

# County nets \$1M from feds

## Money to offset property taxes slated for road department

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Larimer County is slated to receive more than \$1.1 million in federal money this year to offset property taxes on federally owned land in the county.

The annual appropriation is coming from the payment in lieu of taxes, or PILT, program administered by the Bureau of Land Management.

The program compensates counties for tax-exempt land owned by agencies such as BLM, the National Park Service and the U.S. Forest Service. About 750,000 acres in Larimer County are federally owned.

Statewide, counties will receive \$16.84 million in PILT money, according a statement released by Sen. Wayne Allard, R-Colo.

The money makes a difference to financially strapped counties, Allard said in a prepared statement.

"Larimer County, like many counties in Colorado, relies on the PILT program to help offset the costs of providing vital services to the nontaxable federal lands within their boundaries," he said. "This funding makes sure that the federal government is a good neighbor in Larimer County."

Topping the list of payment amounts is Mesa County on the Western Slope with \$1.56 million; at the bottom is Washington County on the plains with \$158.

Most of Larimer County's take will go to the general fund of the county Road and Bridge Department, as it has for many years, said County Manager Frank Lancaster.

The PILT money is important to the county, he said.

"Most of the federal land is in the western part of the county," he said. "There are roads throughout Forest Service land, and they are more expensive to maintain than roads down on the flats.

"Historically, we've thought this was the best use of the money."

The total PILT payment to Larimer County this year is \$1,108,178, said Lorrie Lopez, an accountant with the county's finance department.

All but \$2,855 of the payment will go to Road and Bridge, with the rest going to other taxing entities, such as school and fire districts.

Earlier this month Allard helped to secure an \$8.2 million increase in national PILT funding designated for the 2006 federal budget.

