

Welcome To Pueblo County, Colorado



A Guide to Rural Living

A Guide to Rural Living pamphlet is updated and published on a regular basis by Pueblo County Sheriff's Office Emergency Services Bureau and is provided at no cost to those new to Pueblo County.

Version 2010



An Information Guide for Residents of Rural Pueblo County

Rural living has always had its challenges. The men and women who first came to this part of the country during the westward expansion of the United States were necessarily self-reliant. The values of integrity and personal responsibility guided their decisions, actions and interactions. In keeping with that spirit, we offer this information to help the citizens of Pueblo County who wish to follow in the footsteps of those rugged individuals by living in the wide-open spaces of Pueblo County.

It is important for you to know that life in the country is different from life in the city. County governments are not able to provide the same level of service in rural areas that city governments provide in urban settings, because residents are spread out over a much larger area. To that end, we are providing you with the following information to help you adjust to living on rural land or maybe to help you make the decision to buy and build on a remote Pueblo County property.

We encourage you to be vigilant, explore and examine those things we may not cover in this brochure. We offer you every one of these insights with the hope they help you enjoy your decision to reside in the rural areas of Pueblo County, not to dissuade you from living a fulfilling life in our breathtaking communities. Thanks for making (or considering to make) Pueblo County your home!

Pueblo County Public Works
583-6040
33601 United Ave
Pueblo, CO 81001

Pueblo County Planning & Development, 583-6100
229 West 12th
Pueblo, CO 81003

Pueblo County Sheriff's Office
Law- 583-6125
ESB- 583-6200
Detention- 583-6135
909 Court Street
Pueblo, CO 81003

Pueblo Regional Building Authority, 543-0002
316 West 15th St
Pueblo, CO 81003
www.prbd.com

Pueblo Rural Fire Department
948-4646
29912 Hwy 50 East
Pueblo, CO 81006

Pueblo West Fire Department
547-7337
51 E. Hahns Peak Ave
Pueblo West, CO 81007

Pueblo West Metro District
547-2000
109 E. Industrial Blvd
Pueblo West, CO 81007

Red Creek Volunteer Fire/Rescue
485-3247 (Chief)
2579 Canyon Heights Rd
Pueblo, CO 81005

Rye Fire Protection District
676-3522
4495 Bent Brothers Blvd
Colorado City, CO 81019

Rye Telephone Company
676-3131
60 Beckwith Dr
Colorado City, CO 81019

Rye, Town of
489-2011

Salt Creek Sanitation District
544-6823
111 East 5th St
Pueblo, CO 81003

San Isabel Electric, 547-2160
893 E Enterprise Dr
Pueblo West, CO 81007

St. Charles Mesa Sanitation District, 549-0555
PO Box 403
Pueblo, CO 81002

St. Charles Mesa Water District, 542-4380
1397 Aspen Rd.
Pueblo, CO 81006

U.S.D.A. Service Center
543-8386
200 S Santa Fe Ave 4th Flr
Pueblo, CO 81003

Qwest Communications
800-244-1111

West Park Fire Protection District, 564-0188
3296 Goodnight Ave
Pueblo, CO 81005

Xcel Energy, 800-895-4999

Helpful Contacts

Avondale Water & San. District , 947-3186 321 3 rd St Avondale, CO 81022	CO Water Resources Div. Engineer , 542-3368 310 E Abriendo-# B Pueblo, CO 81004
Beulah Vol. Fire Department 485-3111 8898 Grand Ave Beulah, CO 81069	CSU Cooperative Extension 583-6566 701 Court St Suite C Pueblo, CO 81003
Beulah Water Works District 485-3776 PO Box 155 Beulah, CO 81069	Pine Drive Telephone 485-3400 8611 Central Ave PO Box 188 Beulah, CO 81023
Blende Sanitation District 543-4722 PO Box 1940 Pueblo, CO 81002	Pine Drive Water District 485-3666 PO Box 35 Beulah, CO 81023
Black Hills Energy 800-303-0752 105 S Victoria Pueblo, CO 81002	Pueblo Animal Services 544-3005 4600 Eagleridge Pl Pueblo, CO 81008
Boone, Town of , 947-3311 421 First Street Boone, CO 81025	Pueblo Board of Water Works 584-0250 319 West 4 th Street Pueblo, CO 81003
Boone Vol Fire Dept. 947-3311 421 First Street Boone, CO 81025	Pueblo City Gov./City Hall 553-2489 1 City Hall Place Pueblo, CO 81003
Century Telephone 719-384-1300 800-201-4099 PO Box 482 La Junta, CO 81050	Pueblo City/County Health Department , 583-4300 101 W 9th St Pueblo, CO 81003
Colorado City Metro District 676-3396 PO Box 19390 Colorado City, CO 81019	Pueblo County Courthouse 583-6000 215 West 10 th St Pueblo, CO 81003
Colorado Division of Wildlife 561-5300 600 Reservoir Road	www.co.pueblo.co.us

Indigenous Wildlife



Nature can provide you with some wonderful neighbors. Most, such as deer and eagles are positive additions to the environment. However, even “harmless” animals like deer can cross the road unexpectedly and cause traffic accidents. Rural development encroaches on the traditional habitat of coyotes, bobcats, mountain lions, rattlesnakes, prairie dogs, bears and other animals. You need to know how to deal with these and other dangerous animals. In general, it is best to enjoy wildlife from a distance. Animals can be dangerous. Both male and female animals of many species can become aggressively defensive if startled, provoked, or disturbed. Their natural reaction is either to fight you or escape. Children and unfamiliar adults need to know that it is not safe to approach livestock or wildlife without proper training or supervision.



Dogs

Pueblo County Resolution No. 92-396, Providing for the Control and Licensing of Dogs in the Unincorporated Area of Pueblo County, Colorado, states it is “illegal to permit any dog to run at large in the unincorporated areas of Pueblo County unless the dog is accompanied by and under the immediate control and restraint of the owner.” Uncontrolled dogs can present a serious risk to livestock and wildlife. Dog owners are responsible for their dog’s actions, and may be held liable, and fined, for damages their dogs cause to livestock, wildlife, and other property owners’ rights. In addition, a recently adopted resolution requires all household pets be registered, or the owner can face fines and penalties.

Roads and Access

The fact that you can drive to your property does not necessarily guarantee that you, your guests, or emergency service vehicles can achieve that same level of access at all times, particularly if private access roads are involved. Please consider:



1.1 There can be problems with the legal aspects of access, especially if you gain access across property belonging to others. It is wise to obtain legal advice and understand the easements that may be necessary when these types of questions arise.

1.2 You can experience problems with the task and cost maintenance of your road. Pueblo County maintains 1208 miles/1944 kilometers of roads, but many rural properties are served by private or public roads which are maintained by private road associations. There are some county roads that are not maintained by the County – no grading or snow plowing. There are even some public roads that are not maintained by anyone! There are many public road rights-of-way that were platted years ago but were never constructed to any standard. Pueblo County will not issue access permits to roads it



does not maintain. Make sure you know what type of maintenance to expect and who will provide that maintenance.



1.3 School buses travel only on maintained county roads that have been designated as school bus routes. You may need to drive your children to the nearest county main-

tained road so they can be picked up by the bus.

1.4 In extreme weather, even county maintained roads can become impassable. You may need a four-wheel drive vehicle with chains for all four wheels, a snowmobile and/



Preparedness Information Page



9.1 During an emergency, 911, fire, law, and medical personnel will be overwhelmed with requests for assistance. It's likely that your family will have to fend for itself without power or well water in severe weather for 72 hours after a disaster.

Emergency Officials encourage you to pack a 72-Hour Kit. That is enough non-perishable food, water (one gallon, per person, per day), and medical supplies to last 3 days. The kit should also include, a battery-operated radio, flashlight, extra batteries, some tools, moist towelettes, duct tape, plastic sheeting, and considerations specific to your family (babies, pets, special needs, etc).

9.2 Pueblo County Opt-in is an on-line registration for Emergency Notifications to be sent to your cellular phone. If emergency officials need to notify a large area quickly, opt-in means they will call both your home (if you have a landline) and your cell phone– even if you are away from the house. You have to register your cell for this service by visiting www.pueblountyoptin.com.

9.3 During emergencies, the Pueblo County Status Board is what officials will use to provide large amounts of critical information to the community. Make it a favorite on your computer now so when an emergency hits, you aren't searching for the address. www.puebloemergency.info.

9.4 Pack a kit for your car too!(Food, sand, tools, water, flares, med kit, etc.) Don't travel with less than a half a tank of gas and keep your car on a routine maintenance schedule. If you are traveling during a disaster or bad weather, be sure to tell someone where you are going and when you expect to return.

9.5 Vial of Life is a free label that lets first responders grab some basic medical history out of your freezer if they have to take you by ambulance. If you'd like a kit, contact your local fire station.

Weather Risks and Safety Steps

8.1 Tornado—Go to a basement, interior hallway, or closet.

Avoid windows, outside walls, and doors. Get under something sturdy and protect your head from debris. If you are outside, in a vehicle, or in a mobile home, take cover in a ditch or ravine. Never try to outrun a



tornado by foot or car.

8.2 Flood—Stay alert for changing weather conditions. Avoid low spots and areas downstream from dams. Don't drive over a flooded road or attempt to cross when the water is above your ankles. Abandon your stalled vehicle and get to higher ground.

8.3 Winter Storm—Be prepared to stay at home. Dress in layers of clothing. Avoid driving. If you are trapped in a car stay there until shelter is in sight. While inside a stranded vehicle, don't keep the engine running. It is okay to run it periodically to stay warm but open a window slightly for ventilation, and clear the tailpipe occasionally to avoid CO poisoning.

8.4 Lightning—Don't use the phone, bath, water faucets, or electronic devices. If outside, avoid hilltops, trees, open areas, and stay several yards from other people. If you can't get indoors, avoid being the highest object by going to a ditch or valley but stay away from open water. If you feel your hair stand on end, crouch close to the ground on the balls of your feet with your hands on your knees (do not lay flat).

8.5 Hazardous Materials Accidents—Never approach a spill. Avoid breathing gases, fumes, or smoke. If you believe you are among the first to witness the spill, call 9-1-1 right away from a safe distance. If you are asked to evacuate, do so immediately. As you leave the area, close the car vents and don't use the air conditioner or heating system. If you are asked to Shelter, listen to a local TV or radio station, close the windows, doors and vents, lock the doors and go to an interior room with your 72-Hour Kit.

or snowplow to travel during those episodes, which could last for many days.



1.5 Natural disasters, especially floods, can destroy roads. Pueblo County will repair and maintain county roads that have been formally accepted for maintenance. All other roads are the responsibility of someone else. A dry creek bed can become a raging torrent

and wash out roads, bridges, and culverts. Residents served by private roads and/or bridges have been hit with large bills for repairs and/or reconstruction after floods.

1.6 If your road is unpaved, it is highly unlikely that Pueblo County will pave it in the foreseeable future. Check with the Pueblo County Public Works Department when any statement is made by the seller of a property that indicates an unpaved road will be paved.

1.7 Unpaved roads are not always smooth, generate dust, and are often slippery when wet. Expect an increase in vehicle maintenance costs when you regularly travel on roads of this type.

1.8 Mail, package, and newspaper delivery are not available to all areas of the county. Ask each to describe the system for your area.

1.9 You are encouraged to contact the Pueblo County Public Works Department to find out if the road providing access to the property in question is a public or private road, and who is responsible for repairing and maintaining the road.



Buying Land in Pueblo County



There are many issues that can affect your property. It is important to research these items before purchasing land.

2.1 Not all lots are buildable. The Pueblo

County Assessor has many parcels which are separate for the purpose of taxation. These are not legal lots in the sense that a building permit will not be issued. You must check with the Pueblo County Planning and Development Department to verify if a piece of land can be built upon.

2.2 Easements may require you to allow construction and maintenance of roads, power lines, water lines, sewer lines, etc. across your land. There may be easements that are not of record. Some recorded utility easements are “blanket” easements that cover the entire parcel of land rather than just a strip across it. Check these issues carefully.

2.3 Many property owners do not own the mineral rights under their property. Owners of mineral rights have the ability to change the surface characteristics in order to extract their minerals. It is very important to know what minerals may be located under the land and who owns them. Mineral rights may extend to materials such as “moss rock,” resulting in removal of material that you find attractive and thought was yours. Much of the rural land in Pueblo County can be used for mining, however, a special use permit review and approval by the Pueblo County Planning Commission is usually required. Be aware that adjacent mining uses can expand and cause negative impacts.

2.4 You may be provided with a plat of your property, but unless the land has been surveyed and pins placed by a licensed surveyor, you cannot assume the plat is accurate. Further, if you are purchasing a parcel of land that is less than 40 acres, call the Pueblo County Planning and Development Department to verify you are purchasing a legal parcel. Not all

Law Enforcement

7.1 The Pueblo County Sheriff is responsible for law enforcement in Pueblo County. The office operates 24 hours a day 7 days a week. In addition to the Law Enforcement Bureau of the Sheriff’s Office, there is also a bureau for Detention and another for Emergency Services.



7.2 Calls for service are given priority based on the threat to life then property. Anyone needing emergency service can call 9-1-1 or the non-emergency number for the Communications Center.

7.3 The Pueblo County Sheriff’s Office has several volunteer opportunities for citizens interested in giving back to the community. You can become a member of citizens on patrol, dive-fire-search teams, the courier team, or a victim’s advocate. There is an opportunity for nearly anyone interested in volunteering. To inquire, call the Emergency Services Bureau.

7.4 The Pueblo County Sheriff’s Office website provides citizens and guests of Pueblo County with a plethora of information and many services are actually available on-line. Most Wanted, Crime Reports, Controlled Burn Notification, Sex Offender Searches and more are available at the web address www.pueblosherriff.com. Also available at the site is information on requests for finger printing, concealed handgun permits, inmate services, 911 cell-phone registration, traffic, and law enforcement response.



7.5 The Office of Emergency Management is a division of the Emergency Services Bureau and is responsible for Incident support during a disaster. They also publish a Local Emergency Operations Plan that outlines the duties of local response agencies during a disaster.

Noxious Weeds

Machinery, vehicles, people, livestock, wildlife, wind, and water can all transport seeds from existing infestations to new sites. Once established, noxious weeds aggressively invade adjacent areas. Because these foreign plants have no natural constraints to keep them in balance with our native ecosystems, they quickly overtake and replace indigenous plant communities. Before long, they dominate entire landscapes.

6.1 *Pueblo County Ordinance No. 15* requires property owners to control noxious weeds on their property. For more information about noxious weeds, help with plant identification, and assistance in developing a management plan, contact Pueblo County Public Works or CSU Cooperative Extension.

6.2 Noxious weeds have many detrimental effects. They reduce the land's ability to sustain native vegetation and interfere with water resources. They deprive wildlife of food, water, and habitat. These weeds can cause health problems in humans and domestic animals. Noxious weeds also restrict our ability to use the land for agriculture, recreation, and other activities. All of these results decrease land value.

6.3 Some of the area's noxious weeds include (but is not limited to) leafy spurge, diffuse knapweed, Russian knapweed, hoary cress, perennial pepper weed, Canada thistle, musk thistle, scotch thistle, salt cedar, jointed goat grass, poison hemlock, yellow toadflax and dame's rocket.

6.4 Aside from noxious weed mitigation, there is no weed height regulation for unincorporated Pueblo County. The County is not responsible for removing weeds from private property and is not responsible for any damages they may cause.

6.5 Some weeds that are non-noxious may still cause problems for you. Tumbleweed (Russian Thistle) "blizzards" can occur during windy fall weather.



property developments in Pueblo County have been reviewed and approved by the County. Pueblo County did not adopt Subdivision Laws until August 31, 1972. Some large lot (35 acre minimum) property developments are exempt from the State and County Subdivision Laws. As a result, no one may have reviewed the geologic suitability of the building site, the adequacies of the water supply, road and utility systems, drainage, floodplains, or the suitability of the site for wastewater disposal. Check the status of your "subdivision" with the Planning and Development Department.

2.5 Fences that separate properties are often misaligned with the property lines. A survey of the land is the only way to confirm the location of your property lines.

2.6 Many subdivisions have covenants that limit the use of the property. It is important to obtain a copy of the covenants (or confirm that there are none) and make sure you can live with those rules. Also, a lack of covenants can cause problems between neighbors.

2.7 Homeowners Associations (HOAs) are often created to take care of common elements such as roads, open space, etc. A dysfunctional homeowners association or poor covenants can cause problems for you and even involve you in expensive litigation. Dues are almost always a requirement for those areas with a HOA. The bylaws of the HOA will tell you how the organization operates and how the dues are set.

2.8 The surrounding properties will probably not remain as they are indefinitely. You can check on-line with the Pueblo County Planning and Development Department to find out how the properties are zoned and to see what future developments may be in the planning stages. You should also verify how *your* property is zoned to make sure that your intended use of the property is permissible under the *Pueblo County Code Title 17*.



Building on Your Rural Property

Water, sewer, electric, and other services may be unavailable, expensive to establish, or may not operate at urban standards. Repairs may take longer than in towns and cities. Please review your options from the following non-exhaustive list.



3.1 Telephone communication service is available

in most of Pueblo County. Contact the companies in the back of this brochure for further information on construction costs, service areas, provided services, and availability. Internet access through the phone and broadband systems are available, but are limited. Also, contact your cellular service provider for coverage and availability in our rural areas.

3.2 If sewer service is available to your property, it may be expensive to connect to the system and costly to maintain it. If sewer service is not available, you will need to use an approved septic system or other treatment process. The type of soil you have available for a leach field will be important in determining the cost and functionality. Have the system checked by a reliable sanitation firm and ask for assistance from the Pueblo City/County Health Department's Environmental Health Division.

3.3 If you're building and have access to a supply of treated domestic water, the tap fees can be expensive. You may also find your monthly service can be costly when compared to urban systems.

3.4 If you build in an area that does not have access to a supply of treated domestic water, you will have to locate an alternative supply.



the normal day-to-day operations of your agribusiness neighbors. In fact, Colorado has "Right to Farm" legislation that protects farmers and ranchers from nuisance and liability lawsuits. It enables them to continue producing food and fiber.

5.7 Colorado has an open range law. This means, if you do not want cattle, sheep, or other livestock on your property; it is up to you to "fence them out". It is not the responsibility of the rancher to keep their livestock off your property.

5.8 It is important to make sure that any water rights you purchase with the land will provide enough water to maintain trees, pastures, gardens, or livestock. The water flowing in irrigation ditches belongs to someone. You cannot assume that because the water flows across your property, you can use it. Furthermore, ditch owners may have the right to come onto your property with heavy equipment to maintain the ditch.

5.9 Much of Pueblo County receives only 10-14 inches of precipitation each year. As a result, we have challenges to prevent overgrazing and fugitive dust. There is a limit to the amount of grazing the land can handle and it varies with management and the amount of precipitation and irrigation water available during each month. The CSU Cooperative Extension Office can help you with these issues.

5.10 Living in rural areas means traveling on narrow roads and highways. Often your progress will be slowed or inhibited by farm and ranch machinery sharing the same road. Please provide a margin of safety for these slow moving and over-sized vehicles.

5.11 Pets that are allowed to roam freely in rural areas can be exposed to livestock, chemicals, equipment, and predation control efforts. If your pet is roaming freely on someone else's farm or ranch with livestock, your pet may be perceived legally as a "predator" and eliminated by the land owner. Keep your pets on your own property and under control at all times.



Agriculture

The people who tamed this wild land brought water to the barren, arid east slope of the Rockies through an ingenious system of water diversion. This water has allowed agriculture to become an important part of our environment. Owning rural land means knowing how to care for it. There are a few things you need to know:

5.1 Farmers often work around the clock, especially during planting and harvest time. Dairy operators often milk three or more times each day and hay is often harvested both day and night. It is possible that adjoining agriculture uses can disturb your peace and quiet.



5.2 Agricultural field operations can cause dust, especially during windy and dry weather. Ditch and canal maintenance requires access by producers. Keep children away!

5.3 Farmers occasionally burn their ditches to keep them clean of debris, weeds and other obstructions. This burning creates smoke that you may find objectionable and may generate periodic fire risks, but they are within their rights to conduct an agricultural burn.

5.4 Chemicals including fertilizers, insecticides, and herbicides are often used in growing crops. You may be sensitive to these substances, and some people can develop allergic reactions. These chemicals are applied via a number of different implements including drills, spreaders, sprayers, and dimplers. If a commercial aerial sprayer is utilized, it will be done early in the morning to reduce chances of chemical drift.

5.5 Animals and their manure can cause objectionable odors. Animals such as dogs, cattle, swine, sheep, poultry, and peafowl may be noisy at certain times of day or year.

5.6 Agriculture is an important industry in Pueblo County. If you choose to live among the farms and ranches of our rural countryside, do not expect county government to intervene in

The most common method is a water well. Permits for wells are granted by the State Engineer and the cost for drilling and pumping is considerable. The quality and quantity of well water varies considerably from location to location, and season to season. Obtaining a well “permit” is no guarantee you will be able to develop a well that will provide a suitable drinking water supply. A permit gives you the right to search for water, it doesn’t guarantee that you will be successful.



3.5 Not all wells can be used for watering of landscaping and/or livestock. Permits from the State Engineer may restrict water use to that which is used inside a home. If you have other needs, make certain you have the proper approvals before you invest. It may also be difficult to find enough water to provide for your needs, even if you can secure the proper permit.

3.6 Electric service is not available to every area of Pueblo County. It is important to determine the proximity of electrical power. It can be very expensive to extend power lines to remote areas.

In addition, two-phase and three-phase electrical service configurations may not be available in some rural areas. Check the level of service that can be provided to your property.

3.7 If you are purchasing land and plan to build at a future date, there is a possibility that electric lines (and other utilities) may not be large enough to accommodate you if others connect during the time you are waiting to build.

3.8 The cost of electric service is usually divided into a fee to hook into the system and then a monthly charge for energy consumed. If this is a second home, you may be required to pay the fees in full upon installation, instead of over several years, as is sometimes allowed for primary residences.

3.9 Trash removal can be much more expensive in a rural area than in a city. It is good to know the cost for trash removal as you make the decision to move to the country.

Fire Coverage and Mitigation

4.1 Not all properties in rural Pueblo County are afforded the same emergency services that are considered “basic” in a more urban area. For example, much of the County only has wild land fire protection. This means that the fire department that serves your area may only be trained and equipped to suppress grass and brush fires, not structure fires. Many areas have established special taxing districts to support their fire response. You can check your property tax statement or contact the Pueblo County Sheriff’s Office to see if you are inside one of these areas. If you are outside of a fire protection district, you are likely to pay a higher home owners insurance rate.

4.2 Studies have shown that fire sprinkler systems in residences save lives and minimize property damage. If you are building a home or contemplating remodeling your home, consider a system. It is a wise investment. For more information you can visit www.nfpa.org

4.3 Contact the fire agency that serves your property to learn about regulations regarding outdoor burning in your area. Many districts have instituted a burn permit system so they can track outdoor burns. When you do burn, even with a permit, you are required to call the Pueblo County Burn Line at 719-583-BURN or 2876 both before you burn and to let officials know you are done.

4.4 Make sure your address is visible from the roads leading to your house. Ideally they should contain

numbers that are reflective and at a minimum 4 inches tall. In addition, these numbers should be displayed on the side of your house that faces the driveway and visible from the street.



4.5 Locked gates and doors can pose a severe limitation on fire agencies, especially when the property owner is not available. Several departments utilize the “knox box” system. It provides secure access for the fire department and reduces the likelihood of damage to your gates, doors, and fences. The system is affordable and can reduce insurance rates. Go to www.knoxbox.com for more information.

4.6 The physical characteristics of your property can be positive and negative. Trees are a great environmental amenity but can also involve your home in a forest fire. Defensible space (like on the illustration in the center of this page) can help protect buildings from forest fire and inversely protect the forest from igniting if your house catches on fire.

Call your fire department or check www.firewise.org for details on defensible space and “firewise” construction.

4.7 In remote communities, the fire danger is often something you will hear about. Pay particular attention to the fire danger level in your area, especially in the summer and fall. It will range from Low (Green), Moderate (Blue), High (Yellow), Very High (Orange), and Extreme (Red).

