



## A Gilpin County Guide for Living in the High Country

**2016 Edition**



## A "Deep" Winter Tale

The high country is not for the fainthearted when Mother Nature sends a 100-year snowfall. A three-footer of spring white rain is not uncommon. Gilpinites need to be ready for prime time in the high country. On Saint Patrick's Day 2003, Gilpin County and surrounding counties received 75-85 inches of snow in two days. When you opened the front door, you faced a seven-foot wall of snow. The County received many phone calls. Some silly: "Someone do something!" Some serious.

Road crews, deputies, neighbors, and ambulance and fire services delivered aid as needed, often by ski, snowshoe or snowmobile. They were ready for prime time.



One call came from north county. Mr. S., age 83, wheelchair bound and living alone, said he would need a delivery of oxygen in two days. The path to his house was under six-plus feet of snow, and the oxygen supplier would need help getting in. Given some roads were closed and some just a dozer-wide single lane, a neighbor was called to see if he could help the oxygen service have access. The neighbor could help and did. He shoveled a path from the county road toward Mr. S.'s front door. About four feet from the door, he peeked over the remaining wall of snow to see a smiling Mr. S. sitting in his wheelchair, an oxygen line extended from his van and a snow scoop in hand. Mr. S. had made a 10-foot path to his parked van to hook up to portable oxygen and had extended the line into his house. He told the neighbor not to bother with the last few feet to the house. He said he had plenty of time to take care of it.

When asked what he did with all the snow he had scooped, Mr. S. replied he wheeled his chair, one scoop at a time across the living room and tossed it out the window on the downhill creek side of the house.

Mr. S. was ready for prime time in the high country.

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## Welcome to Gilpin County!

This guide to life in Gilpin County is for you if you are considering moving to the County, have recently arrived here or have been here a long time. The first edition of this publication was written in 1999, based on a booklet by the Larimer County Board of County Commissioners titled, "The Right to be Rural." Each update, including this one, draws on that initial work.

The focus of planning in Gilpin County is on maintaining a balance between ensuring jobs for residents — here and in adjacent counties — while preserving the rural mountain environment that draws people here. Named for William Gilpin, the first territorial governor of Colorado, Gilpin County lies about an hour west of downtown Denver. Elevations in the County range from 6,960-13,294 feet. State and federal agencies own and manage 52 percent of the County's land area. The County is home to Golden Gate Canyon State Park, the James Peak Wilderness Area, and portions of Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests. At 149.87 square miles, Gilpin is the second smallest county in Colorado. The U.S. Census Bureau estimated the 2014 population at 5,851. While

people commute out of the County to work, about 4,000 people commute to the County for work, most at casinos in Black Hawk and Central City.

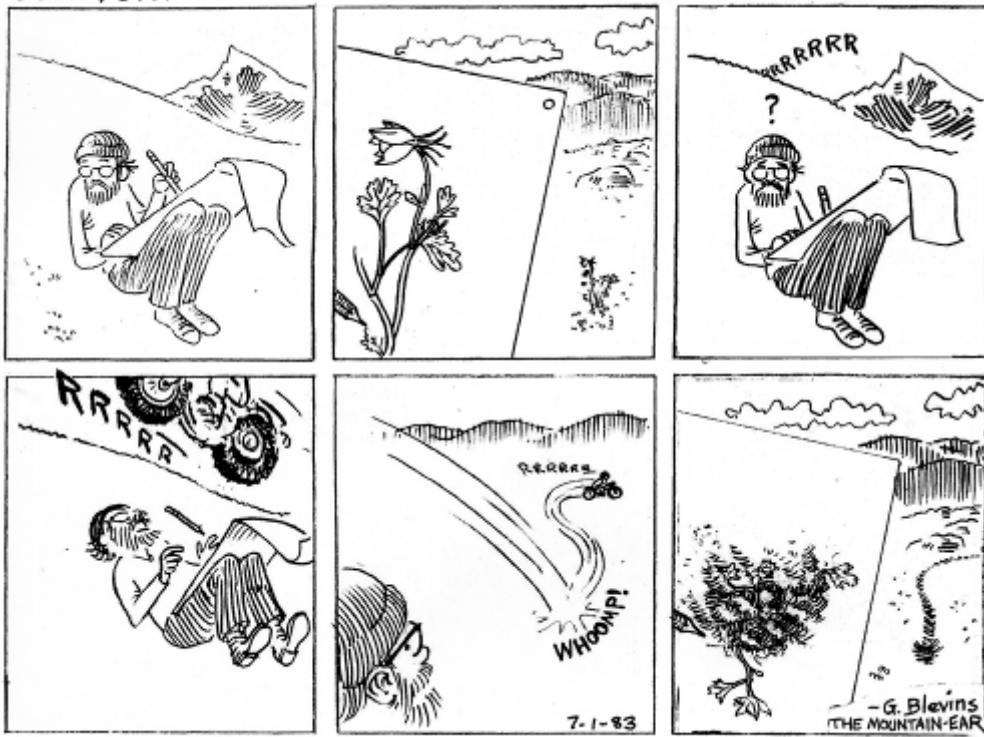
Gilpin County is bordered on the north and east by two large urban counties: Boulder and Jefferson Counties, respectively. Clear Creek County is to the south and the Continental Divide runs along the western edge of the County.

Much of the housing is clustered in areas known in the County Master Plan as villages. There are 64 subdivisions, most with a mix of developed and undeveloped lots. New construction in the County is often on these undeveloped lots. Grouping homes in subdivisions and villages is part of a countywide effort to maintain natural meadow and mountain vistas.

The natural beauty that draws people to Gilpin County requires a lifestyle that will be new to those who have never lived in a rural mountain community. It takes effort, tenacity, preparation and a sense of humor to enjoy life here. Those who first encounter Gilpin mid-summer may see only an idyllic mountain setting. They may be shocked when a bear destroys the grill on their deck, deer munch spring bulbs, a coyote lunches on a small pet, or the driveway disappears under four or five feet of snow. They may be surprised to learn they must drive as much as 20 miles to a grocery store, there are only two gas stations in the County and no healthcare services in the County.

This guide is designed to help you decide if Gilpin County is for you and to help guide you to resources and services if you decide to settle here. If you are already here, it will provide insight into living in harmony with your neighbors and the environment. Knowing about life in Gilpin County can help you develop realistic expectations for life here. Central to the theme of this guide and to life in Gilpin County is a concept known as “the right to be rural.” Although self-reliance is required, rural neighbors need each other. While Gilpin folks may agree to not agree on a lot of issues, when a fire starts, they are neighbors who are going to be there for each other. Working to ensure clean water, sanitation facilities that protect the earth, passable roadways, noise control, wildfire mitigation and more are each resident’s responsibility. Living in paradise means protecting that paradise for others now and into the future.

## Cabin Fever—



## The Master Plan

The Gilpin County Master Plan says:

“Gilpin County is a unique rural community located high in the Colorado Rockies with major metropolitan resources and amenities in close proximity.”

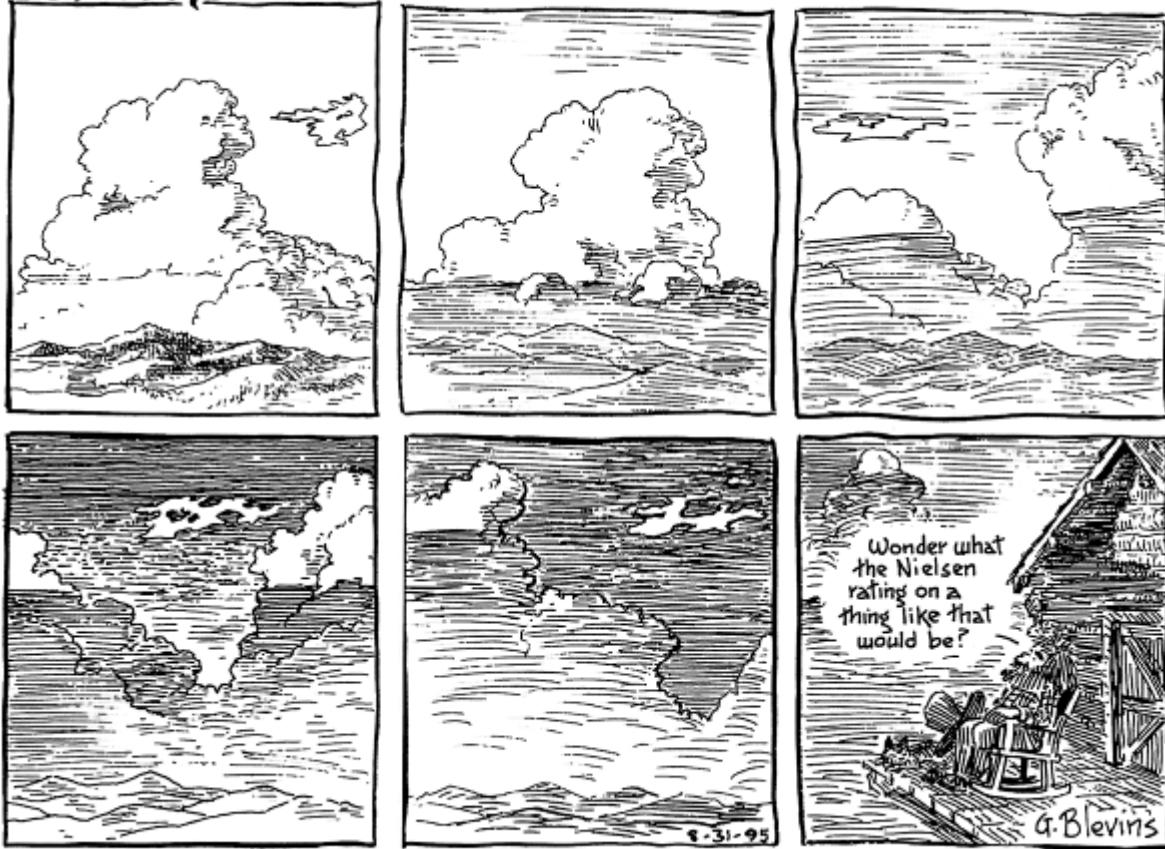
The Master Plan is a good introduction to life in the County. It is based on three principles:

- Non-impingement of adjacent uses
- Preservation of the mountain environment
- Encouragement of economic stability

Zoning regulations and most County ordinances flow from these principles. Residential, commercial and forestry properties may be next to each other, but land uses cannot impinge on neighbors. Dust, light, noise, visual clutter, odors, pets and livestock must be contained within properties. Building and land use should be compatible with the mountain setting. The County enforces setback requirements for construction of home additions, expansions, outbuildings and other structures. When a resident seeks a variance to build closer to a property line than allowed in the Gilpin County Zoning Code, the County notifies all adjacent property owners, giving them an opportunity to speak for or against granting the variance, thus protecting the concept of non-impingement that is at the heart of the Master Plan.

The Master Plan is available on the County's website and at the Gilpin County Public Library. There is no official County zoning map.

## Cabin Fever -



## Population

Most Gilpin County residents come from somewhere else. Although it is tempting, it is not possible or appropriate to raise the drawbridge on population growth. It is possible and necessary to address how the County grows. The County Board of Commissioners is responsible for managing growth within the limits of county authority. Commissioners look to the Master Plan for guidance and work with recommendations from county planning staff and the Gilpin County Planning Commission.

Residents of Gilpin County value space. Many have moved to Gilpin to get away from the congestion of suburban and urban areas. Toward this end, some have purchased multiple lots. The County's Boundary Line Adjustment and Boundary Line Elimination programs are ways residents can reduce the number of lots, eliminate potential construction next door, reduce taxes, protect views and increase privacy. These programs create open space within subdivisions.

Politically, Gilpin County, like much of Colorado, is divided roughly evenly between Democrats, Republicans and Independents. Both the Republicans and Democrats have active chapters in the County. Contact the County Clerk's Office for voter registration and election information.

## Climate and Weather

Climate and weather in Gilpin County vary by elevation. Lower elevations will typically experience warmer and drier conditions than higher elevations. June, July and August are the warmest months; January and February are the coldest, driest and windiest months; and the heaviest snowfalls generally come in March, April and May.

The annual average temperature is 39 degrees Fahrenheit, but that is not very useful in knowing what to expect. Summer nights are cool, often in the upper 40s and 50s, while days are warm, often in the 70s and low 80s. Winter temperatures range from lows below -20 degrees to highs in the 30s. The ground is normally frozen from November to April. Because of the altitude, the sun, even in the winter, makes temperatures feel warmer than they are. When it's 60 degrees in the shade, you may be comfortable without a jacket or sweater, but watch out for sunburn.

Gilpin County averages about 20 inches of precipitation — rain and snow combined — a year. Historically mid-July through August has been known as the monsoon season with almost daily showers or thunderstorms. Precipitation patterns have been shifting in recent years, so these daily rains are less predictable. Gilpin County averages 60 days a year with 0.1 inch or more of precipitation. That leaves more than 300 days a year with no rain or snow.

In most years, there are 100-110 days with more than an inch of snow on the ground in Gilpin County. It can snow from mid-September into June, but measurable snow most often starts with a 10- to 20-inch snowfall in October or November. These early snowfalls tend to melt, especially at lower elevations. Snow that falls from December to February tends to stay around, getting redistributed by the winds. Midwinter is generally dry with one or two measurable snowfalls, and the winter holidays are usually white. Heavy, wet snow usually falls from mid-March into May. There was a record three-day snowfall of 87.5 inches in Rollinsville March 17-19, 2003. A few miles south, unofficial measurements were as high as 96 inches. Annual snowfall varies from 80 inches to twice that. On average, there are 120-124 inches a year, with more at higher elevations and less at lower elevations.

The Front Range foothills are known for strong winter winds. Expect wind gusts exceeding 100 miles per hour several times a year. Most homes are built to withstand these winds. When locating in Gilpin County, consider how much wind is likely at your potential home site and how much you can tolerate. Unlike at lower altitudes, these strong winds are not produced by storm clouds but by a complex airflow over the Continental Divide, much like water flowing over a rock in a fast-moving stream. Winter winds produce snowdrifts that may not melt until spring. Wind-driven snow



becomes the consistency of concrete and can be difficult to shovel or plow. Winds will sweep some areas clear of snow — good if it's your driveway but not good if it's a waterline that will freeze when exposed. High winds combine with low temperatures to create dangerous wind chills that can freeze skin quickly. Children walking to school or waiting at bus stops need to dress warmly with extremities covered. Summer thunderstorms can produce gusty winds.

Gilpin County has its share of hazardous weather. Lightning can be a major threat to life and property. Simple precautions such as surge protectors and lightening arresters can reduce this risk. In severe storms, these may not be enough. You may want to unplug appliances and vulnerable electronics that can be “fried” by a lightning strike. Take care not to be out in thunderstorms to avoid direct strikes to you or the potential for a tree near you to be struck.

Lightning can spark wildfires that can spread quickly when there are high winds. Gilpin County residents must do fire mitigation around their homes and must be prepared to evacuate quickly.

Floods, including flash floods, are another hazard you should prepare for as a Gilpin County resident. Flooding is most common in the canyons and gulches. Find out if the property you plan to purchase or have purchased is eligible for federal flood insurance coverage.

Hail occurs frequently in the summer months and can cause damage to roofs and cars. Typically the hail in Gilpin is smaller than the golf ball-size that falls on Colorado's plains, but it's best to carry hail damage insurance for your home and vehicles. Being able to get your vehicles under cover is a real plus when hail is falling.

When purchasing or building a house, pay attention to the direction it faces. North slopes see little or no direct sunlight during the winter. Snow piles up on the north side of buildings. A south-facing driveway will be easier to plow or shovel, and will see the snow melt faster.

# Natural Environment

The mountain environment — the key reason most folks move to Gilpin County — brings with it the need to be aware of nature in ways less common other places.

## Wildlife

Moving into the mountains means moving into territory that is already inhabited by a range of creatures. The wild animals were here first; we are camping in their space. Animals encountered in Gilpin County include deer, elk, moose, bear, mountain lion, bobcat, bighorn sheep, coyote, fox, beaver, raccoon, marmot, weasel, mice, trout, chipmunks, squirrels, rabbits, voles and pocket gophers.

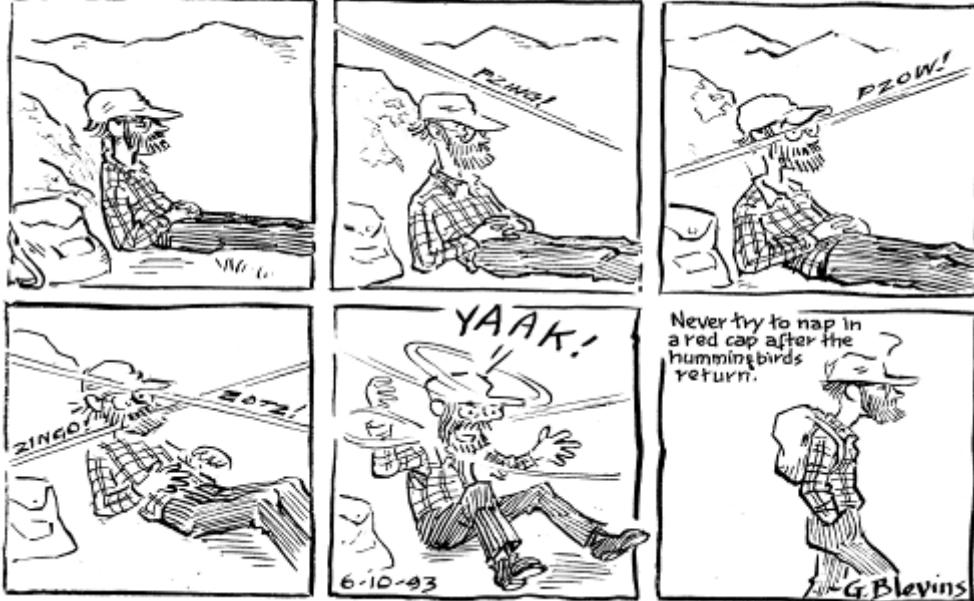
There's a range of birds, including year-round residents, summer residents and migrating species. Among frequently seen birds are owls, eagles, hawks, hummingbirds, magpies, robins, woodpeckers, jays, grosbeaks and mountain bluebirds. Lakes in the County provide breeding grounds for osprey and great blue herons. Living in the mountains means enjoying this abundance of life, but it also requires caution with domestic pets, which must be kept confined and protected or they may become dinner for wild creatures. A regional wildlife writer described a poodle on a deck as "meatloaf with fur." Gilpin County residents have watched as owls have flown off with cats. Bears are attracted to kitchen scraps, bird feeders and pet food. Deer and elk will eat garden plants. The only animals you are allowed to feed in the County are the birds. The chipmunks, rabbits and mice will clean up what the birds spill. A special note on moose: moose consider dogs akin to wolves, their natural enemy, and may attack without provocation. Approaching moose to get a close-up photo is high-country felony stupid.

Reptiles are not common in the County but western chorus frogs sing in ponds in the spring. Tiger salamanders are occasionally found, and some high-elevation lakes are home to the endangered boreal toad. Rattlesnakes are rare but can be found at the lowest elevations in the County. Insect populations aren't high but there are some mosquitoes and flies. Moths, referred to as "miller moths," a common name for multiple species that migrate to the mountains in late spring or early summer, are pesky for a short period of time, but as soon as you think you'll go crazy swatting them, they're gone until the next year.

## Plant Life

Gilpin County is serious about weed control toward protecting native plants. Far fewer exotic species have been introduced into the County than in Colorado's suburban and urban counties, so there is a better chance to protect native plants. Residents need to educate themselves about invader plants and act to control noxious weeds that crowd out native plants and impact potential land use in the County. The Gilpin County CSU (Colorado State University) Extension Office offers classes in weed identification and eradication. The reward for removing noxious weeds is an array of beautiful wildflowers.

## Cabin Fever —



### Trees versus Wildfire

The forest is a main attraction of Gilpin County, but it is not without perils. Wildfire is always a threat. Lightening, trains, careless smokers, campers, off-road vehicles, hikers, hunters and residents can start wildfires.

Building codes and insurance companies require homeowners to take precautions to protect homes in the event of wildfires. While many folks cherish every tree, cutting trees to mitigate the threat of wildfire is necessary. Trees rubbing roofs pose a threat to houses and the forest. As a Gilpin County resident, you will be encouraged to create defensible space around your home — space without trees that creates a buffer from fire. Homes with defensible space and easy to navigate driveways will be the first and easiest to save if fire breaks out.

The following are some additional ways to prepare for wildfires and other emergencies:

- Keep driveways clear.
- Be sure your address is clearly displayed.
- Sign up for reverse 911 notifications.
- Register pets and livestock with the Gilpin County Animal Response Team
- Have an evacuation plan clearly posted in your home.

Homeowner's insurance agents, fire-department personnel and the County CSU (Colorado State University) Extension Office can provide information on how to be prepared for wildfire.

While the pine beetle epidemic of the early 2000s seems to have slowed, beetle damage to trees is ongoing and cyclical. Dead trees are standing tinder and need to come down and be turned into firewood or slash. Consider planting new trees toward restoring and diversifying the forest.

Vigilance in protecting your home from wildfire is not just personal. The "Darn Fool Clause" says it is okay to burn your own house down, but if your house sets the forest on fire and your neighbors are threatened or burned out, that is decidedly un-neighborly.

## Cabin Fever—

Sometimes, like now, when it takes half an hour of walking backwards to get where five minutes of walking forward usually gets you, you wonder if you really made the right choices in life.



You wonder if maybe you shouldn't have stuck with that career opportunity back in seventy-eight.



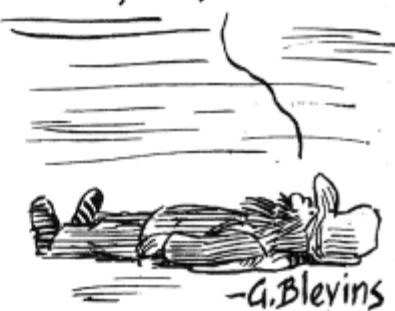
You wonder if you ought to have made the down payment on that nice little house in the quiet little neighborhood.



You wo... whoops!



You wonder what you're gonna do with a mixture of squished bananas, celery & milk.



## Land and Real Estate

Given the realities of Gilpin County's rural mountain setting, "buyer beware" and "renter beware" take on new meaning. Your dreams of a home in paradise can become a nightmare. Reputable landlords and land and home sellers and real-estate agents will welcome a second opinion and your double-checking facts.

Some housing in Gilpin County may have been constructed with inferior materials, may lack proper insulation, may have aging septic systems, and may not conform to current building and zoning regulations. Often "affordable" is a euphemism for what was called a "cracker-box" house, built soon after World War II. Be aware that purchasing such a home may require major expense into the future.

Some homes in the County are on the register of historic places. While this is an honor, it also means that changes to and remodeling of the home will need to conform to specific guidelines to preserve the historic value. Learn these requirements before investing in such a home to be sure you are willing to work within the rules.

When selecting a home or property to buy or rent, you'll want answers to some key questions. The following information will answer some of your questions and can

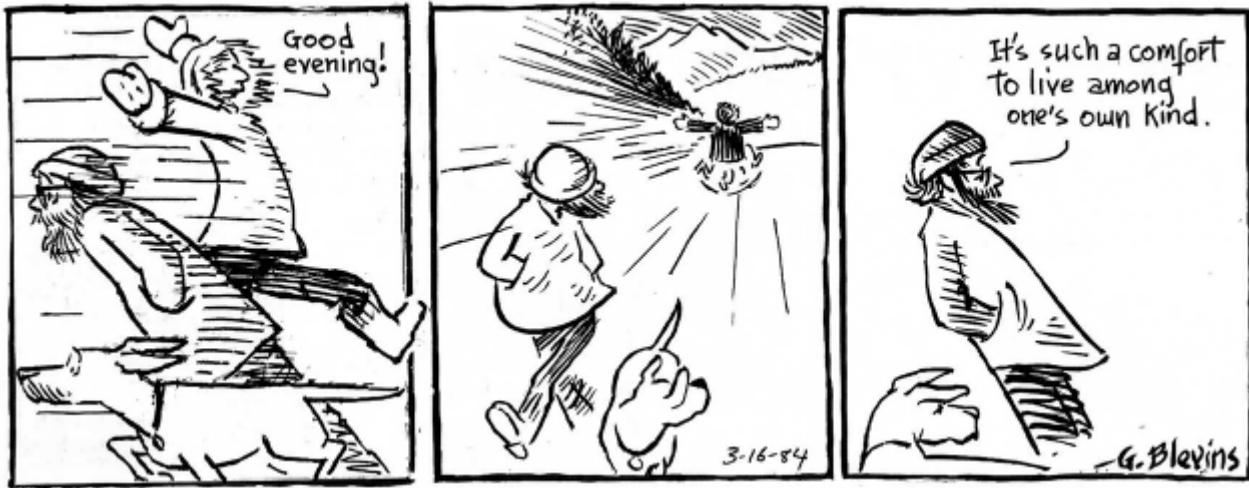
guide you to formulating what you need to know before moving to Gilpin or settling in. Following is a list of questions you'll want to ask. This list is a good starting point but do your homework.

- Is there proper access to the property?
- How is the property zoned?
- Is the property suitable for construction of a home?
- What are the property boundaries?
- Are there mineral rights on the property, and what does this mean?
- Does the property have a view? Could this view be lost to future development?
- What are the challenges to constructing a home on the property? Can you afford additional costs that come with building in the Mountains?
- What utilities are available to the property? Will you have to add any and at what cost?
- Is there a well on the property? What is the condition of the well?
- Is there a septic system? What is the condition?
- Does the County maintain the road to the property?
- Are you okay with neighbors who are farmers or ranchers and those who keep livestock?
- Is the property within a homeowners or property owners association?

### **Access to Property**

Just because there is a road or driveway to a home or lot does not mean it provides legal access to the site. Such passage may be across someone else's property. Get legal advice to fully understand and document easements that may exist or may be necessary for access. Do not accept the word of a seller or seller's agent, especially if they tell you that you cannot be kept off your property. You can and may be kept off if you don't have legal access. Getting access could require you to spend thousands in legal fees and delay construction or your ability to move into your new home.

Land beyond yours may require you to grant an easement through your property. Access disputes are becoming more common in Gilpin County as people are moving into what are known as in-fill lots — those not along a major roadway.



### **Property Boundaries**

You may be given a plat of your property, and you may find survey pegs, pieces of rebar or water pipes, fences, blazes on trees, and/or piles of rock marking alleged property boundaries. Get a survey by a licensed surveyor or risk disappointment and grief.

New homes, outbuildings, wells and septic systems must be within specific distances from property boundaries and from each other, and these structures must be within specific setbacks from neighboring properties and structures. Check all this out before buying. This is not a place to save a few bucks upfront.

### **Mineral Rights**

Many folks purchasing property in Gilpin County for the first time are surprised to learn at closing that they must sign a multi-page document saying they understand they are not purchasing mineral rights. Property may or may not have the mineral rights included with the land. Owners of the mineral rights, which may come from past or state claims, have the right to mine, which may change the surface on or near your property. Although a Special Review Use permit is required to mine, know what minerals could be mined on or near your home site.

### **Zoning**

Zoning for residential, commercial and other uses tends to be stable in Gilpin County, but changes in land uses and density may occur over time. Check with the County on the zoning where you wish to buy and for adjacent and nearby lots. When you move in, the neighborhood changes for your neighbors, and the same will be true for you when the next new residents build on a lot adjacent to yours.

### **Ability to Build**

It is not possible to build on all lots in Gilpin County. The slope may be too steep and the soil inappropriate for construction. There may be insufficient access to the property. It may not be possible to locate wells and septic systems far enough from each other and/or within county setback requirements. Before buying land, check these concerns out.

## Cabin Fever-



### The View

Real-estate ads for Gilpin County homes often include references to Continental Divide (shorthand: Divide) views or views of Mount Thorodin. The price of a home can be higher when the view is good. Spectacular views are in fact a reason folks move to Gilpin County. Be aware your view may change as neighbors near and far build their homes. The County enforces ridgeline building restrictions protecting views. Keep two things in mind as you select your property and build:

- What you do on your property will impact someone else's view. Be careful and considerate as you design and develop your property and home.
- You do not own your view. What your neighbors do will impact your view. To control your view, you may need to buy more land.

### Construction

Building a home in the mountains is different from building down below. Past experience with building may not translate to the new environment. The abbreviated building season, delivery surcharges, worker travel times, limited availability of local labor and contractors, and ever-increasing material costs can drive up the per-square-foot cost.

Water, septic, access and easements may consume time and funds. Be sure cost estimates are complete. For example, when calculating the cost of concrete, consider not only the per-yard cost but also the truck time surcharge, which is often calculated per minute from the time the truck leaves its point of origin until it returns there. Remember: Delays are inevitable. Pick a contractor carefully and get an ironclad written contract. Have a specific and all-encompassing site design; and demand and verify that your contractor gets the proper county permits and inspections for excavation, septic systems, wells, special uses and building.

## Water

While Gilpin County was founded with the discovery of gold in its hills, the real gold is water. Most potable water in the County comes from wells located on each property. Property owners are responsible for the costs of drilling and maintaining wells. When house hunting, pay close attention to the well inspection report. It is important to have some understanding of water laws in the West when locating in Gilpin County. Four facts are critical:

- Western water law determines who owns and controls every drop of water. Water law is often based on first come, first served, meaning there are many long-standing claims on water.
- The State, not the County, controls all water and wells.
- A permit from the State Engineer is required to drill a well.
- Preservation of water quality is paramount. This relates to wells and to sanitation systems, which will be discussed later in this guide.

Since 1972, most new wells for homes on less than 35 acres are for household use only. This means no car washing; no watering lawns, flowers or gardens; no water for livestock or wild animals. Look at your well permit to be sure. As of August 10, 2017, all single-family residences and multi-family units with up to four units will be permitted to collect up to 100 gallons of water from the roofs of their dwellings for use outdoors. Low water-flow devices and appliances are prudent and sometimes necessary for three reasons:

- It can be expensive to pump water from the ground.
- Leach fields must be protected.
- Many wells, especially in dry years, produce only a few gallons of water an hour.

Protecting the purity of well water is essential. Wells must be installed properly, which the State controls. Wells must be protected from groundwater pollution and from failed septic systems. Living in Gilpin County means checking the potability of your well's water regularly. If your water system fails, life in paradise is over.

## **Sanitation**

Nearly every Gilpin County residence outside Black Hawk and Central City has a septic system known as an Onsite Wastewater Treatment System (OWTS). Urbanites expect whatever they flush to go away; Gilpinites expect whatever they flush to end up in their backyards.

Septic systems include tanks and leach fields. Backyard tanks hold 1,000 gallons or more. Bacteria in the tanks digest liquid and solid waste, and undigested solids settle to the bottom of the tanks. The remaining water flows from the tanks into leach fields where the water soaks into the ground and the earth filters out impurities. These systems return 90 percent of well water to the earth pure and reusable, assuming the septic is operating properly. Seeing that septic tanks are in good working order is the property owner's responsibility. The solid waste must be pumped from the tanks regularly. Frequency of pumping depends on tank size and volume of material being flushed into the tank.

Wastewater that goes into the leach fields will be used again, and you may not be the first in line. Because of the importance of keeping water clean and a growing population that is placing wells and septic systems closer and closer to each other, Gilpin County requires enhanced septic systems for most new and replacement systems. If the leach field is 100-200 feet from any water source, an upgraded system is required. Less than 100 feet is not allowed. If your builder, septic installer or well driller places your well and septic system less than 100 feet apart, you will not receive a certificate of occupancy until the well or septic system is moved. Septic systems are expensive, need care and are vital to water quality. If a septic system is 20 or more years old, expect to replace it sooner rather than later. Septic systems fail when:

- They aren't pumped regularly.
- Bacteria-killing chemicals are introduced.
- Non-biodegradable items are flushed.
- Clorox, Drano, paint thinner or other similar substances are poured down drains.
- Plastics, cloth-based paper, feminine hygiene products and diapers are flushed.
- Too many people use too much water in a short period of time.
- People compact a leach field by driving or playing on it.

## **Road Maintenance and Snowplowing**

Before buying, learn if you will be responsible for maintaining and snowplowing the road. There are many private roads in Gilpin County that are not maintained by the County. Find out if your driveway is subject to snowdrifts as you will be the one shoveling or plowing. Emergency vehicles will not have much more luck than you getting through in these conditions. The County maintains and plows public roads. The level and frequency of service depends on the class of road. Major thoroughfares and arterials are well maintained and kept free of snow as much as possible. Side roads get less priority. Check with the County to determine the level of service you can expect on the property you wish to buy. Heavy rains and rapid snowmelt can severely damage or wash out roads and driveways. You may need to buy a snowblower or snowplow to maintain your driveway or you may want to contract for snow removal. If you live on a

private road, you will likely be responsible for all or a portion of the costs of road repairs, maintenance and snow removal, depending on whether or not you share the road with neighbors. Don't assume neighbors will cooperate or share expenses. Some do and some don't.

If the County plows your road, there will be a snow berm across your driveway. The County will not clear this as it is not practical to clear 2,000 driveways on 150 miles of road. Clearing the berm is the property owner's responsibility. A bit of advice: It's easier to clear before you drive over a snow berm, compact it and turn it into "concrete."

### **Farming and Ranching**

While there are only a handful of commercial farmers in Gilpin County, farming and ranching is a long-standing way of life for some families. Where farming exists, it was there first and deserves not to be pushed out by residential and commercial development. If you buy or build next to a farm, expect agricultural activity. Remember, a guiding principle in the County is "the right to be rural." Livestock manure is by definition organic.

More common than commercial farming and ranching is keeping some livestock. Driving around the County, you may see llamas, alpacas, sheep, cows, chickens, donkeys, horses, ducks, even yak. Keeping such animals is part of rural life. Responsible livestock owners will keep these animals in pens and keep their corrals clean. Similarly neighbors with dogs should keep dogs confined so they will not roam into pens scaring other animals or maiming and killing smaller livestock. Dog owners should keep dogs reasonably quiet. Being a good neighbor is key.

### **Homeowner or Property Owner Associations**

Some subdivisions in Gilpin County have homeowner or property owner associations, known as HOAs or POAs. In 2015, there were six active associations. These vary in formality. If your property is within an association you need to understand documents and rules including such things as covenants, bylaws, annual dues and special assessments, rules and regulations for use of common property, and building and living in the area.

Membership in HOAs and POAs may be mandatory or voluntary. Some may control or prohibit animals and shooting guns above and beyond County or State regulations. Some may set architectural standards for building and expanding homes. You can obtain HOA/POA documents from your realtor or the County. Before buying, read and understand them. If you rent within a HOA or POA, you must follow the covenants the same as if you were an owner. The association can tell you of any past assessments on the property and some have information for prospective buyers and/or new property owners. Check with the state to see if the association is properly registered.

## Getting Around

There's a reason Subarus are common in the mountains: they handle well in snow. Whatever vehicle you drive, four-wheel or all-wheel-drive vehicles are recommended, and good snow tires are a must. Many in the County find they need chains or studded tires. Listening to weather reports and checking detailed forecasts is essential to safety in high country since even a few hundred feet of elevation can mean different conditions. Be prepared for delays and accept that, at times, the roads are impassable. An old-timer was heard to say, "A four-wheel drive lets you go further to where you can really get stuck." It's good to keep a winter-weather kit in your car with things you'll need should you find yourself stuck, waiting for weather to clear or a tow truck to arrive. Cell phones do not work in many parts of the County and in most of the canyons leading into the County, so being prepared for delays is important. Have a full tank of gas when you head out.

The only paved roads in the County are the state highways. The 150 miles of county roads are dirt/gravel/rock, which can become dusty and/or rough riding. These roads are not plowed down to dirt because that destroys the road base, so expect to drive on snowpack much of the winter. Snowmelt and rain may leave significant potholes. While the County works hard to maintain roads, there will be times when road repair needs simply outstrip the available staff and equipment.

County road crews use magnesium chloride mixed with tree sap — lignin — to stabilize road surfaces and minimize silica dust in the air. Magnesium chloride is corrosive to vehicles and roadside plants and silica dust is corrosive to roadside plants and human lungs.

If winter and spring melt takes a toll on your road, be patient. It will get repaired. In the meantime, slow down and steer around the ruts. Between the weather and the roads, there will be wear and tear on your car. You'll need to have tires replaced and balanced more often. Vehicle suspensions wear rapidly, especially if you drive too fast on rough roads. Learn to drive in lower gear on steep hills, or you will find you're replacing your brakes often.

The maximum speed limit in Gilpin County is 45 miles per hour. The speed limit is lower at many points along even the main highways. Be prepared to take your time traveling around the County. Parking on public roads and rights-of-way is prohibited. Vehicles parked or abandoned on public roads will be towed because they are a hazard to other motorists and hinder snow removal.

Public transportation — expensive in sparsely populated rural areas — is minimal in Gilpin County. The Gilpin Connect, launched in 2015, provides low-cost public transportation for those needing rides to healthcare appointments and pharmacies. Riders must reserve space at least 48 hours in advance. They are picked up from their homes and taken to nearby Boulder, Jefferson and Clear Creek Counties. Children may ride with parents or guardians but not alone. Check the website for hours of service.

Other public transportation in the area includes buses from Black Hawk and Central City to the Denver area and from Nederland to Boulder. Mountains Taxi is a private

company offering taxi service within the west Denver suburban mountain communities including Evergreen, Golden, Lakewood, Conifer, Bailey, Idaho Springs, Black Hawk and Central City.

### Cabin Fever—



# Gilpin County Government Services

Gilpin County policy is set by three county commissioners who are elected at large by County voters but who live in and represent three districts from north to south within the County. Administration of the County is overseen by a county manager. County staff include elected officials — county clerk and recorder, treasurer, assessor, sheriff, coroner and surveyor — and those hired to provide services such as law enforcement, emergency services, human services, road maintenance, trash collection, CSU Extension services, motor vehicle registration, library services and more.

The Commissioners can be contacted at the Courthouse in Central City and during their meetings. The Commission's meeting schedule, agendas, minutes, announcements and other details can be found on the County website. Commission meetings are open to the public under the rules of the Colorado State open meetings law.

County offices and facilities are located throughout the County. The sites you'll want to know include the historic Gilpin County Courthouse at 203 Eureka Street in Central City; the Justice Center on Dory Hill Road near the intersection of Highways 119 and 46; and the Transfer Station, Public Works facility, slash pile and Public Library along Highway 119 in mid-county. New residents of Gilpin County will want to visit the historic Courthouse in Central City to become familiar with the many services provided there. Though this building is still referred to as the "Courthouse," it is now only County offices. All County judicial proceedings are at the Justice Center, generally referred to simply as the Justice Center. When called for jury duty, you go to the Justice Center. Services at the historic Courthouse include:

- The County Treasurer's office where you'll pay your real estate taxes.
- The Public Trustee Office, located within the Treasurer's officer that releases requests for release of deeds of trust for refinancing or paying off a mortgage, and handles foreclosures on properties within the County.
- The County Assessor's office where property values are set and where you can get answers to how your home has been assessed.
- The County Clerk and Recorder's office where you'll register to vote, license your vehicles and get property deeds.
- A passport office where you can get or renew your passport.
- The County Community Development office where you can get information and apply for zoning variations, building permits and more.
- The County Administrative Offices where notary services are available.

The Gilpin County Sheriff's Department, the County jail, County courts and the Gilpin County Department of Human Services are in the Justice Center. Municipal court for Central City and Black Hawk are housed at the Justice Center.

## **Taxes**

When you receive your Gilpin County property tax bill in January each year, you will see that it funds schools, Public Works, public welfare, the Library, solid waste treatment for the County, the County's general fund and a fire department if you live within a department's coverage area. Gilpin County is divided between two public school districts. Residents of the southern end of the County are in the Gilpin County Public School District, and those in the northern end are in the Boulder Valley School District. Taxes within the Boulder Valley School District are higher than in the Gilpin district.

Gilpin County has no sales tax, so sales tax charged by county businesses is the 2.9 percent Colorado State rate. Black Hawk and Central City do have municipal sales tax rates. If you purchase a car as a Colorado resident, you pay the sales tax of where you live, not where you purchase the car. This can mean a considerable savings to Gilpin County residents so be sure to notify the vehicle seller that you live in the County. If you purchase items for your home that will be delivered, such as building supplies and appliances, you pay only the state sales tax. You will most likely need to inform the seller of this. This savings can help offset delivery costs, which will likely be higher because you're in the mountains.

## **Law Enforcement, Fire Protection and Emergencies**

Gilpin County has trained professional law enforcement and emergency services. Because Gilpin is a rural county, response times found in larger cities or down below cannot be matched. It is important to approach and plan for potential emergencies with as much self-reliance as possible. The use of common sense, awareness and planning are important. Depending on the location and weather, it may take many minutes or even hours for help to arrive. To reach all law enforcement and/or emergency services in Gilpin County for emergencies, dial 911. For non-emergencies and updates, consult the websites and phone numbers listed in the appendix of this guide.

The Gilpin County Residential Emergency Notification System is called CodeRed or, more familiarly, reverse 911. One of the first ways you can prepare for disasters is to make certain you are signed up with this notification system. In the event of an emergency, CodeRed will send out a notification to the affected area with information and instructions. Register your cell and landline phone numbers for CodeRed service through the County website.

The County is served by three local law enforcement departments: The Gilpin County Sheriff and Black Hawk and Central City Police Departments. In addition, there are the Colorado State Patrol and State Park and National Forest Rangers. The Gilpin County Sheriff's Office provides services including:

- Civil process, including protective orders, evictions and service fees for common papers requests.
- CodeRed emergency notification.
- Concealed handgun permits.
- Dog licensing.
- Fire-ban status and open-burn regulations and permits.

- Public information records requests.
- Countywide dispatch.
- Emergency management. A free Emergency Preparedness Guide is available at [www.gilpincountysheriff.com](http://www.gilpincountysheriff.com).

The County is served by three fire departments: Black Hawk and Central City Fire Departments and Timberline Fire Protection District. Timberline Fire Protection District spans Gilpin County and parts of Boulder County along the Peak to Peak Highway between Black Hawk, Central City and Nederland. Timberline District covers approximately 173 square miles with an estimated population of 4,500 residents. During summer months, this district is several degrees cooler than the Denver and Boulder Metro area, and as a result surges to an estimated 15,000 to 20,000 people taking advantage of the State Park and federal lands. The District has nine fire stations with more than 21 pieces of apparatus and 40-plus volunteer firefighters. The District employs a full-time fire chief, an administrator and part-time maintenance staff.

The Black Hawk Fire Department has full-time uniformed personnel. All personnel are fire, hazardous materials and medically trained to a minimum of the EMT-IV level. The Department also provides mutual aid to nearby departments.

Central City Fire Department has full-time, uniformed personnel and trained volunteer firefighters who serve Central City, and upon request, assist other departments.

Gilpin Ambulance Authority provides full-time, paramedic staff and ambulances. This supplements the EMT-qualified members of the Fire Departments and medically trained law enforcement staff. Gilpin Ambulance Authority houses two ambulances at the fire station in Black Hawk.

By Colorado State statute, it is the Sheriff's responsibility to provide search-and-rescue capability. The Gilpin County Sheriff's Office uses the Alpine Rescue Team and the Rocky Mountain Rescue Group to fulfill this responsibility.

The Alpine Rescue Team is staffed by 40-60 professional, unpaid mountain rescuers who have passed a rigorous training regimen. The team maintains an arsenal of mountain rescue and first-aid equipment and a fleet of vehicles at their primary building in Evergreen, Colorado.

Rocky Mountain Rescue Group is a nonprofit, all-volunteer organization that provides mountain search-and-rescue services. The group has been nationally recognized for its level of expertise, training and dedication.

Gilpin County Animal Response Team (GCART) was organized to look after the welfare of domestic animals in emergency situations. GCART assists firefighters in the evacuation of large stock animals and smaller companion animals in the event of wildfire, toxic spill, or other natural or human-made disasters in the County, and if necessary, set up a shelter for animals who have been evacuated during an emergency.

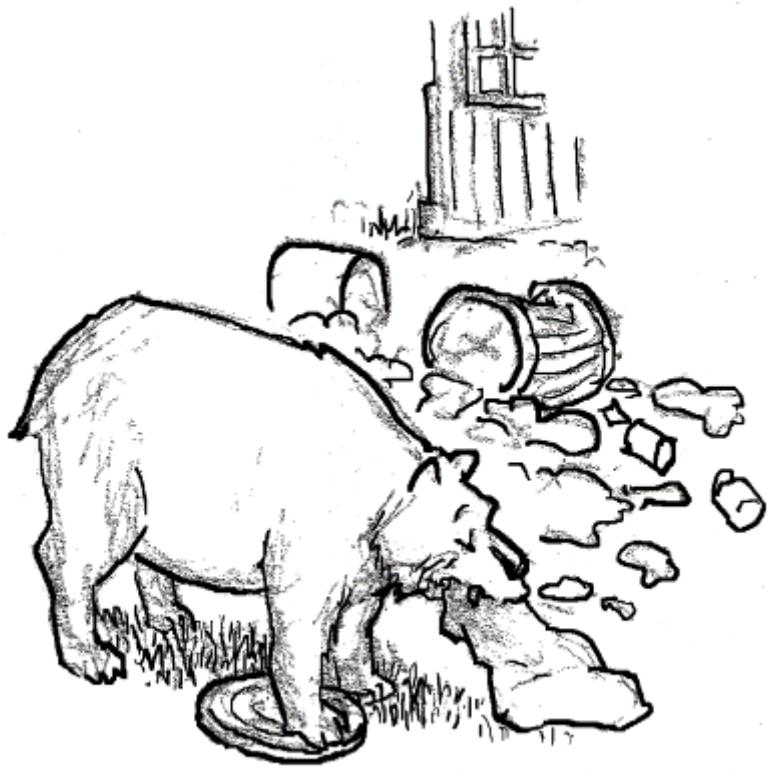
## **Human Services**

Gilpin County Human Services is there for individuals and families during difficult times. From infants to the elderly, from adolescents to veterans, Human Services provides guidance, assistance and support to those at risk by providing financial, medical, food, and social work and veteran services. Human Services offices are in the Justice Center. Because Gilpin is a small-population county, the County contracts with adjacent counties for some services to ensure all needs of County residents can be met. Services include:

- Financial and medical assistance including Medicaid; financial assistance for child care; old-age pension; Colorado Works; assistance to disabled persons in need; a food bank and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as Food Stamps); energy assistance through Colorado's Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP); home- and community-based services; Child Health Plan Plus (CHP+); emergency assistance; and aid to the blind.
- Adult protective services for those who are neglected, abused, financially exploited or unable to care for themselves.
- Assistance to children, youth and families to ensure children and youth have safe, secure homes, including child protection and youth in conflict investigations and assessments, family and individual counseling, foster and kinship care, adoption,

mental health treatment, substance-abuse treatment, and parenting training.

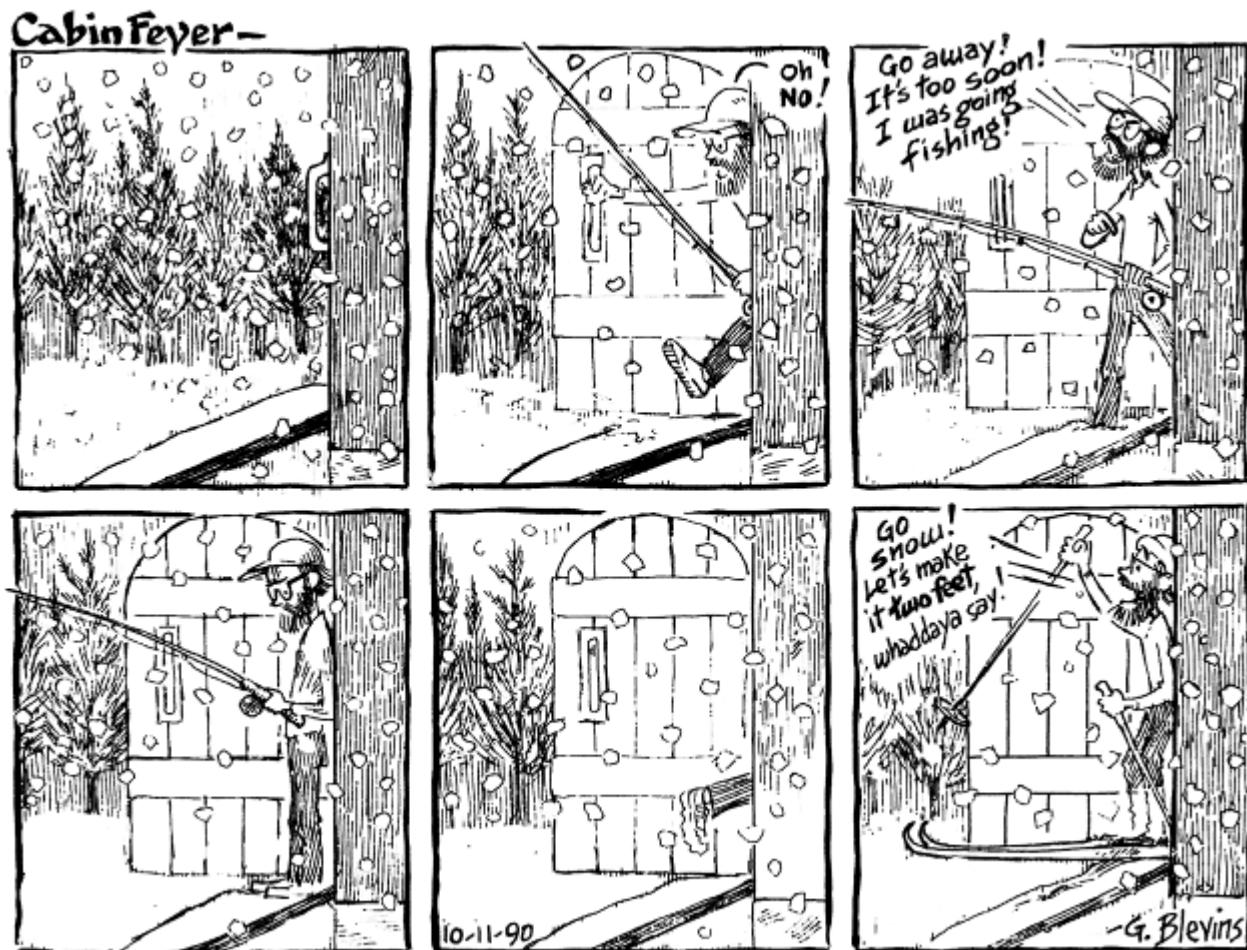
- Help for military veterans and their families to see that they receive State and federal benefits to which they are entitled such as assisting veterans in obtaining high school diplomas through Project Recognition and counseling and referring veterans to community and health services.
- Senior assistance including weekly lunches; Meals on Wheels; grocery shopping; medical, dental and other transportation; and educational and recreational activities.



## Trash, Recycling and Slash

If you are coming to Gilpin County from the suburbs or city, chances are you're used to curbside trash pickup. While a handful of County residents have commercial trash pickup, most quickly find this problematic. Trash cannot be left out overnight without inviting wildlife to rummage. Most County residents haul their trash and recycling to the County's trash transfer site located just off Highway 119 at mile marker 15. It may sound strange, but the Transfer Station is a great place to run into friends and neighbors. Hours of collection vary summer and winter. There is a per-bag charge for garbage; recycling is free. Every household is eligible for one free trash day when items of all sizes can be dropped off, a great deal for those who've just moved in and have lots of trash from the move. Tokens, available from the County Public Works office, located behind the Transfer Station, are required for free trash days and should be acquired before dropping off trash. For specifics on trash and recycling procedures and charges, check the County website or stop by the Transfer Station.

The County slash pile, open seasonally in spring, summer and fall, is across the street from the Transfer Station. Check out hours and what's accepted before arriving at the slash site. The slash pile is also a great resource for garden wood chips and mulch.



## **CSU Extension in Gilpin County**

Colorado State University (CSU) Extension in Gilpin County, housed in the Exhibit Barn near the Community Center off Highway 46, brings the resources of the University to the County. The CSU Extension helps mountain residents of all ages improve the quality of their lives by offering information on a website, in classes and through programs that provide research-based information on forestry, wildfire, wildlife, mountain gardening, noxious weeds and other issues. You can borrow a home energy audit kit from the Extension Office that will help you discover ways to make your home more energy-efficient and save money doing so. Gilpin Extension cooperates with the Colorado Forest Service to offer low-cost seedling trees and bushes for reforestation and windbreaks. These can be ordered from fall into spring and are available in the spring. To keep informed of upcoming Extension classes and opportunities, visit the website to sign up for the email newsletter.

## **Gilpin County Public Library**

Located along Colorado Highway 119 in mid-county, the Gilpin County Public Library is open Tuesday through Saturday, with evening hours Tuesday and Thursday. The Library has a variety of activities for all ages, including a room devoted to children's books, a weekly children's story hour, and a summer reading program for children and youth. The Library is host to movies, speakers, study series, art exhibitions and an annual artist-in-residence who provides community-wide programming. The Library also provides free internet access. You can bring your own computer or use one of the Library's. A public notary is often available, and community groups can book a meeting room on a first-come, first-served basis.

## **Schools and Child Care**

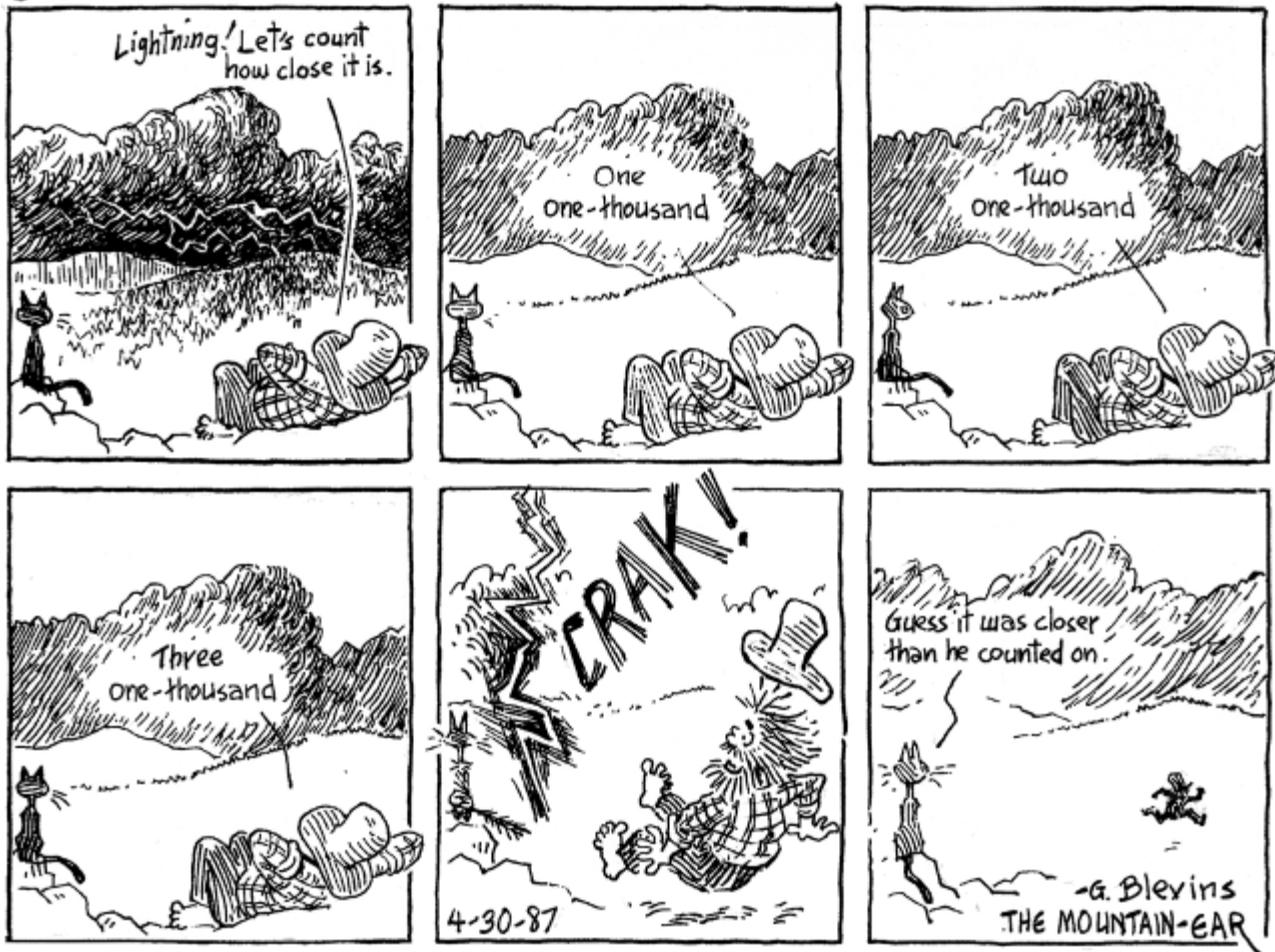
Gilpin County is served by two school districts. The northern portion of the County is in the Boulder Valley School District, which offers elementary to high school on two campuses in Nederland. The southern portion of the County is in the Gilpin County School District, which offers the same grade levels on a single campus. Colorado children are not required to attend schools in the district in which they live. They can commute to other schools without paying out-of-district tuition. School buses do not, however, go beyond district lines, so if a student attends school out of her or his district, the student or the student's parents must drive the student to school or to the closest bus stop. Boulder Valley schools hold classes Monday through Friday; Gilpin County Public School is in session Monday through Thursday.

There are no private schools in Gilpin County. The Public Schools offer alternative-school options beyond the County for students who do not thrive in a traditional classroom setting. Gilpin Public School offers Montessori classes for elementary grades.

Eagles' Nest Early Learning Center, which is adjacent to the Gilpin County Public School, is a licensed nonprofit that provides care for infants, toddlers and preschoolers. There is space for a limited number of infants, ages eight weeks to 18 months. Toddler care is for children from 1-3 years old, and preschool is available to children ages 3-6. The Center is open from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday. Child care is also available in Nederland.

Parents should contact Gilpin County Parks & Recreation to see about the availability of after-school care for children.

## Cabin Fever —



## Basic Services

### Power Providers

Three power companies serve Gilpin County. Xcel Energy provides electricity to Black Hawk, Central City and some nearby areas. United Power provides electric power to the rest of the County, and Colorado Natural Gas serves portions of the County. There are several propane suppliers that deliver in the County. Some residents also heat their homes with wood- or pellet-burning stoves, and some have installed solar systems.

Electric lines do not reach every property in the County. If you plan to buy property that is not on a line, know that it can be expensive to have service run to the site. Easements from private property owners may be needed to reach remote sites.

Summer storms, strong winds and heavy winter snows will knock out electric power and phone lines and towers. Service is usually restored within a few minutes or hours, but longer outages are possible. During long outages, frozen and refrigerated food can spoil, wells won't pump, lights don't work, furnaces won't heat, and the kitchen stove may not work. Having a plan B to compensate for the loss of power may require a standby

generator and alternative light and heat sources. Many residents have wood stoves as primary or backup heat sources; most have more than one heat source to compensate in an outage. Many homeowners have back-up generators.

Residents who install solar electric systems will want to check with the power provider in their neighborhood to ensure compatibility of their solar systems with conventional systems, especially if they are not going fully off the grid. Those setting up solar electric systems need to be aware that power providers in the County may be unwilling to work with them after the fact or willing to do so only at a high cost to the property owner.

### **Phone, Internet, Television and Radio**

As of 2016, phone and Internet service remained spotty and sometimes unpredictable in Gilpin County. CenturyLink provides landline voice telephone to most of the County, a must-have if your home is not within an area with cell phone service since County residents are advised to register for CodeRed. This service notifies you when weather and wildfire threaten and when evacuations have been ordered.

AT&T provides cell phone service to some areas of the County; Verizon may work at the northern and southern ends of the County. Before buying property, find out if cell service is available where you plan to buy and who the provider will be.

Accessing Internet service can be even more difficult than cell phone service. Several providers have towers on Mount Thorodin. Representatives of these companies will come to your site to determine if they can serve you. Satellite companies may also provide service to your site. CenturyLink provides limited DSL service for a basic Internet connection to some portions of the County. Do not assume service to your site. Data speed and capacity vary by provider and location within the County, and sometimes between neighbors.

Television providers vary around the County. Broadcast television via antenna is virtually non-existent. Most residents use satellite television. If the home you want to buy has cable wiring, don't assume cable is available since some neighborhoods that have had cable no longer do. Gilpin residents often receive advertised phone/internet/TV bundle offers that promise low-cost service; the reality is that most such offers are neither low cost nor real. Beware. Don't assume you can watch television on your computer. Many Internet speeds in the County are too slow to access Internet TV providers. Radios work pretty much throughout the County though the available channels will vary by location. KYGT (The Goat) Radio 102.7, out of Idaho Springs, is a public station catering to mountain communities.



need to receive frequent quick deliveries, check out service to your property. "Next day" and "Overnight" deliveries often translate to "Give it a few days." Packages from these services may end up left out in the weather or in plastic bags tied to fence posts or trees, especially when the snow is deep or the delivery person perceives your dog as a threat.

### Newspapers

Two local newspapers — the Weekly Register-Call, published in Central City, and the Mountain Ear, published in Nederland — are delivered by mail and online. They are also sold at local retailers. Reading these newspapers is a good way to get to know the County and to stay informed as a resident. You may want to subscribe to them as part of making your decision if life in Gilpin County is for you.

Newspapers from the metropolitan area are delivered to subscribers at most roadside mailbox locations, weather permitting. Do not expect on-time delivery when it's snowing or even raining hard.

### Deliveries

Mail and other delivery services vary within the County. U.S. mail may be available on major roads in individual mailboxes along the road or in a cluster of boxes at the beginning of a neighborhood. There is no U.S. mail delivery within many subdivisions. During major snowfalls, your mailbox may be the casualty of plowed snow or an errant vehicle. Many Gilpin County residents have Post Office boxes, which are available in Black Hawk, Central City, Rollinsville and Pinecliffe. Some residents have boxes in Nederland, which though not in Gilpin County, may be the closest location for some in the northern portion of the County.

United Parcel Service and Federal Express deliver to most parts of the County, weather permitting. If you

## **Gilpin County Cities**

While much of Gilpin County is rural, the southern end of the County is home to two small cities, the City of Central and Black Hawk. These are best known to folks outside the County as a gaming destination. Modeled on an initiative two years earlier in Deadwood, South Dakota, limited stakes — originally \$5 maximum bets, now \$100 — gaming was approved by Colorado voters in 1990. This gaming began October 1, 1991, in Central City and Black Hawk as well as in Cripple Creek in Teller County. Money coming to the State from gaming was earmarked for historic preservation and economic revitalization. Since then, Colorado casinos have grown, attracting people from the Denver metropolitan market. The result is a billion-dollar industry that has changed Central City and Black Hawk. By 2014, there were more than 7,000 licensed casino jobs in the two cities with about 2,500 filled by Gilpin County residents.

With money from gaming, Gilpin County constructed the Justice Center, Community Center and Public Works facility. The Gilpin County School was expanded with gaming funding. Parking became a premium, stores oriented toward locals disappeared or migrated. Prior to legalized gaming, County property taxes were among Colorado's highest. The Library and Fire Districts taxes are modest and, due to high property values in the gaming districts, the current County property tax rate is now one of the lowest in the state. For details, contact the County Assessor or Treasurer.

As with the County's gold rush a century earlier and gaming, recent oil, gas and marijuana booms have brought change that must be managed by the County.

### **Central City**

Central City, which features “wild-west themed” gambling establishments, is a walkable, historic mining town. When John Gregory found gold in the gulch that now bears his name in the spring of 1859, the rush was on. A series of mining camps sprung up, and when the need for services became apparent, a city was built in the middle of it all. When Colorado became a state in 1876, Central City was the main contender against Denver to become the State Capital. Denver won out by just one vote.

Throughout the summer, Central City is host to numerous festivals featuring music, food and beverage, and costumed gunslingers and ladies of the night. Check the Central City website for a weekly calendar of events. Activities continue into the fall and winter with more focus on bringing local folks together. The Tommyknocker Craft Fair celebrates the Christmas holidays with the creativity of local artists and craftspeople and a chance for Gilpin schoolchildren to meet Father Christmas and residents to enjoy a tree lighting.

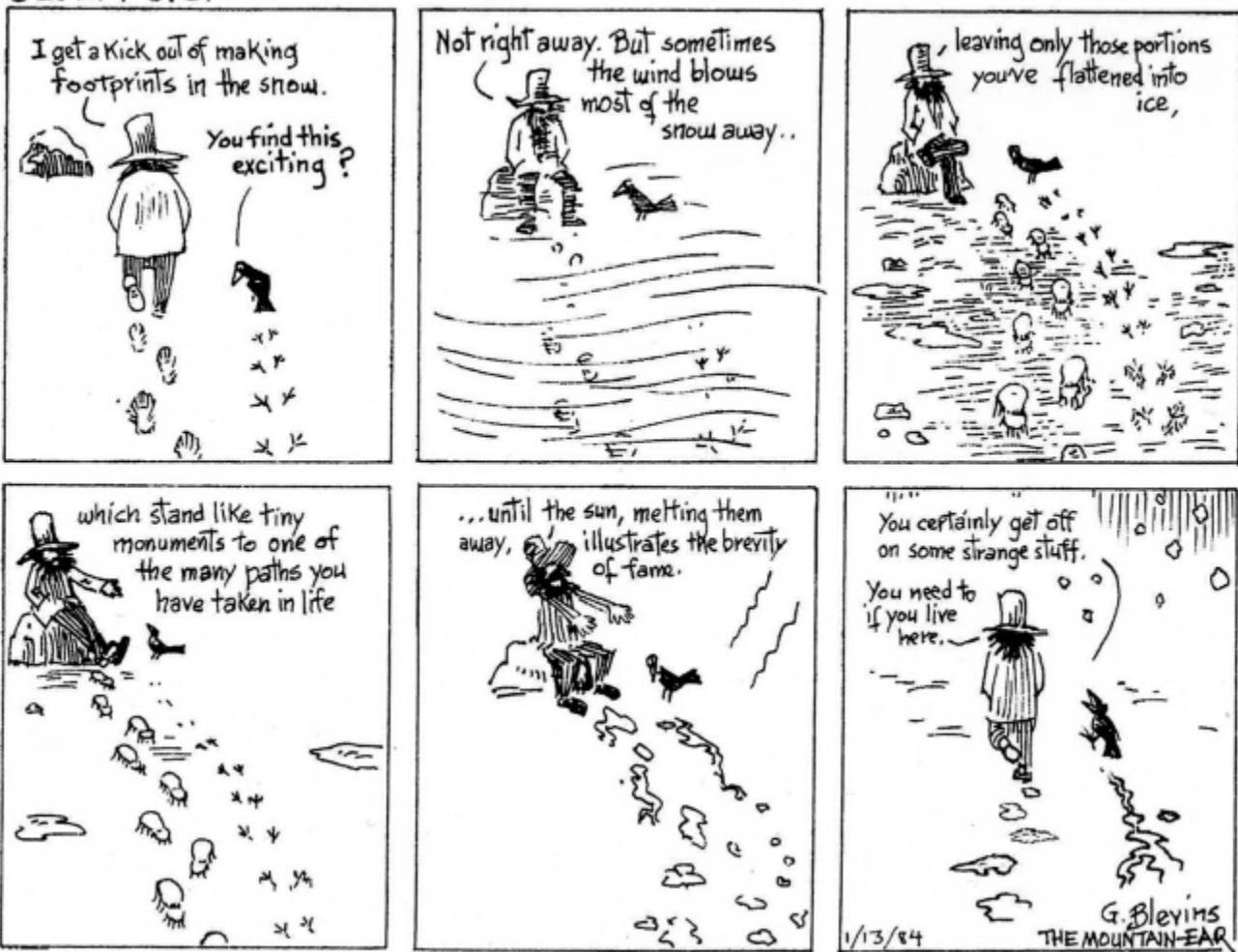
Central City offices are at City Hall, 141 Nevada Street in Central City.

## Black Hawk

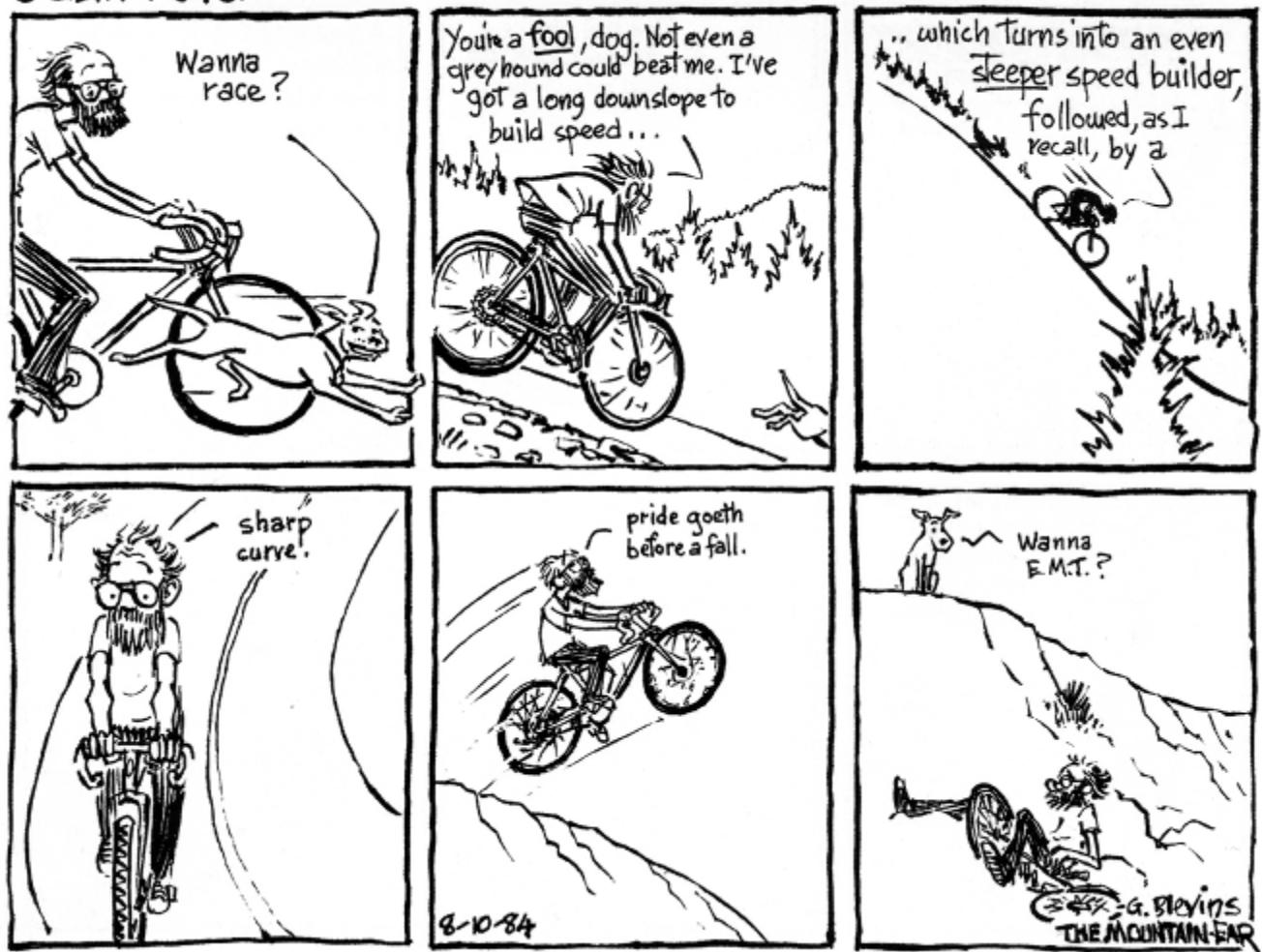
Gaming in Black Hawk assumes a more modern look than in Central City with numerous casinos and high-end hotels. The Fourth of July fireworks, sponsored by local businesses, is a treat each summer, drawing a multitude of visitors and locals to the town. The dry stack walls in Black Hawk are a national treasure, and historic structures such as the Lace House, have been preserved and moved to a single site. During the 1890's gold rush, Black Hawk was host to miners, mills and all that goes with mining. There are gold and other precious metals in and under Black Hawk. Access to State Highway 119 and U.S. Highway 6 has been upgraded, and an eight-mile scenic parkway from I-70 serves Central City and Black Hawk.

Black Hawk city offices are at 201 Selak Street in Black Hawk.

## Cabin Fever —



## Cabin Fever —



## Recreation and Community Activities

Gilpin County — ranked 36 out of 3,111 counties in the United States for natural amenities — boasts thousands of acres of open space including forests, lakes, rivers, hiking trails and climbable mountain peaks. In addition to Golden Gate Canyon State Park, James Peak Wilderness, and the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests, local residents may take advantage of countless small open-space areas for hiking, biking, snowshoeing, skiing and wildlife viewing.

### Gilpin County Community Center/Gilpin Parks & Recreation

The Gilpin County Community Center is an important gathering point in the County. State-of-art facilities include two pools: a lap pool with diving boards and a children's pool with a slide. There's a gymnasium with indoor running track, a teen room, a clay studio, well-equipped exercise and weight rooms, and community meeting rooms. Individuals can enjoy these facilities Monday through Saturday on a walk-in basis, or they can sign up for classes. Fitness classes include such things as yoga, cardio-muscular training, aquacize, martial arts, personal training and massage. Swimming, dance and

pottery lessons are offered. There are athletic leagues for children, youth and adults including such sports as basketball, volleyball, wrestling and pickleball. The Gilpin Stitchers, a group of quilters and needleworkers, meet at the Center.

The Community Center is home to the County's programs for seniors, which include lunches three days a week, grocery shopping trips and transportation to medical appointments. These services, while housed at the Community Center, are coordinated through Gilpin County Human Services.

Center facilities, including the pool, gym and meeting rooms, can be rented by residents and community groups for parties, special events and meetings. Parks & Recreation sponsors an annual Winter Arts Festival, providing space for local and regional artisans and community organizations to sell their work and promote their activities. Gilpin children can decorate holiday cookies and talk with Santa Claus at the festival, and community musicians perform. Community Center space is used for other countywide events, including the County Fair.

Use of the Community Center is affordable. Children and youth from birth-18 and seniors 60-years-old and older use the Center for free. Residents 19-59 find daily, monthly, seasonal and annual membership rates reasonable when compared to other recreation facilities.

### **Gilpin County Fair**

The summer Gilpin County Fair — one of the few free county fairs in Colorado — is a rural, family event held at the Fairgrounds and Community Center. Folks get to show off their pets, livestock, wares, skills, artistry and achievements in competitions and craft booths. There are rides and activities for children and adults. High Country Auxiliary hosts a fund-raising pancake breakfast Sunday morning of the Fair, and displays by Gilpin County CSU Extension inform fairgoers on the environment. The Fair features two days of fun and entertainment with an array of food booths, vendors, music, and a chance to catch up with friends and neighbors.

### **High Country Auxiliary Chili Dinner and Silent Auction**

The High Country Auxiliary's annual chili dinner with silent auction is a great cure for cabin fever. Held in early March, this fund raiser benefits the Timberline Fire Protection District and the Gilpin County Animal Response Team. The Auxiliary began in 1969 as the Pinecliffe Area Fire Department Auxiliary. As various fire protection departments have merged over the years, the Auxiliary has changed its name from time to time but remained committed to its core mission of supporting the Fire Department. When the High Country and Colorado Sierra Fire Departments merged to form Timberline Fire Protection District, the Auxiliary decided to take the name High Country Auxiliary and to expand its reach to include other emergency service organizations, such as the Gilpin County Animal Rescue Team (GCART) and the Gilpin Ambulance Authority. The Auxiliary welcomes new members and is a good place to get to know your neighbors.

## Fine Arts

For a small-population area, Gilpin County has extensive opportunities to enjoy visual art, opera, music and other fine arts. For information on local artists and arts events in Gilpin County and surrounding communities, pick up a free copy of MMAC Monthly (Mountain Music, Arts & Culture) at any of the local businesses that carry it. This publication covers the Peak to Peak and Clear Creek Valley regions of Colorado's Front Range.

The County has a thriving visual arts community that includes painters, potters, sculptors, quilters, jewelers, and other artists and craftspeople. The Gilpin Arts Association, in existence since 1947, exhibits work by Colorado artists and artists from surrounding western states during summer months at its gallery in Washington Hall in Central City. It also hosts an annual exhibition of work by association members. In addition to providing Rocky Mountain artists with an opportunity to show and sell their work, the Association, a non-profit organization, provides financial assistance to the art program at the Gilpin County School.

The annual Gilpin Art Studio Tour coincides with September aspen viewing. Enjoy a weekend in the high country meeting local artists who exhibit their work, demonstrate their techniques and offer work for sale. Opening night held at the Library features a group show of work by the artists.

Throughout the year, individual artists are featured at special events, the Library and private venues throughout the County, and the Gilpin County Public Library sponsors an artist-in-residence each summer.

Central City Opera, which has performed at the historic Teller House since 1932, offers live performances including opera favorites, American works, and new and rarely performed pieces throughout the summer. Productions at the 550-seat Opera House attract people from far beyond the County as well as locals. Continuing a tradition from 1932, names of illustrious performers and figures from Colorado history are carved on the back of many of the Theater's seats. These include such people as Lillian Gish, Beverly Sills, Horace Tabor and Buffalo Bill.

If you enjoy live music, you'll find Gilpin County and surrounding communities rich in opportunities to hear music from a variety of genres, and you'll have opportunities to sing yourself at karaoke nights at several local venues. Check out the local newspapers and MMAC Monthly to find out who is playing where and when. Some of the musicians you'll hear are local. Others come from across the State and Country. From the Stage Stop in Rollinsville and a number of establishments in Nederland, just a few miles north of the Gilpin County line, to the casinos in the southern end of the County, every weekend brings a variety of choices.

## **Gilpin County Historical Society**

Gilpin County Historical Society provides multiple ways for you to learn the history of the County. The Society's Museum in Central City is open during the summer, and tours of the Coeur d'Alene Mine Shaft House are offered summer weekends. Tours of the Teller House, Opera House and Thomas House are offered Tuesday through Sunday during the summer and upon request throughout the year. The Society sponsors fun events including the annual late-summer Cemetery Crawl; High Tea at the historic Stroehle House, usually scheduled several times during the summer and fall; and the Halloween Creepy Crawl in October. It's easy to confuse the Cemetery Crawl and the Halloween Creepy Crawl. Here's the difference. The Cemetery Crawl is only scary if you are terrified of cemeteries. Costumed society members share the stories of famous and ordinary folks buried in the Cemetery. The Creepy Crawl is designed to send chills down your back as you stroll the streets and enter a few buildings to meet the "ghosts" of the area. If you are new to the County, consider attending these events and/or joining the historical society to learn about your new home.

## **Great Expectations**



This guide summarizes some of the issues residents have faced as they grew up in or moved to Gilpin County. Hopefully this guide helps you make informed and successful decisions about living in the high country. Is the “right to be rural” right for you? For some, it’s a nice place to visit during the 19 days of spring, summer and fall. For others it is a paradise for year-round living. But for both, living in rural Gilpin County requires one to learn, prepare and, above all, be ready for the realities of living in the high country.

Welcome!

## **Appendix I: Resources**

### **Churches**

Christ the King Community Church

[www.ctkonline.com/blackhawk](http://www.ctkonline.com/blackhawk)

971 Golden Gate Canyon Road

Black Hawk, CO 80422

Phone: 303-582-2095

St. James United Methodist Church

123 Eureka Street

Central City, CO 80427

Phone: 303-582-5882

St. Mary of the Assumption Catholic Church

<http://www.godrushcatholic.org/home>

135 Pine Street

Central City, CO 80427

Phone: 303-567-4662

St. Paul's Episcopal Church

[www.stpaulsepiscopalchurchcentralcity.org](http://www.stpaulsepiscopalchurchcentralcity.org)

226 E. High Street

Central City, CO 80427

Phone: 303-582-0450

### **Emergencies and Law Enforcement**

Black Hawk Fire Department

<http://www.cityofblackhawk.org/city-departments/fire-department/>

196 Clear Creek Street

P.O. Box 68

Black Hawk, CO 80422

Emergencies: 911

Non-emergencies: 303-582-5878

Phone: 303-582-0426

Black Hawk Police Department  
<http://www.cityofblackhawk.org/city-departments/police-department/>  
201 Selak Street  
Black Hawk, CO 80422  
Emergencies: 911  
Non-emergencies: 303-582-5878

Phone: 303-582-0503

Central City Fire Department  
<http://www.centralcityfire.com/>  
116 Lawrence Street  
Central City, CO 80427  
Emergencies: 911  
Non-emergency dispatch: 303-582-5500  
Phone: 303-582-3473

Central City Police Department  
<https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/centralcity/police>  
141 Nevada Street  
Central City, CO 80427  
Emergencies: 911  
Non-emergency dispatch: 303-582-5500  
Phone: 303-582-5519

Emergency Updates  
Gilpin County Sheriff's Office: <https://twitter.com/GilpinSheriff>  
Gilpin County: <https://gilpinsheriff.wordpress.com/>  
Boulder County: <http://boulderoem.com/emergency-status>

Gilpin Ambulance Authority  
<http://gilpinambulance.com>  
495 Apex Valley Road  
P.O. Box 638  
Black Hawk, CO 80422  
Emergencies: 911  
Phone: 303-582-5499

Gilpin County Animal Response Team (GCART)  
<http://www.co.gilpin.co.us/GCART/GCARTdefault.htm>  
Contact: Vicki Nemec  
E-mail: [gcart@co.gilpin.co.us](mailto:gcart@co.gilpin.co.us).  
Phone: 303-582-5214

Gilpin County Courthouse and Justice Center

<http://www.gilpincountysheriff.com/#!courts/c1k11>

2960 Dory Hill Road, Suite 200  
Black Hawk, CO 80422  
District Court: 303-582-5522  
County Court: 303-582-5323

Gilpin County Sheriff

<http://www.gilpincountysheriff.com/>

2960 Dory Hill Rd, Suite 300  
Black Hawk, CO 80422  
Emergencies: 911  
Non-emergency dispatch: 303-582-5500 or 303-582-5511  
Administration: 303-582-1060  
Courts: 303-582-5522  
Detentions: 303-582-3576

Timberline Fire Protection District

<http://www.timberlinefire.com/>

660 Highway 46, Station 3  
Black Hawk, CO 80422  
Emergencies: 911  
Non-emergency dispatch: 303-582-5500  
Non-Emergency: 303-582-5768

## **Government/Government Services**

City of Black Hawk

<http://www.cityofblackhawk.org/>

City Hall  
201 Selak Street / PO Box 68  
Black Hawk, CO 80422  
Phone: 303-582-5221

City of Central

<https://www.colorado.gov/centralcity>

City Hall  
141 Nevada Street  
P.O. Box 249  
Central City, CO 80427  
Phone: 303-582-5251

Connect for Health Colorado

855-752-6749

[connectforhealthco.com](http://connectforhealthco.com)

CSU Extension in Gilpin County  
[www.extension.colostate.edu/gilpin](http://www.extension.colostate.edu/gilpin)  
Gilpin County Community Center Campus  
230 Norton Drive  
Black Hawk, CO 80422  
Contact: Irene Shonle, Ph.D., director/agent  
Phone: 303-582-9106

Gilpin Connect  
<http://www.co.gilpin.co.us/Commissioners/Administration/GilpinConnect.htm>  
Phone: 303-582-9200

Gilpin County Commissioners/County Manager  
<http://www.co.gilpin.co.us/Commissioners/Commissioners.htm>  
P.O. Box 366  
203 Eureka Street  
Central City, CO 80427  
Phone: 303-582-5214  
County Manager: Roger Baker  
E-mail: [rbaker@co.gilpin.co.us](mailto:rbaker@co.gilpin.co.us)

Gilpin County Food Bank  
2960 Dory Hill Road, Suite 100  
Phone: 303-582-5444

Gilpin County Government  
<http://www.co.gilpin.co.us/>  
203 Eureka Street  
P.O. Box 366  
Central City, CO 80427  
Phone: 303-582-5214

Gilpin County Department of Human Services  
(food assistance, child protection and foster care, senior services, veterans services, Medicaid, Colorado Works)  
<http://www.co.gilpin.co.us/Human%20Services/HumanServicesHome.htm>  
Gilpin County Justice Center,  
2960 Dory Hill Road, Suite 100  
Black Hawk, CO 80422  
Phone: 303-582-5444

Gilpin County Master Plan  
[http://www.co.gilpin.co.us/CommunityDevelop/MasterPlan\\_2008\\_With\\_Figstest1.pdf](http://www.co.gilpin.co.us/CommunityDevelop/MasterPlan_2008_With_Figstest1.pdf)

Gilpin County Public Library  
<http://www.gilpinlibrary.org/>  
15131 Highway 119  
Black Hawk CO 80422  
Phone: 303-582-5777

Gilpin County Public Works, Trash, Recycling and Slash  
<http://www.co.gilpin.co.us/Maintenance%20and%20Trash/trashdefault.htm>  
234 Jankowski Drive (Mile marker 15, State Highway 119)  
Black Hawk, CO 80422  
Phone: 303-582-5004

## **Natural Environment**

Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests  
<http://www.uncovercolorado.com/national-lands/arapaho-national-forest/>

Colorado State Forest Service  
<http://csfs.colostate.edu/>

Golden Gate Canyon State Park  
<http://cpw.state.co.us/placetogo/parks/GoldenGateCanyon>

James Peak Wilderness  
<http://www.coloradoswildareas.com/james-peak-wilderness/>

## **Newspapers**

The Mountain Ear  
<http://themtnear.com/>  
408 W 3rd Street, Nederland, CO 80466  
Phone: 303-258-7075

Weekly Register Call  
<http://www.weeklyregistercall.com/>  
PO Box 93 Black Hawk, CO 80422  
Contact: Aaron Storms, Publisher  
E-mail: [aaron.storms@weeklyregistercall.com](mailto:aaron.storms@weeklyregistercall.com)  
Phone: 303-582-0133

## **Recreation**

Central City Opera  
<https://centralcityopera.org/>

124 Eureka Street  
Central City, CO 80427  
Phone for box office: 303-292-6700  
Phone for administrative office: 303-292-6500

Gilpin Art Studio Tour  
<http://www.gilpinartstudiotour.org/>  
<http://www.gilpinartstudiotour.org/#!contact/czpl>

Gilpin County Arts Association  
<http://www.gilpinarts.org/>  
117 Eureka Street  
Central City, CO 80427  
Phone: 303-582-3345

Gilpin County Community Center  
<http://www.gilpinrecreation.com/>  
250 Norton Drove  
Black Hawk, CO 80422  
Phone: 303-582-1453

Gilpin Historical Society  
[www.gilpinhistory.org](http://www.gilpinhistory.org)  
228 E. High Street  
Central City, CO 80427  
Phone: 303-582-5283

Gilpin County Parks and Recreation / Gilpin Community Center  
<http://www.gilpinrecreation.com/>  
250 Norton Drive  
Black Hawk CO 80422  
Phone: 303-582-1453  
E-mail: [gcrec@co.gilpin.co.us](mailto:gcrec@co.gilpin.co.us)

## Schools/Early Learning

Eagles' Nest Early Learning Center  
<http://eaglesnestelc.org/index.html>  
10655 Highway 119  
Black Hawk, CO 80422  
Next to Gilpin RE-1 School  
Phone: 303-582-0895

Gilpin County School (K-12)

<http://www.gilpin.k12.co.us/>

10595 Highway 119  
Black Hawk, CO 80422  
Phone: 303-582-3444

Nederland Elementary School

<http://bvsd.org/elementary/nederland/Pages/nederland.aspx>

#1 N. Sundown Trail  
Nederland, CO 80466  
Phone: 720-561-4800

Nederland Middle/Senior High School

[www.bvsd.org](http://www.bvsd.org)

597 County Road 130  
Nederland, CO 80466  
Phone: 720-561-4900

## **Senior Services**

Gilpin County Property Tax Work Off

Contact: Sharon Cate  
Phone: 303-582-5214  
E-mail: [scate@co.gilpin.co.us](mailto:scate@co.gilpin.co.us)

Home Delivered Meals/Nutrition and Activities

Phone: 303-582-5444

Transportation

Phone: 303-582-5444

## **Transportation**

Gilpin Connect

<http://www.co.gilpin.co.us/Commissioners/Administration/GilpinConnect.htm>

Phone: 303-582-9200

Road Conditions

<http://cotrip.org/map.htm#/roadConditions>

## **Utilities**

AT&T

<https://www.att.com/>

CenturyLink

<http://www.centurylink.com/>

Phone, order service: 877-720-3428  
Phone, repair: 877-348-9007

Colorado Natural Gas  
<http://coloradonaturalgas.com/>  
7810 Shaffer Parkway, Suite 120  
Littleton, CO 80127  
Phone: 1-800-720-8193

United Power  
<http://www.unitedpower.com/>  
Brighton Headquarters Office  
500 Cooperative Way  
Brighton, CO 80603  
Phone: 303-659-0551

Xcel Energy  
<http://www.xcelenergy.com/>  
414 Nicollet Mall  
Minneapolis, MN 55401  
Phone: 1-800-895-4999

## **Veterans**

Gilpin Veterans Services Office  
[http://www.co.gilpin.co.us/Veterans/VeteranServiceOffice/Veterans\\_Serivce\\_Office.html](http://www.co.gilpin.co.us/Veterans/VeteranServiceOffice/Veterans_Serivce_Office.html)  
Gilpin County Justice Center  
2690 Dory Hill Road, Suite 100  
Black Hawk, CO 80422  
Contact: Rick Winfrey, Veterans Services Officer  
Phone, office: 303-582-5444 X 1103  
Phone, direct line: 303-515-4297  
Phone, cell: 720-254-4060  
E-mail: [rwinfrey@co.gilpin.co.us](mailto:rwinfrey@co.gilpin.co.us)

## **Appendix 2: Volunteer Opportunities**

Alpine Rescue Team

<http://www.alpinerescueteam.org>

P.O. Box 934

Evergreen, CO 80437

Contact: Pete Mayhak

Phone: 303-526-2417

Central City Fire Department

[www.centralityfire.com](http://www.centralityfire.com)

115 Lawrence Street

Central City, CO 80427

Contact: Fire Chief Gary Allen: [gallen@centralcityfire.org](mailto:gallen@centralcityfire.org)

Phone: 303-582-3473

Charlie's Place Animal Shelter

<http://charliesplaceshelter.org/>

500 W. Dumont Road

Dumont, CO 80436

Friends of Charlie's Place

<http://friendsofcharliesplace.org>

Contact: Donna Gee

Phone: 303-668-0924

Colorado State University (CSU) Extension in Gilpin County

[www.extension.colostate.edu/gilpin](http://www.extension.colostate.edu/gilpin)

(4-H, youth program, education, events)

Irene Shonle, Ph.D., director/agent

CSU Extension Gilpin County

230 Norton Drive, Black Hawk, CO 80422

Phone: 303-582-9106

Court Appointed Special Advocate for Abused Children (CASA)

<http://www.casajeffcogilpin.com/site/volunteer/>

CASA of Jefferson and Gilpin Counties

100 Jefferson County Parkway #1536

Golden, CO 80401

Phone: 303-271-6535

Elks Lodge Central City #557

<http://www.elks.org/lodges/home.cfm?LodgeNumber=557>

113 Main Street

Central City, CO 80427

Phone: 303-582-5181

Gilpin County Animal Response Team (GCART)  
<http://www.co.gilpin.co.us/GCART/GCARTdefault.htm>

Contact: Vicki Nemec

Phone: 303-582-5214

Email: [gcart@co.gilpin.co.us](mailto:gcart@co.gilpin.co.us).

Gilpin County Arts Association

<http://www.gilpinarts.org>

117 Eureka Street

Central City, CO 80427

Contact: Micki Moss

Phone: 720-878-7100

[www.facebook.com/GilpinCountyArtsAssociation](http://www.facebook.com/GilpinCountyArtsAssociation)

Gilpin County Democrats

<http://www.gilpincountydems.org/home.html>

P.O. Box 728

Black Hawk, CO 80422

Contact: [gilpindems@gmail.com](mailto:gilpindems@gmail.com)

Gilpin County Department of Human Services

(Food bank, child foster care, senior services, veterans services)

<http://www.co.gilpin.co.us/Human%20Services/HumanServicesHome.htm>

Gilpin County Historical Society

228 E. High Street

Central City, CO 80427

Phone: 303-582-5283

Gilpin County Justice Center

2960 Dory Hill Road, Suite 100

Black Hawk, CO 80422

Phone: 303-582-5444

Contact: Elizabeth Donovan, Human Services Director

Email: [elizabeth.donovan@state.co.us](mailto:elizabeth.donovan@state.co.us)

Gilpin County Parks & Recreation

<http://www.gilpinrecreation.com/>

(Sports officiating)

250 Norton Drive

Black Hawk, CO 80422

Contact: Orrin Snyder

Phone: 303-582-1453

Gilpin County Republicans

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Gilpin-County-Republicans-127016804874/>

Website: <http://gilpingop.com/>

Contact: Ann Fattor, chair

E-mail: [fattor@ecentral.com](mailto:fattor@ecentral.com)

Gilpin County School

[www.gilpin.k12.co.us](http://www.gilpin.k12.co.us)

10595 Highway 119

Black Hawk, CO 80422

Contact: Michelle Herrera-Welch

Phone: 303-582-3444

Email: [mwelch@gilpin.k12.co.us](mailto:mwelch@gilpin.k12.co.us)

High Country Auxiliary

<http://www.timberlinefire.com/high-country-auxillary>

P.O. Box 232

Black Hawk, CO 80422

Contact: Diane Rittenhouse, President

Phone: 303-582-5176

Email: [sdrinco@msn.com](mailto:sdrinco@msn.com)

Main Street Central City

(Historic preservation/an affiliate of Colorado Main Street)

Contact: Barbara Thielemann, coordinator

Phone: 303-582-5919

E-mail: [b.thielemann@att.net](mailto:b.thielemann@att.net)

Peak to Peak Rotary

Contact: Jim Elder, president

Phone: 303-258-3228

E-mail: [Jim4900@gmail.com](mailto:Jim4900@gmail.com)

Rocky Mountain Rescue Group (RMRG)

[http://www.rockymountainrescue.org/get\\_involved.php](http://www.rockymountainrescue.org/get_involved.php)

3720 Walnut Street

Boulder, CO 80301

Phone, voice mail: 303-449-4141

St. James Thrift Store/Ermel's Emporium

<http://coloradogambler.com/central-city-ermels-emporium-thrift-store-was-established-to-give-back/>

111 Eureka Street

Central City, CO 80427

Phone: 303-582-1797

Timberline Fire Protection District

(Volunteer firefighters)

<http://www.timberlinefire.com/volunteer>

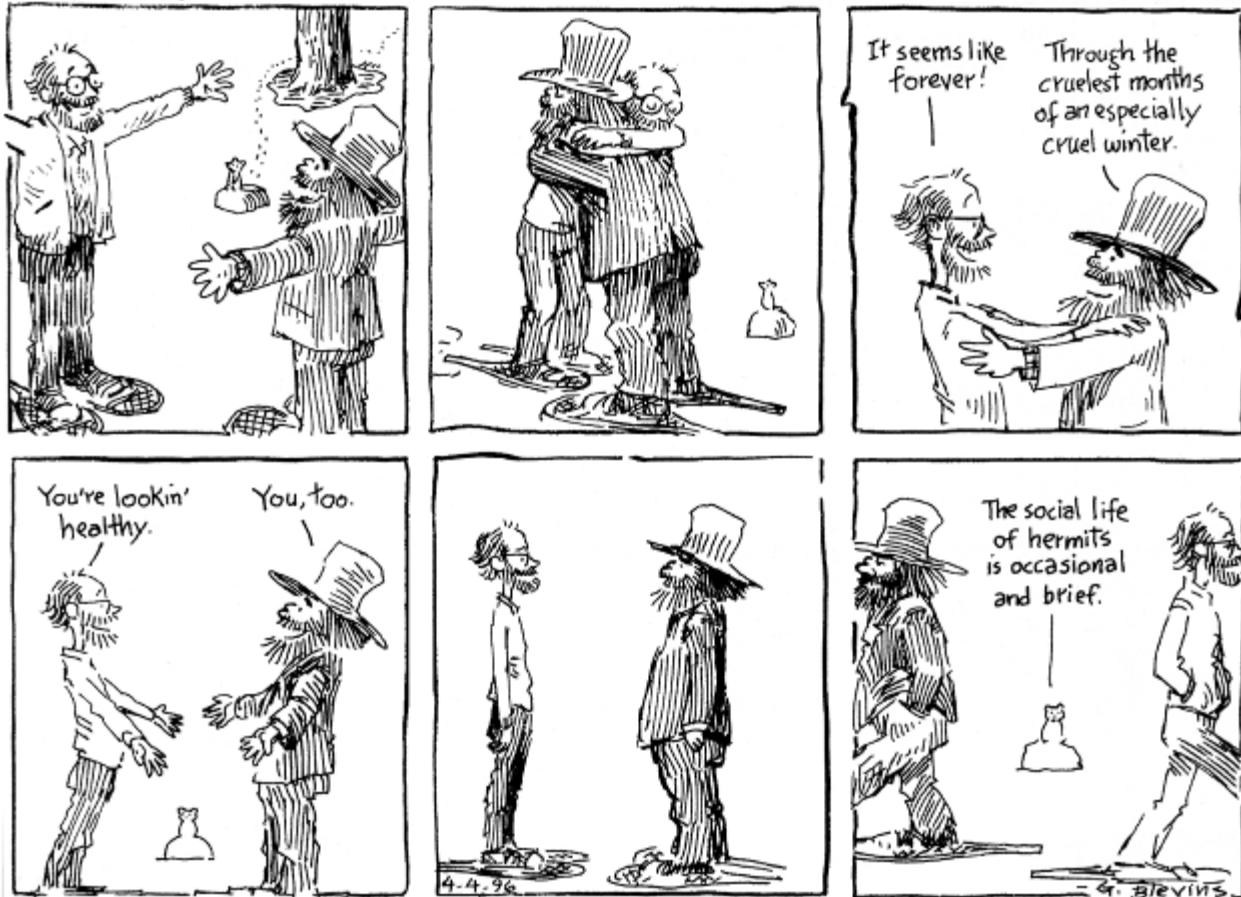
660 Highway 6

Black Hawk, CO 80422

Contact: Jeniffer Hinderman

Phone: 303-582-5768

### Cabin Fever —



## **Appendix 3: Effects of High Altitude on Visitors**

**Prepared by the American Heart Association, Denver, Colorado**

Recreational opportunities such as skiing, backpacking, hunting and fishing require physical demands from your body. These demands can be increased dramatically by the unique environment of high altitude. This information is being presented to help you have a healthy and enjoyable trip in high-altitude areas.

### **What is High Altitude?**

Broadly interpreted, high altitude could be anything above 5,280 feet (1,609 km) in elevation. About three-fourths of the nation's land above 10,000 feet lies in Colorado. Colorado's average elevation is 6,800 feet. Estimates are that more than half of Colorado is over 5,280 feet in elevation. It seems reasonable to say, much of the time you spend in Colorado will be in high-altitude areas.

### **What Are the Effects of High Altitude?**

At high altitudes, everyone is affected to some degree. The effects vary among individuals and cover a variety of symptoms. The two main differences between the high-altitude environment and sea level are:

- Decreased oxygen density, and
- Decreased humidity or moisture content in the surrounding air.

At an elevation of 8,000-10,000 feet, the oxygen is approximately 40-45 percent less dense — creating the feeling of “less oxygen” — and the humidity is 50-80 percent lower than at sea level. A sudden change in environment from sea level to high altitude can produce symptoms of nausea, insomnia, diarrhea, restlessness, shortness of breath and air hunger. Palpitation or fast heartbeat, headache, nasal congestion, coughing, increased flatulence or “gas,” easy fatigue, and intolerance to exertion also may be experienced. If the high-altitude experience progresses, more shortness of breath and increased coughing and edema (fluid accumulation in the lungs) may occur requiring medical attention and possible hospitalization.

### **What Can be Done to Adapt to High Altitude?**

The initial complaints should disappear as your body adjusts to the lowered oxygen content and dryness. This may take anywhere from a few days to a few weeks. Upon arrival at high altitude, do not overdo. Eat lightly. For the first 48-72 hours, avoid alcohol. Alcohol aggravates the high-altitude syndrome. Most of all, keep physical exertion to a minimum the first day. Over-exertion before your body can adapt to the lower oxygen and dryness can result in more severe and persistent symptoms. If you are over 35 and plan strenuous exercise while in high altitude, it would be best to check with your doctor first. If you have a history of heart, circulatory or lung disease, it is mandatory to check with your doctor before coming to high altitude. Infants are also very susceptible to altitude sickness and extra caution should be taken. Respiratory infections or pneumonia should be completely resolved before coming to altitude, since they can be

dramatically worsened by the extra strain placed on your body. Pregnant women should seek the advice of their doctor before exerting themselves at high altitude.

### Some Final Suggestions

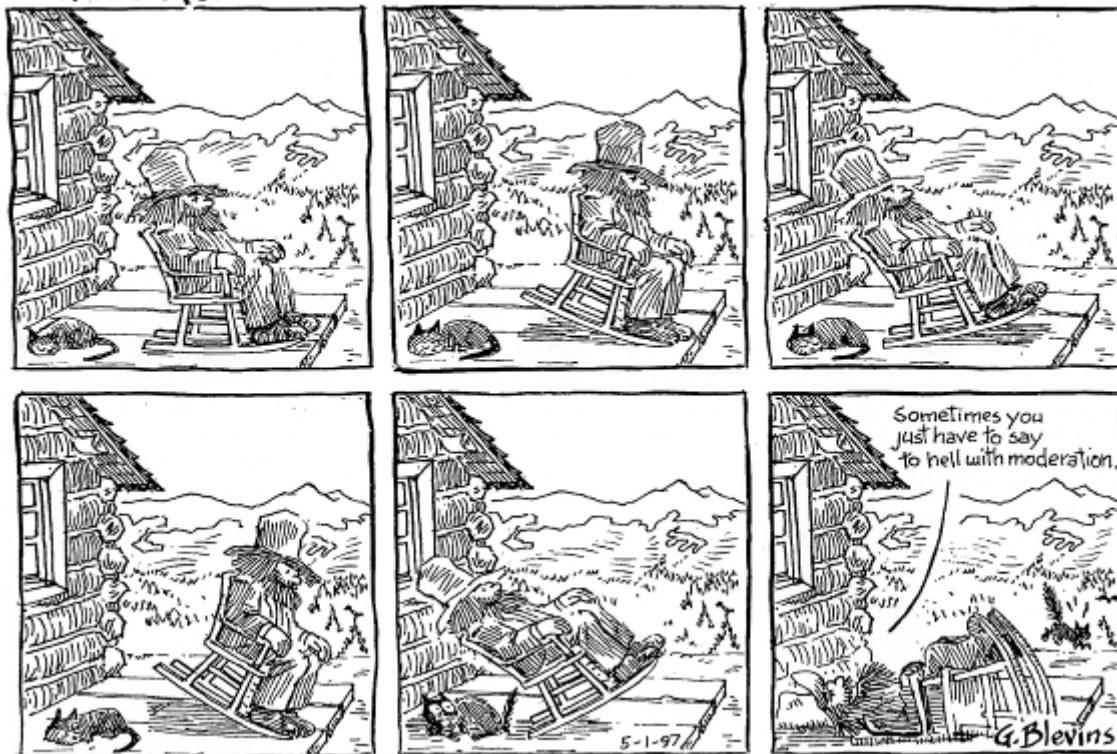
Rest appropriately and do not overdo the first two days. Take a nap when sleepy and get a good night's sleep after an strenuous day of skiing or backpacking. Eat lightly and drink plenty of liquids — many additional liters, but watch the sugar, caffeine and other additives — and avoid alcohol for the first 48 hours. If you experience any symptoms that were mentioned, you may be suffering from an oxygen deficit. The symptoms are a caution light to decrease your activity and protect yourself. A day of rest at this time is strongly suggested. If your symptoms are not improved or symptoms develop that worry you, do not hesitate to contact a physician. It is very easy to call a doctor's office or urgent care to talk to a nurse or doctor on duty if you have questions about your arrival at a higher altitude. You are in a high-altitude area to enjoy your vacation. It is tempting to do as much as possible, but vigorous skiing the first day followed by a big meal with alcohol and more skiing early the following day can lead to high-altitude syndrome and spoil a vacation that was eagerly anticipated and perhaps quite expense.

**Plan ahead.**

**Hydrate like crazy.**

**Take it easy, and enjoy your stay!**

### Cabin Fever-



## **Acknowledgements**

Thanks to the following individuals who volunteered their time, talents and knowledge to this project: Julie Shaw, Ken Eye, Dana Jones, George Blevins, Bill Bergen, Karen Eye, Gerry Fawcett, and CSU Extension Director Irene Shonle for her encouragement and guidance.