

# WATTS & VOLTS

The Official Publication of **IREA**

February 2020

## DIRECTOR NEWSLETTER

Greetings! As your elected representative on Intermountain Rural Electric Association's board of directors, I have some important news to share:

### Pole attachment audits to begin

IREA audits attachments to our poles on a 5-year cycle. These attachments are not owned by us and typically include communication lines such as broadband, telephone and cable television. The audit confirms placement of the attachments and identifies those that might not meet industry standards, which are then addressed by attachment owners. Work on this year's audit will take place through the spring and summer, and will be mostly performed using drones to minimize field work.

Contractors working for IREA will require access to some customers' properties during the audit. They will have company-issued identification and documentation, and will provide it upon request. Updates and additional information will be available at [www.IREA.coop](http://www.IREA.coop) throughout the project.

### Capital credits

The board of directors approved the distribution of capital credits again this year totaling \$16.1 million as patronage refunds for electricity purchased in 2019.

Most current customers will see the refund as a line item on their March bill. To receive a check instead of a bill credit, click the Bill Credit Opt In/Out link under Capital Credits on our website: [www.irea.coop](http://www.irea.coop). Your opt-out request must be submitted by Feb. 27 to receive a check this year.

This is the seventh straight year in which we have approved annual refunds. In those seven years, IREA has returned more than \$105 million in capital credits.

Visit [www.IREA.coop/capital-credits](http://www.IREA.coop/capital-credits) to learn more about capital credits.

### Renewable energy

IREA's investment in renewable energy will continue growing in 2020. We expect another 80 megawatts of solar-generated power when the Pioneer Solar facility comes online by the end of this year. Before year end



ROBERT GRAF  
District 6



we will have nearly 100 megawatts of solar generation in production available, with more under contract and slated to come online in 2021.

Our solar power purchases are made under the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act. IREA pays avoided cost, which is what we would otherwise pay for the same amount of energy from other sources.

We expect to have nearly 200 megawatts of solar energy capacity by 2025, in addition to more than 16 megawatts of distributed generation from customers currently interconnected to our system.

### Payment options

IREA has introduced several features that improve the payment process:

- Customers enrolled in electronic billing can now make credit or debit card payments via their eBill.
- A new guest log-in feature makes it easier for family, caretakers, and other guests to pay bills on behalf of an IREA member.
- Recurring credit/debit card payments also are available. There is a transaction limit of \$500 so consider automatic payments via a savings or checking account if your bill typically exceeds \$500.

There are no longer any fees associated with any form of electronic payment.

### Renewable energy credits (RECs)

Do you want to support renewable energy without installing a solar or wind system? Consider purchasing Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) through IREA.

Each REC is "proof" that 1 kilowatt-hour (kWh) of electricity was generated through a renewable energy source and distributed to the grid. The purchase of RECs does not mean you will receive additional green power at your home or business, but does support the production of renewable energy and entitles you to claim the environmental attributes.

Our current prices are 5.5 cents per kWh of solar and 1

Continued on other side

Continued from front

cent per kWh of wind. You have the option to either make a one-time purchase or add a recurring amount of \$5 or more to your monthly IREA bill.

Visit [www.IREA.coop/RECs](http://www.IREA.coop/RECs) for more information.

**Fire mitigation plan**

The board and management are keenly aware of the threat of fire in parts of IREA’s service territory. We have seen the devastation in California and are committed to reducing that risk in Colorado. IREA has a fire mitigation plan that addresses four key areas: operating practices, design standards, maintenance and tree trimming. Our tree-trimming program recently began a new six-year cycle in which vegetation management crews will clear all overhead distribution lines within IREA’s service territory.

We will mail a notice if trimming is planned in your area, and an additional notice will be left on your door if any work takes place on your property. Crews typically work 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Thursday. Call our Utility Forester at (720) 733-5632 if you see tree-trimming crews in your area and would like wood chips,

which are free to IREA customers.

Please call us immediately at (800) 332-9540 if you spot a potentially hazardous tree or other vegetation near our power lines.

**Safety Poster Contest**

Students in grades one through five can enter our Electric Safety Poster Contest to help us promote National Safety Month in June. We will accept hand-drawn artwork that includes a tip, slogan or message about electrical safety.

Five winning entries – one from each grade – will be awarded \$100 each and appear in IREA’s print, electronic and social media channels as part of National Safety Month. The award-winning artwork also will be displayed in the lobby of our Sedalia headquarters.

Additional details and the official entry form are available at [www.IREA.coop/safety-poster-contest](http://www.IREA.coop/safety-poster-contest). I hope you have enjoyed reading this newsletter. Please visit [www.IREA.coop](http://www.IREA.coop) and check our social media channels – @IREAColorado on Twitter, IntermountainREA on Facebook – for additional news from your electric co-op.

The annual meeting of the members of The Intermountain Rural Electric Association will be held at the Association’s headquarters, located at 5496 N. U.S. Highway 85, Sedalia, CO 80135,

at 10 a.m. on Saturday, April 18, 2020, to transact the following business:

1. The presentation of reports covering the previous fiscal year.

2. All other business that may properly come before the meeting.

Note: Registration is from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. on the day of the meeting.

**PROXY FOR THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE MEMBERS OF THE INTERMOUNTAIN RURAL ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION**

*Note: Registration is from 9 to 10 a.m. on the day of the meeting.*

The undersigned hereby appoints \_\_\_\_\_ (name of IREA member) his or her true and lawful proxy for the annual meeting of the members of The Intermountain Rural Electric Association, to be held April 18, 2020, at 10 a.m.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have signed this proxy this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2020.

\_\_\_\_\_ Customer Account Number

\_\_\_\_\_ Member’s Signature

*Cut out this completed form and return it to IREA, 5496 N. U.S. Highway 85, Sedalia, CO 80135. The presence of a member at the annual meeting revokes any proxy by that member per Article IV, Section 10 of the Association’s Bylaws. To be deemed valid, proxies must be executed within sixty (60) days of the annual meeting. (No earlier than Feb. 18, 2020.)*