

YOUR TAX DOLLAR AT THE COUNTY DOOR - INSTALLMENT II

One county, four clocks: what Boulder was awarded, what was already built, which declaration did not name it, and why a national queue is not that county’s audit.

Installment I opened the drawer. This paper walks one FIPS code through it. A September award is not this summer’s fire. A dam already finished is not a ribbon. A declaration that names four other counties is not Boulder’s file.

A public paper from Notice Nearby. Record of Sale, LLC (Oregon). September 25, 2026.



Plate 1. The geography the award has to name. Flatirons, Boulder County, Colorado — the door, not the press release.

CLOCK	THE DATED FILE	WHAT IT NAMES	WHAT IT DOES NOT NAME
1 Appropriation	Stafford Act / Disaster Relief Fund; HMGP after a declaration.	A federal program that can pay a county applicant.	Boulder County as a payee.
2 Award 9/15/26	FEMA R8-26-NR-025. PA >\$1M. HMGP Prince Lake No. 1 >\$2.4M.	Boulder County. Roads, culverts, a dam.	Aspen Acres. Gold Mountain. June–July 2026 fire counties.

3 Outlay	State mitigation officer: dam work already finished; reimbursement waited.	Dirt that moved before the press release.	Proof every PA culvert is closed.
4 Other clocks	HQ-26-133 (9/4). DR-4634 Marshall. GAO-26-107774 BRIC. OIG-26-25.	Custer, Dolores, Ouray, Pueblo. A national queue. A national sample.	Boulder as the defendant. A local theft figure.

FOUR CLOCKS / ONE FIPS

FIPS 08013

1 APPROPRIATION	A STATUTE BLOCK
2 AWARD	BOULDER COUNTY
3 OUTLAY	ALREADY BUILT
4 OTHER CLOCKS	CUSTER DOLORES OURAY PUEBLO NATIONAL QUEUE

Plate 2. Register plate. Four clocks, one FIPS — 08013. Appropriated is not awarded. Awarded is not paid. Paid is not the other counties’ declaration.

Who this is for

This paper is for the person who read a ninety-million-dollar headline and assumed the money was for the fire still in the feed. It is also for the clerk in another state who will be asked why a register in Oregon is dating a Colorado county. The answer is the series rule: a dollar becomes a public fact when a geography is named. Boulder County was named. Four other Colorado counties were named eleven days earlier, for a different event. Those are two files.

It is not a score of an administration. The September 15 release carries a White House label. The governor’s office dated the same money as reimbursement for disasters from 2013 through 2025, and said it is not the Aspen Acres request still under review. Both sentences can be copied. Neither sentence is this publisher’s verdict.

The installment rule

Installment I said a later paper could walk one disaster from award through closeout in one county. The public desk this week does not hand us a complete closeout. It hands us something more useful and more honest: one county standing in four clocks at once. That is the usual condition of a federal dollar. Pretending there is only one clock is how a press release is written.

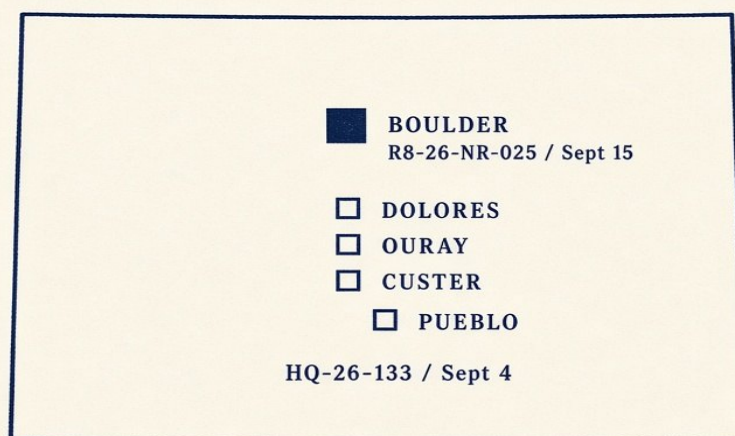
Executive summary

On September 15, 2026, FEMA Region 8 announced approval of more than ninety million dollars for Colorado under Public Assistance and the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program — about twenty-eight million in Public Assistance and about sixty-two million in mitigation. Inside that release, Boulder County is named twice. More than one million dollars in Public Assistance for roads, culverts, embankments, park buildings, and parking lots. More than 2.4 million dollars in mitigation to upgrade Prince Lake No. 1 Dam. Those are file-two sentences with a FIPS code on them.

The same week's local reporting, quoting Colorado's state hazard mitigation officer, said the dam work was already finished and the county had been waiting on reimbursement since the prior year. That is file three arriving late to file two's announcement. A reimbursement for finished work is a good result that still has to be labeled as reimbursement, not as a groundbreaking.

Eleven days earlier, on September 4, FEMA announced a major disaster declaration for Colorado wildfires, flooding, and mudslides from June 27 to July 29, 2026. Public Assistance under that declaration was listed for Custer, Dolores, Ouray, and Pueblo counties. Boulder is not in that list.

TWO FILES. TWO LISTS OF COUNTIES.



NOTICE NEARBY • REGISTER PLATE

Plate 3. Two files, two lists of counties. Filled mark: Boulder on R8-26-NR-025 (Sept 15). Open marks: Custer, Dolores, Ouray, Pueblo on HQ-26-133 (Sept 4). A register plate is not a highway map.

1. Why one county is enough

A national number without a county is a headline. A county without a program code is a mood. Boulder County (Colorado, FIPS 08013) is enough because the September 15 instrument named it, the dam instrument named it, and the September 4 declaration did not. A register that keeps those three sentences apart is doing its job. A register that melts them into “Colorado got money” has left the door.

OpenFEMA's Public Assistance funded-projects file is built for this walk: applicant, county, county code, disaster number, obligated amount. This paper does not scrape that table into a fake local audit. It tells the later reader where the

table lives.

2. File one — the appropriation that made the award possible

Public Assistance and Hazard Mitigation Grant Program money does not appear because a press office is busy. It appears because the Stafford Act and the Disaster Relief Fund already authorized a cost-share after a declaration, and because HMGP is triggered by declarations even when the project being paid is meant to cut the next loss. File one is the statute and the Fund. File one does not name Boulder. That is why file two matters.

3. File two — the September 15 award that names Boulder

R8-26-NR-025 is the clean instrument. More than ninety million for the state. Public Assistance examples include more than 2.6 million to the City of Colorado Springs for drainage and embankments, and more than one million to Boulder County for roads, culverts, embankments, park buildings, and parking lots. Mitigation examples include more than 2.4 million to Boulder County for Prince Lake No. 1 Dam and more than 1.7 million to the Town of Superior for wildfire-risk work. Geography is the difference between an award and a slogan.

Colorado Springs is El Paso County. Superior sits in Boulder County. Prince Lake No. 1 is a Boulder County applicant line. Keep the applicants on their own rows.



Plate 4. Prince Lake, Boulder County Parks & Open Space. The September 15 HMGP line names this water body. The state mitigation officer said the upgrade was already finished and reimbursement had waited. A photograph is not a closeout package.

4. File three — the dam that was already built

Colorado Public Radio, dating the same release, quoted the state hazard mitigation officer: Boulder County had already finished the dam restoration and had been waiting on millions in federal reimbursement since the prior year. If that account holds, file three moved before file two was announced. The press release is then a payment notice, not a

construction notice. Both are “tax dollars at work.” They are not the same photograph.

This paper does not have the closeout package. It does not invent invoice dates. The Public Assistance lines for roads and culverts are not covered by the dam sentence. Do not promote a parking-lot repair to “finished” because a different project was finished.

5. The declaration that did not name Boulder

HQ-26-133, September 4, 2026: federal assistance for Colorado areas affected by wildfires, flooding, and mudslides from June 27 through July 29, 2026. Public Assistance listed for Custer, Dolores, Ouray, and Pueblo. A reader who lands in the third week of September will have seen fire footage and a ninety-million-dollar number in the same feed. The register’s job is to keep the footage and the number from sharing a county they do not share.

6. The old disaster that still names Boulder

DR-4634, the Marshall Fire and straight-line winds, declared at the end of 2021, still publishes obligation totals on FEMA’s disaster page. An old file can keep paying while a new file is opened in other counties of the same state. Do not flatten 4634 into the September 15 HMGP dam, or the dam into 4634.

7. File four — the national findings that do not get Boulder’s name

OIG-26-25 sampled twenty closed Public Assistance small projects across eight regions and found missing documents in all twenty. The sample is not a Boulder County audit. Writing it onto Prince Lake would be the pamphlet Installment I refused to become.

GAO-26-107774, released September 24, 2026, is the BRIC queue. As of March 2025: 1,245 subgrants awarded in cycles FY 2020–2023; about 2.5 billion allocated of 4.8 billion available; 62 million reimbursed; 37 subgrants into closeout; no BRIC awards from April 2025 through March 2026. An unawarded subgrant is file two that did not happen. Neither figure is a theft charge against Boulder County.

8–10. The door, the refusals, the close

If this paper is pointed from a Boulder County hub, the hub should hold the release number, the two Boulder dollar lines, the September 4 declaration’s county list, and the DR-4634 page — four links, four dates. A hallway QR sheet in Boulder County that sends a scan to the county hub is register traffic. It is not Legal Publication of a FEMA award.

This installment will not treat a delayed reimbursement as a moral about one president, or a September announcement as a moral about another. It will not add the ninety million to the Marshall Fire obligations and call the sum “Colorado’s take.”

One county can be paid for an old storm, wait on a finished dam, sit outside a new declaration, and live in a state whose mitigation queue is being argued in a national audit — all in the same month. That is not a contradiction. That is four files.

A county named in an award is not a county named in a declaration. A dam already built is not a groundbreaking. A national queue is not a local audit. Date the clocks.

Notes and sources

1. Series: Your Tax Dollar at the County Door. Installment II, illustrated edition, September 25–26, 2026. Not law.
2. FEMA R8-26-NR-025, September 15, 2026. HQ-26-133, September 4, 2026. DR-4634 Marshall Fire page.
3. Office of Governor Jared Polis, same-week statement on 2013–2025 reimbursement versus Aspen Acres request under review.
4. Colorado Public Radio, September 16, 2026, quoting Mark W. Thompson on the finished dam and delayed reimbursement.
5. GAO-26-107774 (Sept. 24, 2026). DHS OIG-26-25 (Sept. 2, 2026).
6. Plate 1: Flatirons, Boulder County geography. Plate 4: Prince Lake photograph from Boulder County Parks & Open Space public page (bouldercounty.gov/open-space/management/prince-lake/). Plates 2–3: Notice Nearby register plates. Photographs illustrate geography; they are not proof of closeout.
7. Record of Sale, LLC (Oregon). Ryan Standley, Publisher / Authorized Officer.

Suggested live path: noticenearby.com/papers/one-county-four-clocks