

Modern-Day Highlands Ranch Historical Timeline

Highlands Ranch is a 22,000-acre master-planned community founded in 1981. The community has a population of 98,000 people. Highlands Ranch is located 12 miles south of Denver in Douglas County and offers a wonderful quality of life and opportunities for an active lifestyle.

The Modern History of Highlands Ranch - The Last 40+ Years

- **1976:** Lawrence Phipps Jr. dies. He was the last Highlands Ranch Mansion homeowner, having owned the property since 1937
- **1977:** Marvin Davis & others (Highlands Venturers) acquire the ranch from the Phipps Estate.
- **1978:** Mission Viejo Company acquires an option on the property now known as Highlands Ranch.
- **1979:** The Board of Douglas County Commissioners approves Planned Community District Zoning for the property, and Mission Viejo Company purchases the property.
- **1980:** Construction of the first phase of Highlands Ranch begins.
- **1980:** Mission Viejo/Centennial Water and Sanitation District is formed.
- **1981:** The first families move into new homes in Highlands Ranch. The first family was the Phil and Kaye Scott family. The first baby born here is Jennifer Dani.
- **1981:** The Joseph B. Blake Water Treatment Plant is built.
- **1982:** Northridge Park, Northridge Recreation Center and Northridge Elementary open. The community's first businesses also open.
- **1983:** Centennial Water & Sanitation District / Highlands Ranch Metropolitan Districts office building opens. The Marcy Gulch Wastewater Treatment Plant is built
- **1984:** The Convenience Center opens at S. Broadway and Springer Drive.
- **1985:** C-470 opens, providing easier access from Highlands Ranch to the rest of the metro area. Expansion of the Northridge Recreation Center is completed.
- **1986:** Sand Creek Elementary and The Links Golf Course open.
- **1987:** Highlands Ranch Junior / Senior High School opens.
- **1988:** Highlands Ranch's first fire station – Fire Station No. 17 - opens.
- **1988:** St. Andrews Society moved Highland Games to Highlands Ranch
- **1989:** The first RTD Park-n-Ride is dedicated.
- **1990:** Bear Canyon Elementary School and Highland Heritage Regional Park open.
- **1991:** Highlands Ranch celebrates its tenth anniversary. The population is nearly 17,000 people. Falcon Park and the Crestridge Pool open. Cresthill Middle School and the Highlands Ranch branch library open.
- **1991:** Highlands Ranch Historical Society begins, with a mission to document local history.
- **1992:** The Highlands Ranch Regional Post Office and Summit View Elementary School open.
- **1993:** More than 4,000 people are employed in Highlands Ranch in nearly 360 businesses.
- **1994:** Highlands Ranch is recognized as the best-selling, master-planned community in the United States by Arthur Andersen Real Estate Advisory Services. Albertson's, the community's first grocery store, opens. The second fire station serving the community – Fire Station No.16 – is completed.
- **1995:** The HighWoods, Highlands Ranch's newest custom home neighborhood, celebrates its grand opening. Fox Creek and Coyote Creek Elementary Schools open. Cherry Hills Community Church opens.
- **1996:** Groundbreaking is held for Trailblazer Elementary School, Highlands Ranch's first elementary school built completely from contributions by Highlands Ranch builders. Cougar Run Elementary School and the combined Ranch View Middle School/ThunderRidge High School open. James G. Toepfer Park is dedicated. The library mill levy passes, permitting the construction of a regional branch library in Highlands Ranch. An agreement is signed to convey a county regional park within the Wildcat Mountain Reserve. Safeway

celebrates the grand opening of its Safeway Marketplace in Highlands Ranch's Town Center. Red Rocks Federal Credit Union moves its headquarters to Highlands Ranch.

- **1997:** Shea Homes, a division of the J.F. Shea Company, acquires Mission Viejo Company and Highlands Ranch. Highlands Ranch celebrates its Sweet Sixteen Anniversary. The population is 39,000 people. Construction began on Highlands Ranch Boulevard, (renamed Lucent Boulevard), the fourth interchange that provides access from Highlands Ranch to C-470. Trailblazer Elementary School opens. Construction begins on the community's second golf course, Highlands Ranch Golf Club. The third outdoor pool facility, Westridge Pool, and second recreation center, Eastridge, open. AMC Highlands Ranch 24 Theaters opens.
- **1999:** Shea Homes/Shea Properties launches the Highlands Ranch Business Park with the construction of the Shea Center. Lucent Technologies announces its decision to move company headquarters to the Highlands Ranch Business Park.
- **1999:** Highlands Ranch reaches 90,000 homes
- **2000:** The Highlands Ranch Library celebrates its grand opening. The Chamber of Commerce of Highlands Ranch is founded. The 55-acre Redstone Park, the community's largest, opens.
- **2001:** Highlands Ranch celebrates its 20th Anniversary. The population is approximately 70,000. The Recreation Center at Westridge opens.
- **2001:** Mountain Vista High School opens
- **2003:** Rock Canyon High School opens
- **2003:** Highlands Ranch Senior Club opens. Senior members (age 55+) meet to enjoy activities and more.
- **2004:** The first businesses open in the Highlands Ranch Town Center.
- **2005:** Civic Green Park opens in the Highlands Ranch Town Center. The Recreation Center at Southridge opens.
- **2006:** Highlands Ranch celebrates its 25th Anniversary! The population is 86,000. Shea Homes conveyed 874 acres of the Backcountry Wilderness Area to HRCA, and HRCA builds the first of the Backcountry hiking/biking trails.
- **2007:** Valor Christian High School, a private non-denominational, co-educational, independent day school serving 9th through 12th grade students, opens.
- **2007:** Wind Crest, an Erickson Living Community opens at the north-western edge of Highlands Ranch. The motto of this vibrant retirement community is "Add more Living to your Life".
- **2007:** BackCountry, Shea's prestigious, gated, award-winning master-planned community of 1,100 acres opens. The community's tag line is "Wild at Heart".
- **2008:** Highlands Ranch celebrates Resident # 90,000.
- **2008 Vi** at Highlands Ranch opens. Providing a Luxury Senior Life Plan Community. Vi motto is "Redefining Senior Living.
- **2008:** Forbes.com – Highlands Ranch is listed among America's 25 Best Places to Move
- **2009:** Shea Homes conveyed the balance of the Backcountry Wilderness Area to the HRCA. In August HRCA opens the Backcountry Highlands Point Trail System.
- **2009:** The Highlands Ranch Veterans Monument is dedicated. The monument is the realization of a goal to honor the service and sacrifices of our nation's veterans at a special location in Highlands Ranch.
- **2010:** Shea Homes gives the Mansion property and funds for renovation as well as an endowment to the Highlands Ranch Metro District. Metro District begins the \$6 million dollar renovation.
- **2011:** 30th Anniversary of Highlands Ranch | Population 92,600. With 29,638 homes and 3,305 apartment units.
- **2011:** Douglas County Sheriff Substation opens in Highlands Ranch, and houses 35,000 sq. ft. of space, including holding cells, evidence storage, and fingerprinting, along with a community meeting room.
- **2012:** Newly renovated HR Mansion opens. Highlands Ranch Metro District hosts the grand opening of the newly renovated Mansion, inviting the community to enjoy this community treasure.
- **2013:** Nerd Wallet (2013) – Highlands Ranch is #2 in Best CO Towns for Young Families

- **2013:** Children’s Hospital South Campus opens. Convenient emergency, medical, and outpatient care for children in Highlands Ranch and surrounding areas.
- **2016:** Travel & Leisure - H.R.is # 6 in Top 10 Best Places to Live “The area is prized real estate, thanks to its low crime rate and prime schools.”
- **2016:** Money Magazine - H.R. #6 Best Places to Live “A snug town bursting with jobs.”
- **2017:** Central Park opens. The 100-acre Central Park development by Shea will include more than 250 apartments, 200 single-family homes, the UC Health extension campus and an assortment of shops, restaurants and fitness studios
- **2017:** Denver Channel - Highlands Ranch tops list of highest average credit scores
- **2017:** Centennial Water receives Environmental Leadership Award from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
- **2018:** Money Magazine - Highlands Ranch is #8 in the top 10 Best Places to Live in US
- **2019:** Dinosaurs are discovered in Highlands Ranch! During a construction excavation at Windcrest, fossils are uncovered, and Denver Museum of Nature and Science completes the dig, eventually identifying bones from 3 dinosaurs—2 triceratops and 1 duck-billed dinosaur. Age—68 million years old. The dinosaurs become the oldest former residents!
- **2019:** UC Health HR Hospital opens, providing 87 acute care beds and a wide range of health care specialties for the community, including Intensive Care, Cancer Center, Birth Center, Cardiac Center, Trauma Center and ER, and more.
- **2020:** COVID strikes the Highlands Ranch community. Residents remain strong, focused, and overall healthy. This pandemic brings new experiences, challenges and opportunities to all.
- **2020:** Centennial Water serves 30,800 single family homes, 7,550 multi-family units and 950 commercial customers.
- **2020:** C-470 completes major expansion, adding toll lane and making other improvements.
- **2020:** South Metro Fire Rescue Station Number 20 is under construction, scheduled for completion in 2021. It will be approximately 8420 sq. ft. in size and will be the third station in Highlands Ranch.
- **2021:** 40th Anniversary of Highla Dinosaurs are discovered in Highlands Ranch! nds Ranch.

**Highlands Ranch is unincorporated, and is located at the northern edge of Douglas County.
There are three entities that “govern” in HR:**

DOUGLAS COUNTY

Highlands Ranch is served by Douglas County for critical services including:

- Douglas County Public Schools
- Douglas County Sheriff, with a sub-station located at Town Center
- Douglas County Library

HIGHLANDS RANCH METROPOLITAN DISTRICT (HRMD)

As the local government in our community, the Highlands Ranch Metro District Board of Directors is comprised of seven elected board members who represent the citizens of Highlands Ranch.

Mission Statement

Committed to providing quality municipal services while managing resources wisely for the community of Highlands Ranch.

- Construction of major roads
- Installation and maintenance of landscaping and fences adjacent to major roads
- Installation of traffic signals and streetlights on major roads
- Construction and maintenance of parks and trails
- Youth and adult outdoor recreation and sports programs
- Management and maintenance of extensive natural open space areas
- Construction of storm drainage facilities
- Water and wastewater services through a contract with [Centennial Water & Sanitation District](#)
- Community events and volunteer opportunities
- Active adult/senior programs and services
- Operation of the [Highlands Ranch Mansion](#)

Metro District works cooperatively with various other entities to provide essential services to residents including:

- Xcel Energy, for Street Lighting
- South Metro Fire Dept. for Fire Protection.

HIGHLANDS RANCH COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION (HRCA)

- HRCA, the largest community association in the nation, is responsible for management and maintenance of four state-of-the-art recreation centers, the Backcountry Wilderness Area, architectural review of residential improvements, covenant enforcement, commercial development review, assessment billing and collection, community leadership, community events, and recreational programming.
- The Mission of HRCA is to protect and enhance the quality, value, desirability, and attractiveness of all properties which are part of the community association.
- HRCA Offers a wealth of Recreational, Educational and Lifestyle Services for all ages, including 4 large and comprehensive Recreation Centers—Northridge, Eastridge, Westridge, Southridge as well as activities throughout the Ranch
- Governed by a Board of Directors, Delegates, and led by a General Manager
- Property management for residences is controlled via the Community Declaration and other governing documents, such as CC & R's –Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions, which are legally binding for Homeowners, filed with the State of Colorado. The CC & Rs cover the rights and obligations of both the HOA to its members, and also the obligations of the members to the Association. **Covenant enforcement is not a favorite topic, but HRCA ensures that property values remain high in the community and that Highlands Ranch remains a great place to live, work, and play. As a covenant-controlled community, HRCA is bound by the Community Declaration and other governing documents to enforce the covenants of the community.**

Timeline and Contents here compiled from information provided by

HRCA, HR Metro District, HR Historical Society 2020