Greetings! I hope the fall season finds you well. I would like to share several updates regarding your electric co-op:

**Advanced Metering Infrastructure more than 30% complete**

Nearly 50,000 AMI meters have been installed as of late October.

We plan to have all 160,000-plus meters installed by the end of 2020 and already are seeing AMI’s benefits. Because of the ability to read, disconnect and connect AMI meters remotely, we avoided more than 4,200 field visits so far in 2019. Once AMI is fully deployed, we expect to reduce vehicle usage by an estimated 400,000 miles per year.

Warm weather in July, August and September was the main cause of higher bills during those periods. According to the National Weather Service, we had 20 days of 90-plus degree heat in July, 18 days in August and 26 of the 30 days in September had above-normal temps.

Data provided by the new AMI meters makes it easier to identify when energy use correlates with weather, and this data will soon be available to customers who have an AMI meter. The “My Power” portal will include hourly, daily and monthly usage, and will feature a built-in weather tracker. My Power also will allow you to set up custom usage thresholds and will alert you if those thresholds are exceeded.

AMI also will provide us better information about how our system is operating. This will help us more quickly identify the cause of outages and restore power to our customers.

A mailed postcard will be sent at least a week prior to installation of an AMI meter. It includes important info about what to expect and how to schedule an installation appointment, if necessary.

**Winter is coming**

Winter is coming, but there are steps you can take now to reduce your winter energy costs:

- Install a smart thermostat to control your home’s temperature automatically.
- Have your furnace serviced so that it operates efficiently.
- Add insulation with a minimum rating between R38 and R60.
- Seal air leaks around doors and windows with caulk or weather-stripping.
- Use space heaters sparingly; they consume high amounts of electricity.

Next month’s Watts & Volts will include additional energy efficiency tips and info you can use during winter months. If you still have concerns about energy efficiency within your home or business, consider a free energy audit. Visit www.IREA.coop/energy-audits to learn more.

**Scammers get creative**

Scammers continue to change their tactics.

Customers are now being told that their electric service will be interrupted for up to 72 hours for installation of their new AMI meter. We presume the scammer’s intent is to convince customers to leave their homes.

New meter installations do not require more than a few minutes of service interruption, at most. In some cases, a power outage is not necessary at all.

Call us at (800) 332-9540 if you think you have been targeted by scammers. Our representatives can quickly confirm whether any call or visit is legitimate IREA business. The sooner you call us, the sooner we can make other customers aware of a scam.

Visit www.IREA.coop/scams to learn about other utility scams.

**D.C. Youth Tour applications now open**

I am pleased to announce that we will again select three high school juniors or seniors to represent IREA at the Washington, D.C., Youth Tour.

The tour is planned for June 18-25 and will provide participants an in-depth look at the electric cooperative model. They will join more than 1,800 other youth.
representatives as they visit prominent D.C. landmarks and meet with elected officials. Travel, lodging and meals will be covered.

This past summer’s participants – Brady Eitel, Aiden Ingenthron and Maleah Yates – had a memorable experience. They described it as “amazing” and “incredible,” and said they gained tremendous knowledge about co-ops and government.

Applicants must complete an online application – available at www.IREA.coop – and submit either a short written essay or original video describing their hobbies, extracurricular activities, volunteer work and what they hope to gain from participating in the tour. Applicants must also:

• Be a junior or senior in high school as of the 2019/2020 academic year;
• Be 16, 17 or 18 years of age as of Jan. 1, 2020;
• And have a parent or legal guardian who is an IREA customer.

Applications are due by Jan. 20, 2020. Visit www.IREA.coop/youth-tour for more information or to apply.

Shred event is a success

Thank you to all the customers who participated in our first free shred event in late September. More than 300 customers brought boxes and bags full of unwanted documents, which were securely shredded on-site and recycled.

Holiday lights recycling

Customers can bring their unwanted holiday lights to us Dec. 2 through Jan. 31. We will recycle them and donate the proceeds to Energy Outreach Colorado. Your 6,500-plus pounds of recycled lights generated more than $2,500 for Energy Outreach the past two years. That money helps low-income Coloradans meet their energy needs, as well as pay for emergency furnace repair and learn how to use energy efficiently.

We will accept lights of any type during regular business hours, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, at any of our four offices:

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

Please make sure they are free of any packaging before you leave them in the marked box.

Coats for Colorado

You can help fellow Coloradans by donating to Coats for Colorado. Bring new and gently used winter coats to any IREA office by Nov. 30. Children’s and extra-large men’s and women’s coats are especially needed, but any winter coats are accepted and will be distributed to non-profit health and human services agencies. Boots, raincoats, pants, hats, gloves, mittens and monetary donations are not accepted.

Outage mitigation

Lightning protection is an important issue in Colorado, especially the eastern portion of IREA’s service territory. The transmission line from Strasburg to Deer Trail was constructed in the 1950s, when it wasn’t standard practice in rural areas to install an overhead shield wire to divert lightning from power-carrying wires. IREA is taking corrective action to improve performance and reduce outages caused by lightning strikes by installing surge arresters along this line. The arrester works by diverting power to ground when the system experiences an extreme voltage strike. We have installed arresters at 64 locations and expect the project to be complete early in November.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. I look forward to updating you again in a few months. In the meantime, please look to our website – www.IREA.coop – and social media accounts – @IREAColorado on Twitter, IntermountainREA on Facebook – for the latest news from your electric co-op.

I am thankful for the opportunity to represent you on the IREA Board of Directors. On behalf of all of us at IREA, I would like to wish you and your loved ones a happy and safe Thanksgiving holiday.