

WATTS & VOLTS

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DIRECTOR NEWSLETTER



The first half of 2017 continued the sustained 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 6, I'd like to share with you just a few of the more exciting strides we recently have made.



ROBERT
GRAF
District 6

Capital credits

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.

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 without compromising our equity ratios.



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 and enroll in this free service. Enrollment also will allow you to easily report outages via a smartphone.

New IREA.coop

IREA's online Outage Center is part of our newly redesigned website, 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 user-friendly 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.

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Social media

We also have increased our presence on social media. I encourage customers to visit our Twitter (@IREAColorado) and Facebook (@IntermountainREA) channels. 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 toward higher education expenses. Three college-bound students from District 6 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 those education grants, IREA is committed to helping the communities we serve through other programs. One of them is Energy Outreach




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

Colorado. IREA has partnered with that organization 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 con-

tribution. 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 for more information on this important effort.

It has been my pleasure to continue serving you, the customers of District 6, and I look forward to sharing more exciting developments in the near future.

Save on summer energy costs with a few minor tweaks

Though summer won't officially arrive until June 20, it is preceded by summer-like heat. Elevated temperatures can lead to just as much energy waste as winter's cold. With that in mind, we have a number of tips that will help you save during the summer:

- Our region's cool nights mean you can turn off your cooling system and open your windows while sleeping. When you wake in the morning, shut the windows and blinds to capture the cool air.
- Install window coverings to prevent heat gain through your windows.
- Set your thermostat as high as comfortably possible in the summer. The smaller the difference between the indoor and outdoor temperatures, the lower your overall cooling bill will be.
- Keep your house warmer than normal when you are away, and lower the thermostat setting to 78°F or lower only when you are at home and need cooling. A programmable thermostat can make it easy to set back your temperature.
- Avoid setting your thermostat at a colder setting than normal when you turn on your air conditioner. It will not cool your home any faster and could result in excessive cooling and unnecessary expense.
- If you use air conditioning, a ceiling fan will allow you to raise the thermostat setting about 4°F with no reduction in comfort.

- Turn off ceiling fans when you leave the room. Remember that fans cool people, not rooms, by creating a wind chill effect.
 - When you shower or take a bath, use the bathroom fan to remove the heat and humidity from your home. Your laundry room might also benefit from spot ventilation. Make sure bathroom and kitchen fans are vented to the outside, not just to the attic.
 - Avoid placing lamps or TV sets near your room air-conditioning thermostat. The thermostat senses heat from these appliances, which can cause the air conditioner to run longer than necessary.
 - Vacuum registers regularly to remove any dust buildup. Ensure that furniture and other objects are not blocking the airflow through your registers.
 - On hot days, avoid using the oven. Instead, cook on the stove, use a microwave oven or grill outside.
 - Install efficient lighting that runs cooler. Only about 10% to 15% of the electricity that incandescent lights consume results in light; the rest is turned into heat.
 - Wash only full loads of dishes and clothes. Consider air drying both dishes and clothing.
- Visit www.energy.gov for more information about saving energy during warm months.