

# WATTS & VOLTS

The Official Publication of **IREA**

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## DIRECTOR NEWSLETTER

Dear fellow IREA customer:

IREA has reacted to the challenges presented by COVID-19 in several ways. In March, we were one of the first utilities to defer disconnections for nonpayment, giving customers several months' grace without penalties or fees. When disconnections resumed, we extended pay arrangements for customers who are financially impacted by COVID-19, and we continue to waive disconnect notice fees. We do not charge late fees.

We also have implemented practices to keep our employees and customers safe. Our office lobbies have reopened for payments and engineering contract deliveries using guidelines for social distancing, requiring masks, and providing hand sanitizer. Employees who are required at the office or in the field follow health and safety protocols, and most of our workforce is working from home.

The reliable electric service IREA provides has been unaffected by the pandemic. The state of our cooperative is strong. We are selling more energy in 2020 than anticipated, and we do not expect any negative impacts to IREA or the service we provide to our customers because of COVID-19. You can read more about IREA's COVID-19 response at [www.IREA.coop/covid](http://www.IREA.coop/covid).

We are upgrading our system to improve reliability. The new Meadows substation in Castle Rock was commissioned last month. The Eastern Reliability Upgrade transmission project near Elizabeth is now energized. We also are currently upgrading the 44-kilovolt transmission line over Kenosha Pass to provide better reliability for our customers in Bailey, Conifer and the surrounding areas. These are just a few examples



EUGENE M. SPERRY  
District 3



of our ongoing efforts to provide our customers with reliable electric service. You can find information about our ongoing system improvements at the new page on our website, [www.IREA.coop/system-improvements](http://www.IREA.coop/system-improvements).

IREA is supporting several worthwhile programs in the communities we serve.

- In June, IREA and Vitalant held a blood drive at Vitalant's Parker location that resulted in 1,241 people donating that month – an 80% increase over June of 2019. Donors were eligible to win one of 30 \$100 gift cards to local businesses in Parker.
- IREA will match customer donations – up to \$10,000 total – to Help Colorado Now, which provides aid to Colorado communities and organizations affected by COVID-19. Visit [www.HelpColoradoNow.org](http://www.HelpColoradoNow.org) and use the gift code “IREA” when you donate. As of mid-September, customer contributions are only \$2,500 away from our matching pledge amount.
- We also will match your donations to Energy Outreach Colorado, which helps cover home energy costs and furnace repairs for low-income Coloradans. We match customer donations every year, up to \$75,000. As of last month, customer pledges have reached \$23,000, about 30% of that goal. Help us reach our maximum pledge by signing up for either a one-time or recurring donation. Visit [www.EnergyOutreach.org](http://www.EnergyOutreach.org) or fill out and return the reverse side of the payment remittance portion of your IREA bill.
- IREA is again accepting donations to Coats for Colorado, which will keep Coloradans warm this

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winter. Customers are welcome to bring new or gently used winter coats to any of our four offices now through Nov. 30. Children's and extra-large men's and women's coats are most needed, but all sizes are accepted. Please note that raincoats, other warm-weather clothing, and monetary donations are not accepted.

- We also recently created our own program, IREA Cares, through which IREA employees can use a workday to volunteer at eligible nonprofits and charity organizations in our service area. If your organization, program or activity is interested in recruiting volunteers, visit [www.IREA.coop/irea-cares](http://www.IREA.coop/irea-cares) for eligibility and contact info.

IREA wants customers considering rooftop solar to be aware of several important things:

- Rooftop solar is a long-term financial investment and some solar vendors are unfamiliar with IREA's rates and regulations, which can lead them to misrepresent potential savings. It is important you call IREA at (303) 688-3100, ext. 5302, before making this long-term commitment, so we can provide information on how solar might affect your IREA bill.

- We are not affiliated with, nor are we mandated to work with, any specific solar vendor, despite claims to the contrary. We have no agreements with such vendors, nor do we have a preferred company. We do maintain a list of vendors who have installed systems in our service area, which is available at [www.IREA.coop/rooftop-solar](http://www.IREA.coop/rooftop-solar).

IREA's investment in utility-scale solar energy continues to increase. By the end of this year, we will have secured agreements procuring more than 190 megawatts of renewable energy. IREA's Board of Directors is committed to procuring clean energy that is both reliable and affordable for our customers.

Pioneer Solar is one example of that commitment. The utility-scale solar garden near Bennett is scheduled to go into commercial

operation this month. It will provide IREA and its customers 80 megawatts of renewable energy at or below what we would otherwise pay for the same energy from other sources. This price is locked in for the next 10 years, with several options to extend the contract.

We also are committed to improving your customer service. The My Power customer portal is scheduled to launch early October and give those with new AMI meters deeper insight into their energy usage. Granular usage data, custom thresholds, peak demand info, and weather tracking are just a few of the features My Power will offer. The portal will be accessible through the My Account feature at [www.IREA.coop](http://www.IREA.coop). If you don't have a My Account login, consider enrolling now so that you will have access to My Power when it launches.

Nearly 85% of our customers already have new AMI meters that will allow access to My Power. Most of the remaining 15% will have them by the end of the year. My Power gets its data from the AMI meters, so those choosing to opt-out of AMI will not have access to My Power's features. If you would like more info, including answers to the most frequently asked questions, visit [www.IREA.coop/ami](http://www.IREA.coop/ami).

We've heard from many customers about the popularity of our free shred event in August. We've also heard your suggestions about hosting the event at other locations besides our Sedalia headquarters to make it easier for other people to participate. We are working on scheduling multiple events at multiple locations next year, including Woodland Park. More details on these and other developments at IREA will appear in future editions of Watts & Volts and on our website ([www.IREA.coop](http://www.IREA.coop)) and social media accounts (@IREAColorado on Twitter, IntermountainREA on both Facebook and Instagram).

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter. On behalf of IREA, I wish you all the best in these trying times and encourage you to contact us through any of the channels above if you have questions, comments or suggestions regarding your electric service.