

# 84% of Jefferson County Is Unincorporated But Has "City" Addresses

As a Realtor and resident of Jefferson County, I wince when I see a listing that's many miles outside the City of Golden advertised as being "in Golden." It may have a Golden address, but it's in unincorporated Jefferson County.

Another example of this confusion is Evergreen. Evergreen is not a city or town, it's just a postal address with its own ZIP code, 80439, serving 177 square miles of unincorporated Jeffco — and a portion of Clear Creek County. Residents could use "Upper Bear Creek CO 80439" (or similar) in their address if they wanted, because the ZIP code is what matters to the Postal Service, but that's not common. It doesn't make your neighborhood a "city," however.

It's understandable that the Post Office wants to use a city name for every address, no matter how remote. After all, what's the alternative? All mail has to go through post offices with city addresses, but that doesn't mean the address is within city limits.

Littleton is another example. Although Littleton is Arapahoe County's county seat, much of south Jeffco has Littleton addresses. Littleton 80127 and 80128 cover 70 sq. miles and 30,000 homes, all of them in Jeffco and virtually none of them in the City of Littleton!

As we all know, Littleton's reputation was damaged by the 1999 mass shooting at Columbine High School, when in fact that school is a mile from the city limits of Littleton and is part of Jeffco Public Schools. Such is the power of postal addresses!

Above right is a graphic from Jefferson County's website showing the incorporated and unincorporated

areas of Jefferson County.

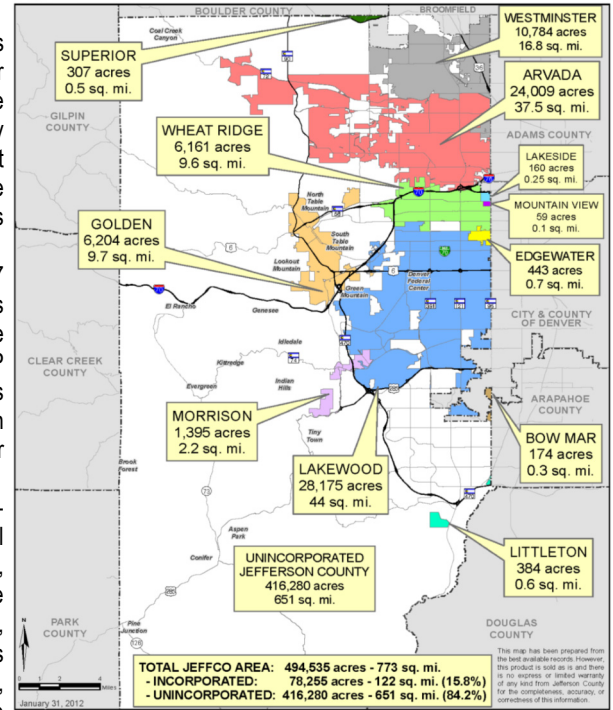
It may surprise you to know that Golden's two ZIP codes — 80401 and 80403 — cover more square miles than the entire City and County of Denver. The City of Golden itself, covers only about 10 square miles — about 5% of the area and just one-third of the homes with Golden addresses.

Golden addresses span 187 square miles compared to Denver's 155 square miles. If you exclude the airport, Denver, with its 41 ZIP codes, covers only 101 square miles — about half the size of "Golden" with its two ZIP codes, and even smaller than "Evergreen" with its one ZIP code.

Because ZIP codes with large rural components are so big, statistics about individual neighborhoods are not generally available, and statistics for the ZIP codes as a whole are meaningless. Some marketing companies, including Zillow, promulgate statistical reports by ZIP code as if they were neighborhoods, which works fine when the ZIP code is one square mile, but not when it's 20, 50, 100, or 150 square miles!

Fortunately, [REcolorado.com](http://REcolorado.com), which is our local MLS, allows real estate professionals like me to draw boundaries around **actual** neighborhoods when generating statistics or searching listings. I do that a lot.

There are pros and cons of being in unincorporated vs. incorporated areas of the county. The county



has no sales tax, but many of the cities do. At the Golden King Soopers, you pay 3% city sales tax on groceries which you don't pay in other King Soopers.

Property tax is another matter. In unincorporated areas you have separate mill levies for law enforcement, fire protection, and other jurisdictions. Golden, as one example, provides all those services for a single mill levy lower than those combined levies.

## NREL Celebrates 40 Years of Making a Difference

The National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), originally known as the Solar Energy Research Institute (SERI), was created during the Carter administration 40 years ago. Its location close to the City of Golden has allowed Jefferson County to become a national center of innovation and business creation in the area of renewable energy.

The Colorado Renewable Energy Society (CRES) is marking this milestone on July 12th at the Jefferson Unitarian Church with a presentation by Denis Hayes, SERI's second director and a co-founder of Earth Day.

His talk is titled, "How NREL Won the Long Game for Clean Power." You can reserve your free seat at [NREL40.eventbrite.com](http://NREL40.eventbrite.com). Your reservation is not required but helps to plan for food, and any donations are appreciated.

Hayes and other remarkable scientists and engineers will share what motivated their research in solar power and other fossil fuel alternatives when oil was king, and how they weathered hostility from earlier

administrations. The future of NREL in the Trump administration will no doubt be discussed. Stay for a networking reception with food and drinks after the presentation. The event is co-sponsored by the Colorado Renewable Energy Society, the JUC Green Task Force and New Energy Colorado/Golden Earth Days.

Jefferson Unitarian Church is at 14350 W. 32nd Ave., west of the 32nd & Youngfield exit of I-70. The event begins at 7 pm.



## Join Us in Celebrating Golden Real Estate's 10th Anniversary!

Golden Real Estate was incorporated on July 7, 2007, which means that this is our 10th Anniversary. Mark your calendar for **Friday, July 14th, 5-8 pm**, when we'll be throwing a party for clients, supporters and you, our readers, in our South Golden Road parking lot with live music and free food. Broker associate Jim Swanson and his Lakeside Doublewide band will entertain us. Tequila's Mexican Family Restaurant will cater the event. I hope you'll join us!

**Jim Smith**

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Honored as Metro Denver's #3 brokerage of its size (6 to 10 agents) for the number of closed transactions in 2016

