

# WATTS & VOLTS

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## DIRECTOR NEWSLETTER

Greetings! I hope this summer finds you well. I have several updates I'd like to share regarding IREA.

First, I would like to thank the members who voted for me to once again represent District 6 on IREA's Board of Directors. I will continue to support fair electric rates that neither penalize nor subsidize some customers at the expense of others, while guiding the Association as it works to obtain additional cost-effective renewable energy.

### Proposed changes to Rates & Regulations

The June Watts & Volts contained a notice of proposed changes to IREA's Rates & Regulations. These proposed changes will not increase rates; they instead will adjust the charges for some field and other customer-requested service calls, lower demand and time-of-use residential rates and adjust the monthly service charges associated with those rates.

If approved, the proposed changes will allow customers who meet specific eligibility requirements to opt out of our Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI). The proposed policy will require a customer to sign an agreement requesting an AMI opt-out. That customer would then be required to pay an \$80 setup fee and a \$20-per-month meter-reading fee. These fees will defer, but not fully cover, our costs to pay meter readers to read the meters manually for those opting out of AMI. If a customer chooses to opt out after an AMI meter has been installed, there will be a charge to change the AMI meter with a non-AMI meter. That fee is \$20 if the meter is changed during normal business hours, and \$65 if it is changed outside of normal business hours.

Those who do not opt out will enjoy many benefits provided by the improved meters, which already



ROBERT GRAF  
District 6



serve nearly half of U.S. homes. Once the AMI is installed and implemented, customers will have convenient access to energy usage data, improved custom billing dates (within a three-day window) and quicker service restoration following outages. We also are exploring the possibility of additional cost-saving programs and pre-payment plans.

We already have installed more than 10,000 upgraded meters and expect to install many more throughout the rest of the year, with the majority of meters upgraded by 2020. Customers will receive a postcard two to six weeks before planned installation. This card will contain details about the installation process, and contact info if you have questions. Meanwhile, you can visit [www.IREA.coop/ami](http://www.IREA.coop/ami) to learn more about AMI. There is no charge for the new meter or its installation.

### Outage mitigation

In mid-March, IREA's 5,000-square-mile service territory was hit by a record-setting "bomb cyclone" that was later declared the strongest storm in Colorado's recorded history. Hundreds of thousands of Coloradans experienced loss of power and other essential services. At their peak, these outages affected nearly 5,500 IREA customers, some of them for extended periods of time. Several of our neighboring utilities lost service to much larger numbers of customers for even longer periods of time. Two months later a late spring snowstorm wreaked havoc with unseasonable ice and fallen trees. Again, the number of affected IREA customers was minimal. We believe our system's reliability during these storms confirms the effectiveness of our maintenance and mitigation programs.

Our linemen and other field personnel deserve

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credit for working around the clock, both during and after the storms, to restore power to every affected customer. We understand the frustration our customers experience during outages and we will continue to explore ways to reduce the number and length of such service interruptions.

### Free and upgraded payment options

We continue to work diligently to improve your customer experience. We recently eliminated fees associated with electronic payments, including fees associated with payments made by credit card, debit card and ACH for residential accounts. Commercial accounts now enjoy free ACH payments.

In conjunction with the elimination of these fees, we have implemented an improved version of Speedpay, our electronic payment system. It offers quicker, more convenient payment via desktop, laptop and mobile devices and allows you to save multiple payment types to a digital wallet. You will also be able to access your payment history. Speedpay can be accessed via the My Account feature on [www.IREA.coop](http://www.IREA.coop) and is also available through our automated voice service at (800) 332-9540.

### Summer safety

Many members are well into their summer landscaping and other outdoor projects. We encourage everyone to make use of the free 811 utility locate service for any projects that require digging. Hitting an underground utility line can have severe consequences such as bodily injury and even death. Legal liability for fines and damages also can be imposed for damage to underground utility facilities if a locate is not requested. It is worth the minimal amount of time it takes to simply dial 811 before you dig. Please make the call at least three business days before you break ground on any project.

Please be cautious when it comes to above-ground activity, too. Be especially careful when working or playing near overhead lines, transformers and other equipment, and consult our vegetation guidelines, available at [www.IREA.coop/irea-your-property](http://www.IREA.coop/irea-your-property), before planting trees, shrubs or other vegetation. If you spot any existing hazards

related to our system call us at (800) 332-9540.

### Energy efficiency

Higher energy bills during summer months sometimes catch customers off-guard. If you haven't explored the energy efficiency tips we've shared in previous editions of Watts & Volts, please visit [www.IREA.coop/energy-efficiency-is-a-breeze](http://www.IREA.coop/energy-efficiency-is-a-breeze). After utilizing these tips, if you still see a spike in your monthly bill, consider scheduling a free energy audit. Our energy efficiency specialist will visit your home, identify possible efficiency issues and provide recommendations for how to fix them. You can schedule your audit online via [www.IREA.coop/energy-audits](http://www.IREA.coop/energy-audits), where you also can find our updated energy use chart, which makes it easy to calculate your energy usage.

### Education grants

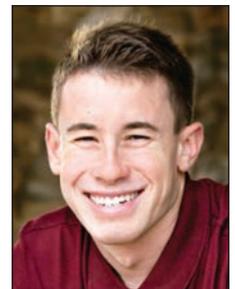
I would like to close this letter by congratulating the recipients of this year's IREA education grants. The names of three graduating high school seniors from District 6 were drawn randomly at last month's Board of Directors meeting:



**Dylan Anna**  
Eaglecrest High School  
Community College of Denver



**Geena Bendul**  
Grandview High School  
University of Illinois



**Everett Urban**  
Eaglecrest High School  
Missouri University of S&T

Dylan, Geena and Everett will each receive a \$2,000 grant for higher education expenses. Next year's graduating seniors can expect the education grant application process to reopen in early 2020. Look to Watts & Volts and our social media channels – @IREAColorado on Twitter and IntermountainREA on Facebook – for updates on when applications will be available.

It is my pleasure to continue serving as your representative on the IREA Board of Directors. I hope the remainder of your summer is safe and enjoyable!