

61.1% Housing Vacancy Rate — #1 in U.S. Rural Counties

61.1% Vacancy in Rural America

Summit County leads the nation in housing vacancy rate — and it's not a crisis

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THE DATA

61.1%

Housing Vacancy Rate (2024)

Summit County, Colorado, leads all U.S. counties under 50,000 residents in vacancy rate.

This figure is not a sign of distress but reflects a structural reality: rural areas with high seasonal or second-home use naturally register elevated vacancy. The U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2024, counts these as vacant, even when well-maintained and in high demand during peak seasons.

01

Vacancy Is a Strategic Asset

High vacancy in rural counties like Summit County is not a flaw—it's a feature. These areas attract long-term investors and impact buyers who view unoccupied land not as underutilized, but as undervalued. The lack of permanent residents preserves land integrity, supports conservation, and enables future infrastructure flexibility. This vacancy acts as a de facto buffer zone for sustainable growth, making these counties ideal for regenerative agriculture, solar development, and off-grid tech homesteading.

02

The Market Values What's Unused

The most valuable rural land today is not the most occupied—it's the most available. Investors are shifting from crowded, high-occupancy zones to areas with high vacancy because they signal low regulatory friction, low population density, and high future scalability. This trend is already visible in Colorado's Western Slope, where water rights and vacant land are being priced as strategic reserves, not liabilities. The market is learning to read vacancy not as emptiness, but as latent opportunity.

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