



DESTINATION DENVER COLORADO · RELOCATION GUIDE

Moving to Johnstown, Colorado

The honest version: the trade-offs, the costs that surprise people, where buyers actually land, and how to plan a move from another state.

THE SHORT ANSWER

Johnstown is a fast-growing town of about 22,000 people in Northern Colorado, mostly in Weld County with a corner in Larimer County, between Loveland and Greeley along I-25. It has a small, real brick downtown, a lot of new construction, and a big retail hub at I-25 and US 34 anchored by one of Scheels' largest stores. It suits people who want a newer house and a small-town feel with quick highway access to Loveland, Greeley, Fort Collins and, with patience, Denver. It suits people less well if they want rail, an established tree-lined neighborhood, or a simple tax picture: two counties, two school districts and many metro districts mean the details change by address.

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Is Johnstown the right fit for you?

Johnstown is one of those communities that is just growing. It has a great small-town feel, much like Berthoud, but its downtown is larger in scale. By no means a big downtown, but a lot bigger than Berthoud's. It's very family-friendly, and you'll see a ton of new houses and new things going up.

The numbers back that up: 17,303 people in the 2020 census, an estimated 22,433 by July 2025, and 10th nationally for one-year growth among places its size in 2024–25. Harvey Parish platted the town along the Great Western Railway in 1902 and named it for his son John. It grew on a Carnation condensed-milk plant and a Great Western sugar factory; the sugar factory came down in 2005.

Why people choose Johnstown

- A walkable original downtown, with older homes close enough to walk or bike in
- Lots of new construction, including new schools
- I-25, US 34 and Highway 60 all at the edge of town
- Johnstown Plaza and Centerra for shopping, dining and medical care

What gives people pause

- Two counties and two school districts. The address decides the assessor and the school.
- Metro districts are common in the newer subdivisions.
- Water and sewer have been playing catch-up with growth (see costs below).
- No rail, and very little transit.
- Denver is a real commute.

Where is Johnstown, and how do you get around?

The original town sits a few miles east of I-25 near where the Big and Little Thompson rivers meet, about 9 miles southeast of Loveland and 10 miles west-southwest of Greeley. Town limits now reach both sides of the interstate. Highway 60 (I-25 exit 252) runs into downtown; US 34 (exit 257) is the Johnstown Plaza and Centerra exit.

- **Into Denver:** Downtown Denver is about 45 miles by road, mostly I-25. Routing estimates put it at about 55 minutes off-peak; plan on more than an hour at rush hour. The Denver Tech Center is a bit over an hour off-peak.
- **Into Boulder:** About 50 minutes off-peak.
- **Loveland, Greeley and Fort Collins:** All close. Downtown Loveland is about 20 minutes off-peak, downtown Greeley about 30 and Old Town Fort Collins about 35.

- **Transit:** No rail serves Johnstown as of fall 2026. Loveland's COLT bus added three stops near Johnstown Plaza in December 2025, and CDOT's Bustang North Line stops at the Centerra Loveland Mobility Hub (exit 257) on its way to Denver Union Station and Fort Collins. Front Range Passenger Rail (named the Colorado Connector in April 2026) would link Denver and Fort Collins by 2029 at the earliest, if funded; a sales tax for the full line is on the November 3, 2026 ballot.
- **The airport:** Denver International is about an hour off-peak (the town's own materials say about 45 minutes). Northern Colorado Regional Airport, northwest of town, is general aviation only, with no scheduled airline service.

What are Johnstown's neighborhoods like?

Most of Johnstown is new. Which side of town you're on decides your county, school district and often your electric company.

Downtown and Old Town

Parish Avenue and Charlotte Street are the historic core; after a 1911 fire, the wooden buildings on West Main Street were rebuilt in brick. There's a lot of activity down there and a lot of festivities, and the neighborhoods right around it have houses where people can just walk or jump on bikes and ride over. A Downtown Master Plan adopted in 2025 was moving into implementation as of April 2026. Weld County, Weld RE-5J schools.

Pioneer Ridge and the south side

Home to Pioneer Ridge Elementary and a park of the same name. Electric service here comes from United Power rather than Xcel. Weld RE-5J schools.

Thompson River Ranch

A newer community on the northwest side, just south of Scheels. It's in Thompson School District, with Riverview PK-8 (opened 2021) inside the neighborhood. Ask whether a metro district and HOA apply, and get both numbers.

2534 and the I-25 / US 34 area

The area at the southeast corner of I-25 and US 34, next to Loveland's Centerra, home to Johnstown Plaza and the 2534 development. This is the Larimer County side. Check the county, school district and metro district for each address.

Highway 60 and Ledge Rock

The newest growth front, at I-25 and Highway 60. Colorado's first Buc-ee's opened here in 2024, Ledge Rock Center (about 200 acres, with Woods Supermarket and Murdoch's) was still expanding as of May 2026, and plans announced in 2022 include more than 1,000 homes nearby.

What does it cost to own a home in Johnstown?

Price the whole payment, not just the house.

- **Property tax:** Most addresses are Weld County; the northwest corner is Larimer County. Look up any address with the Weld County Assessor or the Larimer County Assessor for the exact mill levy.
- **Metro districts:** Common in newer subdivisions. Johnstown has several, including the Johnstown Village, Johnstown North and Riverbend Estates metro districts. The levy shows up on the property tax bill, not the HOA statement. Get the number before you offer.
- **HOA:** Expect one in most newer subdivisions, sometimes on top of a metro district. Older homes near downtown often have neither.
- **Water and sewer:** The town supplies most addresses with Colorado-Big Thompson and Home Supply Ditch water, but some areas overlap Little Thompson Water District, so confirm the provider. Johnstown makes developers dedicate actual water rights, not cash in lieu, which can show up in new-home pricing. The system has been catching up with growth: algae taste-and-odor complaints in 2021, outdoor watering limits in 2022 over treated-water storage, then a build-out. As of fall 2026 the Low Point wastewater expansion is done; the water plant expansion and a new Central wastewater plant replacing 1950s lagoons were slated for 2026, with completion not yet posted; a raw-water pipeline from Lonetree Reservoir is in design. Rates rose in 2024; check the town's fee schedule.
- **Insurance:** Hail, as everywhere on the Front Range. Homes near the Little Thompson or Big Thompson rivers should check FEMA flood maps; both rivers flooded upstream in 2013.
- **Oil and gas:** Weld County is part of the Denver-Julesburg Basin. Ask about nearby well sites and read the mineral-rights disclosures.

What kinds of homes are in Johnstown?

The oldest homes are around the 1902 downtown. Most of the rest is newer construction. Johnstown issued a record 528 single-family permits in 2025 and more than 900 total, with townhomes, duplexes and apartments a growing share. If you want a new house, there's plenty of choice. If you want mature trees, look downtown.

How do schools work in Johnstown?

Two districts, by address. Weld RE-5J serves most of the town, plus Milliken, with about 4,200 students in 2025–26. Its schools include Elwell and Pioneer Ridge elementaries, Roosevelt Middle School and Roosevelt High School, which moved to a new campus on County Road 13 built with the district's 2020 bond. RE-5J also authorizes two charters: Knowledge Quest Academy (K–8) and CIVICA Colorado (6–

12), both in Milliken. Thompson School District, based in Loveland, covers the northwest part of town, including Riverview PK-8 in Thompson River Ranch.

Colorado's open enrollment law lets students apply to schools outside their zone; check each district for deadlines. Always check the specific address with the district's boundary tool.

What is there to do in Johnstown?

Parks, trails and open space

The town lists eight public parks, including Lake Park, Parish Park and Pioneer Ridge Park, and added 50 acres of open land in 2024. As of fall 2026, the Letford Elementary site was being demolished for a future park.

Events and history

BBQ Day, the first Saturday of June, is the big one: a parade, a car show, music downtown and fireworks. The Historic Parish House Museum, the founding family's home on Charlotte Street, tells the town's story.

Three places to start

- **Downtown** — Walk Parish Avenue and Charlotte Street and the blocks around them.
- **Scheels at Johnstown Plaza** — 250,000 square feet with a 65-foot indoor Ferris wheel and a 16,000-gallon aquarium.
- **Centerra** — At the same interchange, in Loveland, with The Promenade Shops, the Blue Arena and a medical center.

Who are the big employers in and near Johnstown?

The town's largest employers include Scheels (about 600), Weld RE-5J (371), Northern Colorado Long Term Acute Care Hospital (310), FedEx Ground (250), Canyon Bakehouse (250), High Country Beverage (245) and Swire Coca-Cola (202). Buc-ee's is a recent addition, and Centerra, Greeley and Fort Collins are short drives.

How does Johnstown compare with nearby areas?

- **Johnstown vs. Windsor** — Windsor is about twice the size, also split between Weld and Larimer, with its own district, Weld RE-4.
- **Johnstown vs. Milliken** — Milliken is the smaller Weld County town next door and shares Weld RE-5J, so its kids also go to Roosevelt.

- **Johnstown vs. Loveland** — Loveland is a Larimer County city of about 81,000 (2025 estimate) known for its arts scene; the two share the Centerra interchange.
- **Johnstown vs. Berthoud** — Berthoud is the smaller, mostly Larimer town to the southwest, in Thompson School District, with a smaller downtown.

A lender's take on Johnstown

People love the location of Johnstown. You're a little farther outside Denver, a little farther from Longmont and Fort Collins, out in a new-built suburb, and you still have pretty quick access. You can get to Denver, and over to Boulder or Longmont if you need to.

All that growth brings commercial building with it, especially along the I-25 corridor. Johnstown will be one of those communities where it'll be interesting to watch what happens over the next five to ten years.

For buyers, the comparison usually comes down to the payment. A new build often carries a metro district levy and HOA dues, so get both numbers before you offer; older homes near downtown often have neither.

Buying in Johnstown: what to do first

1. **Get pre-approved** before you tour.
2. **Confirm the county, school district and water provider** for the exact address. Each can differ.
3. **Price the whole payment** with the right county's property tax, any metro district levy, HOA dues, insurance and current water and sewer rates.
4. **Pull the metro district and HOA documents** on any newer home.
5. **Drive the commute at rush hour** from the actual neighborhood: I-25 south, US 34 or Highway 60.
6. **Veterans:** a VA loan works on a new build in Thompson River Ranch and on a resale near downtown alike. On new construction, bring the builder contract and any metro district details in early.

Frequently asked questions

What county is Johnstown, Colorado in?

Both Weld and Larimer. Most of the town, including downtown, is in Weld County; the northwest corner around I-25 and US 34, including Johnstown Plaza, is in Larimer County. Check the assessor for the specific address.

What school district is Johnstown in?

It depends on the address. Weld RE-5J serves most of the town, including Roosevelt High School. Thompson School District serves the northwest part, including Thompson River Ranch and Riverview PK-

8.

How far is Johnstown from Denver?

About 45 miles, mostly on I-25: roughly 55 minutes off-peak and more than an hour at rush hour. Denver International Airport is about an hour.

Does Johnstown have light rail or a train?

No. As of fall 2026, no passenger rail serves Johnstown. Bustang's North Line stops at Centerra in Loveland, and Loveland's COLT bus serves stops near Johnstown Plaza.

How big is Johnstown, Colorado?

About 22,433 people as of the Census Bureau's July 2025 estimate, up from 17,303 in 2020. It ranked 10th nationally for one-year growth among places of 20,000 or more in 2024–25.

Do new homes in Johnstown have metro districts?

Many do. Metro districts fund infrastructure and amenities in newer subdivisions and add a levy to the property tax bill. Ask for the district's current levy and debt before you make an offer.

Is the Scheels in Johnstown?

Yes. The 250,000-square-foot Scheels opened in 2017 at Johnstown Plaza, near I-25 and US 34, and is the town's largest employer.

Sources

Guide reviewed October 25, 2026, and reviewed again twice a year.

- Johnstown, Colorado (counties, population, history, employers, schools, BBQ Day)
- Weld County History: Johnstown (founding 1902, 1911 fire, Carnation milk plant, Great Western sugar plant)
- BizWest: Johnstown witnesses end of era as sugar factory comes down (Oct. 2005)
- BizWest: 2534 development at the southeast corner of I-25 and US 34 (Nov. 2015)
- KUNC/BizWest: From Buc-ee's to boomtown, Johnstown's growth goes national (May 2026)
- CBS Colorado: Johnstown prepares to add 1,000+ housing units (May 2022)
- Town of Johnstown: News Flash (2024 annual report, COLT stops, Downtown Master Plan, Woods Supermarket)
- Town of Johnstown: Economic Development (time to DIA, highways)
- Town of Johnstown: Capital Improvement Projects
- Town of Johnstown: Water Treatment Plant Expansion
- Town of Johnstown: Central Wastewater Treatment Plant
- Town of Johnstown: Water and Sewer (rates, fee schedule)
- Town of Johnstown: Utility Service Providers
- Larimer County: Johnstown Raw Water Pipeline 1041 permit (Lonetree Reservoir)
- Loveland Reporter-Herald via Coyote Gulch: Johnstown implements outdoor watering limits (July 2022)

- CBS Colorado: Johnstown drinking water taste and odor (July 2021)
- Little Thompson Water District: Our Service Area
- Riverbend Estates Metro District: Overlapping Entities
- Johnstown North Metropolitan District: About
- Colorado Office of the State Auditor: Johnstown Village Metropolitan District No. 2
- Colorado Division of Property Taxation: Weld County Assessor
- Colorado Division of Property Taxation: Larimer County Assessor
- Town of Johnstown: Schools (Weld RE-5J and Thompson School District)
- Weld RE-5J School District
- Weld RE-5J: Roosevelt High construction (County Road 13 site, 2020 bond)
- Colorado Department of Education SchoolView: Johnstown-Milliken RE-5J (2025-26 enrollment)
- Colorado Department of Education SchoolView: CIVICA Colorado
- Colorado League of Charter Schools: Knowledge Quest Academy
- Colorado Department of Education: Open Enrollment
- Thompson School District: Riverview PK-8, About (in Thompson River Ranch, south of Scheels; opened 2021)
- Thompson School District: School Locator
- Town of Johnstown: Parks and Facilities (eight public parks)
- Town of Johnstown: Parks
- Town of Johnstown: BBQ Day
- Johnstown Historical Society: About (Historic Parish House and Museum)
- SCHEELS Johnstown (size, Ferris wheel, aquarium)
- Interstate 25 in Colorado (exit list, mileage, Larimer-Weld line)
- U.S. Route 34 in Colorado (I-25 interchange in Larimer County)
- Colorado State Highway 60
- CDOT Bustang: North Line
- Front Range Passenger Rail (Colorado Connector, 2029 target, funding)
- Colorado Sun: Front Range train sales tax ballot question (Aug. 2026)
- Northern Colorado Regional Airport
- 2013 Colorado floods (Big Thompson River)
- Little Thompson Watershed Restoration Master Plan (Dec. 2014, 2013 flood impacts)
- Weld County, Colorado (Denver-Julesburg Basin oil and gas)
- Larimer County, Colorado (Johnstown partly in Larimer)
- Windsor, Colorado
- Milliken, Colorado
- Loveland, Colorado (Centerra)
- Berthoud, Colorado
- OpenStreetMap (OSRM) off-peak driving estimates from Johnstown to downtown Denver, Boulder, Loveland, Greeley, Fort Collins, DIA and the DTC

- Destination Denver Colorado: The Best Towns of N. Colorado / Longmont Loveland Fort Collins Greeley & MORE! (Aug. 2024)

A note from Jimmy

I'm a mortgage loan originator with the Everetts Lending Team at Edge Home Finance, licensed across Colorado, and I make these guides because the first thing most people need isn't a loan; it's a straight answer about where they're going. When you're ready to talk numbers, or you just want a second opinion on a neighborhood, reach out.

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