

## **Boulder County holds virtual meeting to discuss resources, provide update for residents affected by Marshall Fire**

Daily Camera

Boulder County officials Thursday evening held a virtual update to answer questions from residents affected by the Marshall Fire and discuss ways they and other agencies are aiding displaced residents while also looking ahead at what rebuilding the more than 1,000 homes destroyed will entail.

“There are ways we can incorporate some of our local builders who have contacted us and want to help and want to be there,” said Dale Case, director of Boulder County Community Planning & Permitting.

Before the meeting Thursday, Boulder County officials announced that countywide there have been 1,084 residential structures destroyed and 149 residential structures damaged, and the total countywide actual value of residential damage is estimated to be \$513,212,589

In Louisville there were 550 structures destroyed and 43 structures damaged, resulting in \$229,199,184 in damages. In Superior there were 378 structures destroyed and 58 structures damaged, resulting in \$152,757,462 of damage. In unincorporated Boulder County there were 156 structures destroyed and 48 damaged, with the value estimated at \$131,255,94.

As far as commercial buildings, countywide there were seven structures destroyed and 30 commercial structures damaged.

Officials have posted an updated list of impacted residential and commercial properties along with a searchable map of properties in the fire perimeter.

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Source:

<https://uphelp.org/boulder-county-holds-virtual-meeting-to-discuss-resources-provide-update-for-residents-affected-by-marshall-fire/> Date: December 9, 2023

About 1,100 people tuned into Boulder County's virtual meeting Thursday, according to county officials.

Residents with homes affected by the fire will only receive a property value notice for 2021 from the Boulder County Assessor's Office, said Boulder County Administrator Jana Petersen.

This year, the assessments will be more specific to include the property damages.

"For 2022 taxes, you'll get a notice on May 1 from the assessor's office, and all properties will be at the residential rate, which is a lower rate," Petersen said.

Rob Anderson, superintendent of Boulder Valley School District, spoke during the meeting about the resources the district is offering families and students. He said students impacted by the fire do not need to worry about grades or attendance right now.

"Our first priority is going to be (students') health and wellness," he said.

In response to residents' questions regarding the lack of emergency warnings prior to the Marshall Fire, Mike Chard, office director with the Boulder Office of Emergency Management, said he is not sure why residents, who were signed up for notifications did not receive alerts from the emergency notification system or hear the outdoor sirens.

Chard said OEM is holding debriefing with first responders to ask where they were in relation to the fire and how long it took to issue emergency alerts.

Boulder County has also been working on getting Wireless Emergency Alerts, which are automatically sent to the cell phones of individuals who fall within a certain location area.

"We have been working on getting that capability in the county," he said. "We haven't ignored it; it's just the timing of this fire, but we're moving toward that and have been for some time (and we've been) making improvements in our system over the last 18 months."

During the meeting several people asked about the safety hazards that come with returning to homes or areas affected by the Marshall Fire.

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Recently, Boulder County Public Health urged residents not to disturb ash or sift through debris from the Marshall Fire due to the small amounts of cancer-causing chemicals in the materials.

Darla Arians, division manager with Boulder County Resource Conservation, said the county is working with the state, FEMA and impacted municipalities to hold a debris removal effort.

She said the county will be conducting the effort in three phases: removal of spoiled foods and water-damaged items from properties, which is complete; removal of fallen trees and vehicles blocking public roadways, which will begin in the coming week; and lastly, debris cleanup.

“We anticipate this program kicking off in about four weeks after we go through all of the FEMA approval channels,” Arians said.

Residents do not have to participate in the county-led cleanup and can do the work on their own, she added. To do this, people must acquire permits and complete inspections.

Erin Dodge, water quality coordinator with BCPH, said children should not be playing outside near the Marshall Fire scene, especially if they are in an area heavily covered in ash.

“We are working toward getting some air quality monitoring in the urban areas,” she said. “Additionally, when the contractors go into cleanup, they are going to be under some really strict guidance to prevent migration of that debris and ash.”

Amy Bach, with United Policyholders, said she recommends residents who have homes damaged or destroyed start journaling or writing down what has been lost.

Bach said people can start requesting for advances for temporary benefits from insurance companies.

“Legally they have to give you a third of your contents benefits without requiring you to do an inventory under a law that we, with help from Boulder County, helped pass after the Four Mile Fire.”

People affected by the Marshall Fire can go to the Disaster Assistance Center, which is open from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily at 1755 South Public Road in Lafayette. The center can help with insurance claims,

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financial assistance, mental health supports and more.

The Marshall Fire, which started Dec. 30 and burned more than 6,000 acres before it was deemed contained on Monday, is already by far the most destructive wildfire in Colorado history in terms of property damage.

Two people have been reported missing, but officials have already found human remains at one of the search sites, though the body has not yet been officially identified.

The cause of the fire also remains under investigation.

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