



## YAMPA VALLEY HOUSING AUTHORITY

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### **YVHA Awarded Grants for Building Infrastructure at the Brown Ranch Totaling Almost \$7,000,000**

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, CO – The Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) awarded the Yampa Valley Housing Authority (YVHA) two grants for Brown Ranch infrastructure this week. The first grant for \$5,000,000 is for geothermal infrastructure and the second grant for almost \$2,000,000 is for the construction of wastewater infrastructure, both at Neighborhood A at Brown Ranch. These awards are the first grant dollars committed to construction at Brown Ranch.

With this funding, YVHA will be prepared to start infrastructure construction in 2024, pending annexation. The combined almost seven million dollars in grant funding is part of the total \$15 million dollars of grant applications referenced during the annexation process. YVHA, the City of Steamboat, and Routt County are collaborating on an additional \$8M of grant applications this fall.

“Grant funding is very important to Brown Ranch. Every grant dollar that goes into the project will help make the housing more affordable to future Brown Ranch residents,” said Jason Peasley, executive director of YVHA.

These grants are from the Colorado Energy/Mineral Impact Assistance Fund (EIAF). YVHA will receive \$5,000,000 from the Climate Resilience Challenge for the construction of geothermal infrastructure at Neighborhood A and another grant for almost \$2,000,000 from the More Housing Now & Land Use Initiative for the construction of wastewater infrastructure at Neighborhood A of Brown Ranch.

In the award letter, the Department of Local Affairs said, “DOLA encourages and supports local governments to integrate climate adaptation and climate mitigation solutions that build resilience, mitigate hazards, and prepare communities for future climate-related impacts and social equity vulnerabilities. We are excited to fund innovative projects such as this and look forward to updates on its progression.”

Neighborhood A, the first phase of Brown Ranch, will contain 400-480 affordable housing units restricted to local workforce households, as well as commercial, civic,

and community amenities, including a childcare center, fire station, grocery, and parks.

Since Brown Ranch is a site with limited existing utility infrastructure, infrastructure construction, including wastewater and geothermal, is necessary before housing construction can begin, which will ultimately deliver much needed affordable housing to the local workforce.

Brown Ranch will feature a community geothermal system with ground source heat pumps to provide heating and cooling, without natural gas service, to the Brown Ranch neighborhoods. YVHA went through a thorough analysis to determine a geothermal grid is the best way to deliver reliable heating and cooling to Brown Ranch homes. You can learn more about that analysis in the [Brown Ranch Energy Master Plan](#).

Executive Director, Jason Peasley added how important geothermal energy is to the Brown Ranch, "We know from a 2018 greenhouse gas emissions inventory that energy use in commercial and residential buildings is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in Routt County. We also know we need 1,400 housing units today to meet the need of local workers. YVHA takes very seriously its responsibility to build housing that minimizes carbon emissions to the greatest extent possible. The Brown Ranch geothermal system is an incredible opportunity to move the needle on the top two principles guiding development at Brown Ranch: affordability and sustainability. We are grateful to the State of Colorado for investing in the infrastructure to make this project possible."

Some of the benefits of the community geothermal grid include:

- **Lower energy bills:** Brown Ranch residents' annual energy bills are estimated to be 47% lower compared to a traditional fuel system.
- **Lower carbon emissions:** The geothermal system is estimated to decrease total energy use at Brown Ranch by 52%. Since heating and cooling will be supplied using geothermal energy, the lower electricity demand will significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions, advancing the emission reduction goals outlined in the [2021 Routt County Climate Action Plan](#).

#### **How does geothermal heating and cooling work?**

- Water is pumped at one time to fill a closed loop system, which uses the earth to act like a battery, storing and moving heat. The mass and thermal properties of the ground make the earth capable of retaining heat.
- Buildings are interconnected to centralized heat exchanger. Water source heat pump connects units to borefield.
- For building cooling (summer): heat is rejected and piped into loops in the ground that store the heat for use in the winter.
- For building heating (winter): heat that was stored in the ground is pumped into building.

- For long-term effectiveness, heat flows into and out of the ground must be balanced to maintain a stable earth temperature. To prevent this imbalance, additional heat can be added to the ground at the borefield with solar thermal panels.

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