

## Rate refund arrives

Customers to get back \$8.4M in power costs

Most IREA customers will see rate refunds on their December bills.

IREA has received a one-time wholesale power cost refund and is passing on the full amount of that refund – \$8.4 million – to consumers in the form of a bill credit.

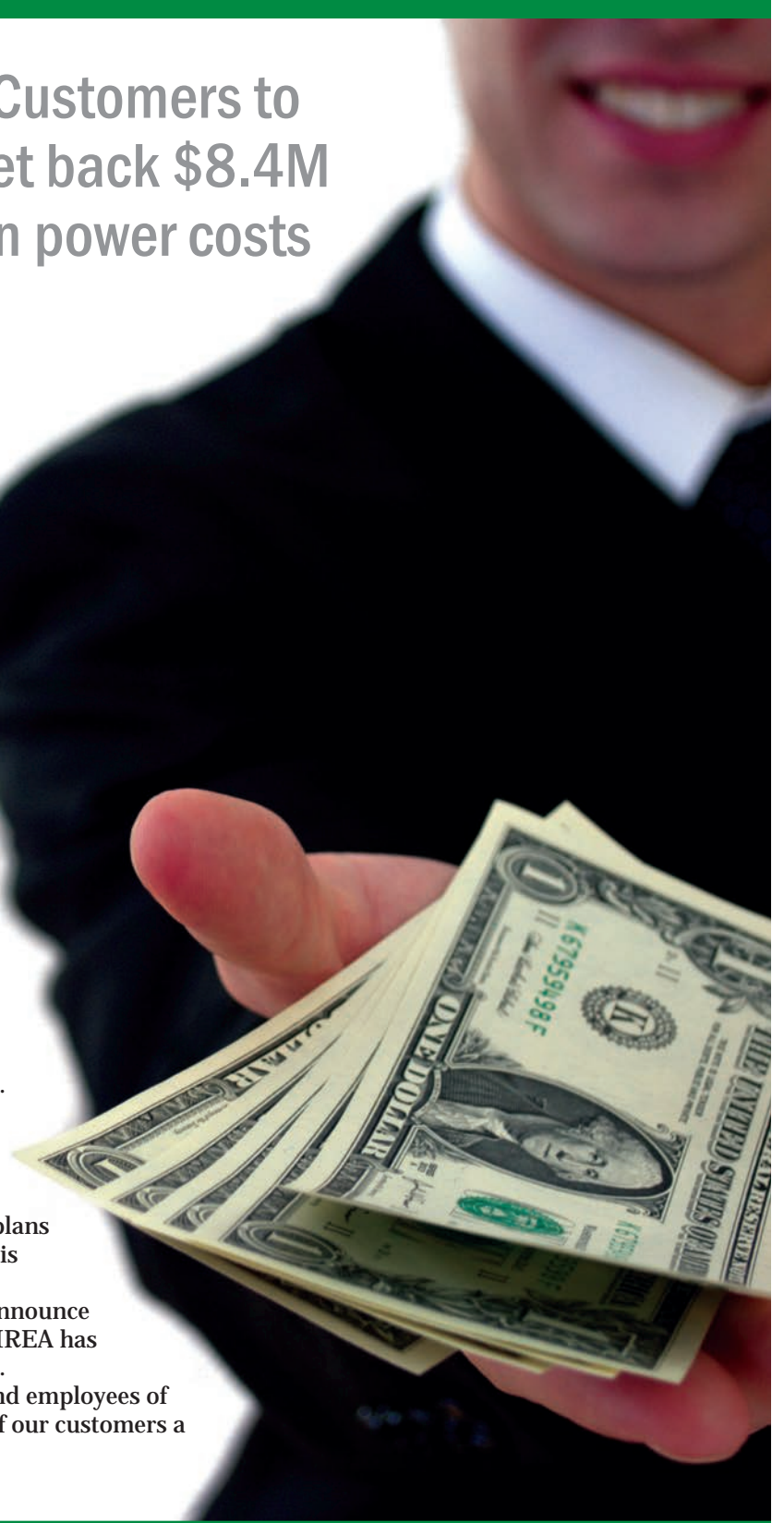
The financial condition of the association is strong and consistent with our business plan even without the power cost refund; therefore, IREA's board of directors concluded that the refund should be passed directly to customers.

Individual credits to customers' monthly bills are based on the amount of energy used this year through Oct. 31 relative to the total amount of energy sold by IREA during that time. Residential customers, on average, will receive a credit on their monthly bill of approximately \$41. Customers who used very little energy during that time or who were not on the system then will see less or no credit; those who used more energy than average during that time will see larger credits. Commercial and industrial customers will receive credits on the same basis as residential customers.

This one-time refund is separate from, and in addition to, the capital credit refunds IREA typically issues to its customers each spring. IREA plans to again issue capital credit refunds to customers this coming March.

In addition to the rate refund, IREA is happy to announce that customers will not see a rate increase in 2018. IREA has not had a general rate increase since February 2013.

As 2017 draws to a close, the board of directors and employees of Intermountain Rural Electric Association wish all of our customers a joyful and safe holiday season and happy New Year.



# IREA to recycle holiday lights

IREA is excited to announce its first Holiday Lights Recycling Program.

From Dec. 1 through Jan. 15, IREA customers wanting to dispose of any Christmas or holiday lights can drop them off for free at any IREA office. This includes working or non-working incandescent, vintage and all other types of festive lights.

We will work with a recycler who will pay for any holiday lights donated through IREA. All funds raised in recycling lights will go to Energy Outreach Colorado, an independent non-profit that provides home energy assistance to low-income Coloradans.

Beyond this worthy cause, replacing old Christmas lights offers other benefits: Newer LED lights are up to 90 percent more efficient. They last much longer and are much more durable and safe than those old lights you've used the last 25 years. Many are also cool to the touch, unlike incandescent holiday lights.

Old lights can be dropped off during regular business hours, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, in designated lobby bins at any of IREA's four offices:

- Conifer – 13404 Old U.S. Highway 285
- Sedalia – 5496 N. U.S. Highway 85
- Strasburg – 1497 Main St.
- Woodland Park – 800 N. Highway 67



## Schedule a free home energy audit

Energy use often goes up during winter months, but not just because your furnace or other heating system is getting more use. Patterns in your energy use, the types of electrical appliances and devices you operate, and the effectiveness of your home's insulation are among the many other factors that can generate an unexpectedly high electric bill.

IREA offers free energy audits to customers interested in potentially reducing their monthly bills. Our energy efficien-

cy expert will gather important data on your home's heating system and use thermal imaging equipment to identify cold spots. We then provide you recommendations for increasing energy efficiency within your home, many of which have little or no cost.

You can schedule your free energy audit by visiting [www.IREA.coop/energy-audits](http://www.IREA.coop/energy-audits), where you will also find energy efficiency tips to follow both before and after your free audit.

# Avoid sophisticated scams

IREA would like to caution its customers to be aware of more frequent and sophisticated scams in and around the association's service territory.

IREA has received reports of possible scammers going door to door, sometimes claiming to be IREA employees. We urge all customers to use the following tips to avoid these scams and ensure the safety of family and belongings:

- **Check for identification.** Any person attempting to access your property should provide upon request photo identification and company ID. IREA field personnel also wear clothing that clearly identifies them as IREA employees. Contractors hired by IREA should have with them documentation from IREA that authorizes the work to be performed. If you have any doubt, call IREA at (800) 332-9540.

- **Look at the vehicle.** IREA employees drive signature yellow trucks bearing the IREA logo. IREA contractor vehicles have company-issued signage that identifies them as those contracted for work by IREA.

- **Know where your meters are.** Most utility meters are actually located outside of the home, so the person reading yours won't typically need to enter your home. Most IREA meters are read

## Scams Impacting Customers Nationwide

Many electric, water, and natural gas customers throughout the country are being targeted by impostor utility scams each day. Scammers typically use phone, in-person, and online tactics to target customers.

One of the most common types of utility scams involves customers receiving unsolicited telephone, electronic, or in-person communications from an individual claiming to be a utility company representative. The scammer warns that the customer's electric, water, or natural gas service will be disconnected or shut off if the customer fails to make an immediate payment—typically using a reloadable prepaid debit card or other non-traceable form of payment.

Scammers often use valid-looking phone numbers, graphics, uniforms, and other forms of fraudulent identification.

### Below are a few common signs of potential scam activity:

- **Threat to disconnect:** The impostor utility representative aggressively tells the customer his or her account is past due and service will be disconnected if a large payment is not made.
- **Request for immediate payment:** The caller instructs the customer to quickly purchase a prepaid debit card—widely available at retail stores.
- **Request for prepaid debit card info:** The caller asks the customer for the prepaid debit card's number, which grants the caller instant access to the card's funds.



by a passing association vehicle and do not require a meter reader to access your property. If your meter is outside, but someone who claims to be a meter reader insists on entering your home, lock the doors and immediately call the police.

- **Don't provide personal information.** Some criminals are looking to

steal your identity, not your belongings. Never give out personal information to people claiming they work for IREA or any other utility company.

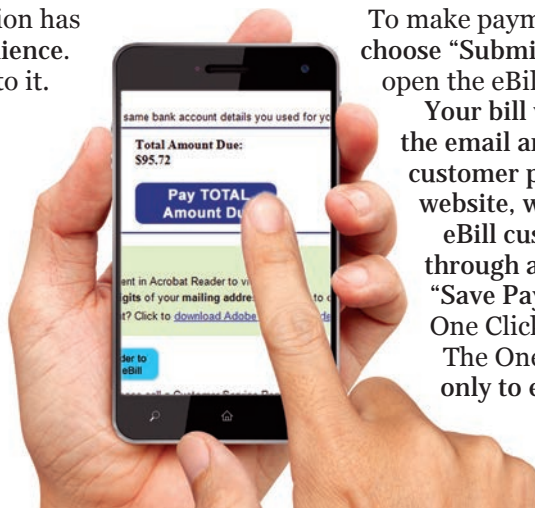
- **When in doubt, don't hesitate to call us at (800) 332-9540.**

Additional tips on avoiding other common utility scams can be found at [www.IREA.coop/scams](http://www.IREA.coop/scams).

## IREA launches new One Click payment option

IREA's new One Click payment option has been very well-received for its convenience. If you don't use it, you should look into it.

The option is available to any eBill customer. eBill customers who have never made payments through the eBill and have not selected the option to "Save Payment Details" can easily set up the One Click option: Open your eBill PDF, enter your payment information, check the box next to "Save Payment Details," and you're all set. Your next eBill will display a "Pay Total Amount Due" button within the body of the email and will prominently show that amount.



To make payment, simply click this button and choose "Submit Payment." You will not even have to open the eBill PDF to make payment.

Your bill will be available for your review in the email and archived on our "My Account" customer portal, which is accessible at IREA's website, [www.IREA.coop](http://www.IREA.coop).

eBill customers who made a previous payment through an eBill and selected the option to "Save Payment Details" already can use the One Click option without any further action.

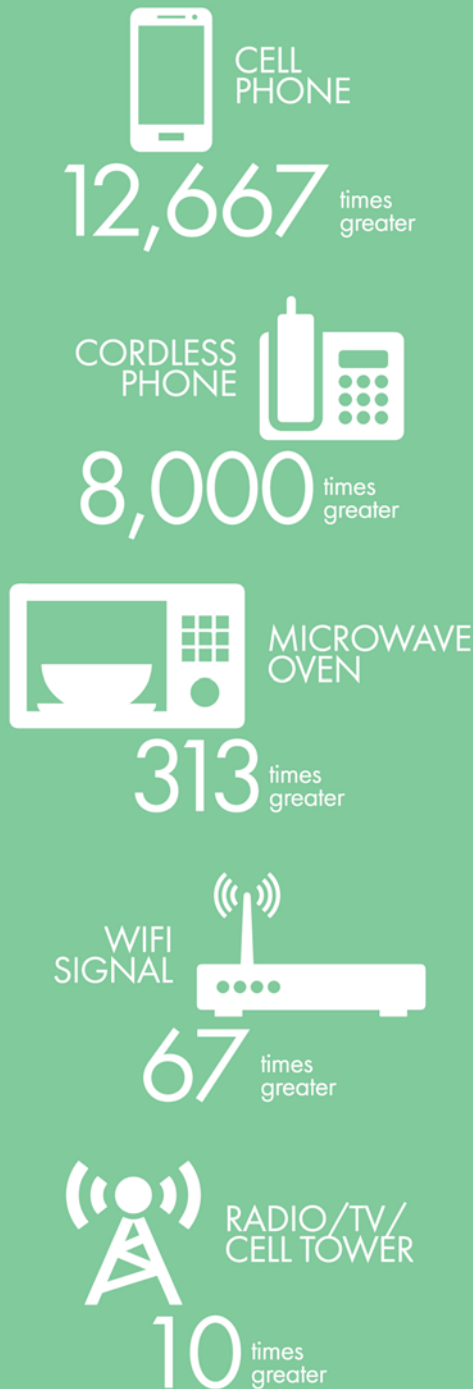
The One Click payment option is available only to electronic billing customers.

If you would like to sign up for our free, secure and easy-to-use eBilling, visit [www.IREA.coop/ebilling](http://www.IREA.coop/ebilling).

# Safety, security key to AMI

## IREA addresses concerns about radio frequency, data privacy

This chart shows the relative levels of radio frequency emitted by several commonly used electronic devices. An AMI meter emits just 0.000015 milliwatts of radio frequency per square centimeter at just 3 feet away, while a cell phone emits 12,667 times as much RF when held to an ear.



Source: Federal Communications Commission

IREA understands that customers have questions about the impending Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) installation that will begin next year. AMI is not new in the electric utility industry. It is a proven technology with more than 65 million meters already in place. It is new for many IREA customers, though, and we want to provide answers to any questions you have.

Some common questions about AMI involve radio frequency (RF) emissions and their health effects. We want our customers to know that these meters are safe. The AMI meters will transmit brief signals once each hour unless the power fails, in which case they will broadcast an alert to us, or unless we call upon them for a response, which will rarely happen. All meters IREA installs as part of the AMI project will operate well below RF emission limits set by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). They will generate much less RF energy than many other household items we use daily, including cell phones and microwaves.

Customers might also have concerns regarding data privacy. That is why it is important to know that no customer-identifying information is transmitted or stored by the AMI system. Like analog and basic digital meters, AMI meters collect information about electricity delivered to the meter. Unlike older meters, an AMI meter will notify IREA if power is not being delivered to the meter and collect data on the level of power demand at the meter and the voltage of power delivered to the meter.

AMI meters will not, however, tell IREA how you use that power. Our data collection stops at the meter. We will not know if you burn toast, what you watch on TV or which websites you visit on your computer. Energy use on your side of the meter is your business, not IREA's. We simply deliver electricity to your meter. AMI meters will be owned by IREA as part of our distribution system; their sole purpose will be to allow us to monitor the energy delivered by that system so we can know how much to bill and understand the performance of the system. The information we will obtain from an AMI meter will not be used or useful for any other purpose.

Protecting customer privacy is a priority for IREA. We do not and will not sell or share customer information with third parties for commercial purposes, nor do we release customer information to government agencies without a subpoena, warrant or other valid legal process. This will not change with the use of AMI technology.

Data security also is a priority for IREA. AMI data will be encrypted and protected by multiple layers of security to guard against unauthorized actions, breaches and tampering. No personal customer information – names, addresses or account numbers, for example – will be transmitted or stored by the AMI system. An AMI meter records and transmits only data regarding the quantity and quality of the energy delivered to the meter, and diagnostic information regarding the performance of the meter itself.

IREA encourages customers to visit [www.IREA.coop/ami-safety](http://www.IREA.coop/ami-safety) for more info on AMI safety and security, including links to independent studies.