vehicles.
- Hidden Mesa: New concrete sidewalk was constructed after drainage improvements were made to help with erosion.



- Waterton Road / Campfire Street: A new median was constructed to provide refuge for pedestrians crossing Waterton Road.
- Dawson Butte Ranch: The fence along Tomah Road was removed and replaced with wildlife-friendly wire. All broken posts were replaced. (not pictured)
- Lincoln Avenue / Stonegate Parkway: Concrete panels were replaced to repair an open cut from a stormwater maintenance project. To minimize impacts to the driving public work was performed on an accelerated schedule during DCSD spring break. A new fast-curing concrete was piloted to achieve this schedule.
- Irish Pat Murphy Drive / Quinlin Court / Stetson Court - Following water line work by Pinery Water and Sanitation District permanent repairs of the asphalt road were made.
- Larkspur Fire District, 14993 South Furrow Road: The gravel parking lot and driveway were paved with asphalt.
- New parking lot and turnaround area at the Sandstone Ranch Observatory: Open Space collaborated with Public Works Operations to meet the Fire Department's emergency driveway regulations. This development not only enhances safety but also provides a convenient location for residents to view the stunning observatory areas.



- **Snow Removal** - This snow season, Operations responded to a total of 18 snow events for a total of 37 days of post-storm cleanup. A total number of 70 units were deployed. Total material usage, 6,336 yards of salt, 3,488 yards of salt/sand, and 364,400 gallons of deicer.



- **Gravel Road Maintenance**

- Dust Control - A total of 102 miles received dust control treatment for \$588,382.
- Gravel Projects - A total of 27 miles were completed for a total cost of \$4,356,082.

- **Gravel Road Blading** - A total of 3,064 miles were graded this year. The total was \$1,246,811.



- **Paved Road Maintenance**

- Sweeping Report - This year, a total of 4,198 lane miles were traveled, and 1,864 cubic yards were collected on all arterial and residential streets.

- Crack Sealing – this year 178,570 pounds of material was used to crack seal. The total cost of this program was \$416,050.
- Pothole Patching – this year, 204,863 pounds of material was used to pothole patch. The total cost of this program was \$276,788.



- **Ice Mitigation Projects**

JOB STREET	PIPE FT	INLETS	AREA DRAINS	CONCRETE FT
5350 Fox Meadow Ave	6	0	1	12
5360 Fox Meadow Ave	36	0	1	10
Millstone Ct/Place	1145	3	0	50
Millstone Ct/St	1145	5	0	70
Bluegate Way	567	1	11	130
Double Dutch Cir	287	1	0	20
Tango Lane	14	1	0	10
Tango Trail	40	0	1	15
Sundrop Trl	150	2	0	30
Winterthur Cir	237	1	0	20
Winterthur Way	520	2	0	20

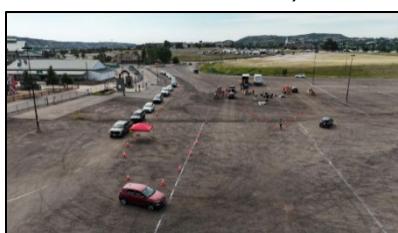
- **Roadside Maintenance**

- Invasive Weeds – 1,085 acres were treated for invasive weeds on open spaces and County rights-of-way.
- Mowing - 2,105 swath miles of mowing on County rights-of-way.
- Bareground treatment was applied on 20 acres throughout the County.

- **Slash Mulch Program**

- Total cost to include labor, equipment, grinding and some yard maintenance: \$77,269.91
  - 10,947 loads of slash came in which is an average 32,841 yards – Avg 3 yds per load
  - 1,826 loads of mulch went out which is an average of 5,478 yards – Avg 3 yds per load

- **Waste Diversion** - YTD, the Green Waste Program has diverted over 2600 cubic yards of material



from landfills to be converted into beneficial compost. In addition, collaboration with HRCA's Clear the Clutter event yielded another 210 cubic yards from Highlands Ranch residents. Also, our third annual Leaf Drop event was extended to an additional week to accommodate resident requests and an unusually late falling of leaves. Green Yard Waste - \$83,743

(through 9/30) - \$83,743.00

## PARKS

- In 2022, voters approved the [Parks, Trails, Historic Resources, and Open Space, Sales and Use Tax](#), which provides for 20% of the net proceeds from the tax to be shared with each municipality wholly located within Douglas County. These funds, known as municipal shareback funds or sharebacks, can be requested at the discretion of the municipalities at any time.

- High Note Regional Park - On September 9, 2025, the Board of County Commissioners approved a Parks Funding Agreement with the City of Lone Tree for \$7.5 million towards the first phase of construction. High Note Regional Park is an 80-acre park planned near RidgeGate Parkway and I-25. The first phase of the project includes two multipurpose, lit synthetic turf fields, a playground, community gathering space, a dog park, a water feature, rehabilitation of Happy Canyon Creek and connections to the Happy Canyon Trail and East/West Regional Trail.



- Salisbury Regional Park - On August 18, 2025, the Parker Town Council approved a construction contract with JHL Constructors for the first phase of Salisbury Regional Park. The first phase improvements include four lighted natural grass multipurpose ballfields, two lighted synthetic turf multipurpose soccer fields, a playground, batting cages, restrooms, parking, utilities, landscape, and irrigation.



The Town of Parker initially received \$8,710,539 of shareback funds for the project in November 2024. In September 2025, the Douglas County Commissioners also granted the Town \$7.5 million toward the first phase, which will help advance the project and complete the entire project sooner than initially expected. The first phase construction project is underway, with an anticipated completion date of August 2026. When Phase 1 is completed, the park will include eight baseball/softball fields, two synthetic multi-purpose fields, one multi-purpose grass field, two playgrounds, an equestrian center, and connections to the Cherry Creek Regional Trail.

- **Zebulon Activities in 2025:**

- **Visioning** - Early 2025: Sterling Ranch proposed the idea for the Zebulon Sports Complex to Douglas County.
- **Stakeholder Engagement** - Feb. 24, 2025: Commissioners met with 10+ key stakeholders (municipalities, HOAs, sports organizations, developers) to discuss location, land use, funding, and partnerships.
- **Community Engagement** - Apr. 14, 2025: County hosted its most-attended Live Town Hall (10,000+ online/phone, 200+ in person) to debut the initial vision for Zebulon.



- **Engineering and Design**
  - May 27, 2025: Approved \$325,000 contract with FHU for roadway infrastructure analysis.
  - Jul. 22, 2025: Approved \$410,000 contract with Kimley-Horn for land development design (grading, roads, utilities). Initial estimates expected late Sept./early Oct. 2025.
  - Retained Wember as owner's representative for \$71,690.
- **Private Partnership Process**
  - Aug. 15, 2025: Launched competitive process via BidNet for private partners to design, build, finance, operate, and maintain facilities (ice complex, baseball fields, indoor sports complex).
- **Funding**
  - County plans to contribute \$60M–\$80M for site/infrastructure, design, and construction. Seeking equity partners for full build-out.
  - Land Transfer - Oct. 14, 2025: Douglas County and Sterling Ranch agreed to land swap:
    - ✓ County receives **46.5 acres** for Zebulon.
    - ✓ Sterling Ranch receives **23.8 acres** for commercial development.
    - ✓ Sterling Ranch residents get free (non-exclusive) access to amenities.
    - ✓ Sterling Ranch reaffirms commitment to preserve **185 acres** for elk migration.
- **Highland Heritage Baseball Field Conversion** - In response to community input about the shortage of baseball fields in the region, Douglas County is moving forward with the conversion of two fields at Highland Heritage Regional Park. This project will return the fields to their original dirt infield configuration, enhancing recreational access for local athletes and families.

**Key Highlights:**

- Community-Driven Project: Initiated following public feedback requesting more baseball fields in the County.
- Field Upgrades: Includes conversion of two natural grass fields to dirt infields, with new backstops and dugouts. Work will involve sod removal, subgrade grading, infield mix installation and fencing enhancements.
- Timing: To avoid conflicts with the fall soccer season, construction is expected to begin in early November 2025.

**County Investment:** \$200,000 for materials and labor

- **Bluffs Regional Park Trail Improvements** - Bluffs Regional Park welcomes more than 500 visitors daily, offering sweeping views along its 2.5-mile loop trail. To address safety concerns caused by erosion from heavy use and weather, Douglas County completed a major trail reconstruction project on the park's south section in May 2025.



### Key Highlights:

- High-Use Trail: The 2.5-mile loop features 200 feet of elevation change and attracts hundreds of users daily.
- Safety-Driven Upgrades: Improvements addressed severe erosion that had made the trail difficult to maintain and unsafe for visitors.
- Trail Restoration: Work included 800 tons of road base, retaining walls, cast-in-place concrete water bars, concrete pan culverts and native grass seeding.
- Contractor Expertise: DesignScapes Colorado led the reconstruction and Architerra provided construction management services.

### County Investment:

- DesignScapes Colorado Contract: \$599,200 (completed)
- Architerra Contract: Up to \$48,680 (costs-to-date of \$22,346)

### **Maintenance**

- **Highland Heritage Playground and Restroom Replacement** - Staff has been working over the last



year to design a new all age inclusive playground and replace the restroom building at Highland Heritage Regional Park. Instead of just replacing the outdated playground equipment, staff is taking this opportunity to examine the current footprint of the playground and design a new footprint which would include new inclusive elements. Outreach for this new playground

started with local and county wide data collection in an attempt to identify undeserved communities. This data was then used to inform design decisions. Design will continue into 2025.

- **C-470 Trail Connector Project** - This project constructed a 1900 linear foot pedestrian/bicycle



trail connecting the light rail station at Park Meadows to the C-470 trail. Additional aspects included the construction of three associated retaining walls, bicycle amenities, and a shade structure. This project addressed an area of low bike/ped connectivity identified in the Walk and Wheel Report, providing a significant opportunity to connect

bicycle users to the light rail and Park Meadows Retail Resort, thereby offering notable regional benefits. This project has multiple funding partners including DRCOG, Douglas County, City of Lone Tree, Southeast Public Improvement Metropolitan District (SPIMD), and the Park Meadows Metropolitan District.

- **High Plains Trail** - The High Plains Trail is a regional trail that runs along E-470 and will eventually

connect the High Line Canal in northern Aurora to the Cherry Creek Trail in Parker. The High Plains Trail is the first part of a multi-year-phased approach to build an east metro regional trail network. The joint effort to construct this regional trail has been advanced by securing grant funding from Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) and Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO). Multiple



intergovernmental agreements were executed in 2021, including the funding and maintenance agreements. Phases 1 and 2 are complete with the installation of a pedestrian bridge over Parker Road (SH-83).

- **Toepfer Park Expansion** - In 2022, Douglas County acquired the site from the Douglas County School District and donated it to the Metro District. The Metro District has invested \$2.5 million in expansion and improvements. In 2025, park improvements included replacement of the playground and restroom, additional concrete trails, a new shelter, new lighting, a new, larger parking lot and new and improved landscaping.



- **Memorial Bench Program** - Douglas County Parks has a memorial bench program that provides the public with the opportunity to request a bench in memory of lost loved ones. It is a donation to purchase a bench, plaque, and concrete pad where they can reflect on those they have lost. Parks staff install approximately 5-8 benches per year. To date in 2025, staff have installed 6 benches at Bluffs Regional Park and along the East/West Regional Trail.



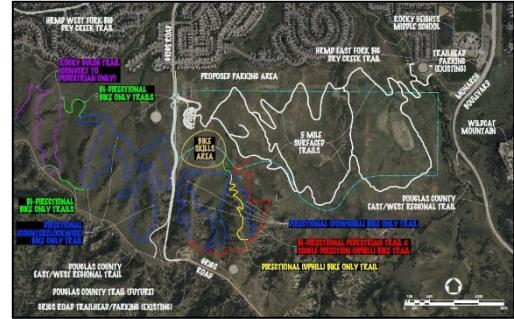
- **Bluffs Regional Park Trail Resurfacing** - Bluffs Regional Park trail is a 2.7-mile loop with an additional 1 mile of scenic overview trails in Lone Tree. The trail has 350 feet of elevation changes throughout the trail loop and sees approximately 140,000-150,000 users annually. Bluffs Trail is a multi-use, soft-surface trail that accommodates pedestrians, cyclists, and equestrians. Due to the nature of the trail surface, weather, and topography, erosion posed safety concerns that were managed through maintenance by Parks staff. The maintenance performed extended the life of the trail surface. However, the extent of material lost to erosion necessitated replacement of the trail surface. A retaining wall along the trail had also become compromised due to erosion of the trail surface and was in danger of failure.



Reconstruction of the trail started in January and was scheduled to be completed in late May. The project consisted of rebuilding the Southwest portion of the trail to improve drainage and provide a safe surface for all users. Additionally, three culverts on the East section of the trail were rebuilt with concrete drain pans to improve flow and to assist with maintenance of the structures. The contractor installed concrete water bars, precast culverts, concrete drain pans, and 85 loads of road base to accomplish the rebuild.

Reconstruction of the trail started in January and was scheduled to be completed in late May. The project consisted of rebuilding the Southwest portion of the trail to improve drainage and provide a safe surface for all users. Additionally, three culverts on the East section of the trail were rebuilt with concrete drain pans to improve flow and to assist with maintenance of the structures. The contractor installed concrete water bars, precast culverts, concrete drain pans, and 85 loads of road base to accomplish the rebuild.

- **Wildcat Regional Park** - The Board of County Commissioners approved both the land transfer and the funding request on October 26, 2025. The Board agreed to transfer the 202-acre property that had been provided to the County as part of the park dedication requirements for the Highlands Ranch Planned Development. The property will continue to serve as a [passive public trail system](#) open to everyone.

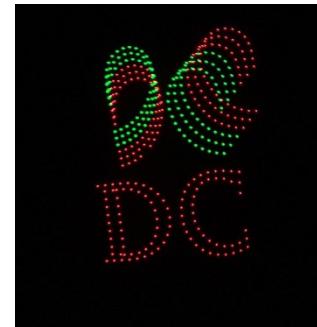


The Board also approved \$3.5 million from the Parks, Trails, Historic Resources, and Open Space Sales Tax to fund construction of the trailhead and trail network. Under the agreement, HRCA must complete the trail network within three years of the land transfer; otherwise, ownership of the property and any unspent funds will revert to the County.

Transferring the land to HRCA allows the trail to extend beyond the original 202 acres and connect with adjacent land already owned by HRCA. In total, the trail system will span approximately 400 acres and will be maintained by HRCA in perpetuity.

- **Celebration Partnerships**

- Commissioners approved partnership funding requests from Highlands Ranch Community Association and Highlands Ranch Metro District, Sterling Ranch Community Authority Board, and Perry Park Metropolitan District for their 4th of July community fireworks display.
- Commissioners also directed staff to organize drone show celebrations for the Fair and Rodeo, as well as New Year's Eve. The drone show for the Fair and Rodeo was performed on July 25th, between the opening act and the headliner.



- **Challenger Ball Field Synthetic Turf Replacement** - As part of the Parks Capital Improvement Plan, the synthetic turf on ballfields #1 and #2 were replaced in July. This was a project identified in the 2025 Budget using Conservation Trust Funds provided by the Colorado Lottery at a cost of \$1,005,000. Staff worked with the Historical User Groups that reserve the ballfields for their baseball and softball programs to close one field at a time during this six-week process to ensure only one field was closed during this project. Fields were opened just in time, allowing Parker Hawks to host their annual Friday night lights kickoff event for the Fall football season, which was attended by 2,000 participants and spectators. (Before and after photos)



- **Electric Equipment Conversion** - The Colorado Air Quality Control Commission adopted Regulation 29, which established restrictions on handheld lawn and garden equipment, effective June 1st, 2025. Douglas County used grant funding to convert equipment from gas-powered to electric to comply with the new regulation. Electric equipment is now being used in the field by all Parks staff.



### **Communications and Public Affairs Support – Parks and Recreation Investments**



In September, the Board announced historic investments in parks and recreation in Parker, Lone Tree, and Castle Rock funded by the Parks, Trails, Historic Resources, and Open Space Fund. To celebrate this investment, Douglas County hosted a Community Field Day at Highland Heritage Park on Oct. 2.

#### Communication Objectives:

- Engage Douglas County stakeholders throughout the decision-making process, so everyone feels informed, even if they don't agree with the decisions.
- Announce funding decisions in a transparent and fun way.
- Continue community engagement during construction of new amenities

#### Results

Two newsroom posts received a total of 1,940 views, while social media content generated 23,405 impressions. Media coverage included 11 mentions, reaching an audience of 89,797 and providing an estimated \$32,327 in ad value equivalency. The community field day drew an estimated 50 attendees, fostering in-person engagement with the event.

## RUETER-HESS RESERVOIR

- **Rueter-Hess Recreation Partnerships** - The Rueter-Hess Recreation Advisory Board (RAB) was



established in May 2023 to guide and expand recreational opportunities on Parker Water and Sanitation District's (Parker Water) Rueter-Hess property. Through collaboration between Parker Water, the RAB, and Douglas County departments and divisions, significant progress has been made toward enhancing recreation in

2025. These partnerships strengthen regional coordination, improve public access, promote safe recreation, and create meaningful recreational experiences that benefit residents across Douglas County and beyond.

Recreation at Rueter-Hess Reservoir continues to thrive, reflecting strong community interest in paddle sports, fishing, and trail use. So far this year, approximately 3,700 watercraft were inspected, more than 2,400 anglers enjoyed fishing opportunities, and over 86,000 visitors explored the surrounding trails.

In total, year-to-date visitation has surpassed 103,000 people, demonstrating the reservoir's growing role as a premier recreation destination in Douglas County. This success is made possible through the partnership, whose shared investment continues to enhance safe, sustainable, and enjoyable recreation for the public.

### ***Capital Improvement Projects***

- **Road Improvements at Entrance** - In collaboration with the Rueter-Hess Advisory Board, the Parker Water and Sanitation District, and Douglas County, significant improvements were completed to the Rueter-Hess Reservoir entrance and inspection area. The project improved traffic flow, visitor check-in efficiency, and drainage at the primary entry point to the reservoir. Together, these features create a more attractive and welcoming gateway to the reservoir while ensuring safe and efficient access for all visitors. (Before and after photos below)



The project was delivered through a partnership among the Rueter-Hess RAB, Parker Water and Sanitation District, Divisions of Parks, Trails, Building Grounds, and Rueter-Hess Recreation; Public Works Engineering; and Public Works Operations for a total cost of \$362,690. The project partners contributed funding and assisted with planning and coordination to ensure that the

design, materials, and site functionality aligned with long-term operational needs. The scope of work covered: construction of new concrete foundation for the entrance station, a concrete area for boat inspections, asphalt paving through the entrance, and drainage improvements along the entrance and around the ranger station. Additionally, a turn lane was constructed on Hess Rd.



The upcoming phases include a new entry station with upgraded electrical capabilities and a more organized inspection area to service the increased visitation Rueter-Hess has seen over the last few years.

- **Incline Trailhead Parking Lot Designed Improvements** - By the end of the year, we estimate

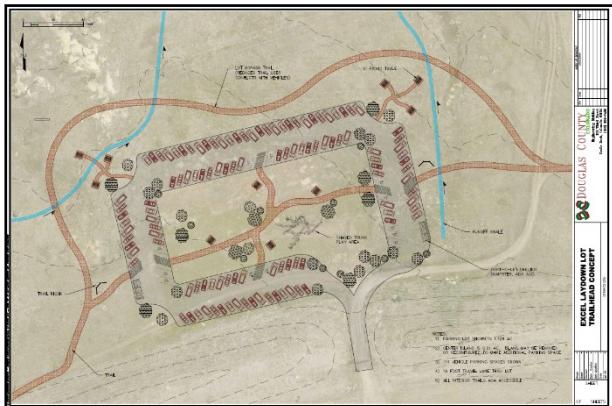


that over 80,000 people will use the Trailhead parking lot to access the local trail systems. Currently, the parking lot spans approximately 1 acre and reaches capacity on weekends and holidays.

In collaboration with Parker Water and the Rueter-Hess Recreation Advisory Board, this area is planned to become a shared destination for recreational enhancements and waterwise demonstration gardens. Douglas County is leading the recreational development to develop the demonstration gardens.

Proposed recreational improvements include expanding the existing parking lot and adding two additional parking areas, a pavilion, a picnic area, more portable restrooms, and additional trash receptacles. These enhancements will be implemented in phases as funding becomes available.

- **Envisioned a Future Hess Road Trailhead**



- The Rueter-Hess Recreation Master Plan emphasizes the need to provide future access along Hess Road. Parker Water, Douglas County Division of Public Works, Special Projects and Parks, Trails, Building Grounds, and Rueter-Hess Recreation partnered to envision a plan to convert a temporary staging area into a future trailhead and parking lot. The conceptual design of the trailhead and parking lot includes a two-acre parking lot, picnic areas, port-o-lets, trash receptacles, and two large overflow parking areas.

This trailhead will connect with the existing trail system. The project could be achieved through a phased approach in the future when funding becomes available.

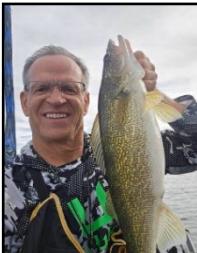
- **Rueter-Hess Reservoir Docks** - Rueter-Hess Reservoir continues to grow as a premier destination for paddle sports and fishing in Douglas County. With the support of the Rueter-Hess Recreation Advisory Board, the first phase of public docks was completed in 2025, establishing a foundational system that includes fishing, public launch, and shared-use docks. These improvements have made it easier and safer for visitors to access the water and launch paddleboards, canoes, and kayaks. This progress reflects the strong partnership among Parker Water and Sanitation District, the Rueter-Hess Recreation Advisory Board, and Douglas County, whose shared investment continues to enhance recreation and community access at the reservoir.



Looking ahead to 2026, the dock system will expand to provide additional fishing access, greater watercraft capacity, and new seating areas. This progress reflects the strong partnership among Parker Water and Sanitation District, the Rueter-Hess Recreation Advisory Board, and Douglas County, whose shared investment continues to enhance recreation and community access at the reservoir.



- **Catch-and-Keep Fishing and Limited Use of Electric Trolling Motors for Fishing at Rueter-Hess Reservoir**



**Rueter-Hess Reservoir** – In 2025, new recreation rules were adopted to enhance fishing opportunities while supporting sustainable management of this popular destination. Anglers may now keep limited catches of Walleye, Largemouth Bass, and Yellow Perch, marking an exciting milestone for recreation at the reservoir. In addition, electric trolling motors rated at no more than 55 pounds of thrust are now permitted when actively fishing, provided they are hand-titled. To help protect shoreline conditions, all watercraft must continue to be launched by hand, as trailers remain prohibited. These updates reflect a shared commitment among the partners to improving access, supporting diverse recreation, and

trolling motors rated at no more than 55 pounds of thrust are now permitted when actively fishing, provided they are hand-titled. To help protect shoreline conditions, all watercraft must continue to be launched by hand, as trailers remain prohibited. These updates reflect a shared commitment among the partners to improving access, supporting diverse recreation, and

preserving the high-quality natural experience that makes Rueter-Hess Reservoir a favorite for residents and visitors alike.

### ***Programming and Special Events***

- **Rueter-Hess Recreation Advisory Board Agencies Partner Days** - Recreation at Rueter-Hess Reservoir is made possible through the strong partnership of Parker Water and Sanitation District, Douglas County, the City of Castle Pines, the Town of Castle Rock, the City of Lone Tree, and the Town of Parker. Together, these partners continue to enhance public access and create meaningful recreational experiences for the community.

Each partner hosted a Partner Day event at the reservoir, drawing approximately 575



attendees. County staff and Park Rangers worked alongside the partners to welcome visitors, conduct paddleboard, canoe, and kayak inspections, and provide on-water safety patrols. These collaborative efforts showcase the shared commitment to safe, high-quality recreation and highlight the value of regional partnerships in serving Douglas County residents.

- **Rueter-Hess Hosts Summer Camps** - On August 15, 2025, Avid4Adventure, a national youth adventure organization, wrapped up their third season hosting one of their kids camps at Rueter-Hess Reservoir for the summer. The 48-day summer long weekday program allowed campers to paddleboard, kayak, or canoe out on Rueter-Hess Reservoir. The program hosted 80-100 participants each week. The campers were taught skills and how to safely recreate on the water. The 2025 summer camp season was a success, providing a fun, educational, and safe environment to explore water-based recreation.



- **Increasing Access** - Rueter-Hess Reservoir is becoming a popular destination for hosting special events. On Saturday, June 7th, three unique gatherings took place on the property. The day began with a 5K race at the Incline, where 50 participants took on the challenge and enjoyed a well-deserved breakfast afterward. Meanwhile, the first fishing event at the reservoir attracted 26 eager anglers. Additionally, over 300 dogs and their handlers attended a Snake Avoidance Training session in a field located in the northern part of the property. Even with three events happening at the same time, the area remained uncrowded, preserving the serene and tranquil atmosphere that the Hess Reservoir is known for.



- In celebration of Father's Day, the Town of Parker hosted the Dash Across the Dam (DAD) 5K at Rueter-Hess Reservoir, offering runners and walkers a rare chance to cross the top of the Rueter-Hess Dam, which is typically closed to public access. The out-and-back course provided sweeping views of the reservoir and its surrounding landscape,

creating a memorable experience for both participants and spectators. The event drew 258 participants and showcased the reservoir as a distinctive recreation venue within Douglas County.



- **9/11 Stair Climb Honoring Heroes** - On Thursday, September 11, Lone Tree Brewing Company



hosted a 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb at Rueter-Hess Incline. This stair climb consisted of traversing the incline 11 times in honor of the first responders that scaled the world trade center Twin Towers. The event honored both first responders and fallen heroes while supporting the Colorado State Fire Fighters Foundation. The event inspired other regular Incline visitors to attempt additional trips up the stairs that day. One

local fire fighter conquered the incline in his bunker gear (firefighting uniform). Lone Tree Brewing Company is interested in holding this as an annual event at Rueter-Hess.

### **Promoting Recreation Safety**

- **Safety Patrol Boat** - The Rueter-Hess Reservoir introduced a new safety patrol boat just in time

for Father's Day weekend. Designed specifically for water rescues, the 22-foot vessel is equipped with a rescue gate and a landing gate. It also features a removable crane, which is essential for maintaining the reservoir, including tasks such as dock and buoy placement. The spacious deck of the boat allows for multiple paddle craft to be secured during rescues, minimizing the number of trips needed to return to shore and ensuring safe recreation.



- **Watercraft Safety and Rescue Operations at Rueter-Hess Reservoir** - Thanks to the partner agencies on the Rueter-Hess Recreation Advisory Board, Parker Water, and South Metro Fire Department, the County upgraded equipment.

The upgrades resulted in significant strides in public safety in 2025. The park received a 22-foot Stanley landing craft and a Rescue X backboard, which enabled rangers to perform 18 water rescues (immediate danger or distress) and 33 water assists (needed help) throughout the year.



- **South Metro Fire Department Emergency Services Training** - To enhance the safety and preparedness of the Rueter-Hess property, the South Metro Fire Department (SMFD) conducted two specialized training operations at the park. In May, five SMFD instructors led 25 firefighters in wildland fire response training using portable pumps. Then, in July, 30 SMFD rescue divers participated in reservoir-based exercises, including site familiarization, recertifications, and dynamic scenario training. These collaborative efforts strengthen emergency readiness and ensure the highest level of service and protection for the reservoir and surrounding areas.



- **Sonar Technology on Rueter-Hess Recreation Patrol Boat** - A new advanced sonar system has been installed on the patrol boat at Rueter-Hess Reservoir to enhance public safety and emergency response, support recreation, and improve angling opportunities. The system provides real-time underwater imaging and environmental data, allowing Park Rangers to identify active fish habitats, detect underwater hazards, and monitor water conditions for safe recreation. It also significantly strengthens emergency response by enabling quicker location of missing persons or submerged objects.



This investment in technology reflects a shared commitment by Parker Water and Sanitation District, the Rueter-Hess Recreation Advisory Board, and Douglas County to promote recreation safety, environmental stewardship, and exceptional visitor experiences at the reservoir.

## VOLUNTEERS

- **Community Volunteers Strengthen County Parks-** In 2025, the Douglas County Parks Volunteer



Program saw enthusiastic participation from individuals, students, and community partners. Through hands-on projects and ongoing weekend opportunities, volunteers are making a lasting impact on public spaces across the County while also reducing costs and fostering community pride. The **Dougnad** community events is the Douglas

County's branding of a term known as "Dugnad". This is the word used for a custom communal work in Norway that dates back centuries. Today dugnad has come to mean unpaid voluntary work done in a group for local, national, or international causes.

### Key Highlights:

- **Dougnad Events:** Taking place in the spring at Bayou Gulch Regional Park, 71 volunteers planted 45 trees, contributing 231 hours of service in partnership with Douglas County School District.

The fall Dougnad volunteer event brought community members together across Castle



Rock, Parker, Highlands Ranch and Lone Tree to support Douglas County older adult homeowners with yard work and minor exterior repairs. Over 138 volunteers helped at 33 homes, raking leaves, pulling weeds, and preparing yards for the winter. The Douglas County Youth Commission also contributed to the Dougnad community day with volunteers raking leaves in front of the County building on Wilcox. Through their dedication

and time, volunteers not only improved the physical spaces of residents' homes but also brought companionship, reassurance, and joy to their communities.

- **Additional Events:** Volunteers participated in 18 events, including recurring weekend opportunities at Rueter-Hess Reservoir and special projects across the County's park system.
- **Service Hours:** 156 volunteers contributed a total of 434 hours of service.
- **Cleaning and Maintenance:** Volunteers collected 23 bags of trash, removed over 4,000 invasive mullein weeds, pruned two miles of trail and painted one box culvert.
- **Landscaping Efforts:** Participants planted annuals and perennials in six landscape beds and planted 54 trees across various County parks.
- **Outreach and partnership** with the Douglas County School District (DCSD) continue to fuel the numerous small events throughout the year.





- The volunteer program partnered with the Douglas County Youth Council for the fall Dougnad event. Twenty-one volunteers helped rake 115 cubic yards of leaves on the front lawns of the Wilcox Building in downtown Castle Rock. Staff also provided critical technical signup support for the numerous events hosted across the County helping older adults.



### **Communications and Public Affairs Support – Dougnad**



Douglas County's Dougnad, a semi-annual volunteer program, intends to inspire generational public service and reinforce the value we place in Douglas County by keeping our public spaces clean, safe and enjoyable for all. Dougnad events have focused on tree planting and helping older adults with exterior home improvement projects.

#### **Communication Objectives:**

- Raise awareness of Dougnad as Douglas County's semi-annual community volunteer event.
- Inform residents of upcoming Dougnad events and how to get involved.
- Enhance positive perception of Douglas County's community involvement.
- Strengthen community connection and engagement.

#### **Results**

Two Dougnad volunteer events were hosted- one in April and one in October. Across two newsroom stories, there were a total of 645 views, while nine social media posts generated

41,049 impressions. Media coverage included three mentions, reaching an estimated 170 people and providing an ad value equivalency of \$61. The program's webpage received 1,976 views, further extending digital engagement. Event attendance was strong, with 143 participants at the spring event, and the fall event welcoming 112 volunteers alongside 33 older adult participants, highlighting the community's engagement and support.

- **Parks Volunteer Highlights**

- American Family Insurance volunteered at Dotts Park on July 8<sup>th</sup> with 12 volunteers providing 24 hours of service. At Dotts, they painted the trash can, pulled weeds, planted wildflower seeds, and refilled the playground mulch. This is the second year of partnership with American Family Insurance.



- The volunteer program hosted the Douglas County Leadership Academy at Whispering Pines Park on September 19<sup>th</sup>. These leaders of Douglas County spread 15 tons of sand for the volleyball court, 25 yards of mulch for the playground, 4 yards of mulch for the landscape beds, painted one shed, collected three bags of trash, and pruned numerous shrubs. 38 attendees provided 114 hours of service.



- On October 5<sup>th</sup>, the volunteer program partnered with Cherry Hills Community Church for their "Love Extended" community service day. The 96 participants helped move 100



2025	Number of Hosted Events	Number of Volunteers	Hours of Service
March	10	14	36
April	14	97	276
May	25	35	92
June	17	27	63
July	14	40	88
August	5	11	24
September	2	39	117
October	6	136	282
<b>Totals</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>398</b>	<b>975</b>

- **Open Space Volunteers**

Key Highlights:

- Service Hours: 152 volunteers contributed a total of 2,612 hours of service.
- Weed Warriors: 65 volunteers managed weeds and beautified our open spaces.
- Mounted Patrol: 33 horseback volunteers ensured our open spaces were safe for visitors.
- Trail Ambassadors: 58 volunteers kept an eye out for issues, helped with maintenance and ensured visitors had a positive experience.

- **Adopt-A-Road Program** - As of October 7, 2025, the Adopt-A-Road Program was temporarily suspended while staff re-evaluates the program.



Prior to that date, staff renewed over 80 agreements and welcomed 14 new adoptees through digital processing. Below is our Clean-Up Reporter Stats comparing 2025 to 2024, data reflects annual adoption term April 1<sup>st</sup> – March 31<sup>st</sup>. *Note, this data is gathered using a self-reported post event survey; majority of longstanding volunteers do not self-report and dispose of their collected trash bags on their own.*

Clean-Up Reporter Stats			
See the impact our volunteers are making in Douglas County.			
Clean-Up Events Year-to-Date	Participants Year-to-Date	Trash Bags Collected Year-to-Date	Volunteer Hours Year-to-Date
38	475	315	674
Clean-Up Events Previous Year	Participants Previous Year	Trash Bags Collected Previous Year	Volunteer Hours Previous Year
50	303	459	629

- **Weed Warriors** - Douglas County Open Space has a dedicated group of volunteers called the

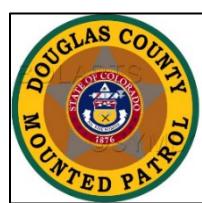


‘Weed Warriors’ who go out into the field to mitigate noxious weeds on OS properties. On Friday, July 2nd, the Weed Warriors went to Lincoln Mountain OS where they worked at the trailhead and the Eastern meadow to tackle what they described as ‘mullein mania’. During this time of year mullein is in its growing stage, boasting overlapping, fuzzy green leaves that can grow up to a foot long. The plant has a long stem with sulfur-yellow flowers that can produce 100,000 to 250,000 seeds per plant. Volunteers used shovels to dig out the entire rosette before the plant dries out and drops its seeds, typically around early fall.

Common mullein is a noxious weed species that spreads rapidly and pushes out native plants important for maintaining soil health, wildlife, and seasonal pollinators. The volunteer weed crew plays a vital role in managing noxious weed growth on Open Space properties and their consistent efforts contribute to the overall health of the ecosystem. The Weed Warriors were at Columbine Open Space on Friday, July 18<sup>th</sup> to focus on mullein, Canada thistle, musk thistle, knapweed and dalmatian toadflax.



- **Volunteer Mounted Patrol** - With over 65,000 acres of protected land, 17,000 acres of directly managed land, including 115 miles of trails across Open Space (OS), volunteers play an invaluable role in helping staff patrol and manage these properties. One program is volunteer Mounted Patrol. This is a group of trained equestrians who promote public safety, education, and the protection of the County's land and resources. In 2025 these volunteers have logged over 800 hours so far!



Mounted Patrol assists during Search and Rescue operations, participates in annual fairs and parades and guides public rides on OS.



- **Astronomy/Dark Sky Volunteer Program** - Volunteers are essential in providing educational programs to Douglas County residents. The Astronomy/Dark Sky Volunteer Program, paired with the Denver Astronomical Society (DAS), enhances public understanding of astronomy by offering presentations, night-sky viewing sessions, and hands-on learning opportunities.

DAS volunteers supply telescopes and binoculars for participants, and volunteer astrophotographers occasionally offer introductory workshops for those interested in pursuing the hobby. Program events follow the lunar calendar and are scheduled closest to the near the New Moon for optimal visibility. Astronomy programs are held on the guided side of Sandstone Ranch Open Space.



## HOMELESSNESS

- **Collaborative Service Matching** - The Collaborative Service Matching (CSM) partnership in



Douglas County continued to make significant progress in 2025, addressing homelessness through a collaborative, multi-agency approach. The partnership is formalized by a Memorandum of Understanding, which brings together Douglas County and a diverse group of service providers to engage in regular case conferences and coordinate services for unhoused residents.

Douglas County serves as the regional Built for Zero coordinator, hosting meetings, maintaining the service matching tool, and providing training to all partners. Each CSM partner agency plays a vital role in identifying unhoused residents, attending case conferencing meetings, and serving as the lead agency for referred clients. The lead agency guides clients through the service matching process until they are housed or transitioned to another agency, ensuring accountability and continuity of care.

The collaboration is grounded in principles of accountability, personal growth, and wellbeing, and is designed to reduce both the duration and volume of homelessness in the community. All partners are committed to working together for the benefit of the clients they serve, both individually and collectively. This collaborative effort exemplifies the power of partnership in tackling complex social challenges and demonstrates a shared commitment to making homelessness rare and brief in Douglas County.



- **Point-in-Time (PIT) Survey of Homelessness** - The HEART, County staff, community partners, and



local law enforcement joined together to perform the annual Point in Time (PIT) Survey of Homelessness. The PIT surveys all sheltered and unsheltered individuals in Douglas County on a single night of the year. The winter PIT was conducted on January 27. Winter PIT surveys are submitted to the Metro Denver Homeless Initiative (MDHI), which is responsible for collecting all surveys in the metro region and submitting data to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Winter 2025 PIT results revealed 58 people were unhoused; 30 were sheltered, six were unsheltered and sleeping outside, and 22 were unsheltered and sleeping in their vehicles.

The 2025 Summer PIT count was completed on the night of July 28. Summer 2025 PIT results revealed 72 people were unhoused; 43 were sheltered, four were unsheltered and sleeping outside, and 25 were unsheltered and sleeping in their vehicles.

- **Homeless Engagement, Assistance, and Resource Team (HEART)** - The Homeless Engagement, Assistance, and Resource Team (HEART)



that launched in September 2022, continues to lead Douglas County's efforts to make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring. The HEART operates countywide including Littleton, Highlands Ranch, Parker, Lone Tree, Castle Rock, Castle Pines, and unincorporated areas within the county.

Douglas County's Homeless Engagement, Assistance and Resource Team (HEART) continues to make measurable progress in addressing homelessness through direct outreach, strategic partnerships and compassionate care coordination. Since January 2025, the program has helped over 100 individuals move toward safe, stable housing, demonstrating the effectiveness of a collaborative, community-based model.

**Key Highlights:**

- Strong Outcomes: Of the 161 individuals discharged from HEART since January 2025, 40% moved into permanent housing and 30% entered transitional housing.
- Support from the Community: The Douglas Has Heart campaign has raised \$16,600 to assist local nonprofits supporting individuals in need.
- Collaborative Care: Weekly case conferencing with partners enables individualized service planning and faster housing placements. As of May 2025, only 5 individuals remain unsheltered outdoors.
- Innovative Tools: HEART launched a text messaging option to help individuals connect with Navigators and receive assistance quickly.
- Engagement with Local Businesses: Since January 2025, HEART has collected 83 trespass letters and deepened partnerships with businesses to promote public safety with empathy.

**County Investment:** Total of \$4.7 million allocated from American Rescue Plan Act funding. Total of \$2.5 million expended to date.

This year Douglas County has maintained a By-Name List (BNL) for all populations experiencing homelessness, expanding on its successful Veteran BNL. Weekly Coordinated Service Matching (CSM) meetings strengthen coordination, accelerate service delivery, and improve housing outcomes for individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

In 2025, HEART continued to provide targeted case management and coordinated referrals to essential services, including healthcare, behavioral health and substance use treatment, employment support, and assistance obtaining vital documents. Emergency hotel vouchers were utilized to provide short-term shelter and stability for individuals awaiting placement in



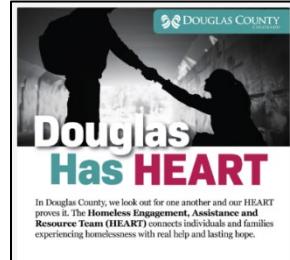
temporary or permanent housing. Through coordinated partnerships with OneHome's Coordinated Entry System, Family Tree's GOALS program, and Douglas County Cares, clients received ongoing support from initial outreach through permanent housing placement. Between January and October 2025, HEART Navigators delivered 2,355 documented services to individuals actively engaged in securing housing or shelter. These connections to services demonstrate a sustained and data-informed approach to reducing homelessness and improving housing stability in Douglas County.

Since January 2025, HEART has received 906 referrals. These referrals have originated from law



enforcement, citizen calls, community partners, the public referral form, and text messages. In addition to responding to referrals, HEART units have conducted proactive outreach within various areas of the community 850 times. Also since the beginning of the year, HEART has discharged 246 people from their program: 16% secured permanent housing, 19% used emergency shelters, 29% exited into a temporary housing solution, 16% wished to be unhoused, and the remaining 20% were discharged due to no contact.

HEART launched text messaging capabilities for the HEART hotline on July 1 with support from the IT Department. This enhancement offers the public a more convenient and efficient way to connect with a navigator. Since July 1, the HEART hotline has received 131 incoming text messages and had 54 total conversations.



The Initiative continues to expand the information campaign "Handouts Don't Help" to inform citizens, businesses and those experiencing homelessness through the public awareness campaign. There are currently 76 "Handouts Don't Help" signs strategically placed throughout the county. An updated, electronic, downloadable version of the sign has been made available to businesses in Douglas County in various poster and postcard sizes on the website for easier access.

The Douglas Has Heart campaign, in partnership with the Douglas County Community Foundation, raised more than \$11,000 in contributions in 2025. All contributions go to local non-profit organizations addressing homelessness in the community, including the Help & Hope Center, SECOR Cares, Parker Task Force, Douglas County Homeless Initiative, and HEART.



- **Housing Stability Program Grant Year End Summary** – The Housing Stability Program officially launched in August 2024 and concluded its first contract period on March 31, 2025. The program is designed to prevent homelessness by supporting individuals and families at risk of losing their housing. Through individualized case management plans and partnerships with local service providers, the program delivers coordinated services aimed at fostering long-term stability.

During this contract period, the program successfully assisted seven households, representing 25 individuals, in maintaining their housing and avoiding homelessness. To achieve this outcome, the program provided just over \$62,000 in direct financial assistance and coordinated more than 70 hours of case management services through community partner agencies.

From April - November 2025, the HSP has supported five households through the use of Homeless Resolution Program (HRP) funds. Just under \$27,000 has been spent to help prevent evictions, provide case management, and support ongoing housing stability for these families. All five households are led by single mothers who are actively working to increase their income and address barriers to long-term stability.



- **2025 Animal Welfare Association of Colorado's Annual Conference** – The Homeless



Engagement, Assistance and Resource Team (HEART) and Castle Rock Police Department presented at the 2025 Animal Welfare Association of Colorado's Annual Conference. They spoke on the challenges and barriers that the unhoused population faces trying to secure shelter when they have animals and the regional resources that are available to unhoused people with pets.

- **DC Cares** - Since October 1, 2024, DC Cares has assisted 17 unique households through a combination of rental assistance, emergency shelter, and case management services. Just over \$48,000 has been provided in rental support to help families maintain stable housing, while an additional \$7,000 has been used for emergency hotel placements for those without immediate shelter options.

In addition to financial assistance, the program has delivered more than 91 hours of case management. These sessions have helped participants access resources, navigate housing challenges, and work toward greater independence. DC Cares continues to offer both short-term support and guidance that helps households move toward longer-term stability.



#### **Communications and Public Affairs Support - Homeless Initiative**



Douglas County's coordinated Homeless Initiative continues to show measurable results. Through the Homeless Engagement, Assistance and Resource Team (HEART), the County provides direct outreach and housing navigation while encouraging residents to give through the Douglas Has Heart / Handouts Don't Help fund, which has raised more than \$18,000 for local nonprofits.

A new text-to-connect option now makes it even easier for community members to report concerns or request outreach for unhoused neighbors, reinforcing the County's commitment to compassion, collaboration, and long-term solutions.

**Communication Objective:** Provide timely updates on HEART, showcasing Douglas County's commitment to addressing homelessness through long-term, sustainable solutions.

**Results:** Across four newsroom stories, there were a total of 2,593 views. Social media efforts were robust, with 49 posts generating 221,596 impressions. Additionally, a single YouTube video received 719 views, further extending our digital reach. Media coverage included three mentions across online and print platforms, reaching an estimated 21,848 people and providing an estimated \$7,865 in ad value equivalency.

In August, the Douglas County Homeless Initiative webpage was redesigned to create a more effective and functional layout. Between August and December, the page received 575 views, and approximate 40% increase from the previous four months.

## WATER

- **Northern Highway 85 Water and Wastewater Project (Chatfield Basin Reclamation Facility) -**



Douglas County's \$20.5 million ARPA investment, part of a \$37 million project, will bring a much-needed regional state of the art wastewater treatment facility to northwest Douglas County, addressing infrastructure needs along the U.S. Highway 85 corridor. This project is the backbone to Douglas County achieving its vision to bring sustainable water supplies and reliable wastewater treatment to the corridor, protecting water resources, and providing for economic growth and development.

sustainable water supplies and reliable wastewater treatment to the corridor, protecting water resources, and providing for economic growth and development.

The Chatfield Basin Water Reclamation Facility (CBWRF) is key to the success of the project providing for a centralized wastewater system that will convey wastewater from aging and inefficient septic systems as well as new development along the corridor for treatment and discharge on the South Platte River. The project also includes a new water line designed to serve communities that now depend on non-renewable well water, ensuring long-term water security for the corridor. By investing in a centralized wastewater system, Douglas County is proactively addressing regional water and wastewater needs for its residents. This ARPA investment provides reliable wastewater treatment, supports responsible growth, and keeps valuable water resources within Douglas County. Construction began in August 2025 and is anticipated to be completed in December 2027.

- **Louviers Water and Sanitation District Supply Treatment and Infrastructure -** In 2020, the radium level in the drinking water from the groundwater well rose above EPA limits and Colorado Department of Health and Environment issued Louviers an enforcement order due to the water not meeting drinking water regulations. This APRA investment funded a new water treatment facility to remove the radium from the water. The new water treatment facility began successfully treating water for radium in May, 2025. Investment: \$1.9 million.



- **Louviers Water and Sanitation District Water Distribution Infrastructure Replacement -** The Louviers water distribution system was originally installed by Dupont in the early 1900's. Louviers replaced 1600 feet of water main in 2014 and has continued to work on replacements. This project will replace 2800 feet of water main line improving service to 23 homes. Construction is anticipated to start March, 2026 and be completed by October, 2026. Investment: \$2.0 million.



- **Sedalia Water and Sanitation District Infrastructure Improvements** - Water infrastructure in Sedalia was aging and not able to keep up with demand. This \$2.6 million investment will replace water infrastructure and add new pipes to better serve water customers. The Sedalia Water and Sanitation District has completed Phase I and Phase II construction design documents for the replacement of water infrastructure within the Town of Sedalia, pending all final jurisdictional approvals. Phase I includes replacement of existing water mains and service meters throughout the town. Phase II will construct a new water main extending from the Town, across Highway 85, and north along Delva Way to the future water tank site. Both phases are currently under review by USDA and Phase I is anticipated to be released for bidding (Phase II as Bid Alternate – Subject to Funding) in late February or March 2026. Construction award and mobilization are planned for May or June 2026, with final project completion projected for August or September 2027.

- **Cherry Creek Stream Restoration at Dransfeldt Road Extension** - The Cherry Creek restoration at Dransfeldt Road Extension was substantially completed and opened to the public in June 2025. This restoration project was the recipient of the 2025 APWA Colorado Environmental Award for medium-sized communities. The project was recognized for its exceptional integration of environmental restoration, flood risk reduction, water quality improvement, and protection of infrastructure in a rapidly urbanizing area. The stream restoration project spans a one-mile reach of Cherry Creek and 1800 lineal feet of the adjacent KOA tributary, reversing years of stream degradation while supporting major transportation and recreational enhancements. A core accomplishment of the project was the transformation of an unstable, degrading stream corridor into a resilient and ecologically functional corridor, while providing improved habitat for riparian vegetation and wildlife and improved water quality through filtering and infiltration.



## Water Supply

- **Douglas County Water Comprehensive Master Plan** - In November 2023, the Board of Douglas County Commissioners approved a resolution allowing the Douglas County Water Commission to begin work to develop the Douglas County Water plan. The goal of the 11-member advisory board is the integration of existing water provider plans into the 2050 Comprehensive Douglas County Water Plan.



In 2024, the Water Commission advanced the creation of the 2050 Douglas County Water Comprehensive Master Plan. Staff successfully worked with the Water Commission and developed a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the County's Water Master Plan. The RFP was issued in September, and the Commission recommended that the Board of County Commissioners contract with Forsgren Associates, Inc to develop the Water Master Plan.

In early 2025, the Douglas County Water Commission began working with Forsgren Associates, Inc on development of the 2050 Douglas County Water Comprehensive Master Plan. Forsgren has gathered water supply and demand information from County water providers and developed a thorough analysis of groundwater in the County. Public outreach opportunities to review the draft plan will begin in 2026.

- **House Bill 24-1362 Concerning Measures to Promote the Use of Grey Water** has been monitored by the Public Health Department, Environmental Health Division. Periodic check-ins are held with Building Department regarding the installation and use of grey water in new construction in the county. Douglas County will automatically be opted-in on January 1, 2026 and will need to meet the full requirements of Reg. 86, unless the Board of County Commissioners or Municipalities choose to opt-out, in full or in part. Counties or Municipalities can choose to opt-in later if they so choose.

### **Water Quality**

- **Basin/Watershed Authorities**
  - Staff participated in the Cherry Creek Basin Water Quality Authority (CCBWQA) Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), Board meetings, and work sessions in 2025. Efforts included preparation for Regulation 38 rulemaking hearings, planning of non-point source projects, and working towards securing partner funding for Reach One of Cherry Creek. The CCBWQA worked with technical consultants regarding site-specific nutrient standards for Cherry Creek Reservoir.
  - In 2025, staff acted as the Chair of the Chatfield Watershed Authority Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). Efforts included the Rulemaking process through the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission regarding fee-setting for the Chatfield Reservoir Water Quality User Fee, preparing for Regulation 38 rulemaking hearings, and working with technical consultants regarding site-specific nutrient standards for Chatfield Reservoir. The CWA TAC created an online portal for project proponents to submit requests for grant funding from the revenues collected from the Water Quality User Fee tied to the purchase of day passes at Chatfield State Park. Chatfield Reservoir on November 14, 2024. Starting Jan 1, 2025, Colorado Parks and Wildlife will charge an additional two dollars for the purchase of daily park passes at Chatfield Reservoir. The Authority is required to use the revenue provided by the fee for projects that are beneficial to water quality, including using up to twenty-five percent for water quality projects within the state park.

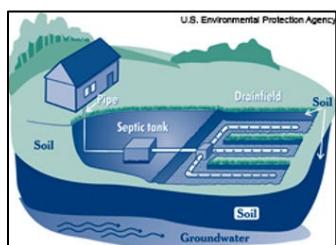
- **West Plum Creek Watershed Authority** - Douglas County Open Space, in cooperation with The River Network, The Watershed Center, Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), Alba Watershed Consulting, among other agencies, has partnered in the creation of a working group dedicated to the conservation of the West Plum Creek watershed, noted as potentially the last best example of



relatively unaltered front range transition zone streams. In 2025 Phase I of the program was officially completed, and work began on Phase II, with an emphasis in identifying opportunities for improvement in stream conditions for native fish and amphibian species, improvements in longitudinal connectivity, as well as hydrological characteristics such as stream flow regime, substrate profile, channeling, water depth and erosion.

- The Water Team reviewed the **proposed Onsite Wastewater Treatment System regulations** (Reg. 43) which set the minimum standards for how OWTS systems are regulated statewide. The Water Quality Control Commission met on March 10th and adopted the regulations which went into effect on June 15, 2025. DCHD anticipates the need for adopting a local regulation and will have up to one year from the effective date to adopt local regulations. A proposed timeline for adoption of local regulations will be completed following the Procedures to Adopt or Revise Regulations by the Local Board of Health in the upcoming months.

- The **Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Collection Program** is open to all residents of Douglas County, including incorporated areas.
  - There were 948 residential collections in 2025, totaling 58,191 pounds of waste.
  - There were 112 material drop-offs in 2025, totaling 14,646 pounds of waste.
  - Total waste collected in 2025 was 72,837 (13%+) pounds, 75% of which was recycled.



## Stormwater

- Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Stormwater Permit** - The Douglas County Cooperative for Local Environmental Awareness and Responsibility (CLEAR) group is comprised of 14 members (Castle Pines Metro District, Cherry Creek Stewardship Partners, City of Castle Pines, City of Lone Tree, Douglas County, Douglas County School District, Heritage Hills Metro District, Highlands Ranch Metro District, Meridian Metro District, Southeast Metro Stormwater Authority, Stonegate Village Metro District, Stonegate Village North Metro District, Town of Castle Rock, Town of Parker) and meets regularly to discuss each of the five MS4 Permit program elements and how local agencies can work together to meet common goals and protect water quality. The DC CLEAR group runs monthly public education and outreach messages in local media outlets which is a component of their annual reporting to Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE).



The DC Clear group launched a social media campaign in 2024 which continued this year and focused on positive messaging around water quality and best practices to prevent stormwater pollution.



Projects implemented for 2025 included:

- Website content revisions
- Increasing the effectiveness of targeted outreach
- Assisting member entities to meet their MS4 Permit requirements
- Preparing and submitting the Annual MS4 Permit Report to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE).
- Participating in the MS4 Permit Renewal stakeholder meetings. This included collaborative meetings with local agency partners regarding the upcoming Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requirements in our next MS4 Permit term.

- **Participation in the Colorado Stormwater Council (CSC)**

- Permit Compliance Committee: The work plan for the Permit Compliance Committee was focused on stakeholder engagement for the upcoming Phase II MS4 permit renewal, which is expected to be completed mid-year 2026.
- Legislative Committee: The efforts of the Legislative Committee were focused on any pending legislation that could affect MS4 permittees or other local environmental programs.
- 303d Committee: The 303d committee is focused on educating MS4s regarding upcoming permit requirements related to 303d listed waters, the development of TMDLs, and watershed/point-source water quality monitoring.
- Municipal Operations Committee: This committee is focused on providing training for municipal staff regarding compliance with MS4 Permits, Pesticide Applicator Permits, and general good housekeeping and pollution prevention practices.



- **Stormwater-Legislative** - House Bill 24-379 was signed by the Governor on May 29, 2024 and



directs the Water Quality Control Division to implement a Dredge and Fill authorization program and the Water Quality Control Commission to promulgate rules for individual permitting and mitigation by Dec. 31, 2025. CDPHE released the first draft of Regulation 87 - Colorado Dredge and Fill Program Implementation in December 2024. Staff continues to attend all stakeholder meetings and advised on the requirement to provide CDPHE with notification and to seek Temporary Authorizations for discharge until Regulation 87 is finalized.

- **Mile High Flood District (MHFD)** Mile High Flood District (MHFD) completed a study focusing on



municipal street sweeping operations and associated pollutant load reductions in stormwater runoff. Douglas County is one of ten municipalities that participated in this study. As a result of this study MHFD is hoping to create a new science-based street sweeping quantification tool with Colorado parameters including

phosphorus and other pollutants of concern. This tool will allow MS4 permit holders to quantify pollution removal via street sweeping operations in order to comply with pollutant load reduction requirements/Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) forthcoming in the MS4 Permit renewal.

- **Pinery – Lakeshore Storm Sewer Installation:** This area of Lakeshore was experiencing private property impacts due to heavy rain events. This project installed a Type C inlet, two (2) manholes and 236 Linear feet (LF) of polypropylene storm sewer (HP Storm). Lakeshore Drive has been in Pinery Filing 3 since 1970 and has minimal storm sewer access. The contract was awarded to 53 Corporation, LLC in May 2025 (\$224,500). Work began in July 2025 and was completed in September 2025.

- **Lincoln Ave Phase II Storm Sewer Replacement Project:** it was found during a map update that



several storm sewer systems in Lincoln Avenue (near the Douglas County VMS Signage mid-way between Stonegate & Keystone) were installed in the mid-1980s, and during investigations on these systems, we found them to be in bad condition and full of sediment. Phase I was completed in 2024, and Phase II was awarded to Denver Dirt Works in May 2025 (\$350,000). Phase II work began in July 2025 and was completed in August 2025 and consisted of removing and replacing storm sewers crossing Lincoln Avenue at this location.

- **Storm Sewer Cleaning Project:** In 2025, Shelbourn Enterprises cleaned Lincoln Avenue between Stonegate-Keystone, as part of this on-call contract. Shelbourn Enterprises was awarded this contract in October 2023 (\$75,000). Work will continue during 2026.

- **Platte River Road Project:** Special Projects Engineering responded to a request for support in



resolving a long-term challenge on DC 67, Platte River Road. The work entailed review of consultant geotechnical exploration and proposed sources of road failure. Staff then solicited additional expert geotechnical analysis, which further supported the identification of the source cause of the failures. Staff then designed a solution for the subsurface drainage challenge and sought additional external expert review to confirm the design solution. Construction is slated for Q2 or Q3 of 2026. Design was completed in late 2025.

- **Charter Oaks Drainage Channel:** The Charter Oaks community asked Engineering staff about on-going channel failures in their subdivision. Staff provided community support with preliminary and conceptual level design, in addition to coordination with relevant and applicable regulatory authorities to enable implementation.



- **DC Projects with Mile High Flood District** - The Mile High Flood District



(MHFD) has partnered with 41 local governments, which includes Douglas County, to master plan drainage improvements through the Denver Metro area; design, construct and maintain stream corridors including removal of trash and debris; provide flood warning services, and develop resources related to improving water quality in our streams. The program leverages local government dollars to

fund stream projects that reduce flood risk and provide community amenities. The work plan for 2025 included the following Douglas County projects:

- Cherry Creek Upstream of Scott Road – under construction
- Newlin Gulch at Recreation Drive – in design
- Happy Canyon Creek north of Lincoln Avenue – initiating community outreach
- Sulphur and Tallman Gulches MDP – project kickoff in the Spring of 2025
- Rampart Gulch and Unnamed Tributaries MDP – kickoff will occur in 2025

- **Engineering Stormwater Projects from 1/1/25 through 11/30/25:**

DESC Multi-Lot Plans	8
DESC plans/permit	879
Floodplain Development Permits	15
GESC Low-Impact plans	52
GESC Small Utility Plans	17
GESC Standard Plans	61
<b>Total projects reviewed:</b>	<b>1,032</b>

## **Drainage**

- **Woodmoor Mountain GID Project:** The Woodmoor Mountain community asked Engineering staff to support the development of a master drainage plan for the Woodmoor Mountain GID. Staff completed field data collection, survey, hydraulic and hydrologic analysis, structure design, and developed a comprehensive report supporting the prioritization of work. The community elected to delay the project until Q2 2026 due to community debate regarding the prioritization of work and project scope.



- **Peterson Road Drainage Improvement Project:** Due to the heavy storms that Douglas County experienced in the spring and summer of 2023 and the improvements completed on CDOT Highway 85, we received numerous complaints of flooding in the industrial properties along Peterson Road from Airport Road to the south. Phase I plans were completed in March 2024 and constructed in June 2024; Phase II plans include a new storm sewer and outfall to collect the flows from Hwy 85 and upstream to mitigate flooding. These plans are 90% complete and we are waiting for the relocation of AT&T Fiber and Xcel Energy Gas line to finalize the plans. Phase II is anticipated to start construction in 2026 after dry utilities have been relocated. Phase III design is currently being evaluated, which includes a secondary storm sewer system to collect the flows from Hwy 85 and pass them through the sites, and will move forward when budget allows.



- **Highline Canal Transition and Management Plan** - The Mile High Flood District (MHFD) and Douglas County desire to work cooperatively on Major Drainageway Planning for the High Line Canal Stormwater Transition and Management Plan (STAMP). Many other local jurisdictions, along with MHFD are funding this effort through individual intergovernmental agreements. The purpose of the project is to develop a canal-wide master plan and jurisdiction-specific master plans. The canal-wide master plan will include high-level operations and maintenance considerations, refinement of hydrology, hydraulic evaluation, water quality considerations, and ecological impacts to the canal.



- **Major Drainageway Planning for Rampart Gulch and Unnamed Tributaries** - The purpose of this project is to develop a master plan for a drainageway to provide efficient stormwater drainage within this area. The proposed work includes mapping, fieldwork, hydrologic and hydraulic analyses, and the development of all reasonable alternatives to determine and justify the most feasible master plan for the area. In developing the master plan, consideration is typically given to cost, land use, existing drainage systems, known drainage and flooding problems, known and anticipated channel erosion problems, stormwater quality, right-of-way needs, existing wetland and riparian areas, and open space and wildlife habitat benefits.

- **Major Drainageway Planning and Flood Hazard Delineation for Willow Creek Tributaries Upstream of Englewood Dam** - The purpose of the project is to develop a drainageway master plan to provide efficient stormwater drainage within this area. The proposed work includes mapping, fieldwork, hydrologic and hydraulic analyses, and the development of all reasonable alternatives so the most feasible master plan can be determined and justified within the area. In developing the master plan, consideration is typically given to cost, land use, existing drainage systems, known drainage and flooding problems, known and anticipated channel erosion problems, stormwater quality, right-of-way needs, existing wetland and riparian areas, and open space and wildlife habitat benefits.



- **Post Construction Inspections** - Inspection and maintenance of all County-owned permanent stormwater control measures continues with a modernized approach utilizing OpenGov to document historical maintenance records and schedule required inspections under MCM4 of our MS4 permit. This year, 9 facilities were identified as deficient and converted to a compliant status through our pond maintenance contract to ensure facilities perform as designed to reduce pollutant discharge into receiving waters. (Below left is prior to maintenance, and right is after.)



- **Pinery Ponds Drainage Analysis Project:** it was discovered during the GIS Mapping update that there are 19 ponds within the Pinery Subdivision located on Douglas County Open Space property, which places the maintenance responsibility for these ponds on Douglas County. Special Projects Engineering found the original plans for these ponds and contracted with RESPEC to analyze these ponds to determine what maintenance will need to be conducted to ensure these ponds are restored to the original detention volume.

- **Pinery Outfall Cleaning Project:** Pinery outfalls were inspected in 2022, and the cleaning of several severely rated outfalls in the Pinery subdivision occurred in 2023 by the contractor, 53 Corporation, LLC (\$105,000). More severe outfalls in the Pinery were cleaned during October 2024 by the same contractor. The poor and fair rated outfalls in the Pinery, along with the severe outfalls in Pinery West, are anticipated to be cleaned in 2025-2026.



#### ***Maintenance/Repair***

- **East Plum Creek Stabilization** - Staff worked with the Douglas County Conservation District (DCCD) and Colorado Agricultural Leadership Foundation (CALF) to continue stabilizing East Plum Creek within the CALF property south of Castle Rock. In turn, DC staff secured a \$805,000 award from the CDPHE, which assisted with the most costly and significant portion of the project. CDPHE added another \$140K award for the project in the fall of 2024 and construction continued through the spring of 2025.



- **Sandstone Irrigation Major Maintenance – Gove Ditch** - Gove Ditch was experiencing significant loss for several years due to the ditch running through fractured rock. The loss was so significant that the County was unable to deliver the water to the hay field and put it to beneficial use. OSNR worked with Engineering Special Projects to create a solution that minimized the losses while maximizing efficiencies in the system. The solution was to pipe a short section of the ditch through the fractured rock and replace the headgates, the vertical stand structures, and distribution components. Additionally, OSNR and Engineering Special Projects were able to clean and maintain the entire ditch as it traverses the property, from the headgate on Gove Creek to the hay field.



- **County Dam Inventory Maintenance:** Eleven (11) dam structures were inspected, all of which required a variety of design development in coordination with the State Office of Dam Safety. Staff completed design and contracting, construction, and oversight of the repairs for the identified dams. In addition, staff performed proactive management inspections of higher risk structures.

- **Bridge Repair Program:** This program was started to inspect and repair the 84 County-owned bridges. The bridges are being added to Cartograph, an annual inspection program is being developed. In 2025, two bridge repair projects were:
  - Hess Road North Bridge Repair: Staff hired a consultant to design the repair of this bridge. Bids were received in December 2024, and construction was completed in the spring of 2025.
  - Hess Road South Bridge Repair: Staff hired a consultant to design the repair of this bridge in 2024. Bidding and construction were completed in the summer and fall of 2025.



- **Highlands Ranch Manhole Installation at HRP-Goldsmith and Daisy Ct. Project:** There are now two additional manholes on Highlands Ranch Pkwy, west of Goldsmith & Daisy Ct. American West Construction, LLC was awarded the contract in October 2024 (\$265,100); and work was completed in 2025. Phase III will occur in 2026, and we will begin UV Lining the existing lines that now have access.

- **Chatfield Reservoir Mitigation Company/Sugar Creek** - Inspection and maintenance roles continue to improve through the use of OpenGov where inspection and maintenance data are organized and available for analysis. Fifty-six cubic yards of sediment were diverted from the South Platte River this year through proactive maintenance of 34 sediment traps along Sugar Creek.



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- **Gailen Buck Pond Repair Project:** Operations asked Engineering staff to develop a redesigned solution for the Gailen Buck Operations facility. The prior design had shown signs of failure, requiring a more robust solution. Staff self-performed all elements of design and construction, to be completed Q4 2025.

- **Sandstone Ranch Irrigation Repair Project:** Open Space asked Engineering staff to assist them in resolving chronic water losses and system inefficiencies for the Sandstone Ranch Irrigation Repair Project. Staff self-performed all design, construction, and oversight of repairs and retrofit to multiple regulated structures on Sandstone ranch. Direct review and coordination by the Perry Park Water engineer was also required and support was garnered for the work.



## PUBLIC HEALTH

- **Health Department Relocation:** To enhance service delivery and improve operational efficiency,



the Douglas County Health Department has moved all services to a central location effective Monday, July 7, 2025. Designed with modern amenities and improved accessibility, the new facility, Lansing Point, brings all public health functions under one roof, allowing for stronger coordination, collaboration, and customer service.

### Key Highlights:

- Consolidated Services: The new 27,000-square-foot facility now houses Vital Records, WIC (Women, Infants and Children program), Community Health, Epidemiology, Emergency Preparedness and Environmental Health.
- Continuity of Services: No service disruptions occurred during the transition. WIC services were provided remotely July 7–11, with in-person appointments resuming Monday, July 14 at the new location.
- Improved Access and Coordination: The centralized location supports greater team cohesion, more efficient operations and improved access for residents in the northern part of the county.

### County Investment

- Annual Lease: \$847,000 Furniture: \$500,000
- IT infrastructure: \$180,000 Security and Access: \$58,000
- Signage: \$9,000

- The Health Department continues to deliver high-quality services to Douglas County residents. Key developments over the past year include expanded interagency collaboration, strategic health assessments, infectious disease monitoring, and operational enhancements as well as office relocation. Some highlights are listed below:

- We were lucky to recruit a local physician to serve in the Medical Officer role for the department following the retirement of Dr. Smith at the end of 2024. Dr. Kamran Dastoury has been doing a good job of supporting our staff when needed.
- DCHD worked with Advent Health hospitals to perform a Community Health Needs Assessment. This collaboration means that residents are asked for input and information once by three entities in the county instead of three separate asks. By working with Advent Health, we will be doing more frequent assessments while reducing the costs for each organization.
- This year had many Measles outbreaks around the country, including several cases in Colorado. Luckily there were no confirmed cases in Douglas County; however, our disease surveillance staff was kept very busy investigating potential cases and those who were potentially exposed in other counties or states.



- Creative work by our Vital Records staff has allowed us to generate revenue through state authorized fees that cover the cost of that office as well as a large part of our administrative overhead costs. At the transition from Tri-County Health Department to DCHD, we were told to expect \$60,000 per year in vital records fees but are currently generating nearly \$400,000 by working with the state to be a preferred provider for these services and by providing excellent services to local funeral homes who then direct their death certificate needs to our office.

- **Healthy Families Partnership:** The Healthy Families Partnership of Douglas County (HFP) was established as a collaborative, community-based initiative focused on improving maternal and child health outcomes and promoting family wellness. Fifteen subject matter expert organizations came together to develop prevention and early intervention materials focused on reducing infant mortality and enhancing long-term outcomes for families by connecting parents and caregivers with essential resources, services, and support.

The organizations that originally comprised HFP included: AdventHealth Castle Rock, AdventHealth Parker, Advocates for Children CASA, Catholic Charities, Developmental Pathways, Douglas County Early Childhood Council, DHS, DCHD, Douglas County Libraries, Douglas County Mental Health Initiative, Douglas County School District, HCA HealthONE Sky Ridge, Manna Resource Center, UCHealth Highlands Ranch Hospital, and You Are Not Alone. In 2025, HFP expanded to include youth-focused organizations including The Aspen Effect, Douglas County Healthy Youth Coalition, Douglas County Youth Initiative, and Happy Crew.

In September 2024, HFP officially launched its bag distribution partnership with the four hospitals for newly birthing families that include a sleep sack and educational materials covering safe sleep, infant crying, child passenger safety laws, developmental milestones, and perinatal mental health, just to name a few. In its inaugural year, HFP successfully distributed over 4,300 bags to birthing families, establishing itself as a trusted community resource. In early 2026, HFP will begin the expansion to youth-focused initiatives, including substance misuse and suicide prevention.

- **Immunizations:** In 2025, Douglas County Health Department (DCHD) partnered with ColoVAX and the Public Health Institute at Denver Health to host ten community immunization clinics in Castle Rock, Highlands Ranch, Lone Tree, and Parker. In total, 252 individuals were administered more than 665 vaccines, including common childhood and adult vaccines, flu, and COVID. Approximately 45% of the individuals receiving vaccines were uninsured and would not have been able to access the necessary vaccines without support from the Department's core immunization grant.



- **Suicide Prevention:** Beginning in May 2025, DCHD and the Douglas County Mental Health Division convened individuals from local law enforcement, judicial, hospitals, behavioral health organizations, community-based organizations, and the school district to begin a deeper discussion around suicide prevention in Douglas County. Short-term objectives included the following items:



Through regular monthly meetings, this workgroup has determined available resources, gaps, and risk and prevention strategies. Additionally, they have identified five priority populations for which data mining and strategy development will occur in 2026:

- Perinatal (12 months before and after birth for moms and dads)
- Youth (birth – 17 years) and Transition-Aged Youth (18 – 24 years)
- Men (25+ years)
- Older Adults (55+ years)
- Veterans and First Responders

- We participated in the **2025 Castle Rock Food Truck Jamboree**. Food Trucks and Carts were invited to a licensing event in which Environmental Health, Castle Rock Fire Department, and Castle Rock Government (Zoning and Business License) provided educational presentations on topics related to health and safety. It was also an opportunity to receive a one-stop-shop for inspections and licensure.



- **National Accreditation Progress** - The Department achieved a significant milestone in our pursuit of Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) accreditation, a prestigious national recognition that validates our commitment to best practices:
  - Completed Readiness Assessment: Successfully finished the first critical stage of the accreditation process
  - Positive PHAB Feedback: Received encouraging evaluation indicating strong preparedness for achieving full accreditation
  - Best Practices Implementation: This process ensures Douglas County residents benefit from nationally recognized standards in public health service delivery

- In partnership with AdventHealth, DCHD worked with the two Advent Health hospitals in our county to perform our respective **Community Health Assessment** processes at the same time in order to increase effectiveness and reduce the frequency of asking our residents and partner organizations for data. We worked with Advent Health in 2025 and will continue into 2026 and will share the cost of their consultant. The Health Department and AdventHealth also partnered to complete the **Public Health Improvement Plan (PHIP)**, which will guide the direction of DCHD for the next 3 years. This crucial and mutually beneficial partnership aligns the Douglas County Health Department and AdventHealth to create a more coordinated and effective approach to serving the residents of Douglas County.

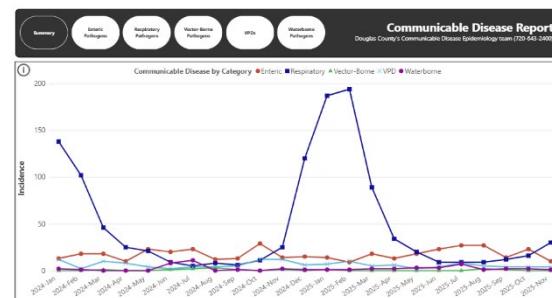


- **Podcast sheds light on vital health topic for parents.** Vaping use among teens is nearly twice as

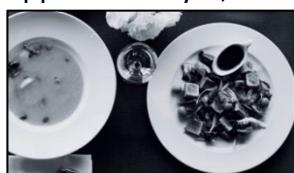


high in Douglas County compared to the rest of the country. According to the Centers for Disease Control, e-cigarette and vaping use among middle and high school students is 5.8% nationwide, but Douglas County's Community Health Survey shows it's closer to 12.2% locally. Staff created a [webpage](#) to share resources from the Douglas County Health Department to help parents, schools and other community leaders start conversations with kids and young adults.

- **Communicable Disease Data Dashboard** - The Douglas County Health Department is notified of county residents who test positive for communicable reportable conditions. The following graphs provide counts of cases in Douglas County by year or month. Data are updated monthly. Data may be missing due to ongoing disease investigations and reporting delays. Data source: [Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment \(CDPHE\)](#)



- Approximately 1,200 invoices were mailed for **2025 license renewals**. Staff completed phone call and onsite follow ups to issue Notices of Violations for facilities that had outstanding payments. Several facilities had changed ownerships, so inspectors worked to collect updated information to ensure that invoices and points of contact were current. Retail Food facilities that are operating and are still outstanding on their payments were issued a Civil Penalty.



- **Colorado Universal Preschool** opened for applications for the 2025 school year on December 17, 2024. A total of 4,655 children participated in 161 programs.
- **SB24-002 - Local Property Tax Credits Rebate** – The Board approved a childcare property tax incentive program for Douglas County, developed under Senate Bill 2024-002, to address the critical shortage and high cost of childcare, particularly for infants and toddlers, and to support



the local workforce. The program provides a property tax rebate structure for qualifying childcare providers with a base 75% rebate and an additional 25% for those serving infants and toddlers. The estimated fiscal impact is \$800,000 annually, impacting 58 commercial and numerous residential providers.

- Douglas County Health Department hosted a **community open house** on Sept. 4 to provide information on a variety of resources available like oral health screening, immunizations and car seat safety inspections.



- **The Highlands Ranch Backcountry Wilderness Sunshine and Storytime program has expanded**



- We know that reading aloud to children and spending time outdoors together fosters healthy development by strengthening bonds, building language skills, improving motor abilities, and supporting overall physical well-being. That's why the Douglas County Health Department contributed \$5,000 to the Highlands Ranch Backcountry

Wilderness' Sunshine and Storytime program. The donation ensures more families can take part in this enriching and free activity.

- **2025 Stats:**

Body Art Inspections	14
Child Care Routine Inspections	138
Recreational Water (Swimming Pools and Hot Tub) Inspections	90
Retail Food Establishment, Routine Inspections	865
RFE, Re-Inspection	105
Plan Reviews for New Builds or Remodels	97
RFE, Pre-Operational	98
Child Care, Pre-Operational	26
Special Events	57
Vendors	89
Mobiles	51
Complaints	177
OWTS, Major Repairs	28
OWTS, Minor Repairs	112
OWTS, New System Installs	111
OWTS, Use Permits	401
Land Use Case Referrals	134
Environmental Record Reviews	23
Waste Tire Inspections	9
Landfill Inspections	8
Outbreak Investigations	1

## COMMUNITY SERVICES

- **Aurora Regional Navigation Campus** – On November 6, Commissioners and staff attended the



ribbon-cutting and grand opening ceremony for the Aurora Regional Navigation Campus. Supported through funding from the City of Aurora, Arapahoe County, Adams County, and Douglas County, the 13-acre facility is designed to provide comprehensive services, including emergency shelter, wraparound case management, supportive resources, and transitional housing for individuals experiencing homelessness. The facility began

accepting participants on November 17. The HEART Navigators are working with the case managers at Advance Pathways to coordinate placement at the shelter when needed. Since opening, HEART has assisted three individuals obtain shelter at the ARNC.

- **Strive to Thrive** - Strive to Thrive is a bi-annual resource and service fair presented by the



Community of Care Network. Strive to Thrive is a magnet event that coincides with the annual Point-in-Time survey of homelessness. Calvary Church in Castle Rock hosted the winter fair on January 28, 2025. Douglas County residents were able to access resources and services from 25 local non-profits and providers. There were 61 adult attendees, and the fair offered a

hot meal, grocery items, clothing, employment opportunities, emergency assistance applications, health information, and food and nutrition assistance.

Cherry Hills Community Church hosted the fair on July 29. Douglas County residents were able to access resources and services from 33 local non-profits and providers. The Summer Strive to Thrive is held in coordination with the Foundation for Douglas County Schools backpack drive, Lend A Hand. This year, 389 backpacks were distributed to Douglas County students. The fair offered a hot meal, grocery items, clothing, employment opportunities, emergency assistance applications, health insurance information, and food and nutrition assistance to 476 attendees.



- **Douglas County Art Encounters** – Douglas County administers the Douglas County [Art Encounters](#) program in collaboration with Douglas



County Libraries, City of Lone Tree, Highlands Ranch Cultural Affairs Association, Roxborough Arts Council, and the Towns of Castle Rock and Parker. The selection process was completed in April and 35 new sculptures were installed in May for the 2025-2026 program year. The Douglas County News Press highlighted the program in their [April 7 newspaper edition](#). Since the program's inception in 2008, the

County has featured more than 400 public art sculptures.

- **Meadowmark Grand Opening** - On April 30<sup>th</sup>, staff joined Commissioner Teal, Governor Polis, and partners to celebrate the grand opening of The Meadowmark, a 200-unit affordable community for 55+ residents in the Town of Castle Rock. A combined total of over \$34 million in Private Activity Bond Cap was provided by Douglas County, Castle Rock, and Parker toward the project. We are proud to support this facility that is not just a place to live, but a place for older adults to connect and remain active in their community.



- **GOALS 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Data** – The GOALS program provides safe, temporary shelter and individualized support to families experiencing homelessness, with capacity to serve up to five families at a time. During the first quarter of 2025, GOALS supported four families, representing 17 individuals, all of whom received safe shelter and comprehensive wraparound services. A key milestone this quarter was the successful exit of the program's first family, who transitioned from shelter into a private rental unit.



- **Faith-Based Roundtables** - On May 15, Douglas County hosted a Faith-Based Roundtable meeting at Sunday Salmon. Attendees gathered to share and collaborate on outreach projects their congregations are currently engaged in. The meeting also provided an opportunity to learn more about Tessa, the new operator of the Douglas County Domestic Violence Safehouse, and the services they will offer to survivors of domestic violence and sex trafficking. Tessa staff shared their mission and approach and provided details on the variety of services offered through their organization. A key focus of the discussion was exploring ways faith-based organizations can support Tessa's work and collaborate to serve those experiencing domestic violence.



On August 21, the County facilitated a Faith-Based Roundtable meeting hosted at SECOR in



Parker. The meeting focused on engaging local faith communities in the fight against human trafficking. Covered Colorado delivered a powerful presentation on local statistics and the range of services they offer to survivors. Attendees also participated in a guided tour of the Covered Colorado facility, gaining firsthand

insight into their operations and impact. The meeting strengthened connections between service providers and faith-based partners, highlighting the vital role these communities play in addressing human trafficking.

- **Manna Resource Center Spring Graduation** - On May 13, staff attended the Manna Resource Center (MRC) graduation to celebrate the 12 participants graduating from their self-sufficiency program. The vision of MRC is to see cycles broken, families strengthened and live transformed.

To help participants achieve this the MRC program offers a Parent Connect course, individualized coaching, and a financial independence course among other supportive services. The 12 graduates of the program collectively accomplished 84% of the goals they set to achieve and increased their self-sufficiency score by 24%. Overall, in 2004 MRC celebrated their 100<sup>th</sup> MRC graduate and collectively their graduates to date earn an annual income of over \$4.5M and this represents an increase of 296%.



- **Your continued access to art, science and history through Scientific and Cultural Facilities**



and Castle, you are benefiting directly from Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD) funds at work in your community. In support of these organizations and more, \$1,290,475.62 in Tier III, County SCFD funds have been distributed.

**District grants** - When you enjoy the sounds of the Lone Tree or Parker Symphony Orchestra, explore dinosaur tracks at Dinosaur Ridge, learn about our history from the Highlands Ranch Historical Society, or take in the beauty of the Cherokee Ranch

and Castle, you are benefiting directly from Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD) funds at work in your community. In support of these organizations and more, \$1,290,475.62 in Tier III, County SCFD funds have been distributed.

- **Link Outreach** – Via Transportation and staff offered a Link On-Demand table at the Older Adult Resource Fair. They informed those attending the resource fair about the recent Highlands Ranch extension for Link On Demand and demonstrated capabilities of the app to riders who may find themselves in Highlands Ranch and Lone Tree. Joe participated in the panel during the Town Hall to provide insight and answer any questions over the new Highlands Ranch extension.



In addition, staff visited Wind Crest Senior Living to introduce residents to the Link On Demand. Over 60 members of the No-Car Club attended the presentation, where they also received assistance downloading and using the app. Some residents have already used the Link in Highlands Ranch and spoke highly of the ease of use and friendliness of the drivers.

Staff also hosted information tables at Southridge Recreation Center, the Highlands Ranch Library, and the Highlands Ranch Senior Center. Informational pamphlets were given to the staff at each location and Community Services staff assisted riders in setting up the app and creating a user profile to take a ride on Link.



- **Touch A Truck** – The Touch a Truck event is a community event that allows children (and adults) to explore and learn about different types of vehicles. It included a variety of construction vehicles, police cars, fire trucks, bucket trucks, trash trucks and more. Attendees were able to climb inside the vehicles, take pictures and ask questions of the operators.



## HISTORIC PRESERVATION

- **History Colorado State Historical Fund Grants** – During 2025, staff applied for three History Colorado State Historical (SHF) grant. One grant was successfully awarded during the spring grant cycle for window and door restoration at the Greenland Post Office in the amount of \$168,006. With the County's contribution, the total funding for the project is \$224,009. Staff applied for two additional grants during the fall grant cycle and is awaiting grant decisions in mid-December. One grant will fund exterior restoration work on the barn and saloon at Prairie Canyon Ranch. The second grant is for excavation and site stabilization on a significant archaeology site located in northeastern Douglas County.

These grants will leverage 2025 Parks, Trails, Historic Resources, and Open Space tax funds to further implement projects in support of the Board's Historic and Natural Resources Priority. To date, the County has received over \$1 million in SHF grant funds to support various historic resources restoration projects.

- **Douglas County Library Exhibit and Event Participation** – Staff attended and hosted a booth with County artifacts at several Douglas County Library events throughout the year, including the kickoff for spring reading with a Charlotte's Web theme, Brew Tour Kick Off event, and the Storybook Holiday event. Staff also collaborated with the Library on "A History of Competition" exhibit featuring several County artifacts at the Castle Rock, Highlands Ranch, Parker, and Lone Tree branches, and a Veterans Day exhibit located at the Highlands Ranch branch.



- **Parker Water and Sanitation Headquarters Exhibit Opening** – In November 2025, County staff and Parker Water staff held a grand opening for the Douglas County History Repository's exhibit "Thriving Through Time: Adaptation on the Palmer Divide" at the Parker Water headquarters located near the Rueter Hess Reservoir. The grand opening highlighted Douglas County's largest public artifact exhibit featuring three display cases of artifacts, a historic oil wagon, mural of historic photos, and a Douglas County history timeline.



Two lower mandible mammoth specimens from the Scott Spring site were cleaned, stabilized, and prepared for display. The lower jaws were still coated in dirt and plaster jackets from being excavated in the field. A professional fossil preparer carefully cleaned the dirt away, removed the field plaster jacket, and stabilized the fossilized jaw bones and teeth. The final phase was creating a new permanent plaster jacket for each mandible to support and display the specimens.



This exhibit is the result of a successful partnership between the Douglas County History Repository and Parker Water and Sanitation. Over 70 people attended the grand opening and local news outlets published articles highlighting the exhibit opening. The exhibit is free and open to the public during Parker Water and Sanitation District's regular business hours.



- **Historic Restoration** - Open Space and Natural Resources (OSNR) staff, in partnership with Historic Resources, works to protect the historical structures on Open Space properties. This included ongoing restoration work at William Converse Ranch, Spring Valley School House, and the Evans Homestead.

While inspecting the OSNR Historical Structures, the team identified three main properties that have projects in need of urgent repair based on current, and interest to increase, public access to these properties. The following is the properties identified and what work needs to be completed:

- Prairie Canyon Ranch - restoration and stabilization of the saloon, bunkhouse, and barn structures.
- Sandstone Ranch - restoration of the palm barn and loafing shed.
- William Converse Ranch, Hidden Mesa Open Space - roof replacement of the four historic buildings.

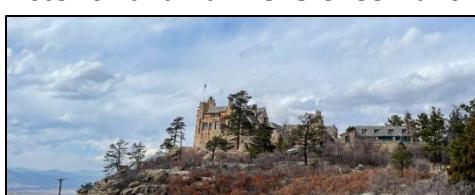


The team is applying for State Historic Fund grants and has presented this project to the County Open Space Advisory Committee to request direction to allocate the necessary funds to begin work early in 2026.

- **Douglas County Library Spring Reading** - On Sunday, April 6, staff attended a ticketed event for kids with the Douglas County Library at the Parker location to kickoff spring reading. The theme was Charlotte's Web. Staff brought farming artifacts to the event to teach kids about old farming materials and promote the virtual museum. The artifacts included a milk can, milk bottles, branding irons, corn planter, pig ear tattoo kit, and sheep shears. About 500 people attended the event.



- **Historic Landmark Cherokee Ranch and Castle Preservation and Protection** - At the July 22 Business Meeting, Douglas County Commissioners approved \$575,000 to be used to repair the castle's exterior concrete, roofing, awning, and property fencing, interior repairs and painting, to identify future historic preservation needs and to support continued public access. The funding agreement also allowed Douglas County Commissioners to appoint two members to the Cherokee Ranch and Castle Foundation Board.



Business Meeting, Douglas County Commissioners approved \$575,000 to be used to repair the castle's exterior concrete, roofing, awning, and property fencing, interior repairs and painting, to identify future historic preservation needs and to support continued public access. The funding agreement also allowed Douglas County Commissioners to appoint two members to the Cherokee Ranch and Castle Foundation Board.

- **Franktown Cave Artifacts** - On July 29, the County Curator picked up 18 artifacts from the Franktown Cave archaeological site from the University of Denver. All the artifacts are rare and perishable artifacts typically not found in Colorado. Among the collection are a 3-piece moccasin and yucca sandal. This was a unique opportunity for staff to photograph the artifacts and create a virtual showcase exhibit of the collection on the County's virtual museum before the artifacts return to the University of Denver.



- **Historic Resources Public Outreach**: Parker Arts Presentation – Curator, Brittany Cassell, gave a presentation with Dr. Gordon Tucker Jr., a retired archaeologist, at the request of the Town of Parker to discuss the archaeology work at the Reuter Hess Reservoir. The event provided staff with an opportunity to discuss the work of the Douglas County History Repository and bring artifacts for public viewing. A total of 113 people attended the presentation.

- **Brew Tour Kick Off at Douglas County Library** - On July 27, the County Curator and repository contractor Todd McMahon attended the Brew Tour Kick Off event at the Castle Rock library. About 300-400 people attended the event which had beer tasting, live music, and lots of swag. The Repository had a booth with historic beer bottles and a flask from the Cheese Ranch that once existed in Highlands Ranch. The booth also had a case of old matchbooks from the 50's and 60's that all



came from the Meltzer Ranch property. This was a great opportunity for the public to engage with staff and County artifacts at a fun event!

- **Douglas County Fair Historic Preservation Booth** - On August 1, the County Curator attended the County Fair hosting the Historic Preservation booth with Historic Preservation Board member Mary O’Pry. The booth was filled with historical information on Douglas County. The Curator brought historic Fair and Rodeo ribbons from the 50’s and 60’s from the Metzler family.



- **International Archaeology Day** - The Douglas County History Repository attended International Archaeology Day on October 18 at Red Rocks Amphitheatre. Douglas County History Repository and Historic Preservation Board hosted a big booth with a mini pop-up museum inside for people to enjoy artifacts from the Metzler Ranch. All artifacts were focused on the dairy operations at the ranch. Staff and volunteers engaged with interested citizens and met several kids who are a part of the Lego League. The Lego League’s theme this year was to focus on archaeology, and the kids were creating robots to help archaeologists find artifacts in the ground.



- **Douglas County Library Where the Wild Things Are Event** - On October 25, staff attended a ticketed event for kids with the Douglas County Library at the Castle Rock location to celebrate reading. The theme was based on the book Where the Wild Things Are. The Curator brought fossilized plant impressions and mammoths fossils from the Scott Spring site in Roxborough. The mammoth tooth was a big hit! The kids also received fun activities to help learn about archaeology. Over 500 people attended the event.



## HUMAN SERVICES

- **Child Abuse and Neglect Multi-Disciplinary Team** - The Douglas County Child Abuse and Neglect



Multi-Disciplinary team (MDT) met quarterly in 2025 with representation from the Investigations units of all four law enforcement jurisdictions, the 18th Judicial District Attorney's Office, and the Department of Human Services. In the four years since MDT was founded, members from attending agencies have grown substantially in trust,

communication, and our understanding of each other's roles. In 2025, we continued to review incidents of serious bodily injury to children, mainly infant ages 0 to 2 months. This detailed analysis of contributing factors led to the creation of an "All Babies Cry" resource by the DHS Chairs of MDT and was incorporated into the county's Healthy Families Initiative as a preventative measure for new parents. We also looked in depth at Abusive Head Trauma, the number one cause of death to children due to physical abuse. Recently, we implemented a new team response practice to felony child abuse cases which includes a pre-response staffing between law enforcement, the district attorney, and human services and continued staffing and information sharing at critical points in the case.

- **Mandatory Reporting Task Force – Child Protection Ombudsman of Colorado** - Through a lens



of partnership and support for our local mandated reporters, Human Services has spent much of 2025 providing training around the new mandated reporter laws that took effect

on September 1, 2025. This law is a significant change and comes after the statewide Mandatory Reporter Taskforce convened and issued almost two dozen recommendations to address the state's mandatory reporting law. These recommendations focused on: (1) Recognizing and addressing the disproportionate impact of mandatory reporting law and policies; (2) Clarifying reporting processes and requirements in statute; (3) Creating and requiring mandatory reporting training; (4) Addressing requirements for specialized occupations; and (5) Reviewing and improving data and information systems. Legislatively, this resulted in the passing of the first bill, House Bill 25-1188, which was specifically aimed at addressing the findings of the taskforce.

During 2025, Human Services staff met with community partners such as law enforcement, mental health and medical professionals, as well as Douglas County School District and Public Health staff, to communicate out the change in the law and offer support. Additionally, Human Services has also provided the ability for mandated reporters to consult with the Department prior to making a report. Human Services seeks to ensure all mandated reporters understand their legal obligation as well as know how to respond when concerns arise for an at-risk child. Human Services believes in partnership with its community members, because it takes the entire community to help ensure child safety and well-being.

- **2025 Heroes Gala** - On September 12, Community Services staff and members of the HEART attended Douglas County Community Foundation's (DCCF) 2025 Heroes Gala at Centennial Airport. The evening honored recipients of the Armed Forces Hero Award, Community Hero Award, and the First Responder Hero Award. This inspiring event not only paid tribute to our heroes but also raised awareness for first responders while supporting the DCCF Community Emergency Relief Fund.



- **Philip S. Miller (PSM) Grant Program** - The Board of County Commissioners renewed a Memorandum of Understanding between Douglas County and the Douglas County Community Foundation (DCCF) in July 2025 giving the DCCF the ability to administer the PSM grant for another three-year term. Douglas County transferred \$195,000 in PSM grant funds to DCCF to be distributed to organizations through the 2025 PSM grant application process. Douglas County also signed an Intergovernmental Agreement in the past, awarding \$65,000 in PSM funds annually to DCCF for operations.

- **The Douglas County Community Foundation (DCCF)** manages grant funds for Douglas County and others, including the Philip S. Miller Grant, the Douglas County Opioid Council Emergency Grant and the Douglas Has Heart Fund. In partnership with the Douglas County Community Foundation, the Douglas Has Heart campaign raised more than \$11,000 in contributions in 2025. Since its inception, the campaign has raised more than \$16,623. One hundred percent of the contributions go to local non-profit organizations addressing homelessness in the community, including Help and Hope Center, SECOR Cares, Parker Task Force, Douglas County Homeless Initiative, and HEART.



- **New Human Services Location** - To expand access to vital safety net services in northern Douglas



County, Douglas County Human Services opened a new office within the Highlands Ranch Senior Center. The office began serving the public on January 21, 2025, offering convenient support to individuals and families of all ages.

Key Highlights:

- Strategic Location: Offers convenient access to Human Services in northern Douglas County at 200 E. Highlands Ranch Parkway, Suite 101.
- Comprehensive Support: Provides assistance with applications, renewals and documentation for SNAP, Medicaid, TANF, Old Age Pension and Aid to the Needy Disabled.
- Benefit Access: Allows residents to drop off documents, complete redeterminations and pick up EBT cards on site.
- Accessible Hours: Open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., for walk-in and scheduled services.

- Coordinated Service Delivery: Complements full offerings at the Castle Rock location, expanding reach and reducing travel barriers for residents.

**County Investment:** Annual lease: \$91,513 Furniture: \$51,756; IT infrastructure: \$40,140

- **2025 National Association of Counties (NACo) Achievement Award** - Since 1970, the NACo Achievement Awards have recognized outstanding and innovative county government programs and services that promote the betterment of communities. Through a non-competitive application process, noteworthy programs receive awards in 18 categories that cover a vast range of county responsibilities. Douglas County's Care Compact (TCC) program received the 2025 Achievement Award in the Human Services category.



TCC, established in December 2020, serves Douglas County adults (18+) living with mental health conditions, substance use disorder, intellectual, developmental disability/delay and/or unmet basic needs through a network of case management agencies, healthcare, and social services providers. TCC streamlines care and coordinates services across multiple systems, reduces crisis service utilization, and provides a safety net for people traditionally disconnected from support. Today, the TCC network includes over 20 agencies, has served over 170 adults, made over 900 service connections, and has seen an 87% reduction in emergency service utilization, like law enforcement and Co-Responder contacts six months after case closure.

Why is TCC innovative?

1. TCC connects and streamlines coordinators and case management, creating efficiencies within the existing system without duplicating efforts.
2. TCC incorporates professional peer support to engage clients in treatment, an innovative, growing, and evidence-based approach that helps meet whole person needs.
3. TCC intentionally connects with clients where they are, at home and in community. Case management is intensive and hands on.
4. The philosophy is person-centered, and solution focused. TCC identifies community resources and blends funding to overcome barriers and improve social determinants of health.
5. TCC is situated in the Douglas County Mental Health Collaborative, a 50+ agency group that has worked together for 11 years on mental/behavioral health priorities. The established partnership of this group made convening TCC possible.
6. TCC's agency leaders address system-level issues by making internal and collective process improvements to meet the needs of Douglas County's most vulnerable residents.

- **All Babies Cry Campaign** - We noticed a significant increase in serious bodily injury to infants in the fall of 2022 that continued into 2023. Because of this drastic shift, we initiated a project looking into demographics and risk factors that were present in these families. We found that families without the common risk factors (substance use, mental health, domestic violence, criminal history, financial stress) showed a pattern of unhealthy communication between caregivers. This specific group of family's made up approximately half of the serious bodily injury

assessments we reviewed. Because our initial goal was prevention work, we developed the prevention campaign “All Babies Cry.” Our goal is to encourage caregivers to learn about nervous system regulation and plan for effective communication in order to prevent episodes of abuse to infants. All Babies Cry has been included in the Douglas County Healthy Families Partnership swag bag that is given to every family who delivers an infant in one of the 4 participating hospitals. We are currently gathering feedback on the effectiveness of the campaign and are excited to continue expanding it in the future. Both supervisors have also been selected to present this work at a national conference later this year!



- In the summer of 2024, Governor Polis announced a Wildly Important Goal to improve the application processing timeliness (APT) of eligibility determinations for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) from 88% to 95% by June 2025 to empower Coloradans with low incomes to have access to healthy food and the ability to make their own food choices. Colorado reached that goal in June 2025, and now have reached 97%! Erin Johnson and Gabrielle Fischer were proud to represent the Douglas County Eligibility Team and receive our certificate of recognition at the Capital. The Douglas County Human Services Eligibility team has been exceeding the SNAP application timeliness goal of 95% since 2011, ensuring that those in need are able to access food.



- Human Services is pleased to share that in January, they began offering onsite department-wide **consultation with Manna Resource Center**. Each Wednesday from 10-11am, Family Support Coaches from Manna can be seen at the Human Services building, meeting with staff from across the Department to provide resources, consultation, and support for our Douglas County clients. Many staff have attended and expressed their appreciation for the insight and support Manna Resource Center offers. We appreciate being able to offer this to our staff and are thankful for our collaboration with Manna to helping our clients in a community focused and preventative driven manner.



- **Expanding Support for Domestic Violence Survivors** - In June 2024, the County completed a comprehensive domestic violence needs assessment, which provided key recommendations for enhancing services to better support survivors of domestic violence in Douglas County. The assessment identified critical service gaps, including the need to invest in emergency shelter capacity. Specifically, it highlighted the importance of a traditional emergency shelter model offering 24/7 staffing, a 30-day length-of-stay, and core services focused on safety planning, legal advocacy, and connections to long-term, community-based resources.



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Following the 2024 Domestic Violence Needs Assessment, Douglas County took bold steps to improve safety and housing options for survivors of domestic violence. A new 7,500-square-foot safehouse, combined with a strategic partnership with TESSA, now provides 22 beds and comprehensive, trauma-informed services and expand access to critical resources within the county.

**Key Highlights:**

- Renovations: New finishes, upgraded LED lighting, enhanced security systems, fencing and all-new furnishings.
- Services Offered: 24/7 access to safe housing, legal advocacy, mental health counseling and coordination with law enforcement.
- Collaborative Approach: Established the Domestic Violence Advisory Committee (DVAC) in April 2025 to guide the provider transition, improve service delivery and strengthen countywide collaboration among law enforcement, healthcare, legal and community partners.
- About TESSA: Founded in 1977, serving over 17,000 individuals annually with confidential, trauma-informed support.

County Investment - \$350,000 service agreement with TESSA

**Communications and Public Affairs Support – TESSA Domestic Violence Shelter**



In November 2024, Douglas County purchased a facility to be used as a domestic violence shelter, and at a March 2025 Business Meeting, the Board of Douglas County Commissioners approved a \$350,000 service agreement and partnership with the nonprofit TESSA to increase the number of safehouse beds in Douglas County.

In August, County leaders, law enforcement, and community partners joined TESSA for a ceremonial ribbon-cutting at the Wilcox Building in downtown Castle Rock, to celebrate the opening of the remodeled safehouse — a milestone in protecting some of the community's most vulnerable.

**Communication Objectives:**

- Celebrate the opening of TESSA's confidential safehouse in Douglas County—an essential milestone in the County's commitment to supporting survivors of domestic violence—while respecting and protecting the privacy and safety of its location.
- Raise awareness of new help that is available in Douglas County, encouraging those who need help to call the safe line.

**Results:** The newsroom post received 1,642 views, while social media content generated 24,545 impressions. The ribbon-cutting ceremony was attended by approximately 75 people, demonstrating community engagement. Media coverage included 16 mentions, reaching an estimated 1,819,783 people and providing an estimated \$661,476 in ad value equivalency, highlighting the significant reach and impact of the event.

- Douglas County Department of Human Services was excited to formally launch a new model of child welfare in the summer of 2025. **Differential Response (DR)** marks a shift toward a more family-centered model that differentiates between high-risk and low-to-moderate-risk cases. Instead of a one-size-fits-all investigative approach, DR enables child welfare agencies to use an assessment-based pathway for less severe cases, promoting engagement with families, building on their strengths, and connecting them with supportive services without the stigma of a formal investigation. This benefits families by reducing adversarial interactions with the child welfare system and removing the need to gather evidence, labeling perpetrators, and making a finding. This approach instead, focuses on fostering collaboration with caseworkers, and increasing access to community resources that address underlying issues such as poverty, mental health, or parenting challenges that can be the root cause of child maltreatment.



The State of Colorado began implementation of DR in 2010. All 64 counties have spent the last 15 years developing and refining the organizational processes and enhancing the associated practice model. Our local community-level initiatives will complement DR by providing concrete supports and enhancing protective factors for families at risk. Overall, the adoption of DR in Colorado has fostered a more supportive and effective child welfare system, promoting family well-being and child safety.

## ECONOMIC FOUNDATIONS

### ***Business Development***

- **Douglas County Welcomes Safran Defense & Space, Inc.** - A global leader in aerospace innovation, Safran Defense & Space, Inc. (Safran DSI) has chosen Parker, Colorado, as the site of its newest U.S. manufacturing facility. This strategic decision strengthens Douglas County's growing reputation as an aerospace hub and brings high-quality jobs and long-term economic opportunity.



#### **Key Highlights:**

- New Facility: Safran's state-of-the-art site will manufacture electric propulsion thrusters and support operations in space telemetry, satellite communications and ground domain awareness.
- Workforce: The expansion will generate 20 new, high-quality jobs, including engineers, technicians and operators.
- Strategic Location: Safran selected Douglas County due to Colorado's robust aerospace ecosystem, highly skilled workforce and strong supply chain infrastructure.
- Business-Friendly Environment: Douglas County's emphasis on public safety, quality schools, natural resource preservation and infrastructure makes it a top choice for business relocation and expansion.
- Economic Development Leadership: The Douglas County Economic Development Corporation (EDC) played a pivotal role in securing the project in collaboration with Gov. Jared Polis and the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade.

- **Northrop Grumman Expands Further in Douglas County:** A major milestone in Douglas



County's economic development and aerospace leadership was marked with the grand opening of Northrop Grumman's new Highfield Integration Facility on June 23, 2025. This expansion not only brings cutting-edge defense manufacturing to the region but also reflects the County's ongoing commitment to fostering high-quality job growth, innovation and infrastructure that supports business success.

#### **Key Highlights:**

- New Facility: The 100,000-square-foot Highfield Integration Facility near Centennial Airport will focus on manufacturing advanced communications systems for military operations.
- Workforce: The facility will support 125 employees transferred from other Colorado locations, with expectations for continued job growth.
- Business-Friendly Environment: Northrop Grumman cited Douglas County's responsive governance, smart infrastructure and culture of innovation as key reasons for selecting the location.
- Economic Development Leadership: Local leaders emphasized the project's alignment with the County's vision to grow education partnerships, expand workforce development and build a resilient economy.

- **Heading into 2026, Commissioners reaffirm commitment to business community** - Douglas



County has a strong history of eliminating barriers for business investment, creating effective partnerships, and maintaining a low-tax environment. The Board of Douglas County Commissioners reaffirmed its commitment to this pro-business policy during the annual State of Douglas County event in December.

More than 400 community, government, nonprofit and business leaders gathered for the Board's annual report to the community on Dec. 11 at the Denver Marriott South in Lone Tree. In addition to highlighting the community's 2025 accomplishments, Commissioners reaffirmed their commitment to businesses, referencing a [resolution they passed earlier in the week during a regular business meeting](#). They ceremoniously signed the resolution during the event.

The resolution states, in part, that Douglas County will:

1. Accelerate speed to market
2. Identify shovel-ready sites for future employers
3. Remove burdensome and duplicative regulations
4. Expedite permits

[Read the full resolution online.](#)

- **Business Personal Property Tax Incentive Agreements** – In April 2025, the Board of County Commissioners approved a Business Personal Property Tax Incentive Agreement with Safran Defense & Space. The estimated total rebate is \$1,798,130 over 35 years. Safran is a global space equipment provider leasing a 28,337 square foot facility that houses manufacturing, integration, testing, and associated personnel supporting their wide range of space products. Safran anticipates hiring over 20 employees within 24 months.

In September 2025, the Board of County Commissioners approved a Business Personal Property Tax Incentive Agreement with the Kroger Company. The estimated total rebate is \$2,898,254 over 15 years. Kroger is an American retail supermarket chain. This facility in Lone Tree is expected to create 250 new jobs.

#### Largest Private Employers in Douglas County (2025)

- Charles Schwab – Financial Services (4,200 employees)
- EchoStar – Satellite Tv & Equipment (2,700 employees)
- Lockheed Martin Corporation – Aerospace & Defense (2,250 employees)
- AdventHealth – Healthcare (1,600 employees)
- HCA HealthONE – Healthcare (1,600 employees)
- Kiewit Companies – Construction Services (1,400 employees)
- VISA Debit Processing Services – Financial Services (1,300 employees)
- Wind Crest – Assisted Living (900 employees)
- Kaiser Permanente – Healthcare (750 employees)
- Zynex Medical Group – Healthcare (600 employees)

- **Lone Tree Entertainment District** - A major redevelopment effort is underway in the Lone Tree Entertainment District, and through collaboration with Douglas County partners the new Lone Tree Urban Renewal Authority will lead in these initiatives. [Jack's Lone Tree](#) broke ground on a new high scale restaurant at the previous Mimi's site, 303 Sports Grill will replace the previous Brewery Bar III restaurant, [9070 Maximus Drive](#) was purchased and demolished to make way a new “eatertainment” concept, and the creates a significant opportunity for new retail, entertainment, or mixed-use projects in the City.



- **Park Meadows Retail Resort** – Park Meadows continued ongoing revitalization efforts, including the successful implementation of the new children’s play area funded by American Rescue Plan Act funds, construction of a new 700-space parking garage that opened in late October and enhanced security measures utilizing advanced technology to address retail theft.



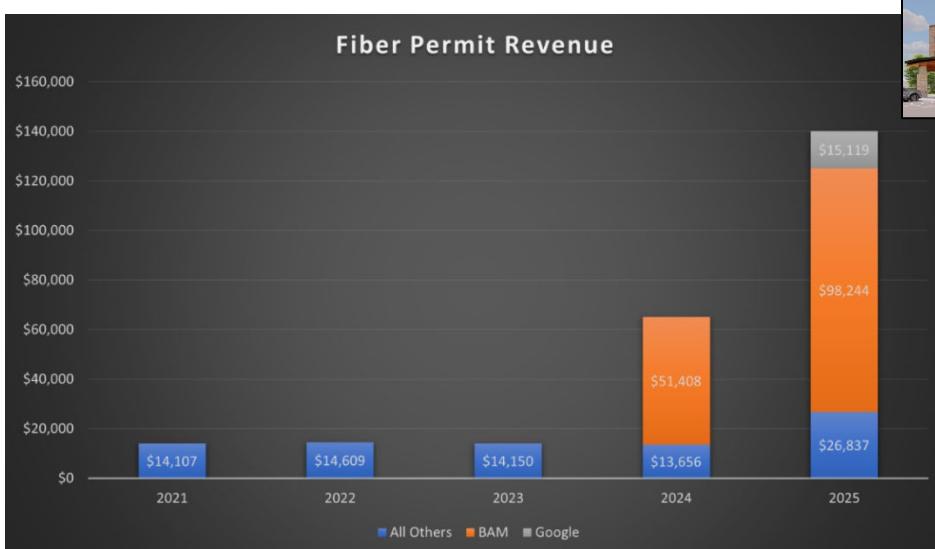
- **Douglas County Economic Development Corporation News:**

- Douglas County is actively pursuing economic growth through major projects, international trade opportunities, and strategic partnerships
- Major Projects and Economic Impact
  - 12 major projects announced with significant capital expenditure.
  - Estimated economic impact of \$463M across 2025 announced projects.
  - Creation of 2,564 jobs and 4,743 indirect jobs.
- Business Development and Engagement
  - 10 site visits and over 50 stakeholder meetings conducted.
  - Participation in major trade shows like the Dubai Air Show.



- **Large Commercial Projects in 2025**

Address	Owner/Business
8677 Double Helix Ct.	Tesla Sales and Service Center
I-25/E-470	County Line Station Apartments
6756 Wellspring Dr.	King Soopers Marketplace
7979 Butte Creek St.	John Adams Academy Charter School
9051 Sgt. Chris Falkel Dr.	Surgery Center of Highlands Ranch
11045 Lansing Cir.	Douglas County Health Dept.



### ***Demographics and Statistics***

- Douglas County's economy entered 2025 on solid footing, **with most indicators outperforming regional trends despite a general slowing of economic activity both locally and nationally.**
  - **Employment in Douglas County increased 2.0%** year-over-year in the first quarter of 2025. Government reported the strongest growth rate, while education and health services also added a notable number of jobs. Growth was offset by declines in industries including financial activities, manufacturing, and retail trade.
  - The unemployment rate in Douglas County was 4.2% in the second quarter of 2025, up 0.5 percentage points year-over-year. **Douglas County had the lowest unemployment rate among the seven counties in Metro Denver.** The labor force in Douglas County expanded in the second quarter of 2025, increasing 0.6%, or by 1,446 people working or looking for jobs.
  - **Retail trade activity, which is not adjusted for inflation, increased 4.2%** year-over-year in the second quarter of 2025, driven largely by increases in motor vehicle and parts dealers, which represents the second largest category of retail sales activity. Health and personal care retailers, and sporting goods, hobby, musical instrument, book, and

miscellaneous retailers also reported significant growth in retail sales activity over the period.

- **Home sales in Douglas County increased by 7.9%** between the second quarters of 2024 and 2025. An increase in single-family detached home sales was partially offset by a decrease in single-family attached home sales. Home prices in Douglas County rose for detached homes but fell year-over-year for attached homes. The average sale price for detached homes in Douglas County rose 9.5% to \$897,946, while attached home prices fell 2.4% to \$482,834.
- **The number of residential units permitted increased 20.7%** year-over-year in the second quarter of 2025, with increases in permitting activity in multi-family units partially offset by declines in single-family attached and single-family detached units. In 2Q 2025, 329 multi-family units were permitted, compared to zero units in 2Q 2024, driving the increase over the year.
- Douglas County's **commercial real estate market improved somewhat** in the second quarter of 2025, with signs of stabilization in the office market. The vacancy rate for office properties was 14.6% in 2Q 2025, down 1.0 percentage point year-over-year, while the average lease rate for office properties increased 4.8% to \$29.39 per square foot. Flex and industrial spaces reported increases in leasing rates, rising 13.3% and 3.8%, respectively. Retail properties reported slight decline in vacancy rates and a 9.0% increase in rent, rising to \$26.81 per square foot.

- **January 1, 2025 – November 25, 2025**

<b>Building Division issued the following permits:</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
Building Permits	3,331	2,971
Electrical Permits	1,925	1,548
Mechanical/Plumbing Permits	3,482	3,218
<u>Roofing</u>	<u>5,341</u>	<u>1,764</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,079</b>	<b>9,501</b>

<b>Building Division Inspections performed:</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2024</b>
Building Inspections	24,324	20,579
Electrical Inspections	19,661	17,463
Mechanical/Plumbing Inspections	11,347	10,337
Roofing Inspections	9,290	2,557
<u>Wildfire/Defensible Space Inspections</u>	<u>586</u>	<u>622</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>65,208</b>	<b>51,558</b>

### **Workforce Development and Outreach**

- Arapahoe/Douglas Works! solicited for individuals to enroll in the **Virtual Work Readiness Program (VWRP)**. This program is a partnership between A/D Works! and ACC that is focused on upskilling individuals in digital literacy. It is a 1- or 2-week in-person course (depending on location). Participants received a free laptop or Chromebook upon completion.



- A/D Works! extended the **Career Services Ambassador Work Experience** to the Castle Rock office. Arapahoe/Douglas Works! has had successful work experiences at the Altura and Lima offices for the past three years. The Career Services Ambassador assists at the front desks, works on administrative and marketing tasks, and provides basic assistance to customers. These Ambassadors also receive intensive coaching and job search support by the team. Arapahoe/Douglas Works! offered this opportunity to its first Douglas County Youth Employment Program (DCYEP) participant starting on 3/31/2025 (this participant is co-enrolled with the Work Innovation and Opportunity Act Young Adult program to help cover costs).



• **Outdoor Education and Park Ranger Career Fair** – Staff attended the Outdoor Education and Park Ranger Career Fair at Red Rocks Community College on January 29<sup>th</sup>. They were able to meet with young professionals to talk about the seasonal positions and volunteer opportunities available with Parks, Trails, and Building Grounds and Rueter-Hess Reservoir.



- Arapahoe/Douglas Works! hosted the Q1 Programs **Virtual Career Fair** on February 11<sup>th</sup>.
  - 30 employers attended
  - 328 job seekers logged in and attended the career fair
  - 139 of the 328 identified as program participants for a 42% attendance rate for program participants

- Arapahoe/Douglas Works! partnered with the **Douglas County School District and Arapahoe Community College** to offer a job fair on April 3<sup>rd</sup> at ACC Sturm. This event had 30 employers, 5 resource tables, and 167 attendees (41 of which were not ACC or DCSD students). A/D Works! staff provided information about services and programs at this event.



- Arapahoe/Douglas Works! partnered with **Legacy Campus for their inaugural Pathways Job Fair** last Friday, February 28<sup>th</sup>. Students district wide networked with over 60 participating employers, schools, and vendors that were specifically invited as they aligned with the career pathways and credentials offered at Legacy Campus.



- **Douglas County Public Schools Career Fair** - On February 27, staff attended a career fair hosted by Douglas County Public Schools at Chaparral High School. Several businesses and organizations set up booths showcasing current and future job opportunities for the students. Staff engaged with students about careers in various fields represented by our Department, including Parks seasonal employment and volunteer opportunities. Attending the career fair provided a valuable opportunity to connect with a diverse pool of potential candidates and build meaningful connections within the community.



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## OPEN SPACE

### Programming and Events

- **30th Anniversary of Open Space and Natural Resources** - In 2025, Douglas County celebrated 30 years of the voter-approved Parks, Trails, Historic Resources and Open Space Fund, the creation of the Douglas County Department of Open Space and Natural Resources and all that has been preserved, protected and built in three decades. Since its inception in 1995, the department has conserved over 65,000 acres of land and provided a wide range of recreational and learning opportunities for residents and visitors alike.  


To mark this momentous occasion, the public was invited to the guided side of Sandstone Ranch for a Fall Festival packed with activities from wagon rides to archery. With over 1,000 people in attendance, Douglas County Open Space showcased the value of land conservation and public education with a day of family friendly fun.



- **Agents of Discovery** - In January 2025, *Decode Douglas County Outdoors* went digital with the Agents of Discovery app. By completing interactive challenges, users can discover fun new ways to explore more than 65,000 acres of Douglas County open space, all while learning about the remarkable natural and cultural resources that make our landscapes special. Conquer quests, ace the trivia, and rediscover your own backyard! 2025 marked a tremendous milestone with the launch of *Agents of Discovery*—and the response was outstanding. We reached a record **2,001 total plays** in the app's first year. The launch of *Agents of Discovery* was made possible through a valued partnership between Douglas County Open Space and Natural Resources and the Douglas Land Conservancy.  


#### Key Highlights:

- New Engagement Opportunities: Players unlock interactive games while hiking trails, with a new topic and location each month.
- Broader Access: “Play Anywhere” feature allows users to participate from home or other locations.

Positive Feedback: Agents of Discovery has been played over 1,500 times since launch, compared to only 300 annual plays of *Decode*. Users say the games are fun, educational and family-friendly.



- Educational Variety: Topics have included black bears, geology, history of Open Space, Leave No Trace, wildflowers and summer weather.

**County Investment:**

- Annual app costs: \$5,000
- Initial startup costs: \$1,400

**Communications and Public Affairs Support – Agents of Discovery**

 In 2025, as part of the 30th anniversary of Douglas County's Open Spaces, Decode Douglas County went digital using the Agents of Discovery App. By completing challenges within the app, users found fun new ways to experience the county's 65,000 acres of open spaces with the Agents of Discovery App, while learning new things about those spaces. The app replaced the Decode booklets and allowed users to learn about Douglas County open space while enjoying scenic recreation opportunities. They conquered quests, aced the trivia, and explored their backyard! The app was developed and managed in partnership with the Douglas Land Conservancy.

**Communication Objectives:**

- Introduce community members to the Agents of Discovery App as the new era of Decode Douglas County
- Encourage open space visitors to use the new app to learn more about Douglas County open spaces when they visit
- Increase visits to Douglas County open spaces and historic sites and educate residents on the funding for these spaces
- Celebrate the past success of the Decode Douglas County program and the strong partnerships it symbolized

**Results**

As of Nov. 20, players had engaged with the experience 1,952 times, collectively traveling more than 224 miles. The app secured approximately 1,000 downloads in 2025, the second highest for any program that's part of the Agents of Discovery app. Altogether, they spent the equivalent of 1 week, 4 days, and 20 hours immersed in Agents of Discovery.

Fifty-seven social media posts generated a total of 297,872 impressions. These posts drove 6,540 engagements, reflecting active audience interaction with the content and demonstrating solid visibility and engagement across social channels.

- **Astronomy at Sandstone** - On February 28, 2025, an “Astrophotography Assistance for Beginning and Intermediate Imagers” event was held at Sandstone Ranch Open Space. Denver Astronomical Society members, Open Space Volunteers, and Tommy Lease, the leader of the Denver Astronomical Society's Astrophotography Special Interest Group assisted imagers with issues they have in capturing photos of cosmic objects.



Over 25 guests were in attendance and conditions were perfect for viewing the planetary alignment as well as distant galaxies and nebula. (Photo of Orion Nebula taken by Dena McClung at Sandstone)

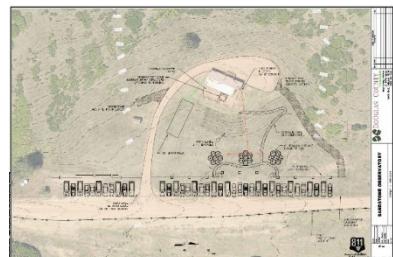


The Gathering Place at Sandstone Ranch, a yearlong project,



came to fruition in 2025. This building is a dedicated multiuse space for our community partners and volunteers to meet, train, conduct research and conduct studies in southern Douglas County. The revamped facility has more indoor and outdoor space for people to use with all the amenities that are needed in today's modern workspace. Douglas County IT partnered to

install Starlink satellite service for participants to use the County's public internet at this remote location.



On November 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Denver Astronomical Society was our first partner to use this space for their monthly stargazing event at Sandstone Ranch. They set up their telescopes and utilized the new patio red lighting to safely view the stars on a beautiful fall night. This site will now be the primary location for all dark sky events and is the location of the observatory.

- **Army National Guard Training on Open Space** - On February 22<sup>nd</sup>, the 193<sup>rd</sup> Army National Guard unit conducted a training at Lincoln Mountain Open Space for the second consecutive year. In this valuable training about 70 personnel covered medical, knots/ropes, shelters, and more. This training is intended to help keep their cold weather skills up to date and verify that their equipment is in good working order.



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## ***Community Outreach and Education***

- **Making the Wellness and Outdoor Recreation Connection** - In 2025, Douglas County Open Space and Natural Resources and Douglas County Libraries partnered to engage with communities in Lone Tree, Castle Pines, Highlands Ranch, Roxborough, and Parker. OSNR staff visited libraries in each of these towns to discuss themes of Wellness and Active Living. Topics included discussions on mental and physical health, and how open spaces play an important role in the overall health of our communities. This was a great opportunity for OSNR staff to facilitate safe and open conversations about wellness with county residents and maintain a strong partnership with Douglas County Libraries. DCL also offered weekly community outdoor story times at local parks over the summer engaging more than 4,200 participants.



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- During the Spring, Open Space and Natural Resource (OSNR) staff members visited **Flagstone Elementary School** in Castle Rock to share information about wildlife across Douglas County. The presentation reached an audience of approximately 500 K-6 students, teachers, and parents. Staff displayed animal mounts and shared trail camera footage of local wildlife, while providing key facts and safety tips during recreation. The discussion highlighted approximately 20 species, including mountain lions, bobcats, black bears, pronghorns, coyotes, and elk, giving students an up-close look at the diversity of wildlife in their community.



- **History and Aging Resources** - OSNR staff welcomed a group of 25 participants from Aging Resources, a non-profit community aging center, to Prairie Canyon Ranch for a day of learning, connection, and exploration. OSNR staff and volunteers gave a walking tour of the property, discussed the history of ranching, toured the historic barns, and learned how the landscape has evolved over time. After the tour, everyone gathered for lunch, where OSNR staff listened to stories from Aging Resources residents about their experiences living in Douglas County and their personal connections to local open space properties. It was a meaningful opportunity for older adults to experience nature firsthand while engaging with the deep history preserved at Prairie Canyon Ranch.



- **Aquatic Invertibre Field Trip to the South Platte River with Open Space and Natural Resources**



- At the end of October, the OSNR team partnered with Castle View High School to teach two Advanced Placement Environmental Science and Aquatic Biology classes. This was a two-day hands-on learning experience at the Chatfield Audubon Center along the South Platte River. This partnership, now in its 20th year, provides students with valuable, real-world exposure to Douglas County's natural ecosystems.

Each day, approximately 50 students participated in field activities focused on river system health. Students donned waders, entered the river, and collected aquatic organisms such as crawfish and mayflies. Students also studied water chemistry, calculated river-flow rate, and learned about the roles of indicators, endangered, keystone, and apex species within riparian areas. These habitats cover only about 2% of Colorado's landscape yet support a disproportionately high share of the state's plant and animal biodiversity.

- **Leave No Trace** - Open Space and Natural Resources staff continue to educate volunteers, visitors, and partners about the seven principles of Leave No Trace. Two events to note are the Leave No Trace Agents of Discovery mission in May at Sharptail Ridge Open Space. This mission highlighted each of the seven principles and emphasized their importance in preserving Douglas County Open Spaces. Additionally, staff delivered a tailored Leave Not Trace course to the Intellectual and Developmentally Disabled



(IDD) community through the Arc Ambassador program, promoting inclusive stewardship and environmental awareness.

- **Cherokee Ranch and Castle Foundation Partnership** - Douglas County holds a conservation easement on Cherokee Ranch and Castle property that ensures the preservation of approximately 3,500 acres of critical wildlife habitat. For more than a decade, Open Space and Natural Resources (OSNR) and Cherokee Ranch and Castle Foundation (CRCF) have maintained a strong partnership rooted in stewardship and community education. Each September, Open Space and Natural Resources staff visit the castle to provide an evening interpretive program on Elk and highlight the background on the importance of the conservation easement during CRCF's annual Elk Bugling event. This year, the program drew nearly 270 attendees, reflecting the community's continued interest in both wildlife and land conservation. OSNR is dedicated to strengthening this longstanding partnership with CRCF and collaborating with staff to create more meaningful educational experiences.



## ***Land Management***

- **Sandstone Forestry Management & Phase II Trail Development** - Douglas County Open Space and the Colorado State Forest Service continued collaborative forest health and wildfire mitigation efforts at Sandstone Ranch in 2025. The forestry work is a prerequisite for the next phase of trail development, which will enhance recreational access.



### **Key Highlights:**

- Forest Health Work: Thinning 144.5 acres to reduce wildfire risk and improve ecosystem resilience.
- Progress: 48 acres completed as of July 3, 2025. Next Phase: Five miles of new trails planned
- following forest work, expanding access to forested habitats.

### **County Investment:**

- \$177,000 for forest management work, plus matching funds of \$177,000 from the Forest Restoration and Wildfire Risk Mitigation (FRWRM) Grant.
- \$190,000 for trail development.

- **Adaptive Agricultural Management** - Douglas County Open Space & Natural Resources (OSNR)



is committed to protecting and preserving the natural resources found within our sprawling Open Spaces. One of the most effective ways of doing this is the implementation of adaptive agricultural land management practices on OSNR properties. This is achieved through a combination approach which includes highly targeted grazing by stocker cattle (both in location and duration), multiple forms of noxious weed management, as well

as, this year, the implementation of prescribed fire. These management tools, when practiced as complements of one another, generate healthier grassland ecosystems. In turn, healthy

grasslands provide bountiful forage for both the cattle utilized in their management, as well as forage, cover, shelter, and nesting habitat for the suite of wildlife species known to inhabit them.

- **Forest Management – Sandstone Ranch** - Open Space staff, in partnership with Colorado State



Forest Service, conducted further forest maintenance on Sandstone Ranch Open Space. Approximately 144.5 acres were mitigated during 2025. This project was implemented for overall forest health by improving tree crown spacing, reducing competition, and improving growing space for residual trees and oak while providing for wildfire risk mitigation. This restoration will reduce the threat of insect and disease outbreaks by reducing stand densities. These fire mitigation activities lessen the potential for crown fire through reductions of tree densities, removal of ladder fuels, modifying stand structure and creating openings in the crowns in overstory trees. The project was necessary to best maintain forested areas and reduce wildfire risk on Sandstone Ranch Open Space. Open Space was able to utilize the Forest Restoration and Wildfire Risk Mitigation Grant (FRWRM), offered by the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS). This grant program was established by SB 17-050 and provides funding to reduce the risk of wildfire to people, property and infrastructure, and promote forest health and restoration. Sandstone Ranch has been identified as high risk for wildfire and in its current state may result in high loss from wildfire. Douglas County provided a 50% match as part of the award agreement matching contributions.

- **Noxious Weed Management** - During the 2025 growing season, Open Space and Natural



Resources (OSNR), in partnership with the Public Works department, conducted noxious weed management using a variety of methodologies. Some of these highlights include biocontrol releases for noxious weed management at Lincoln Mountain Open Space. During the spring and early summer, OSNR staff researched and worked extensively to implement biocontrol methods for noxious weeds on Lincoln Mountain. Seed head feeding weevils were released at Lincoln Mountain Open Space to target diffuse knapweed. The beetle feeds on the seed heads, halting reproductive viability, and as an adult it will feed on the remaining foliage. Diffuse knapweed is the only plant species the weevils cause any damage to. Additionally, a host specific pathogenic rust fungus, was utilized to control Canada thistle. After the fungus is released in spring, during late summer and early fall, the diseased stems from the fungus die, and the leaf tissue falls onto emergent rosettes. This allows the fungus to quickly move to the roots where it overwinters. In addition to bio control methods, OSNR staff was also able to have chemical application applied to 1,500 acres during the growing season.

- **Chatfield Reallocation Mitigation Company Monitoring** - The US Army Corps of Engineers

(USACE) built Chatfield Reservoir in 1975 near the confluence of the South Platte River and Plum Creek for flood control, recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, and water supply. Population growth along the Front Range led to a higher demand for water storage. In 2014, USACE made the decision to expand Chatfield Reservoir by 20,600 acre-feet. The Chatfield Reservoir Mitigation Company (CRMC) was formed in 2015 to implement the project. The increased water levels at Chatfield Reservoir resulted in impacts to the natural resources both on and off-site.



Sandstone Ranch is located 22.5 miles South of Chatfield Reservoir and is intersected by two streams, West Plum Creek and Gove Creek. 477 acres within Sandstone Ranch was chosen by CRMC as an off-site “Mitigation Property” because of its high density of quality wetland, bird, and Preble’s Meadow Jumping Mouse (PMJM) habitat. After five years of monitoring by a third-party organization, Open Space and Natural Resources (OSNR) staff took over the responsibility of monitoring the mitigation property. OSNR staff are committed to the permanent protection of the mitigation property and dedicated resources throughout the growing season to thoroughly monitoring areas at Sandstone Ranch and the Schmidt Open Space properties.

- **Southern Shooting Partnership (SSP) and Turkey Tracks Shooting Range** - The United States Forest Service (USFS) finalized its Integrated Management of Target Shooting (IMTS) decision for the Pike National Forest in January of 2025. This decision was the culmination of a decade of negotiation and planning through the Southern Shooting Partnership (SSP), an organization of 11 organizations with land management responsibilities between Pueblo and Denver. This decision authorized the construction/expansion of six shooting ranges throughout the Pike National Forest (Pike) and will eventually close dispersed recreational shooting on roughly 2/3rd of the Pike.



Douglas County and the SSP have now transitioned from primarily planning and negotiation to implementation. The USFS has conducted preliminary environmental assessments required by the decision.

Douglas County is advancing efforts to construct the Turkey Tracks Shooting Range in southwest

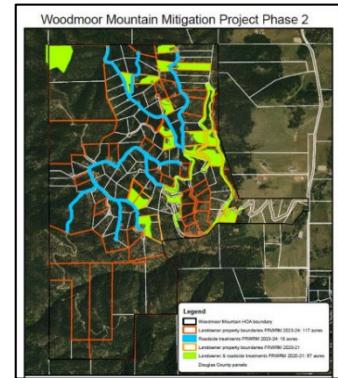


Douglas County. The range addresses safety concerns from dispersed shooting while enhancing public access to safe, well-managed facilities. The County's leadership and strategic investment will accelerate construction and improve long-term service to the community. Douglas County has applied to the USFS

for a special use permit to build and operate the Turkey Tracks shooting range. Open Space and Natural Resources and Special Projects Engineering took possession of \$400K worth of steel targets, shooting benches and related hardware for the range. These sections were also successful in securing another Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) shooting range grant award for \$500K (\$300k award plus \$200K in County cash and in-kind match). This funding will be enough to complete the overall infrastructure and several of the ranges sufficient to complete phase 1 construction and open the range to the public.

- **Douglas County Partnership with Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS):** Open Space and Natural Resources along with the Colorado State Forest Service have maintained an ongoing partnership to help maintain the forest health and wildfire risk reduction for our Open Space properties. Staff also coordinate with the CSFS other important mitigation projects within the county.
  - Seven projects were awarded DC ARPA funding to leverage state FRWRM funding: Approximately 1,000 acres of forest management and wildfire risk reduction planned.

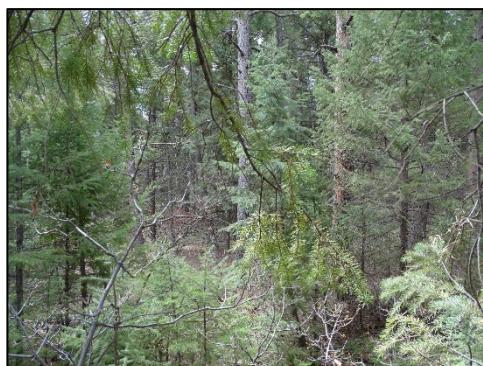
- Six projects have been completed to date: Funding assistance provided to 4 communities (81 landowners) and 2 standalone private landowners for a total of 885 acres of treatment.
- The remaining one project (Woodmoor Mountain) is in progress and will be completed in 2026. This work will involve 15 landowners and 135 acres to create defensible space, reduce fuels and improve forest health in addition to addressing 17.5 acres of roadside easements to improve egress and ingress.



- Deerfield Community Defensible Space and Fuels Reduction: The CSFS Franktown Field Office has completed three defensible space and fuel reduction projects within the Wildland Urban Interface communities of Deerfield, Pinewood Knolls and Russellville. From 2010-2016 525 acres were treated on 144 individual landowner properties. The implementation of the 2024-2025 project added an additional 62 properties and 310 acres within the Deerfield community to further increase landscape scale wildfire risk reduction and defensible space treatments within Ponderosa pine and Gambel oak vegetation. (Before and After photos below)



- Silver States Forest Restoration and Defensible Space: Primary goals of 118 acres of fuels reduction and forest restoration on the Silver States church camp property. The treatment area was adjacent to USFS Sprucewood treatment areas completed in 2017-588 acres, Indian Creek treatment areas completed in 2011-565 acres, & CSFS treatments of 774 acres on 64 private landowners 2013-2021. Completing treatments on this property has broadened these past treatment efforts into a larger landscape-scale fuels mitigation and forest health improvement effort.



- **Research and Demonstration Orchard at Hidden Mesa Open Space** - Hidden Mesa Open Space



is a 1,200-acre property of grassland and scrubland habitat and the site location of the five-acre Research and Demonstration Orchard. In 2010, OSNR received a \$120,000 Communities Putting Prevention to Work grant, administered through the Health Department with support from the Crooked Willow Foundation, to fund the orchard's initial development.

The orchard aims to research both traditional and innovative fruit and nut cultivars, and experiment with growing methods best suited to the Front Range climate. Over the past decade, OSNR staff and volunteers have conducted variety trials of lavender, herbs, and annual vegetables. Today, the orchard includes a production garden, native pollinator bed, free-range chickens, and the team is exploring new fruit and vegetable propagation techniques. CSU and CSU Extension also provide technical expertise for research and development. The orchard has over 60 active Douglas County volunteers, with 20-25 participating every Tuesday. Together with volunteers from CSU Extension Master Gardeners, they contribute over 2,000 hours annually.



All produce from the orchard is donated to the Parker Task Force, a volunteer-run food bank and counseling center serving Parker, Elizabeth, and Franktown. In 2025, donations exceeded 3,100 pounds, a 20% increase from 2024 (see chart for a detailed breakdown). Since 2012, OSNR has donated a total of 40,000 pounds of produce!

- **Open Space and Natural Resources Expansion of Operations and Infrastructure through Partnerships** - In addition to our regular funding, here are some examples of funding increases in recent years that contribute to our influence within the county and region:

- Wildlife fencing, jumpouts, deer guards and underpasses along the I-25 Gap project: \$20M
- Greenland wildlife overpass: \$15M
- South Platte Enhancement Board grants along Platte River: ≈\$60K annually
- Wildlife fencing along I-25 and Highway 85 north of Castle Rock: ≈\$3M estimated
- Shooting Range Grants for Turkey Tracks \$600K, plus \$300K County match
- CDPHE grant for watershed restoration on E. Plum Creek at Lowell Ranch: \$900K
- FRWRM forestry grants for treatment of Sandstone Ranch: The county has a match of \$354K, however the total project amount is for \$708K.
- West Plum Creek Stream Management Plan grant & other funding: \$1M estimated
- CDOT and Douglas County CIP to Prairie Canyon Ranch & Hidden Mesa entry improvements: \$4-6M estimated
- USFS processing of decision and NEPA review for integrated management of target shooting and subsequent assessments (such as soil analysis): Unknown amount but considerable

## VETERANS

- **New Heroes Hall to Offer Centralized Veterans Services** - Douglas County is building a first-of-



its-kind space dedicated to honoring Veterans and empowering the organizations that support them. Heroes Hall will unite local Veteran service groups under one roof, offering comprehensive support, collaboration and community for those who served our country. ([video](#)) The concept was presented to the Board of Douglas County Commissioners and

ultimately included in the first draft of a new Fairgrounds Master Plan. The new Heroes Hall will be a central gathering place for Veterans and a one-stop-shop for their needs, including offices for Douglas County Veterans Service Office and the founding organizations – American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars and Douglas County Veterans Monument Foundation.

### Key Highlights:

- New Veterans Resource Center: The future 14,000 square foot facility will include office space for key Veteran organizations, event and conference space, classrooms, common spaces and an outdoor patio for community gatherings.
- Local Collaboration: Heroes Hall Foundation was established through a partnership between the Douglas County Board of Commissioners, the Douglas County Veteran Service Office, Castle Rock VFW, Douglas County Veterans Monument Foundation and Castle Rock American Legion.
- Lease Agreement: In April 2025, the County signed a lease agreement with the Heroes Hall Foundation, clearing the way for continued fundraising and future construction.



### County Investment:

- [\\$400,000 contract](#) with DLH Architecture for their design services
- As of June 2025, private donors have pledged \$4.1 million toward the \$15 million project.

### **Communications and Public Affairs Support – Heroes Hall**



Douglas County Commissioner George Teal, the Douglas County Veteran Service Office, and the leadership of other Veteran-focused organizations in Douglas County, including Castle Rock Veterans of Foreign Wars, Douglas County Veterans Monument Foundation and Castle Rock American Legion created the new Heroes Hall Foundation, dedicated to building the Douglas County Heroes Hall.

The Heroes Hall will be a gathering place for our local Veterans to meet and enjoy the camaraderie they once experienced on active duty. It consolidates the support functions of the founding organizations, which can help Veterans receive additional assistance and support. Furthermore, it allows Veterans to pursue community engagement and advocate for Veteran causes. The Heroes Hall building will include event space and a conference center in a 14,000-square-foot building with a 7,000-square-foot basement.

### Communication Objectives:

- Raise awareness of the Heroes Hall project.
- Engage and recruit stakeholders and supporters

Results: Across three newsroom stories, there were a total of 1,981 views, while 14 social media posts generated 51,072 impressions, broadening digital reach. Media coverage included 10 mentions, reaching an estimated 72,931 people and providing an ad value equivalency of \$26,255. The project hosted two notable events: a \$100,000 donation celebration from the Aloha Fund and a sign unveiling, each attended by 15 participants. Additionally, a single YouTube video received 392 views, further extending the program's visibility and engagement.

- Once again in observance of Veteran's Day, Douglas County took part in **Operation Green Light for Veterans** from Nov. 4 – Nov. 11. Led by the [National Association of Counties \(NACo\)](#), Operation Green Light is an opportunity for communities to recognize the sacrifices made by our veterans and their families by illuminating public buildings in green. The initiative also raises awareness around the unique challenges faced by many Veterans and the resources available at the county, state and federal levels to assist Veterans and their families.



As part of Operation Green Light, Douglas County illuminated the Philip. S Miller Building, Wilcox Street Building, Justice Center and a new fourth building, the County facility on Lansing Point in Meridian. Also in honor of the men and women of the armed forces, the Board of Douglas County Commissioners, Douglas County Veterans Service Office and the Douglas County Veterans Monument Foundation held a Veterans Day ceremony to honor our American heroes on November 8 at the Veterans Monument Plaza, 301 Wilcox St. in Castle Rock.

- **Veteran Networking Event** – September 4th at A/D Works! Castle Rock Office (pictured): 18



veterans (and 8 employers) attended, networked, and practiced their elevator speeches with the employers. Veterans practiced their 2-minute elevator pitch in front of the group and received real time feedback from the business partners and attendees. The pitches ended with a networking opportunity to learn about jobs available that matched their skill sets. [Veteran priority of service](#) is always honored at A/D Works! and this quarterly VIP event is a way A/D Works! ensures priority of service.

- In June, Arapahoe/Douglas Works! was awarded \$165,000 in funding to serve veterans



experiencing homelessness find meaningful employment and assist them in overcoming barriers to transition back successfully into the workforce. These grants provide participating veterans with occupational skills, connect them with Registered Apprenticeships or other on-the-job training, and deliver job search and placement services.

## SENIORS

- **Highlands Ranch Senior Center Grand Opening** - Staff attended the [Highlands Ranch Senior Center](#) grant opening ceremony on January 10, 2025. The new \$18.4 million facility offers a 22,000 square-foot community space to include a large multi-purpose room, activity rooms, a large kitchen and outdoor amenities. The goal of the facility is to offer a centralized location for senior resources, activities and socialization as the number of residents over 55 continues to grow in Highlands Ranch.



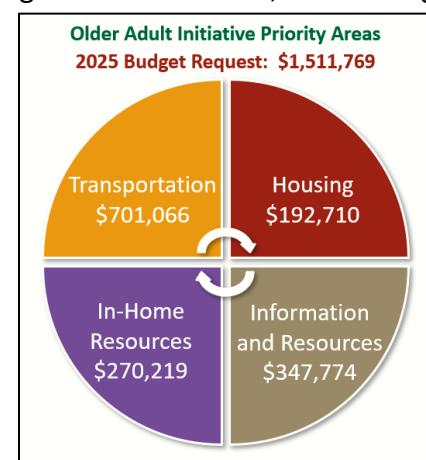
- **Older Adults Initiative** – Douglas County's Older Adult Initiative (OAI) was launched in 2023 to elevate community input and shape meaningful solutions for residents aged 60 and older. The initiative is helping improve quality of life through targeted services, strategic partnerships and local investment. The OAI began with an Aging Well Town Hall and continued through 2024 with listening tours and community road shows that gathered input from older residents across Douglas County. The OAI Executive Committee analyzed survey data and community feedback to identify key priorities: transportation, housing, in-home services, safety, and access to information and resources.



In 2025 the OAI shifted from planning to action. The County funded program expansion to include transportation, meal delivery, home assistance, training, care coordination, accessibility programs, and workforce training to advance the goal of helping older adults live safely and independently. Since June 2025, nearly 5,000 trips and wellness calls have been delivered, and 18,710 hot meals provided, directly improving health, independence, and well-being for older adults across Douglas County.

### Key Highlights:

- Community-Driven Planning: Gathered feedback through three town halls, 12 listening tours, 13 roadshows and two public surveys.
- Identified Priorities: Transportation, housing, in-home services and access to information emerged as top areas of need.
- Strategic Partnerships: Collaborated with community stakeholders and service providers to develop impactful local projects.
- Funded Programs: Supported efforts include a housing navigator, in-home meals, transportation expansions, a senior housing shuttle and a printed and online resource directory.
- Empowerment Opportunities: Projects also offer yard maintenance events and childcare certification for older adults to support workforce reentry or supplemental income.



### County Investment

- \$1.5 million from accrued interest on American Rescue Plan Act funding.
- Launched a competitive grant program for local proposals, with approved proposals selected on May 19, 2025.

- **Seniors' Council of Douglas County** - The council is run by local seniors to provide a place for this community to be involved, connected to resources and have current relevant information. DCL holds a seat on the board as the Educational Chair and as such plans monthly meeting locations and speakers. In 2025, DCL hosted meetings each quarter and partnered with a local area business to provide coffee and pastries at those meetings.



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quarter and partnered with a local area business to provide coffee and pastries at those meetings.

- Seniors' Council Meetings - The Seniors' Council of Douglas County hosts monthly meetings around the county on a variety of topics of interest to older adults. Meetings are held the first Thursday of each month from 10 to 11:30 a.m. A few topics that were featured in 2025 include Modifiable Risk Factors for Dementia, meeting staff and touring the new Highlands Ranch Senior Center, Protecting Yourself from Scams and Fraud, Goat Therapy, and learning to use Medicare's Plan Finder. From January through October 2025, more than 300 older adults have attended these monthly meetings.



- Vintage & Vibrant 2025 - The Seniors' Council of Douglas County held its Vintage & Vibrant event at the Highlands Ranch Senior Center on September 17 with 200 older adults, caregivers, and community members attending. The day-long event featured engaging keynote speakers and a wide range of breakout sessions on topics such as nanobiotechnology, caregiving costs, legal planning, scam awareness, cognitive health, and artificial intelligence. There were also interactive experiences like dementia simulation and outdoor trishaw rides. Participants praised the diversity of topics, speakers, the opportunity to connect with others, and the fabulous food.



- **Older Adult Services and Transportation** - Services funded through the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) completed the most recent program year on June 30. Over the past program year, Douglas County partner organizations provided more than 12,200 home-based service units and more than 17,290 one-way trips. Through provider partnerships, Douglas County was able to leverage County contributions of \$33,501 in cash match and \$53,752 of in-kind match to provide \$975,788 in programming support through grants. For every general fund

dollar spent, Douglas County residents received almost \$13 in benefits for transportation and older adult services programs.

- **Highlands Ranch Senior Center's Health and Wellness Expo** – The new Highlands Ranch Senior Center held a Health and Wellness Expo on April 17 from 1 to 4 p.m. Douglas County staff provided information and resources to approximately 70 attendees.



- **Castle Rock Senior Expo** – Community Services staff had a table at the Castle Rock Senior Expo held at the Douglas County Events Center on June 4 from 1 to 5 p.m. The Expo was busier than in previous years and staff spoke with 117 attendees about transportation, chore, homemaker and personal care services, as well as providing information about the upcoming Older Adult Town Hall meeting.



- **Older Adult Resource Fair and Town Hall** – Community Services staff held a Resource Fair in conjunction with the Older Adult Town Hall on June 11. The Resource Fair was held prior to the Town Hall and allowed older adults to access information and ask partner organizations questions regarding services before attending the Older Adult Town Hall.



#### **Communications and Public Affairs Support – Resources for Older Adults**



In May, the Douglas County Board of Commissioners formally adopted a resolution declaring May as Older Americans Month and announced a June 11 Live Town Hall and Resource Fair.

In June, the Board announced its investment of \$1.5 million into solutions that address service gaps identified during public meetings and direct feedback to Commissioners as part of their Older Adult Initiative.

Communication Objective: Raise awareness among older adults of resources and services available to them in Douglas County and the progress made on increasing these offerings as part of the Board's Older Adult Initiative.

Results - The newsroom post attracted a total of 2,084 views, while the Online Resource Search, a one-stop-search for available health and human services offered by Douglas County and its partners, was accessed 908 times.

Our social media content reached a wide audience, generating 62,523 impressions. The live town hall drew 4,179 participants online or by phone, with 75 attendees joining in-person. Following the event, the town hall recording has been viewed 231 times, allowing even more community members to engage with the discussion.

- **Connecting wisdom and wonder: new Bridging Generations program goes far beyond childcare**



- A new program in Douglas County is turning childcare into connection by bringing together older adults and preschoolers to share stories, skills and smiles.

Highlands Ranch Community Association (HRCA) has teamed up with Douglas County to pioneer Bridging Generations, which connects the wisdom and knowledge of older adults with the wonder and imagination of our smallest residents during preschool classes. The program launched Monday, Oct. 20, with a preschool story time celebration at Eastridge Recreation Center.

Youth have so much to learn from our elder neighbors. From sharing cultural knowledge like language and stories, to tips on how to grow a green thumb, or their famous chocolate chip cook recipe, older adults are an immense resource of information and wisdom.

#### **Communications and Public Affairs Support – Bridging Generations**



Highlands Ranch Community Association teamed up with Douglas County to pioneer Bridging Generations, which connects the wisdom and knowledge of older adults with the wonder and imagination of our smallest residents during preschool classes. The program launched Monday, Oct. 20, with a preschool story time celebration at Eastridge Recreation Center.

##### Communication Objective:

- Raise awareness of the program among parents and older adults.
- Recruit older adult volunteers.
- Demonstrate the social and economic impacts of an intergenerational childcare program.

Results - A single newsroom story garnered 292 views, while two social media posts generated 6,055 impressions, extending the program's digital reach. Media coverage included seven mentions, reaching an estimated 14,092 people and providing an ad value equivalency of \$5,073. The event welcomed 40 attendees, including the preschool class, community partners, elected officials, and HRCA staff, highlighting strong in-person engagement and community support.

## YOUTH

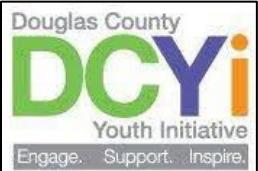
- **Youth Initiative**

The [Douglas County Youth Initiative \(DCYI\)](#) was established in 2005 to bring together local governments, schools and community partners to make Douglas County a place where every young person feels valued, supported and inspired to thrive. Programs of the Youth Initiative include:

- [WrapAround](#): A program helping at-risk youth by providing supports for the youth and their family.
- [Truancy Program](#): In partnership with the DCSD, Courts and Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA). DCYI will work with the family and youth who are in court for truancy to engage with the youth and provide the following services; assistance with completing assigned action items; meet with youth weekly; work with the CASA Mentor and the Guardians ad Litem to discuss strategies; communicate with the school on a regular basis to evaluate what is working, what is not working and to strategize on how to help students while in class.
- [La Liga Futbol](#): La Liga Fútbol is a collaborative program between Iglesia Nueva Vida Church and the Douglas County Youth Initiative, bringing community, fun, and mentorship to local youth through the game of soccer. The program features both Spanish and English-speaking adult coaches and referees, ensuring a supportive environment for all. Each participant receives a free jersey, adding to the sense of team spirit and unity. This summer, 77 youth pre-registered, with even more signing up at kickoff. WrapAround staff member Matt Kilian volunteered as a coach and mentor, supporting the players both on and off the field. The final regular season game was held on June 26, with the championship match on June 28. The winning team celebrated at The Aspen Effect's ranch with a pizza party, mini horses, and plenty of fun.



- [Outstanding Youth Awards](#): The Douglas County Youth Initiative hosted the 2025 Outstanding Youth Awards on April 28. The theme of the evening was butterflies, from cocoon to a beautiful winged young person! Each of the winners and nominators shared stories of their journeys, challenges, and remarkable resilience. This year's outstanding youth embodied every component: emotional awareness, self-control, problem-solving, optimism, and even a great sense of humor. It was an honor to congratulate each youth and offer our heartfelt thanks and admiration for everything they have accomplished and continue to do.



- Douglas County Youth Commission: On May 29, the Douglas County Youth Commissioners (DCYC) met with Commissioners Laydon and Van Winkle to provide highlights from the 2024–2025 school year and present on the issue of youth vaping in Douglas County. DCYC shared first-hand observations of vaping behaviors among peers and offered thoughtful insights on effective strategies to reduce and prevent vaping in their schools and communities. One notable recommendation was for DCYC to partner with the Douglas County Health Department to explore joint efforts in vaping prevention. This partnership represents a promising step forward in engaging youth as active stakeholders in public health efforts.



- Town of Castle Rock Youth Commission - The Town of Castle Rock established a Youth Commission, seated its first-ever Youth Commission members, and awarded its first ever Rising Star scholarships. The Town's Youth Commission is engaging with other youth commissions Countywide, along with additional partners.



- DCYI 20th Anniversary: On August 15, the DCYI proudly celebrated its 20th anniversary with a community ice cream social at the Miller Activity Complex in Castle Rock. The celebration welcomed Advisory Board members—past and present—as well as Douglas County Youth Commissioners, who were recognized for their time,



service and commitment to youth voice in our community. Over the past 20 years, the Youth Initiative has enriched the lives of more than 3,000 young people. Through its WrapAround program, DCYI has created opportunities for at-risk youth and their families to find stability and thrive. In addition, the Youth Initiative has fostered leadership development, giving youth a platform to engage with elected officials, share their voices, and shape the future of their communities. For 20 years, DCYI has inspired, engaged, and supported children and families, strengthening the community and empowering the next generation of leaders.

- Youth Congress: The 2025 Youth Congress was held on September 29 at the Douglas County School District's Legacy Campus in Lone Tree. Youth Congress convenes high school students (grades 9–12) from across Douglas County to engage with civic leaders on topics that matter to them. It's designed to give youth a voice in community issues, to propose solutions, and to foster dialogue between students and elected or community leaders. Participants hear from adult leaders, discuss problems, brainstorm actionable strategies, and share ideas with the larger group. Students who attend receive six hours of community service credit for the day. Categories discussed this year:
  - Social and emotional wellness
  - Peer pressure and youth voice

- School climate and restorative practices
- Prevention efforts (e.g. vaping)
- Access to mental health support
- Cell phone policy for public schools
- School facilities
- School transitions



Youth Congress is a key vehicle for amplifying young voices in Douglas County's policy and planning conversations.



It helps bridge the gap between youth concerns and decision-makers, encouraging civic engagement and accountability. The event also strengthens the visibility of youth perspectives in local governance and community programming. DCL contributes monies to the running of this initiative and attends monthly meetings as well as participate in special events such as Youth Congress and Outstanding Youth Awards.

- **February workshops introduced families to the youth development benefits of 4-H** - More than



60 project areas are offered by 4-H including rocket science, carpentry, archery, gardening, sewing, and dozens of other engaging areas for kids to learn about alongside traditional crafts such as agriculture and baking. Along with helping kids hone a new skill set, 4-H is also our nation's oldest and largest youth development organization, primarily focused on life skill development to help the young people in your life learn about leadership and responsibility. [Watch this video](#) to see how 4-H has worked to transform the lives of kids in Douglas County.

- Staff held an evening Open House for the **Parker Youth Commission**. This is a group of nine



students who serve as advocates for local youth and advise the Town of Parker, including elected officials and Town staff. A presentation was given on A/D Works! services and programs, as well as the Financial Literacy workshop. The students and staff brainstormed ideas on how to best engage DC students and how to get the information to students. Their ideas included classroom meet and greets, senior lunch and learns, adding information to the student resource section of each school's website, creating an engaging email to students, and including agency information in the parent portals.

- **Young Adult Summer Job Fair:** This job fair offers an array of opportunities for enthusiastic young adults seeking employment and allows them to explore various industries and find the perfect job that aligns with their interests and goals. This is in conjunction with the Young Adult Boot Camp (June 2-5).

- A/D Works! and Developmental Pathways presented a no-cost **Summer Job Hunt Boot Camp** designed for young adults aged 14-18. This comprehensive event equipped young adults with the knowledge and tools to succeed in finding a summer job to support their goals and succeed in

future job searches. Topics included career exploration, etiquette and self-advocacy in the workplace, interviewing, resume building, labor market information, and career pathway planning.

- **The Aspen Effect Teen Advisory Board (TAB) Presentation:** At the recent DCYI Advisory Board meeting, the Aspen Effect TAB presented the results of a student survey focused on School Resource Officers (SROs) in the Douglas County School District (DCSD). The survey, with responses from over 1,000 Douglas County students, was also presented to the Command Staff of the Douglas County Sheriff's Office on May 1, 2025. TAB members shared key findings and student perspectives on the role and impact of SROs in schools. Their presentation is available at <https://shorturl.at/fV4G7>. The Advisory Board expressed strong appreciation for the TAB's work and will be reviewing their recommendations to strengthen partnerships between schools and SROs.



## INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

- **Unity on Park Open House and Community Celebration** – Staff attended the community celebration commemorating the opening of Unity on Park. Wellspring Housing and the Douglas County Housing Partnership (DCHP) partnered together to establish Unity on Park Street.

Unity on Park provides affordable housing for residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) while providing support and resources for successful independence. Both individuals with I/DD and those without will live in this unique community, creating a sense of unity. The project benefited from funding support from Douglas County and the Developmental Disabilities Mill Levy grant, helping to make this inclusive housing model possible.



- **Citizen-approved funding continues to support those with disabilities** - As a result of the 2001



voter-approved Douglas County Developmental Disabilities Mill Levy, more than \$7.3 million has now been awarded to organizations delivering local services to support residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families, including \$500,710 awarded for use

in 2026.

- **Your community celebrates individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities in 2025** - Our neighbors with disabilities enrich our community, enhance our diversity and strengthen our County. These community members and the organizations that provide support to them are recognized throughout the year and specifically in March as part of Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month.



2025 - Our neighbors with disabilities enrich our community, enhance our diversity and strengthen our County. These community members and the organizations that provide support to them are recognized throughout the year and specifically in March as part of Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month.

- **Developmental Disabilities Mill Levy Grant Program** - A one-mill property tax dedicated to



services for persons with developmental disabilities was established in 2001. The County distributes 93 percent of the Developmental Disabilities Mill Levy (DDML) funds to support Developmental Pathways, the County's Community-Centered Board, while retaining 5.5 percent for a competitive grant program. The remaining 1.5 percent covers Treasurer's fees.

Since 2001, the DDML grant has awarded over \$5.9 million in funding for local services supporting residents with intellectual or developmental disabilities (I/DD). DDML grant awards are allocated through an annual competitive grant process. Through the competitive grant program, \$107,380 was awarded to the City of Lone Tree, South Suburban Parks and Recreation, Highlands Ranch Community Association, the Town of Castle Rock, and the Town of Parker in 2025.

These projects included adaptive water safety, day camps, employment training, and inclusive entertainment programming and recreational activities. DDML funds enabled IDD individuals and their families to receive respite care and provided access to many engaging, health and wellness activities customized for the IDD community.

## LAND USE

- **Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Regulations** – Last year, staff developed proposed revisions to the Zoning Resolution to expand opportunities for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). In developing the proposed ADU amendments, staff considered lot size and availability of central water and sewer service as parameters for how ADUs would be allowed. A public workshop was held on December 3, 2024.

In June 2025, the Board of County Commissioners approved Douglas County Zoning Resolution regulations allowing for an ADU as an accessory use to a principal residential dwelling in all single family detached residential zone districts. Detached ADUs would be allowed on lots that meet minimum lots sizes and attached ADUs would be allowed on all lots. The intent of the amendment is to provide residents with additional use opportunities on their properties.



- **Natural Medicine Regulations** – In response to Senate Bill 23-290, the state concluded the



rulemaking process for the legalization of natural medicine and natural medicine businesses in 2024. Local jurisdictions are enabled to regulate time, place, and manner of the operation of natural medicine facilities. In June 2025, the Board of County Commissioners approved Douglas County Zoning Resolution amendments to regulate the time, place, and manner of operation of Natural Medicine businesses. The regulations limit the zone districts in which Natural Medicine businesses can operate, require a 1,500-foot separation from all residential zone districts, dwellings, schools, childcare facilities, libraries, churches, parks, and municipal boundaries, and require additional operational parameters through the Use by Special Review process.

- **Agritourism Regulations** – The Board of County Commissioners directed staff to develop draft regulations for agritourism activities and related used. Staff proposed a series of new definitions related to agritourism. Land use processes are then proposed to match the scale and intensity of the proposed agritourism activity. Staff will continue to work with the Board of County Commissioners on draft regulations and a public outreach process into 2026.



- **PD Amendment Regulation Change** – Based on direction from the Board of County Commissioners, staff drafted proposed revisions to the Douglas County Zoning Resolution Section 15 Planned Development (PD) amendment section. The proposed revisions aim to simplify review of the PD amendments, while meeting the statutory requirements for PD amendments with Colorado Revised Statutes. Staff will continue to work with the Board of County Commissioners into 2026 to determine next steps for the proposed regulation changes.

- **Non-Functional Turf Regulations** – The Colorado legislature approved House Bill 25-1113 and Senate Bill 24-005 requiring the County to prohibit the installation of non-functional turf in new multi-family and non-residential development and re-development projects. Staff is working with the Board of County Commissioners on draft regulations in response to state legislation.



- **Large Home Day-Care Regulation Change** – Staff has drafted amendments to the Douglas County Zoning Resolution for Large Day-Care Homes to comply with Colorado Revised Statutes § 26.5-5-310, which prohibits local governments from applying additional regulatory requirements to large or small family child care homes that do not also apply to other residential uses. Under the proposed amendments, all Day-Care Homes will be a residential accessory use for the zone districts in which they are allowed. The proposed amendments also enable this allowance for Adult Day Care facilities as the use impacts are very similar in nature. Staff will continue to work with the Board of County Commissioners into 2026 to finalize these regulations.



## TECHNOLOGY

- **AI Center of Excellence** - Douglas County has launched an AI Center of Excellence (CoE) to responsibly explore and implement artificial intelligence solutions that enhance public service and internal operations. With a focus on ethical innovation, the CoE will guide AI adoption across departments, ensuring every use case supports the County's core priorities and strategic goals.

### Key Highlights:

- Governance and Guidance: The CoE is tasked with developing AI policies, governance standards and training to ensure responsible and effective implementation.
- Strategic Alignment: Each AI project is evaluated to ensure support of the Board's Core Priorities: County Services, Public Safety, Health & Human Services, Transportation, Economic Foundations and Historic & Natural Resources.
- Employee Engagement: Department listening sessions and internal communications are underway to gather ideas, address concerns and encourage participation.

### County Investment:

- Data security and Microsoft license upgrades: \$195,000
- Microsoft Copilot licenses: \$50,000
- ChatGPT pilot program: \$10,500

### **Communications and Public Affairs Support – AI Center of Excellence**



The County is interested in integrating artificial intelligence (AI) tools to enhance service delivery and internal efficiency. An AI Center of Excellence (CoE) has been formed to establish governance, develop expertise and guide responsible implementation.

There is public skepticism around AI, especially concerning ethics, workforce impact, privacy, legality and environmental impact. Departments have unique, labor-intensive workflows where AI could provide value. Success stories will help establish public trust and position the County as a leader in responsible AI use among government entities.

### Communication Objective:

- Build internal awareness and understanding of AI's role and the County's AI Center of Excellence.
- Encourage department participation in identifying AI opportunities via ideation intake efforts.
- Reassure staff that AI is meant to support—not replace—their roles.
- Build public trust through transparency and highlight real-life success stories of AI use cases.
- Assure audiences that data privacy and risk mitigation is at the center of all AI use cases.
- Promote the County's leadership in ethical and innovative public sector AI use.

### Results:

- From April through June, the AI team conducted listening sessions to gather input and feedback from staff, ensuring concerns and ideas were heard and incorporated.

- Internal newsletter updates and FAQ content on DCNet kept employees informed and engaged, providing a central resource for timely information.
- FAQ sheets and slide decks were developed to address common fears, myths, and facts, helping to clarify key topics and promote understanding.

A presentation to elected officials and department directors was delivered during a quarterly EO/Director meeting, ensuring leadership was fully briefed on progress, insights, and next steps.

- **Technology Accessibility** - This initiative was launched in response to HB21-1110 which was enacted by the State to remove barriers to accessing electronic information. Rules were adopted February 2024 which applied to all internal and external technology and all governments were expected to be in compliance by July 1, 2024. An internal working group comprised of representatives from Communications, IT, County Attorney's Office, Risk Management, Clerk and Recorder's Office, Sheriff's Office and Community Development was convened to identify issues and a Technology Accessibility Plan was created, as dictated by the Governor's Office of Information Technology. The State later adopted HB24-1454 which provided a one-year extension to July 1, 2025, for immunity from liability for failure to comply with the digital accessibility standards. This provided additional time to secure a vendor and implement a training program for staff to ensure that the County would be poised for compliance at the end of the grace period.



Technology Accessibility training and office hours concluded in April of 2025, providing staff with 11 instructional sessions and nine open Q & A sessions in total. Building on last year's training, courses this year covered more advanced curriculum and continued to offer time to ask the consultants questions related to specific business cases. Application evaluations were held bi-weekly throughout most of the year to assess whether each of 200+ applications were compliant with state accessibility requirements. The team methodically followed a rubric and created a plan to continue to address the non-compliant applications into 2026 and beyond until they are all fully accessible or have sufficient accommodations available.

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- **Stormwater and Ponds** – IT and Public Works staff implemented the Cartegraph OMS solution for managing Stormwater and Ponds work orders and assets in 2024. This project replaced manual processes and spreadsheets with an automated geospatial work order management application. This system improves staff efficiency through seamless office and field work order management. It features an interactive map for asset visualization and analytics and provides advanced tools for workflow analysis, asset maintenance planning, inventory tracking, and reporting. Additionally, it enhances customer service by offering real-time work order information for constituent requests. In 2025 Staff created layers to track future funding projects and to track what pipes have been inspected or not and by color ranking. This information allows for better budgeting and project creation by utilizing the information that is found in the field and based on the program that has been created.



- Public Works successfully migrated from PubWorks to the **Cartegraph OMS**, aligning with the County's standardized geospatial asset management platform. The new system integrates data on assets, work orders, staff, inventory, and equipment into a centralized platform, improving business processes, staff training, reporting, and GIS compliance. Key benefits include enhanced service delivery, improved cost tracking and budget forecasting, and reduced duplicate service requests, boosting operational efficiency. This migration positions Public Works for greater efficiency, service quality, and enhanced operational capabilities.



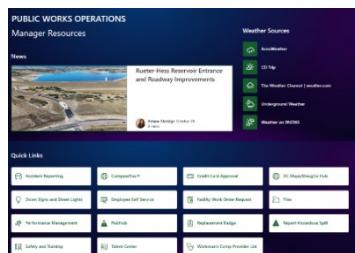
- **Highlands Ranch Drainage and Culvert Video Program:** In 2025, this video program continued within Highlands Ranch to verify the condition of pipes. Staff created efficiencies using Cartegraph to work with the contractor, DRC. DRC has completed 566 segments of pipes of the 716 segments requested. The program is expected to conclude in 2026.



- **Electronics Recycling** - Over 579,000 pounds of electronic waste have been collected (YTD) from 5,891 visits to our vendor's facility in Aurora. A reservation-based pop-up event in Castle Rock in August serviced an additional 633 residents and sent over 48,000 pounds of plastics and heavy metals to be repurposed or recycled. (Through 9/30 – \$274,382.41)
- A Request for Proposal (RFP) was posted by the Health Department for a **large scanning project** to digitize approximately 184 linear feet of physical files that are on a permanent retention schedule – most of which are related to the Onsite Wastewater Treatment System. The end goal is to upload these onto the Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems map which will allow homeowners and contractors to access the information they need to maintain their systems and to save employee time searching and scanning records.



- **Microsoft Teams** - Operations successfully launched its new Teams Channel, leveraging available tools to design engaging and user-friendly spaces with quick links, shared files, and integrated calendars, ensuring staff and management have access to essential resources.



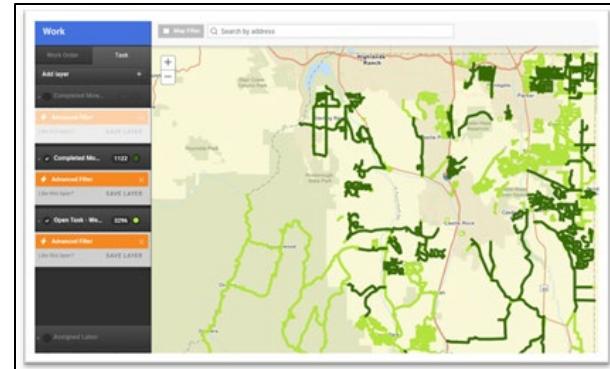
- **Engineering Traffic Systems Division is Piloting Near-Miss Technology - Highlands Ranch:** Four intersections are being monitored by advanced Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) devices to better understand the safety concerns with vulnerable users and how Douglas County can mitigate those concerns with the most effective safety solution(s).

- **Introducing the Hylio - AG216 Drone!** - This new addition to the Invasive Weeds program will give our applicators the ability to spray invasive weeds in County right-of-way and open space areas in Douglas County. The drone will reduce exposure of staff to chemicals, increase safety of operations near roadways, and will be able to spray areas that are not



easily accessed by vehicles. Eventually, the process will become more automated with spectral mapping of invasive weeds and automation of the drone's spraying pattern.

- **Using Cartograph to Track the Annual Roadside Mowing Program** - By utilizing 'Work Orders', we can manage the logistics of mowing operations, ensuring that everything is organized and managed effectively. The work order allows for systematic tracking of over 3,000 road segments, covering a total of 830 miles and grouping and highlighting these segments onto one map. Because the roads are now tracked within the work order the system will automatically generate each year, eliminating the need for manual entry and reducing the risk of errors. This approach not only saves time but also enhances the efficiency of the mowing program and ensures that every segment is completed without any oversight.



#### Benefits of Work Orders for Multiple Tasks

- Visual Tracking - As mowing activities are completed, the work order provides a visual map that highlights the areas that have been mowed and those that need to be completed. This real-time visual representation helps in assessing the progress and planning where our mower operators still need to clear vegetation.
- Efficiency in Route Planning: By analyzing the map, we can determine the most efficient routes for our mowing crews. This saves time and reduces fuel and equipment wear, making the entire operation more cost-effective.
- Transparency and Status Updates – Tracking tasks through work orders shows the program's status in an accessible way, allowing anyone involved to view progress and updates.
- **Autonomous Crash Detection System Deployment Effort**: Numerous meetings have been held with software vendors to explore a cost-effective way for the county's Traffic Management Center to use existing traffic cameras to detect crashes within seconds on a 24/7 schedule to support emergency responders and to more efficiently redirect traffic to other corridors to mitigate secondary crashes and unnecessary congestion.

- **Copilot Use Rollout Strategy** - Douglas County introduced generative AI tools to help employees work smarter, collaborate more effectively, and deliver better service. Key subject matter experts (SMEs) representing most departments/offices are piloting Microsoft Copilot, supported by an AI Resource Hub that provides training, guidelines, and real-world use cases. The AI Center of Excellence is leading this initiative, with departments nominating AI Champions to guide early adoption and shape the use of Copilot across the County.



- **Next Gen Teams and SharePoint program** - The IT Department is driving widespread adoption of modern Microsoft Teams and SharePoint tools, replacing legacy systems and enabling streamlined collaboration, communication, and information sharing. Early results show strong engagement—81% of newly created Teams are actively used—demonstrating high employee adoption and immediate value.



- **EventPro Fairground DB Split** - In partnership with EventPro, IT launched a dedicated event management system in October 2025 for the Fairgrounds division. This platform simplifies scheduling, billing, and reporting, aligning with the division's specific operational requirements. The result is improved efficiency and a scalable foundation for future growth.



- **Motor Vehicle Data Warehouse** - Launched in May 2025, this centralized reporting tool, developed in partnership with the Clerk and Recorder's Office, integrates data from eight sources into visual dashboards. It enables data-driven decisions and improved transparency. The system supports performance benchmarking and resource planning, benefiting both internal teams and the public.



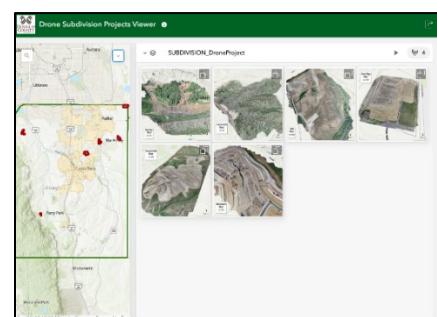
- **Cohero Re-Implementation Project** - In close partnership with the Coroner's Office, IT successfully re-implemented Cohero as the County's primary platform for managing critical case data. This project delivered key system enhancements—including a modern Task Management module, integrations with external data sources, and configurable user-defined fields. These improvements significantly strengthened the accuracy, consistency, and usability of core case information.



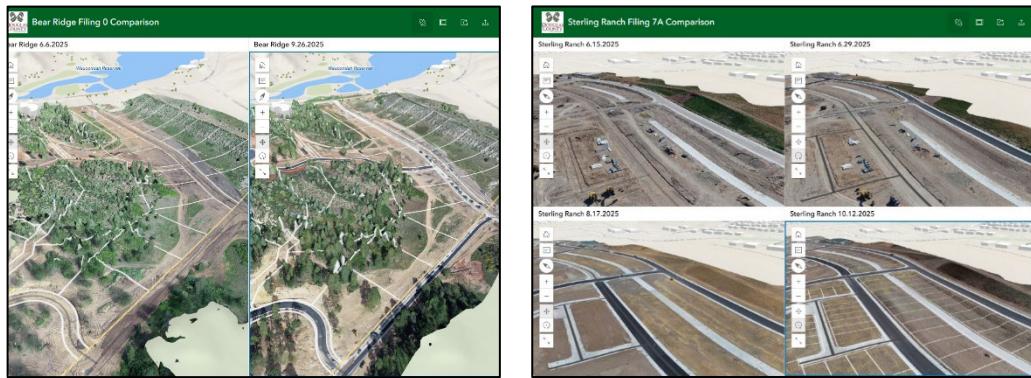
- Annual Report Modernization: A major component of this initiative, the manual Annual Report process was replaced with a streamlined Power BI solution. This transformation reduced preparation time from 2–3 months to a single day, saving over 200 staff hours annually. The new system provides dynamic data visualization, daily data refreshes, and timely public reporting—replacing outdated, 15-month-old data with near real-time insights.
  - Task Management Advancement: To support long-term success, a comprehensive adoption and continuous improvement strategy was developed for the new Task Management module. This module introduces configurable business logic aligned with departmental workflows, eliminates reliance on spreadsheets, and enables real-time task tracking through the Cohero Status Board and Power BI dashboards.

- **New GIS Mapping and Applications**

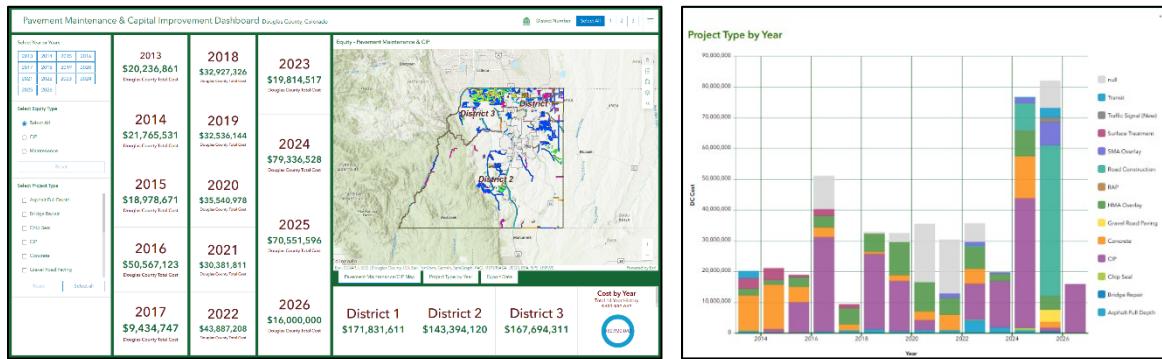
- Drone Subdivision Projects Viewer: View progress of subdivision development through drone imagery.
  - Parking Restriction Areas - Residential parking permit areas as shown on Ordinance No. o-025-00x.



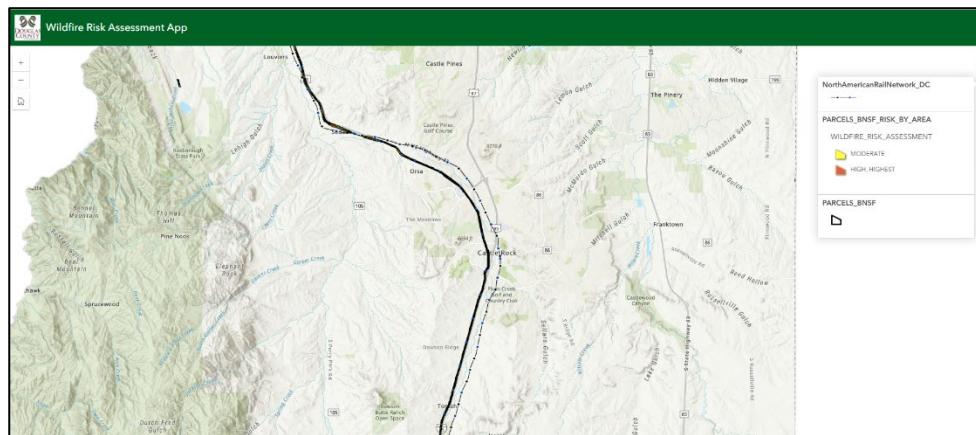
- [\*\*Subdivision Development Compare Gallery\*\*](#) - Compare drone imagery, by subdivision, in an interactive 3D viewer.



- [\*\*Equity Maintenance & CIP Dashboard\*\*](#) - This dashboard reflects projects from 2013 to present day. Douglas County costs associated with each area are divided by year and can be shown by project type and Commissioner district.

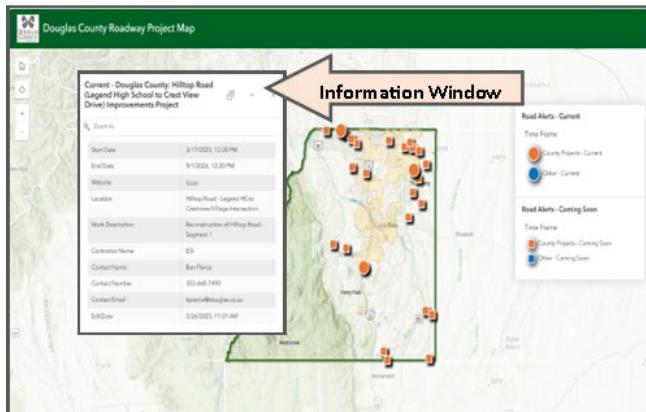


- [\*\*Wildfire Risk Assessment App\*\*](#) - Douglas County parcels owned by BNSF Railroad with HIGH and MODERATE risk for wildfire. Acreage calculated by area of parcel that falls within the MODERATE, or HIGH of the DouglasCo\_Wildfire Risk layer.



- **Roadway Project Map** - An additional new feature, the Roadway Project map was added to the new Cone Zone page and will be updated by County staff using a corresponding project editing application.

This application is designed to give a visual location of current and future road alert activity in Douglas County, making it easier to find a project based on its location even if you do not know the name of the project.



To navigate the map, simply find your area of interest and click on the circle icon for current alerts or a square icon for future alerts. An information window will give greater detail on the alert with a website link for yet additional information. You can also zoom to an area by using the zoom tools and move the map around by clicking and holding

the map to locate your area of interest.

- **Cohero Performance Improvements Project** - Completed in March 2025, this project delivered a major upgrade to Cohero, significantly improving system speed and responsiveness. Collaborating with the Coroner's Office and Cohero, staff reduced system wait times by approximately 60% significantly improving the user experience for investigators and administrative staff. Staff reported a 43% improvement in perceived speed, saving each user an average of 57 minutes per day—translating to over 2,700 hours returned to the organization annually.



- Through collaboration with Cohero and NMS Labs, IT eliminated manual lab request forms and enabled automatic population of toxicology results into the case management system. This reduces errors, accelerates access to critical data, and improves investigative efficiency. The project exemplifies the County's focus on improving efficiency and accuracy in mission-critical operations.

- **Law Enforcement App for Open Space** - Launched in October 2025, the updated Law Enforcement App for Open Space enhances field operations for rangers and officers by providing offline map access, identifying repeat offenders, and offering an intuitive dashboard for tracking patrol patterns. Developed in partnership with the department, the app strengthens both law enforcement and open space management.



- **CJMS Replacement – RollCall23 and Socrates** - IT partnered with Community Justice Services to launch RollCall23, a modern case management system that replaces the legacy platform. The rollout included Socrates, a mobile app that extends functionality and improves client service. The previous application was outdated and difficult to maintain or upgrade due to vendor constraints and limited county IT expertise. Sharing the system with Arapahoe County complicated changes, increased costs, and limited flexibility. With the 2025 redistricting, the counties required independent CJMS systems.



With 100% staff adoption and 87% of active clients using Socrates for check-ins, the system has streamlined workflows, improved accuracy, and enhanced productivity, positioning the department for faster, more client-focused outcomes.

- **Asset Management for the Open Space Division Project** - In 2025, Open Space & Natural Resources (OSNR) began utilizing a new asset management software called Cartegraph. This system allows staff members to track staff time, maintenance needs, life-cycle costs, and centralizes work history into one location. The software system has mobile-friendly features, allowing OSNR staff to more accurately and easily record tasks completed, even while offline in the field. OSNR has utilized this software system to streamline processes which include routine maintenance, habitat assessments, and conservation easement monitoring. The new tool also enables staff to manage properties, trails, buildings, and signage more effectively, while improving maintenance scheduling, disaster preparedness, and budget planning through digital work orders and linked materials tracking.

Task ID	Activity	Asset	Priority	Status	Due Date	Entx. Proximi...	
185175	Replace	OpenSpace Sandston...	High	In Progress	10/20/2025	tmc	0 ft
179685	Admin Duties	Non-Asset	High	In Progress		tmc	32 ft
179210	Fence Maintenance/...	OpenSpaceFence 84	Medium	In Progress		ram	4.1 mi
185832	Maintenance	OpenSpaceTrail104	None	In Progress		lwill	11 mi
186174	Trail Maintenance	OpenSpaceTrail104	High	In Progress		lwill	11 mi

- **Tax Roll Quality Improvement Project** - This cross-departmental initiative, led by IT in partnership with the Assessor, Budget, and Treasurer's offices, modernized the annual Tax Roll process. The team mapped data flows, validated system inputs/outputs, and conducted a successful test run, culminating in a smooth 2024 Production Tax Roll. The project delivered comprehensive process flow, master data documentation, and system validations, culminating in a smooth and efficient 2024 Production Tax Run in January 2025.



- **Cisco 1KEyes Network Performance Project** - IT implemented a new network monitoring system, Cisco 1Keyes, in partnership with Advanced Network Management (ANM). This tool enables real-time monitoring of internet and cloud connections, allowing IT to detect and resolve issues before they impact operations. This tool enhances the County's digital infrastructure, ensuring reliable and high-performance connectivity for both employees and residents.



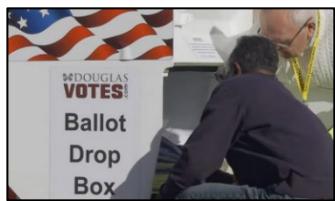
- As part of the efforts to relocate Health Department services into the new building, approximately **9,000 folders were digitized**. Most of these records were for the Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems located in Douglas County. Environmental Health is working with the GIS team to plot these addresses to a GIS Map allowing homeowners and contractors to access their information and saving employee time searching and scanning records.



- **POSSE Upgrade** - The POSSE system for Community Development and Public Works was successfully upgraded. POSSE is a mission-critical platform that supports land management, permitting, inspections, and related workflows across the County. The latest upgrade enhances system performance, strengthens cybersecurity, and expands reporting capabilities—ensuring the platform remains stable, secure, and adaptable to the County's evolving operational needs.



- **BITS Rewrite** - The BITS (Ballot Information Tracking System) project updated the County's ballot-tracking application to a modern platform. The new system retains all legacy features while improving security, maintainability, and adaptability. Completed under budget and without service disruption, this upgrade ensures the County's election infrastructure remains resilient and responsive to future needs.



- **County Board of Equalization (CBOE) Hearings** - Seamless technical support was provided for the CBOE appeals process, facilitating phone and teleconference hearings. In addition to real-time support, the team delivered a new business application to streamline the process. This ensured that appellants, board members, and County representatives could participate in virtual proceedings without technical interruptions.

- **Veeder-Root Upgrade** - The Fleet Veeder-Root Upgrade project modernized fuel site monitoring with new Automated Tank Gauge (ATG) systems and Starlink communications. The project upgraded seven sites, including the Northwest and Sedalia locations, ahead of the snow season. The new ATGs improve security, reliability, and network compatibility, while training ensured the fleet team was fully prepared for the transition.



- **ArcGIS WebApp Builder Migration** - A countywide modernization project in partnership with Esri, a global leader in geographic information systems (GIS) technology was successfully completed. Using Esri's latest platforms, the County updated 18 key mapping and information applications to ensure continued reliability, performance, and long-term support. Over the course of nine months, DCIT collaborated with staff from seven County departments to review, test, and enhance each application, ensuring they meet current business needs and support essential operations. This effort strengthens the County's digital infrastructure and reinforces its commitment to delivering efficient, high-quality public services through innovative, sustainable technology solutions.

<b>18</b> modernized GIS applications	<b>7</b> county departments
<b>2½</b> weeks early	Under budget <b>\$960</b> returned to Tech Fund

- **Tax Roll Interim Enhancements** - The County has replaced its outdated Tax Roll Application with a new, more reliable system to ensure tax processing continues smoothly. The new system can be updated quickly if tax laws change. The first phase, which involved removing the old system and installing the new one, was completed in six weeks. The next phase will add features for handling split property assessments and testing the annual tax roll.

- **Zoning Application Update** - The updated Zoning Application was launched to the public on September 18, marking a successful collaboration between IT GIS and Community Development. This initiative enhances the county's zoning tool to better meet current needs by improving usability for both staff and residents. The system migration to a new platform also restores important features and creates a flexible foundation for future improvements, ensuring continued efficiency and user satisfaction. [Click here to view the app.](#)



- **Windows 11 Upgrade** - DCIT successfully completed the County-wide upgrade to Windows 11, replacing an aging operating system with a modern, secure, and high-performance platform. This proactive initiative enhanced endpoint security, improved system stability, and introduced powerful new features that support staff productivity. Employees now benefit from tools like Snap Layouts for efficient multitasking, Virtual Desktops for organized workflows, and a cleaner, more intuitive interface that streamlines access to essential applications. The upgrade was executed with minimal disruption, ensuring a smooth transition and immediate value for County operations.



- **Election Support** - The IT Department played a critical role in ensuring the success of both the June Special Election and the November General Election by delivering comprehensive, on-site technical support. From end-to-end infrastructure setup to real-time troubleshooting, IT ensured 100% technical readiness across all Voter Service and Polling Centers (VSPCs), including secure and reliable network connectivity. Throughout both voting periods, the team maintained a zero-downtime goal by providing proactive, hands-on assistance to poll workers and judges, enabling the Elections Team to focus entirely on serving voters and maintaining the integrity of the electoral process.

- **Facilitating Major Departmental Transitions** - The IT Department managed two complex office relocations and setups, ensuring that essential county services remained accessible to the public with minimal interruption. DCIT managed several complex office relocations and setups, ensuring continuity of service and minimal disruption to the public:

- **Recorder's Office Relocation** - Staff relocated 19 workstations, specialized recording software, and a public kiosk with only two days of approved downtime. The transition was nearly invisible to the public, preserving uninterrupted access to recording services.



- Human Services – Highlands Ranch Office Setup - The team rapidly established a full IT infrastructure at the new Highlands Ranch Senior Center location, including workstations, printers, EBT card readers, and signature pads. This enabled Human Services staff to begin serving clients on schedule.
- E. Lansing Point Building Launch - Staff prepared a large new County office space to support Public Health, Community Justice Services, DA23 Diversion, and State JD23 Probation. The project involved building out office space, deploying equipment, and installing advanced A/V technology in coordination with state partners, ensuring that departments could move in and begin operations immediately.

## WILDLIFE

- **Greenland Wildlife Overpass** - The Greenland Wildlife Overpass is a landmark project designed



to protect Colorado's iconic big game species while enhancing motorist safety on Interstate 25. Located near the Greenland Interchange between Larkspur and Monument, this structure represents the culmination of Douglas County's 30-year strategy to safeguard wildlife movement across its landscapes. Completed in December, it stands as

one of the largest wildlife overpasses in the nation and a defining element of the I-25 South Gap project.

### Key Highlights:

- Strategic Location: Resolves a 3.7-mile gap in existing wildlife crossings along the I-25 South Gap corridor, a hotspot for wildlife-vehicle collisions.
- Massive Scale: At 204 feet wide, the overpass is built for elk, mule deer and pronghorn and is one of the largest crossings in the United States.
- Wildlife Connectivity: Links over 55 square miles (39,000 acres) of protected habitat on either side of I-25, part of a larger network including Pike National Forest's 1.1 million acres.
- Driver and Animal Safety: Expected to reduce wildlife-vehicle crashes by up to 90%, improving safety for both wildlife and motorists.
- Natural Design: Features gradual slopes and open sight lines preferred by large animals, addressing limitations of underpasses for species with antlers or wide field-of-view needs.
- System Completion: Serves as the capstone to the 15-structure wildlife crossing system in Douglas County and northern El Paso County.

### County Investment:

- While no direct funding came from the County for this project, Douglas County is a partner in the I-25 Gap Project that is related to the overpass construction. The project was funded by CDOT and was projected to cost approximately \$30M; however, it was completed at half the projected cost (approximately \$15M).
- Over the past 30 years, Douglas County and our partners have invested more than \$300 million in Open Space, habitat and wildlife conservation.
- Open Space and Natural Resources staff assisted Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) with the Wildlife Overpass over I-25 at Greenland. OSNR staff assisted with coordination, elk genetic studies, access agreements, fence removal and modification, tours, public affairs and information. Multiple tours were given at this location, including Colorado and US elected officials, Wildlife Tours Across America & National Geographic, International Conference on Environment and Transportation (ICOET), university groups, and Douglas Land Conservancy.



- **Collaboration with CDOT for Wildlife Mobility Highways 83, 85, & 121** - Open Space and Natural Resources (OSNR) staff have been proactively planning and collaborating with the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) to access wildlife needs and impacts associated with upcoming highway improvement projects. It is helpful to identify important wildlife crossing locations at the outset of highway improvement planning processes. This year, OSNR staff has contributed to these projects:

- Highway 83/Parker Rd. from Bayou Gulch Rd. to County Line Rd.
- Highway 85/Santa Fe Blvd. from Sedalia to Castle Rock
- Highway 121/Wadsworth Blvd. near Chatfield Reservoir

Proactively working with CDOT, Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), and other partners is spreading understanding of wildlife habitat, movement patterns, and facilitating opportunities for wildlife crossings as well as deterring wildlife vehicle collisions through implementation of various safety measures. Likely outcomes include the enlargement of the wildlife underpass adjacent to Cherokee Ranch south of Sedalia, and the possibility of wildlife crossings of Wadsworth from the hogback into Chatfield State Park, expanding access to habitat areas outside of Douglas County and facilitating genetic exchange in the rapidly urbanizing Denver Metropolitan area. Additional outcomes include entry improvements to Prairie Canyon and Hidden Mesa open space properties which will improve access and public safety.

- **Preble's Site Conservation Team (SCT) for Plum Creek Watershed** - Open Space and Natural



Resources (OSNR) staff chaired the Site Conservation Team for the Plum Creek Watershed. This effort is part of the Preble's meadow jumping mouse (PMJM) recover plan. Under the plan, the habitat within each of the watersheds within PMJM range that supports Preble's mice are to be assessed. From these assessments and population models, the PMJM population is estimated. This estimate and all the data and supporting information is articulated into a report called a nomination package. This nomination is then reviewed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (Service). If accepted, the population of that watershed is then added as a reliable figure to the total population of the species throughout its range.

In 2025, the SCT finished its calculations and extrapolations, and began drafting the nomination report. The report should be finalized in 2026 and sent to the Service for review. The numbers show that the Plum Creek population is the largest in the species' entire range and one of only two large population segments. This is great news for Douglas County. It shows that the habitat within Douglas County is prime and that Douglas County is a conservation leader in spite of high rates of population growth.

- **Wildlife Watch Program** - In 2025, Douglas County Open Space and Natural Resources staff continued the collaboration with the County's Communications & Public Affairs team to educate and inform residents about local wildlife on social media channels. Citizen response has been extremely positive, and the videos have become very popular on YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook. Showcasing the importance of protecting wildlife habitat and the need for Open Space to exist in Douglas County. Across the three social media platforms, 40 videos were posted on a variety of species with a total of 29,836 views this year!

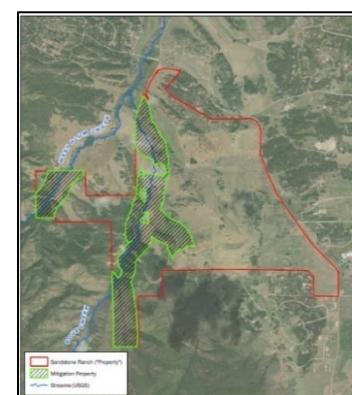
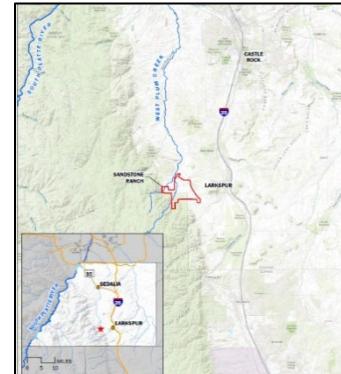


- **Chatfield Reservoir Mitigation Company Monitoring** – The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) built Chatfield Reservoir in 1975 near the confluence of the South Platte River and Plum Creek for flood control, recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, and water supply. Population growth along the Front Range led to a higher demand for water storage. In 2014, USACE made the decision to expand Chatfield Reservoir by an additional 20,600 acre-feet. The Chatfield Reservoir Mitigation Company (CRMC) was formed in 2015 to implement the project.

The increased water levels at Chatfield Reservoir resulted in impacts to the natural resources both on and off-site. CRMC is committed to offsetting the impacts associated with the water reallocation project.

Sandstone Ranch is located 22.5 miles South of Chatfield Reservoir and is intersected by two streams, West Plum Creek and Gove Creek. The map on the right shows the location of Sandstone within Douglas County. Four hundred seventy seven acres within Sandstone Ranch was chosen by CRMC as an off-site “Mitigation Property” because it is dense in quality wetland habitat, bird, and Preble’s meadow jumping mouse habitat, a federally protected species. The map on the left shows the location of the Mitigation Property within Sandstone Ranch.

After five years of successful monitoring by a third-party organization, Open Space (OS) staff are taking over the CRMC monitoring project. OS staff are committed to the permanent protection of the Mitigation Property and dedicated the entire month of September to thoroughly monitoring the 477 acres. OS anticipates the full monitoring report will be completed by late October.



## FAIR AND RODEO

- **Ticket Sales and Attendance** - Ticket revenue totaled \$608,443—a 50% increase over 2024—driven primarily by a 220% jump in concert ticket sales. This growth is helping offset rapidly rising production costs. Attendance is estimated at 50,000–54,000, consistent with the past three years, with improved accuracy thanks to three independent measurement tools. The Fair & Rodeo delivered strong revenue growth while maintaining steady attendance.
- **Event Sponsorship** - Sponsorship revenue reached \$444,550—a 10% increase over 2024. We welcomed 22 new sponsors this year, bringing the total to 93. Staff and the Fair Board will continue to focus on growth by creating new, high-value opportunities for sponsors, increasing their exposure, and raising awareness of available sponsorship packages. Overall, sponsorship continues to grow steadily, expanding both revenue and community partnerships.
- **Show Management and Livestock Sale** - Show management saw growth across the board, with Open Class, Ag and Floriculture, and 4-H entries up in most categories. Total entries increased 7% to 4,871. The competitions were supported by 56 volunteer superintendents and evaluated by 62 judges. The Junior Livestock Sale was a standout success—buyers, animals, and average price per animal were all up, driving total sales to a record level: up 20% and \$100,000 over last year. Participation and sales reached new highs.
- **Event Marketing** - Marketing efforts were brought fully in-house this year, resulting in outstanding results. Website views increased by 20%, and our large-scale email campaign delivered over 150,000 emails with an exceptional 52% open rate. Social media grew by 1,600 new followers, and rodeo tickets sold faster than ever before. Overall, in-house marketing significantly boosted reach, engagement, and ticket sales.
- **Events and Vendors**
  - Farm to Table – The event was well-received, and we plan to make operational adjustments and select a different catering vendor next year. Despite 50% of revenue coming from sponsorship, the event ended nearly \$17,000 in the red, continuing to be a net loss for the Fair.
  - Vendor Sales – Food sales were up 21%, beverage sales up 31%, and carnival revenue up 14%, with steady attendance and record per-capita engagement.
  - Marketplace—We will be re-evaluating our approach to the Marketplace, and significant changes are likely needed to improve the experience for both patrons and vendors.
- **Opening night concert:** Dustin Lynch with Lakeview - Country music powerhouse Dustin Lynch brought his chart-topping hits to the Douglas County Fair & Rodeo! From his breakout hit “Cowboys and Angels” to his history-making, six-week #1 smash “Thinking ‘Bout You” (feat. MacKenzie Porter), and recent favorites like “Stars Like Confetti” and “Party Mode,” Lynch continued to thrill fans with his dynamic sound and unforgettable performances.

- **Employee Appreciation Day At The Fair:** This event welcomed 1,210 employees and their guests with an address from elected officials, prizes, \$10 food vouchers, unlimited carnival rides and free entrance in the Douglas County Fair. From 4pm – 10pm, leadership thanked staff as they entered a special VIP gate with their families. A grand time was had by all!



- **2025 Fair Improvements –**

- A refreshed VIP experience is planned with better communication, streamlined processes, and premium access to the platform stage for PRCA rodeo performances, including a private bar and fly treatments.
- A new premium seating deck on the north stand was offered to test demand, sponsored by the Rotary Club.
- Midway area improvements included warm holiday lights and portable wireless LED lighting.
- Farm to Table was moved to a tented space southeast of the event center with more local vendors and an expanded menu.
- An aggressive, systematic increase to the PRCA purse over the next five years, funded by a \$5 annual ticket price increase, is anticipated to improve the rodeo's national ranking, potentially unlocking additional revenue from the Cowboy Channel.



- At the 2025 Douglas County Fair and Rodeo, Developmental Pathways expended a portion of their DDML funding to offer **Douglas County's Unbridled Rodeo** – An Accessible Rodeo Experience. In partnership with Developmental Pathways, Douglas County was proud to host this special event, designed for individuals with disabilities, lower mobility, and/or sensory sensitivity. This experience offered a fun and welcoming environment filled with interactive activities like roping, barrel racing, and even riding a real mechanical bull—just like a traditional rodeo, but tailored for all abilities.

More than just fun, the day was about building confidence and creating unforgettable moments. Participants were not only able to try their hand at classic rodeo events, but also to connect one-on-one with real cowboys, cowgirls, and rodeo queens who generously volunteer their time to make this day truly special.



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- **County Fair & Rodeo IT Support** - In collaboration with Facilities, DCIT supported the Douglas County Fair by deploying and maintaining the full IT infrastructure across the venue. This included computer systems, secure network connectivity, and public Wi-Fi. The team's rapid response to technical issues ensured a smooth experience for organizers, vendors, and thousands of attendees.



- **Thank you for serving. First responders and military, enjoy a free ticket to the rodeo** - As a small token of gratitude, the 2025 Douglas County Fair & Rodeo offered one complimentary ProRodeo ticket to military service members and first responders.



- **Fair Volunteer Appreciation Event** – Staff held a Volunteer Appreciation Event on September 26 from 6:30-8:30p at the Fairgrounds Midway. The event offered live music, food trucks, dessert, bar service and an Old West photo booth. The celebration was enjoyed by approximately 125 attendees who volunteered their time and made the Fair and Rodeo possible.

## HUMAN RESOURCES

- **Health Benefits** – In 2025, Douglas County formed a new partnership with MJ Consulting Group for benefits brokerage services and development of our new Benefits Hub website. Another technology enhancement through our partnership with Telligen, allows employees to manage their well-being initiatives and coaching through Telligen Connects, via the web or app. Quarterly Benefits Newsletters have been released to support communication and education of benefits available for our employees and their families.

For 2026, as healthcare costs continue to soar with average trend at 15.6%, the County was able to finalize our medical coverage with a projected 11.2% increase to medical premiums for 2026. MJ Consulting provided solutions that fit the County's overall strategy to continue to provide quality healthcare for our employees at competitive rates, with small design changes and cost share adjustments allowing Douglas County to continue to stand out as an employer of choice.

Additionally, for 2026, staff negotiated minimal increases (in some cases 0%) in monthly premiums for all other benefit programs in 2026 such as:

- Life Insurance, AD&D, Voluntary Life, Accident, Critical Illness & Disability – 0% increase
- Delta Dental - 7.6% increase
- VSP Vision - 7.2% increase

- **Retirement** – In 2025, Douglas County continued to partner Morgan Stanley Fiduciary Consulting Group (formerly Cook Street Consultants) and Empower to provide retirement services to our employees. Empower continues to provide top-of-the line technology and participant education.



- The 1<sup>st</sup> semi-annual Retirement Readiness Workshop was held which provided education on healthcare options including Medicare, financial planning and mental preparation for retirement.
- In 2026 Douglas County will provide employees with the ability to utilize a Self-Directed Brokerage window through Empower allowing individuals to invest some or all of their vested retirement account balances into mutual funds, ETF's, individual stocks, bonds, etc. All employees will still have the normal core-fund lineup to choose from in addition to these more individualized options.



- **Compensation** - Each year in January, compensation is top of mind as it relates to remaining market competitive and ultimately allowing employees to provide for themselves and their families. Over the past 12 months, the Board of County Commissioners have again prioritized compensation as a top-line budget request. Looking back over the last year, the following increases were approved:

- 2025: 4% merit pool; 0.75% high performance pool; 6.22% average Deputy tier increases
- 2026: 3% merit pool; 5.5% average Deputy tier increases

- **Douglas County Connects:** Building on the foundation established the previous two years, the



Douglas County Connects Employee Council began its first full year of activity, continuing its efforts in strengthening engagement, communication, and recognition across the County. This spring the Council launched the *DC Connects Quarterly Newsletter*, providing employees with a platform to celebrate achievements, share inspiring stories, and deliver a behind-the-scenes look at the work that makes Douglas County thrive. This effort marked a significant step towards fostering transparency, collaboration, and a stronger sense of community among employees.

In addition, the Council coordinated activities for Public Service Recognition Week in May, an event meant to honor the dedication of the employees and their wonderful work for and within our community. Various food trucks visited multiple County locations, offering lunch to staff throughout the week. Employees also had the opportunity to participate in raffle drawings, adding an element of fun and appreciation to the celebration.

Looking ahead to 2026, the Council is committed to building on its success and advance new initiatives that respond to employee feedback and evolving needs, such as continuing the production of the well-received newsletter and launching social and shared-interest groups to foster connection and collaboration among employees, ensuring Douglas County remains a great place to work.

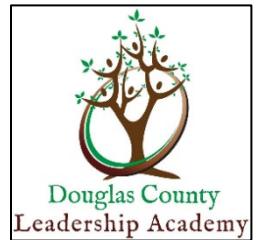
- **Looking forward to 2026:** We look forward to continuing to evaluate HR/Payroll systems for in addition to partnering with IT to leverage current available technology such as AI toward enhanced efficiencies and improve employee experiences.

## EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

- The **Douglas County Innovation League** graduated 16 staff members from across the organization in one cohort in 2025 before going on hiatus. They learned how to apply Lean methods and tools to their processes to increase efficiency by identifying and eliminating waste such as time and cost. These efforts in turn reduce frustration of our citizens and customers and increase employee retention rates. This brings the total program graduation number to 352 since 2016 with an estimated 1,000+ improvements implemented. Staff intend to reevaluate the program for alternative formats and technology advancements and consider reinstituting
- **Training and Development:** Douglas County continues to invest in the growth and development of its workforce, ensuring employees have access to meaningful opportunities that strengthen leadership, enhance skills, and prepare the organization for the future. Several new initiatives were introduced in 2025 while established programs continued to thrive:
  - Entry Level Supervisor Series: Human Resources launched the Entry Level Supervisor Series of training classes, designed to support new and aspiring leaders across the County. The first two courses, Grow Your Leadership Skills and Generations in the Workplace focused on building soft skills in management and fostering effective team dynamics. Looking ahead, the series will expand in 2026 with HR Bootcamp in Q1, a high-level introduction to Human Resources and policies and procedures, as well as additional classes to further strengthen supervisory skills throughout the year.
  - Talent Center: Will remain a cornerstone of employee learning, offering more than 5,000 online classes available 24/7. Employees can access training on a wide range of topics, including technology, safety, leadership and management, and health and wellness. The platform continues to provide flexible, on-demand learning opportunities that support professional growth.
  - Douglas County Leadership Academy (DCLA): Continues to play a pivotal role in preparing future leaders. The sixth cohort graduated in March 2025, and a seventh class launched in the spring. Monthly sessions provided opportunities to learn and apply new management skills, supported by 360° reviews and executive coaching to guide personal development plans. Alumni and County leaders continue to volunteer as mentors and guest speakers, sharing expertise on topics such as budgeting, recruiting, and performance management.



Participants this year engaged in service project at Whispering Pines Park, adding new sand to volleyball courts, refreshing mulch for playground equipment, and supporting clean-up efforts to reinforce the value of servant leadership. DCLA continues to provide emerging leaders with the tools to refine their skills and discover new techniques that benefit our staff and community.



- The Building Division became a **Preferred Education Provider with the International Code Council (ICC)**. This recognition adds greater value to the continuing education unit (CEU) hours from our in-house training. It also allows us the opportunity to provide regional training and collaborate with surrounding jurisdictions for more cohesive code applications.



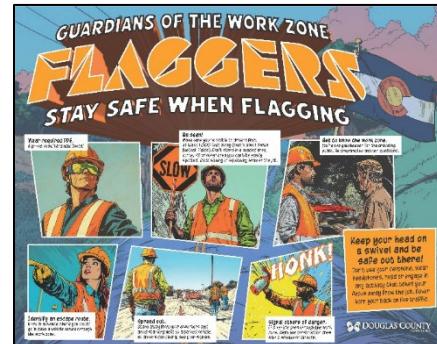
- In preparation for next year's mandatory adoption of the Colorado Model Electric Ready and Solar Ready Code, the Building Division held on-site training with a representative of the State of Colorado Energy Office. This training included other surrounding jurisdictions.
- **Snowplow Training Day** - PWOps team successfully hosted its annual Snowplow Training Event.



This year, in addition to the snowplow training course, the event featured a variety of other equipment courses. These courses are designed to ensure that all operators are well-prepared and confident in handling the machinery necessary for the upcoming season.

A highlight of the event was the keynote address delivered by Alison Madison from Wisconsin Salt Wise. She discussed the impacts of excessive use of salt during snow removal operations, emphasizing conscientious environmental practices. Her insights were much appreciated by the staff in attendance.

- **New Safety Posters** - The implementation of new safety posters for our safety and training program was a critical step towards enhancing awareness and promoting a culture of safety. Our primary objective was to develop posters that were not only engaging and realistic but also conveyed key messages effectively. This initiative aims to benefit our employees and extend its impact on other municipalities, ultimately ensuring a safer working environment for everyone involved.



- **Core Productivity and Skill Enhancement Training** - Staff launched the "Level Up" Training Series dedicated to enhancing employee proficiency and utilization of the Microsoft (MS) Office 365 suite. These targeted sessions focused on high-impact applications to improve collaboration across the County. Key training areas:

- **OneNote**: For advanced organizational skills and team note-sharing.
- **Teams**: For optimized virtual collaboration, meetings, and communication channels.
- **SharePoint**: For effective document management, project collaboration sites, and streamlined information sharing.



- **Next-Generation Training** - Proactive training was provided on **next-generation features** for key collaboration platforms, specifically MS Teams and SharePoint, ensuring employees stay current with new tools for communication and content management.
- **Generative AI Proficiency** - As part of the county's AI initiative, the Training Team played a key role in the rollout of Microsoft Copilot. Dedicated training videos equipped AI Champions from each department with the knowledge and tools to use Copilot effectively and responsibly.

- **GIS Technical User Group** - The GIS Technical User Group (TUG) continues to foster collaboration and knowledge-sharing across departments. Meeting quarterly, TUG provides a valuable forum for GIS professionals to connect, exchange updates, and explore current initiatives.



At the November 2025, session, a guest speaker from ESRI presented training resources and led a discussion on the AGOL cleanup initiative and broader data modernization efforts. These sessions support continuous learning and help align GIS practices with the evolving priorities of the County.

- **Integral Care Training** - On January 10 and 17, Community Services hosted the Integral Care Training sessions, bringing together case manager, facilitators, and community partners for an immersive learning experience. These sessions introduced and deepened participants' understanding of the integral Care framework - a transformative approach to empowering individuals facing complex challenges.



Participants explored the foundational principals of Integral Care, a holistic framework designed to empower individuals by surrounding them with comprehensive care and support. This model equips facilitators to guide toward meaningful transformation by addressing the barriers to their goals and aligning their motivations with actionable steps.

There were 15 case managers in attendance from eight different local partners. In addition to the deeper understanding of the Integral Care Model, attendees left with stronger connections and an expanded network of resources.

- **Workforce Stability and Employee Satisfaction** - Through focused retention strategies and culture improvements, the Public Health Department significantly enhanced workforce stability:
  - Improved Turnover Rate: Reduced turnover by 40% through refined hiring practices and enhanced employee morale initiatives
  - Continuous Improvement: Employee satisfaction survey results show consistent improvement across all measured categories for two consecutive years
  - Strategic Hiring: Implemented enhanced candidate selection processes to ensure optimal fit and long-term retention
- Funding provided by the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**, through CDPHE, has allowed for Public Health Department staff to travel to many professional conferences over the past year. Staff have gained knowledge, made new contacts and increased their enthusiasm for the field of public health.
  - Conferences supported through this funding included the annual meetings of the American Public Health Association, the National Association of County and City Health Officials and the National Environmental Health Association. The funding which runs through next year allows staff not covered by other grants to learn more about their field.



## REMEMBRANCES AND KEY STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS

- This year the Treasurer's office was devastated by the senseless loss of **Tanya Burnside**, our Chief Deputy Treasurer. There are no words to truly capture the depth of grief the office felt over the loss of such a wonderful person.



She was appointed to the chief deputy treasurer position because of her ability and her work ethic. She was an incredible person, a joy to be around, and her personality made her just one of those rare people that when she entered a room, she brought an aura of energy that exploded around the room and affected everyone. Regardless of what the difficulty or problem was that we were having in the office she was always there, with a smile and an answer.

She was a devoted mother, loving daughter and sister, brilliant coworker and cherished friend. She loved the outdoors, the beach, snowboarding and camping. Tanya is and will truly be missed by all who knew her and had the pleasure of working with her.

- **Jimmie Bechle** served Douglas County as the Parker Shop Supervisor from March 2021 until his passing in May 2025. Jim brought more than 30 years of heavy truck repair experience to the County and had an immediate, positive impact on the Parker Fleet Shop. He was the right person at the right time—helping the team move away from outdated processes, strengthening proactive support for county operations, and building positive working relationships across departments.



Jim had an easygoing way about him that could diffuse any situation. He used that natural calm and kindness to form genuine friendships with everyone who had the privilege of working with him. His presence made the Parker shop and Fleet Services shop a better place.

- Forensic Analyst for Digital Evidence, **Jay Norejko**, lost his 3-year battle with cancer on Friday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2025. Jay passed peacefully on Friday, surrounded by his loved ones. Jay was married to Maureen and had two beautiful daughters, Abby and Charlotte. Jay was accomplished in traditional Japanese swordsmanship called Kendo and loved to cycle and practice yoga. Before coming to us, Jay was a Detective for Lakewood Police Department working as a Forensic Analyst. When a combined position was created with Douglas County and several other local agencies, Jay joined the Douglas County Sheriff's Office family on January 24, 2019. He was always available and patient to "impart wisdom" as he called it, to other examiners in the lab.



- In 2025, several long-tenured staff members left their positions after many years of public service:
  - Johnny Mulligan – Open Space and Natural Resources; Property Maintenance Mgr (28 yrs)
  - Jill Welle – Public Works, Building Div; Wildfire Mitigation & Resilience Coordinator (27 yrs)
  - Dale Hiebert – Public Works, Traffic Div; Asst Supv Signals (25 yrs)
  - Lynn Martinson – Community Justice Svcs; CJS Officer II (24 yrs)
  - David Ransom – Public Works, Building Div; Plans Examiner II (24 yrs)
  - Timothy Ollinger – Public Works, Building Div; Cashier (23 yrs)

- Atilio Quintanillo – Facilities; Maintenance Supv (23 yrs)
- Craig Vacura – Information Technology; Senior Project Mgr (23 yrs)
- Wendy Holmes – Communications & Public Affairs; Director (22 yrs)
- Andrew Copland – Finance; Director (22 yrs)
- Daniece Waggoner – Human Resources; Leave Coordinator (18 yrs)
- The following key leadership changes also occurred:
  - Caroline Frizell, Director of Communications
  - Jennifer Eby, Director of Community Services
  - Christie Guthrie, Director of Finance
  - Kirk Inderbitzen, Manager of Operations, Open Space and Natural Resources
  - Jason Kennedy, Undersheriff
  - Taylor Davis, Ron Hanavan, Phil Domineco, Mike McIntosh, Joel White and Dan McMillian each were promoted to the rank of Chief
  - Brandon Lenderink, Deputy Director, Office of Emergency Management (shown below)
  - Melissa Bloodworth, Manager, Human Resources (DCSO)
  - Raven Stuart, Manager, Support Services Manager (HS)
  - Brian Franklin, Asst. Director, Fleet Services
  - Dean Grafft, Manager, Fleet Services
  - Rand Clark, Asst. Director, Community Services
  - Felice Entratter, Deputy Assessor, Appeals
  - Jill Janz, Asst. Director, Finance
  - Eric Miller, Chief Deputy Treasurer
  - Miles McClure, Chief Deputy Treasurer
  - Jeff Ulrich, Chief of Staff
  - Christine Rolfes, Chief District Attorney, SVU
  - Seth Aldridge, District Supervisor, PW Ops
  - Jessica Carlos, Chief Deputy, Coroner
  - Zoe Laird, Managing County Attorney, HS
  - Brie Lee, Terry Lyons and Shawn Deder assumed the roles of Sr. IT Manager
  - J'aquale Brooks, Compliance and Communications Manager, HS
  - Dan Avery, Deputy County Manager
  - Kati Carter, Director of Community Development
  - Holly Carrell, Director of Strategic Solutions
  - Steve Shoultz, Director of Parks

