

Emergency Services Sales & Use Tax and Grant Program

BOCC Work Session

SEPT. 29, 2026





Parks and Open Space Ranger Kevin Grady and his search-and-rescue dog, Dottie, are featured in this year's Community Connections.



When every minute matters, these dogs deliver

*Ranger Kevin Grady
with Service Dog Dottie*

Highly trained K-9 teams help Boulder County locate missing people and bring critical answers to families — in record time.

When someone goes missing, timing is critical, and in Boulder County, the fastest responders have four legs.

Search-and-rescue dogs like Dottie and Watson, are highly trained to locate missing people or detect

had searched the area for two hours. Within six and a half minutes, our K-9 team found him," Grady said.

Watson, a 3-year-old bloodhound handled by Sheriff's Deputy Josh Scrudder, specializes in tracking and trailing. In one case, he followed

Presentation Overview



OVERVIEW OF ES
SALES TAX



FOCUS ON GRANT
PROGRAM



SHARE HIGHLIGHTS
AND STORIES



Lifesaving Equipment Purchased with
Emergency Services Grant Funds



Overview:

Emergency Services Sales Tax





Emergency Services Sales and Use Tax

Voters approved the tax to strengthen emergency services across Boulder County, particularly in rural and mountain communities.

Funding can be used to support search and rescue, fire districts, ambulance services, wildland firefighting, and trail and trailhead safety—including the facilities, equipment, staffing, and other resources these organizations need to respond effectively.

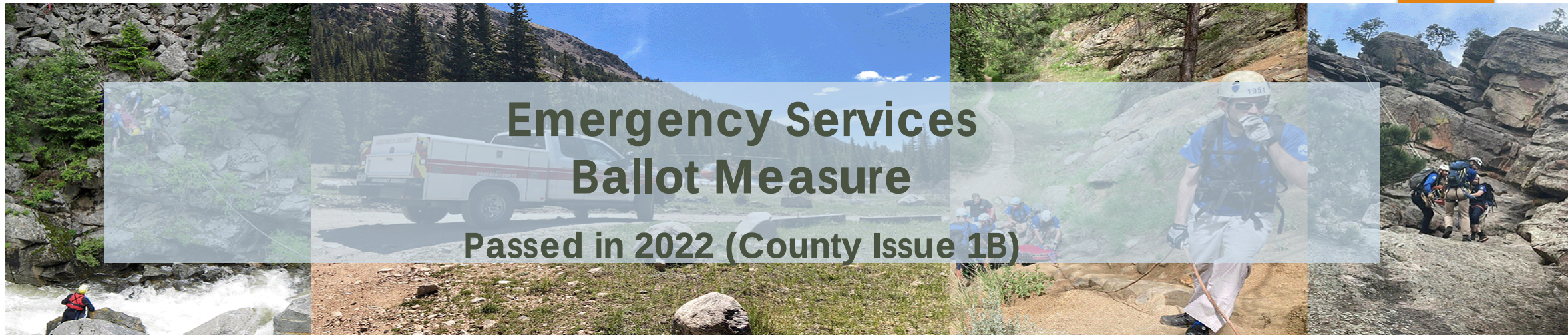




“ We are pleased to put this voter-approved funding to work supporting the first responders and firefighters who protect lives and property throughout Boulder County every day, often with limited resources.

Boulder County voters recognized the importance of investing in emergency services, and with these funds, we can make a meaningful difference—filling critical gaps in equipment, preparedness, and emergency response. ”

-MARTA LOACHAMIN,
BOULDER COUNTY COMMISSIONER



Emergency Services Ballot Measure

Passed in 2022 (County Issue 1B)

PURPOSE...

Fund
Emergency
Services in
Boulder
County,
Including:

Capital Assets & Improvements—Facilities and Equipment

Operational Costs—First Responder Agencies

Supplemental Funding—Rural & Mountain Fire Districts

Ambulance Services—Not Covered by City or Fire District Services

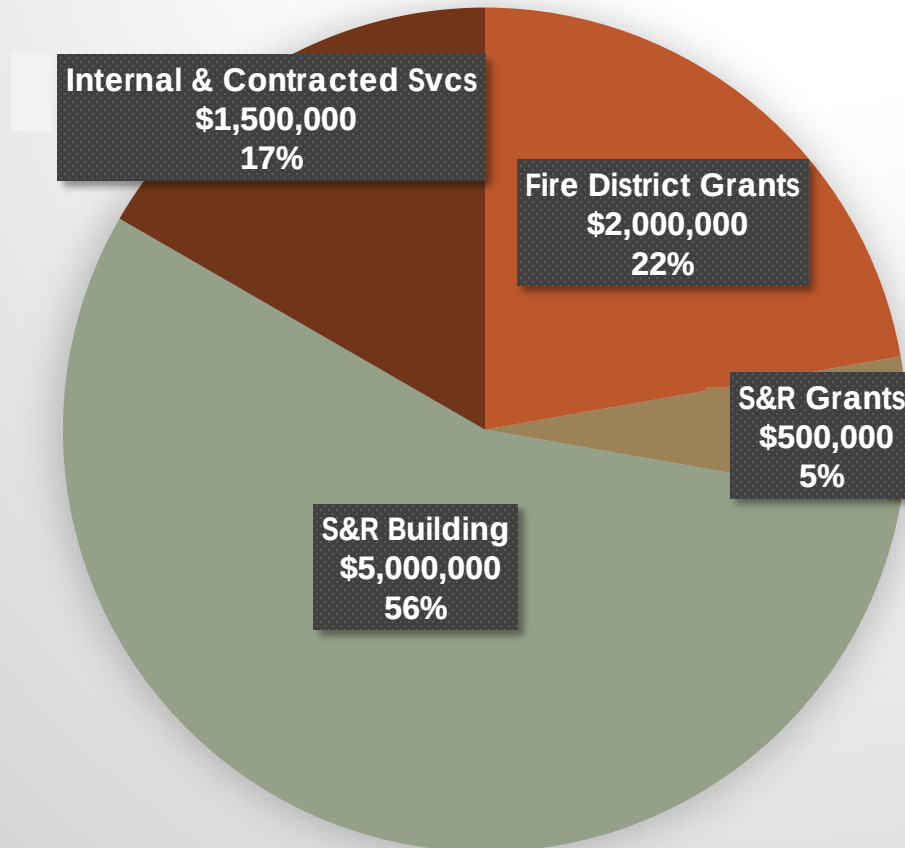
Wildland Firefighting—Staffing & Training

Trail and Trailhead Safety—Major investment in Search and Rescue

Emergency Services Sales & Use Tax 0.1% (Current)

Thank You
Boulder County
Voters!

Annual Revenue and Expenditures (~\$9M/Year)



Total Grant Program
\$2.5M/Yr.
27%

- Fire District Grants
- S&R Grants
- S&R Building
- Internal & Contracted Svcs



“

The Emergency Services Sales Tax has allowed the Sheriff's Office to expand its wildland firefighting capabilities, improve radio communications across the county, and provide its personnel with essential equipment to respond to local emergencies.

It has also allowed us to add an emergency response coordinator, giving our team more capacity and backup when communicating with our first responder partners in the field. Together, these investments have strengthened our ability to act quickly and effectively when the community needs us.

”

-CURTIS JOHNSON, BOULDER COUNTY SHERIFF

Sheriff's Office



“AlertWest” Camera

“Sees” and reports wildfires in real time. Alerts dispatch, BCSO, and ODM at the start of a wildfire in the back country.



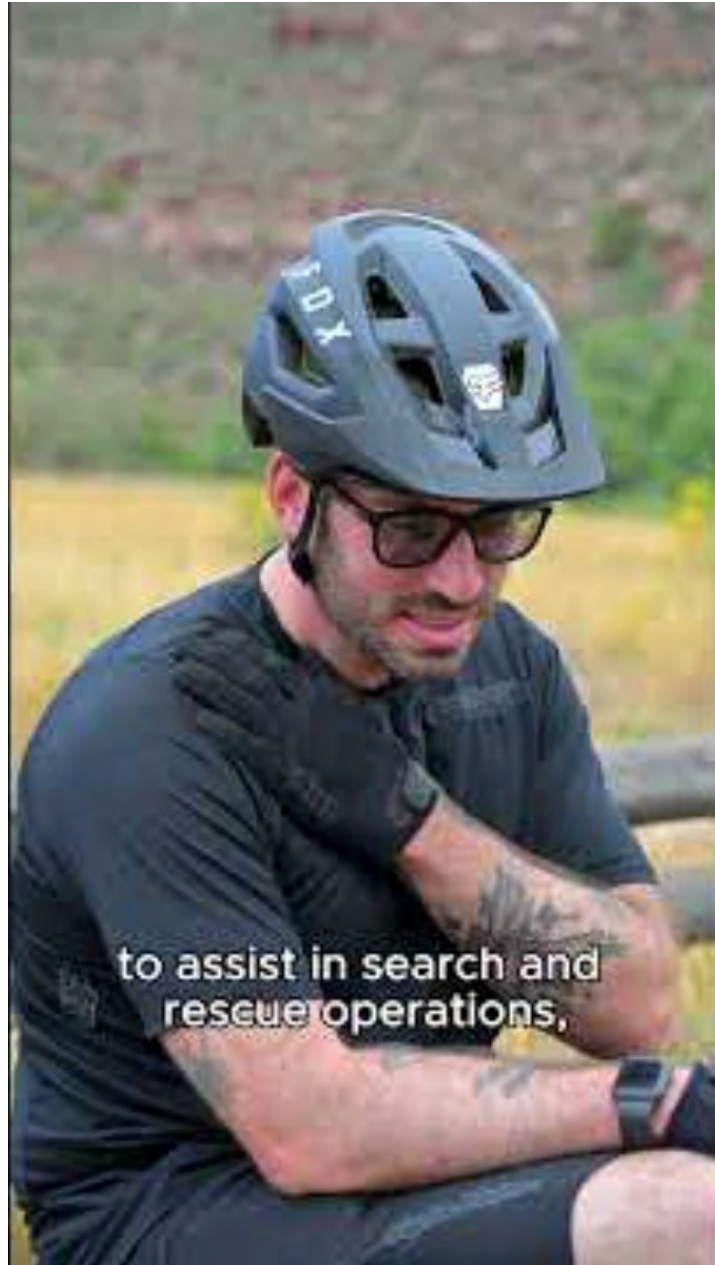
Wildland Fire Vehicle

Helps BCSO Staff respond quickly to wildland fires with the appropriate gear.



ES Coordination Team

The Sheriff's Office coordinates and supports emergency response throughout Boulder County.



Parks & Open
Space:

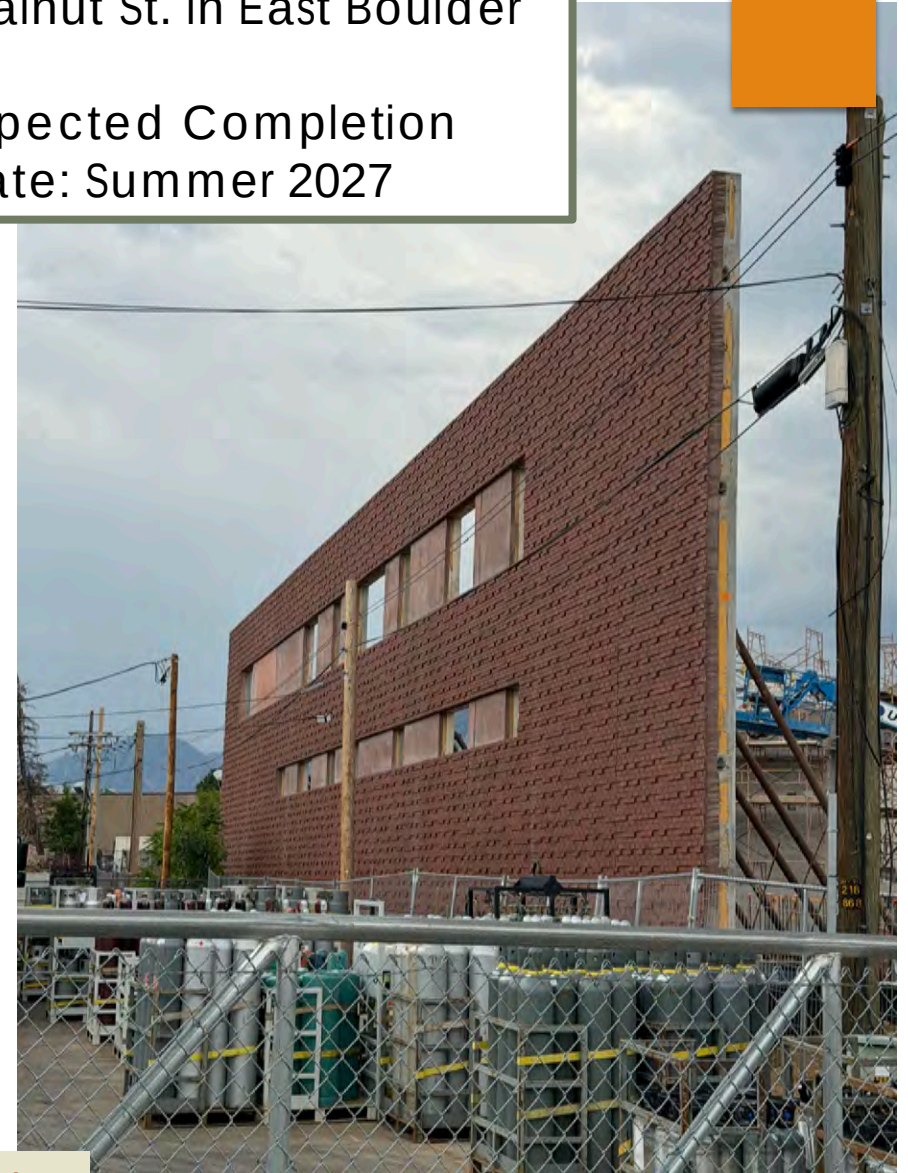
ES Sales Tax
Pays for New
Visitor Safety
Park Ranger

New Search and Rescue Building

Walnut St. in East Boulder

Expected Completion
Date: Summer 2027

RMR: EXTERIOR AXON



The building will be occupied by Rocky Mountain Rescue Group, and allow for training, meetings, and barrack needs by other SAR groups.

Current Construction Status New Search and Rescue Building



Work Session Highlight:

Emergency Services Grant Program



Two Annual Grant Pools

▶ Fall Grant Pool



▶ Fire District Funding

▶ Eligible applicants:

- ▶ Mountain and Rural Fire Districts in Boulder County
- ▶ Municipal Districts in Boulder County performing emergency services in Mountain and Rural areas of Boulder County



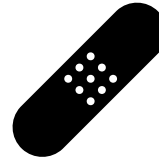
▶ Spring Grant Pool



▶ Search and Rescue and Trail Safety

▶ Eligible applicants (or services)*:

- ▶ Search and rescue agencies
- ▶ Organizations that provide first aid, safety patrols, visitor education, or other services that help keep people safe outdoors
- ▶ First aid, first responder, or other emergency response training



*Must provide services in Boulder County

EMERGENCY SERVICES GRANT PROGRAM

(Total Awards: \$6.5 million as of September 2026)

Fire Protection Districts

- \$5M Awarded to Fire Districts (over 3 yrs)
- Examples:
 - Radios, fire station repairs, trucks, rescue apparatus, EMS/CPR lifesaving equipment, PPE, firefighter gear, UTVs, hoses.



Search & Rescue

- \$1.5M Awarded to S&R and Trail Safety Orgs (over 3 yrs)
- Examples:
 - Radios, first-aid kits, pagers, rescue training, capital improvements, dog radio collars, safety videos.

\$6.5M in Grants Awarded (2023-2026)

Awards by Type of Grant



Command Vehicle for
Sunshine FPD

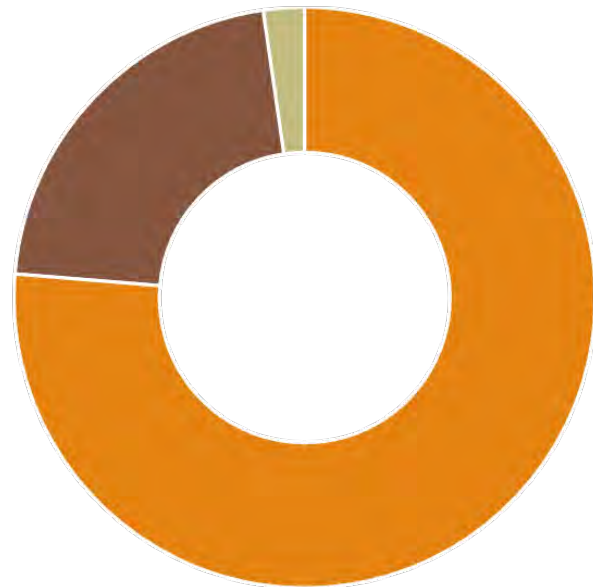


Trail Rescue First-Aid Kits



Nordic XC Ski Rescue
Supplies





Awards by Type of Agency

\$6.5M Total (3 yrs)

- Fire Protection Districts \$ 4,982,889
- Search and Rescue Organizations \$ 1,398,182
- Trail and Trailhead Safety/Recreation Groups \$ 149,870





Emergency Services Grant Program Advisory Committee

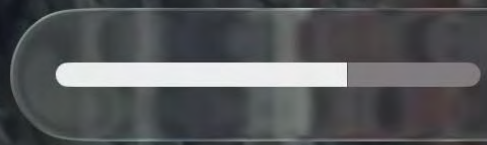
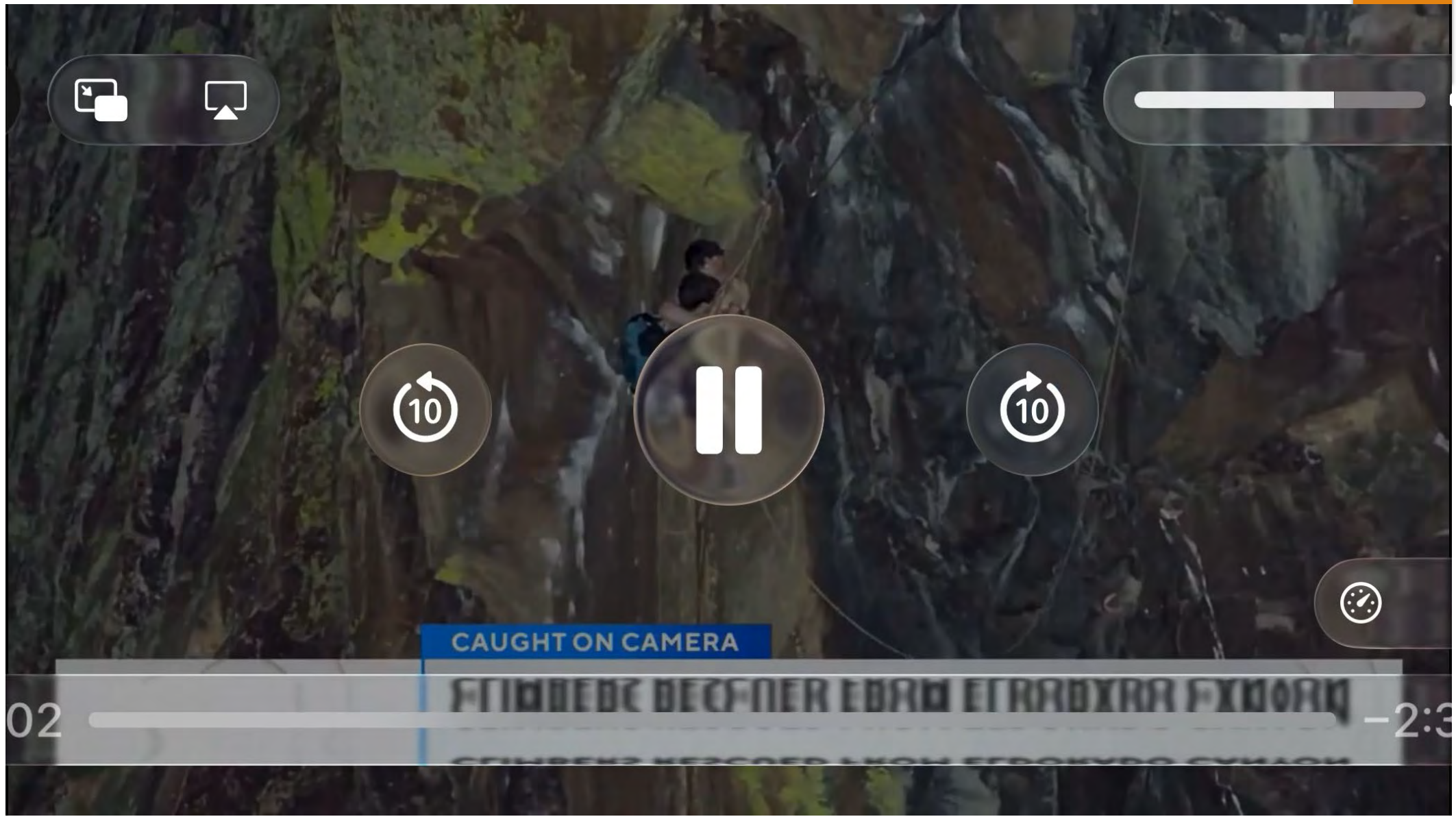
- ▶ Nine-member volunteer committee.
- ▶ Boulder County residents with experience/expertise in emergency response activities that help make living and recreating in Boulder County safer for everyone.
- ▶ Review and score grant proposals.
- ▶ Make funding recommendations to the county commissioners twice a year.

Grant Program

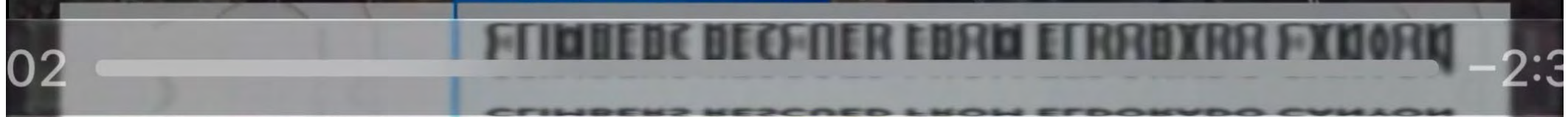
Highlights and Case Stories



Local S&R organizations assist with climber rescue in Eldorado Canyon



CAUGHT ON CAMERA



Boulder Emergency Squad (BES)



New HVAC

BES has received several capital improvements including a new roof, HVAC system, flooring to replace cracked floors, and others.



New Drone

The new UAS Enterprise Platform will feature a longer range and flying time without battery changes.



Specialty Radios

Dual-band radios customized for field work in varied conditions.

“ We respond to some of Boulder County’s most challenging emergencies—from extricating patients from vehicle accidents to dive and creek rescues to managing search for missing people.

The upgrades we receive from the grant program help keep our volunteers and partner agencies safer while making sure we have the equipment and facilities we need to respond quickly when people need us most.

- ANDY AMALFITANO, BES CHIEF





Andy Amalfitano, President and Chief of Operations, Boulder Emergency Squad

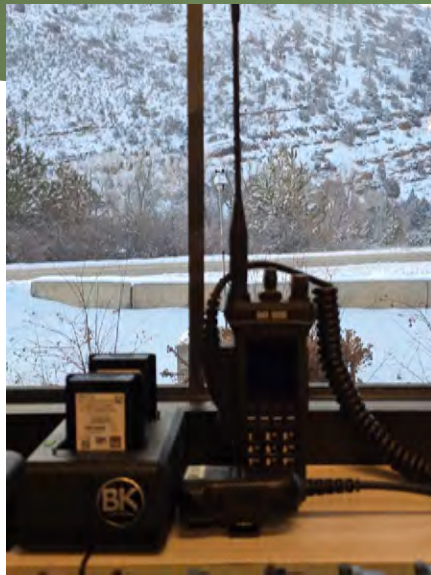
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This grant allowed us to solve a countywide problem that no one fire district could have solved on itself.

By investing \$1.2 million in dual-band radios, we were able to put the same communications technology into the hands of first responders across Boulder County, allowing agencies that previously operated on different radio systems to communicate directly with one another.

”

**- CHRIS O'BRIEN, BCFFA PRESIDENT AND
LEFTHAND FIRE CHIEF**



“ When we respond to a major wildfire or other emergency, we respond together—and now we can communicate that way, too. ”

Hygiene Fire



Groundbreaking

Hygiene Fire broke ground in Sept. 2026 on new firefighter barracks and administration building set to open in 2027.



Co-Responds w/Lyons

Hygiene and Lyons share a mutual aid agreement to cover areas east of Longmont, sharing grant-funded equipment.



New Bunker Gear

New firefighter bunker gear and PPE provided by the Emergency Services Grant Program.

“ Our current fire station was built in 1963, and it simply no longer meets the needs of our firefighters or the community we serve. Our new station, funded partially by the Emergency Services Grant Program, will give our crews a safer, more functional place to operate and help us work more effectively with our emergency response partners throughout Boulder County.

Ultimately, it will help us be better prepared to respond when our community needs us. ”

-ALEX FRANK, FIRE CHIEF, HYGIENE FIRE



Indian Peaks Fire Protection District



Upgrading Vehicles

Awaiting new Type 6 “brush” truck. Will deliver by winter.



EMT Response

New CPR defibrillator. IP gets more than twice the # of medical calls than fire-related calls.



P2P Car Accidents

Vehicle extraction equipment

“ With the number of calls we respond to each year, having a new brush truck will allow us to be more flexible and effective in how we respond. It took us 10 years to pay off our last truck, and now that truck is 10 years old and increasingly needs repairs. For a small agency like ours, replacing essential equipment like this is a significant expense.

We're grateful for the support this grant program has provided our district over the past three years.

— BILL GILBERT, ASSISTANT FIRE CHIEF, IPFPD





Radio Collars for FRRD Dogs



Front Range Rescue Dogs



“

When we're searching for a missing person, every minute matters. The grant-funded GPS dog collars allow us to track our search dogs and handlers in real time, even when the dogs are working far out of sight. That helps us make better decisions during a search, keeps our dogs and handlers safer, and ultimately helps us find people more quickly.

-KRISTEN GRUCA, FRRD OPERATIONS LEAD

”



FRONT RANGE RESCUE DOGS

Founded in 1984, Front Range Rescue Dogs is an all volunteer team and the only Boulder County based search dog group for the past 40 years. As a non-profit SAR team we are committed to providing exceptional canine search and rescue teams to Boulder County and beyond to aid in location of missing persons in emergency situations.

We certify teams in multiple disciplines and are available to respond 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.



Jeff Sparhawk, President, FRRD

Feedback from Grant Recipients



Bryan Mountain Nordic Ski Patrol says, "Thank you, Boulder County!"

Informal Feedback from Grant Recipients:

- ▶ Overwhelming support for grant program.
- ▶ Some award recipients have suggested a few changes, such as increasing the spring allocation for search and rescue, allowing larger or multiyear awards for major capital needs, accounting for rising costs in award amounts, and narrowing eligibility to volunteer rural and mountain agencies.

Changes Already Made:

- ▶ Move fall grants up one month to start in July so that fire districts can set budgets by mid-Oct. (Will implement in '27)