

# WATTS & VOLTS

The Official Publication of **IREA**

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## DIRECTOR NEWSLETTER



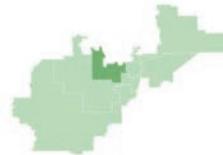
The first half of 2017 continued the trend of rapid growth we have seen over the last several years along the Front Range. Intermountain Rural Electric Association now has more than 152,000 customers and is one of the largest and fastest-growing electric distribution cooperatives in the U.S. As your member-elected director for District 1, I'd like to share with you just a few of the more exciting strides we recently have made.



MICHAEL  
KEMPE  
*District 1*

### Capital Credits

As a member-owned cooperative, we do not operate for profit, and instead allocate to you, our members, shares of the net revenue remaining after all operating expenses have been covered. My fellow directors and I are committed to returning capital to customers while also maintaining and improving the infrastructure that allows IREA to provide reliable service at low rates.



For the fourth year in a row, IREA returned to its customers capital credits in the double-digit millions. This year's refunds, most of which were returned as line-item credits on March bills, totaled \$15.3 million, bringing to \$58 million the amount IREA has returned since 2014.

### Victory Solar Utility-Scale Energy

Within IREA territory and across the world, solar photovoltaic electrical energy continues to grow at an exponential rate. To date, member-owners have installed almost 9 megawatts on homes, businesses and various properties. Last December, IREA connected a 12.8-megawatt AC photovoltaic power plant near our substation just outside of Bennett. IREA will have the option to buy this plant after the system operator has utilized the various tax benefits for putting in the plant. In the meantime, IREA has a power purchase agreement for which we purchase the produced energy at less than half the retail rate, which is also less than our average cost of power.

This rapid growth in renewable energy, and particularly solar, has been of great personal interest to me. As the cost for producing solar electricity has reached prices comparable to or lower than its value to the energy grid, the interest from developers has skyrocketed. IREA is continually contacted by developers interested in adding wind and solar to our energy supply. Many of these potential additions are large enough to require formal grid integration studies to evaluate the grid's capacity to utilize the energy. In the coming years, I expect to see very large additions of utility-scale solar projects to IREA's energy mix.

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## Outage Management System

Among the many improvements we've recently made is a new outage management system. Introduced toward the end of last year, the OMS proved its worth during another typically volatile winter, determining the locations of problems, improving dispatch times and allowing customers to monitor outages and the progress our crews made in restoring service.

If you are not already signed up for text-based outage alerts, I encourage you to visit our online Outage Center at [www.IREA.coop/outage-center](http://www.IREA.coop/outage-center) and enroll in this free service. This will enable you to be notified of an outage and when the outage is repaired. Enrollment also will allow you to more easily report outages via a smartphone.

## Newly Designed IREA.coop Website

IREA's online Outage Center is part of our newly redesigned website, [www.IREA.coop](http://www.IREA.coop). Unveiled in February, the new IREA.coop is a major upgrade from our previous website. In addition to the Outage Center, you will find more intuitive navigation, improved aesthetics and a mobile-friendly format. We also have added information such as our most recent audit reports.

We plan to make continued improvements to IREA.coop to provide customers a useful and enjoyable visitor



experience. We want it to be your go-to resource for all things IREA-related, and you can already look to it for helpful customer tools and information.

## Social Media

We also have increased our presence on social media. I encourage customers to visit our Twitter (@IREAColorado) and Facebook (@IntermountainREA) channels and, if you haven't already, follow or like us.

We plan to more frequently use those channels for breaking news and other alerts. And when we're not using them to deliver urgent messages, we'll be sharing energy-saving tips, interesting facts and other less serious energy-related items you will enjoy.

## Education Grants

It is possible that, by the time you read this letter, my fellow directors and I will have awarded 21 graduating high school seniors grants of \$1,000 each to-

ward higher education expenses. Three college-bound students from District 1 are among the recipients, and I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate them as they enter this exciting new stage of life.

## Energy Outreach

In addition to education grants for high school seniors, IREA is committed to helping the communities we serve through Energy Outreach Colorado. IREA partners with them to offer energy assistance grants to more than 100 Colorado emergency assistance agencies, all of which help pay electric bills for families who are having trouble doing so on their own.

IREA will match every dollar our customers contribute to Energy Outreach Colorado this year, up to \$75,000. You can sign up for monthly contributions of any amount or make a one-time contribution. Your donation is tax-deductible, and you can opt out of monthly contributions at any time. I urge you to visit [www.IREA.coop/community-involvement/energy-assistance](http://www.IREA.coop/community-involvement/energy-assistance) for more information on this important effort.

It has been my pleasure to continue serving you, the customers of IREA District 1. Every year in the fall, I hold a District 1 meeting at which I discuss with the IREA member-owners the activities of IREA. This is a good opportunity to get questions answered and to learn more about IREA. If you would like to be added to this invitation list, please send me an e-mail to [MKempe@IREA.coop](mailto:MKempe@IREA.coop). I look forward to sharing more exciting developments at IREA.

**Michael Kempe**  
[MKempe@IREA.coop](mailto:MKempe@IREA.coop)




**YES!** I would like to help IREA assist struggling families in Colorado.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ IREA Account No. \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

One-Time Contribution\*: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ **OR** Monthly Contribution: \$5 \$10 \$20 Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*I agree this amount will be added to my monthly statement and reflected as a separate line item.*

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Send to: Energy Outreach Colorado, c/o Intermountain Rural Electric Association  
5496 N. U.S. Highway 85, P.O. Drawer A, Sedalia, CO 80135

\* Make checks payable to IREA

Questions about the program? Call us at (800) 332-9540