

## IREA avoids high rate hikes

### Other large Colorado utilities imposing significant increases

As reported in the July Watts & Volts, IREA's Board of Directors recently approved changes to the association's rates and regulations that will go into effect Sept. 1.

Key changes include elimination of the load factor adjustment (LFA), replacement of the temporary monthly power cost adjustment (PCA) with a quarterly wholesale power cost adjustment (WPCA), introduction of a three-

part residential rate, and changes to rates that will result in an average cost increase of about 2.25%. This is remarkable considering that we have not had a general rate increase since 2013, even though the cost of living has increased more than 15% in that time.

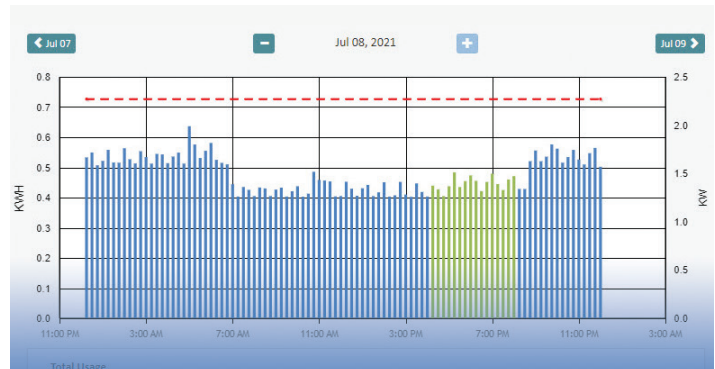
Meanwhile, as you may have seen in the news or

noticed on your other utility bills, all other large utilities in Colorado are imposing significant rate increases on their customers:

- Public Service Colorado (Xcel) plans to increase electric rates for its 1.6 million residential and commercial customers by 13%.
- Black Hills Energy introduced rate increases of between 6% and 7% for most of its electricity and/or gas customers in Colorado.
- Colorado Springs Utilities has raised residential rates 8% and commercial rates 10.6% through at least April 2022.

IREA's 2.25% increase, in contrast, amounts to an additional \$2.46 in cost for the average residential member.

"Our ability to avoid large rate increases results from two factors," said IREA CEO Jeff Baudier. "First, we are experiencing extraordinary growth in our membership, which brings in additional revenue to offset inflation. Second, we are not created to drive shareholder profits, like an investor-owned utility, or meet ever-growing governmental budgets, like a municipal utility. Our ability to



## Access My Power for important usage info

My Power, a free online portal available to IREA members, can help reduce your monthly bill.

Access My Power through My Account our website, [www.IREA.coop](http://www.IREA.coop), then use it to view detailed usage data, including hourly, daily and weekly consumption; set up custom alerts that notify you if usage has exceeded a specific amount; and compare periods of energy use.

My Power will also help you identify your on-peak demand, which is the largest amount of energy consumed during any 60-minute interval between the "on-peak" hours of 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. In IREA's new three-part rate, a \$1.50-per-kilowatt charge is applied to your highest on-peak demand. Visit [www.IREA.coop/rate-redesign](http://www.IREA.coop/rate-redesign) for more info.

go multiple years without significant rate increases is just one advantage of an electric co-op over the other utility models."

We encourage members to visit [www.IREA.coop](http://www.IREA.coop) for additional info about rates and regulations, including FAQs and explanations of the new three-part rate and other changes.

# Legislature moves state closer to RTO

## “Bait and switch” tactics taint session’s final days

The 2021 state legislative session adjourned in early June, with significant policy changes that affect the energy industry.

For more than five years, IREA has advocated for a regional transmission organization (RTO), which would allow us to buy and sell power on an open market, provide affordable and reliable power, and responsibly increase the amount of renewable energy we deliver to our members. We greatly appreciate all IREA members who participated in our calls to action to advocate for Senate Bill 72 this year and are happy to announce that Governor Polis signed the bill in late June.

The bill, titled Public Utilities Commission Modernize Electric Transmission Infrastructure, requires transmission utilities join an organized wholesale market such as an RTO by 2030. An RTO is a non-profit, multi-state entity that manages the bulk power transmission system, ensures non-discriminatory access to the transmission grid, and plans regionally for generation and transmission assets. The bill also directs the state Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to approve applications for transmission facilities that will help Colorado meet its clean energy goals and creates the Colorado Electric Transmission Authority (CETA), which will deliver well-planned transmission facilities throughout the state, connecting us to many opportunities outside of Colorado for additional energy generation.

In the last week of session, a 25-page amendment was added to House Bill 1266, Concerning Efforts to Redress the Effects of Environmental Justice on Disproportionately Impacted Communities. The amendment language was distributed to affected stakeholders less than 24 hours prior to the committee hearing of the bill and less than 48 hours before the legislature adjourned.

In the waning days of the session – and without stakeholder input or meaningful legislative debate – proponents of H.B. 1266 crammed into the bill a significant portion of



a separate bill the governor had previously committed to veto. The resulting legislation that was passed on the last day of session and eventually signed into law by the governor requires IREA to file a Clean Energy Plan with the state detailing how we will reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2030, though as of the writing of this newsletter, IREA has limited control over our energy sources. If IREA does not meet this goal, we are subject to rule-makings and fines. IREA opposed both the substance of this amendment in giving a regulatory body control over our cooperative, as our membership voted years ago to remove itself from regulation by state bureaucratic agencies, and also the end-of-session tactics used to pass such sweeping policy changes that will have drastic effects without appropriate and thoughtful dialogue and consideration. IREA continues to pursue additional sources of renewable energy to serve our customers, but, as a not-for-profit cooperative, must do so in a financially responsible manner.

IREA’s government affairs team works with elected officials to implement policies that lead to reliable service and support lower electric rates. If you would like additional updates on these efforts, or communications regarding our calls to action, please sign up for our legislative alerts. Visit the Contact Us page at [www.IREA.coop](http://www.IREA.coop) and submit an inquiry using the contact form and subject “Legislative Alert Sign Up.”

## IREA awarded electric vehicle charger funds

IREA has received funding from Charge Ahead Colorado to install customer-accessible electric vehicle charging stations at our offices.

Charge Ahead Colorado, a joint program between the Regional Air Quality

Council and Colorado Energy Office, works to reduce air pollution and encourage the diversification of Colorado’s transportation fuels mix.

We plan to install two DC fast chargers at our Sedalia headquarters, and are

considering installing additional chargers at our new Bennett office. These chargers will be available for public use.

More information about the planned charging stations will appear in future customer newsletters.

# Utilities deal with line worker shortage

Many electric utilities are grappling with a shortage of qualified candidates for one of their most important positions: Line worker.

Electrical power line installers and repairers accounted for about 115,000 jobs in 2019, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Employment is projected to grow by only about 2,000 – less than 2% – by 2029. That figure is low compared to projected overall job growth of 6 million – about 3.7% – but does not include the open positions left by retiring veteran and career line workers.

The U.S. is experiencing what Forbes calls an “unprecedented skilled labor shortage” that has electric generation, transmission and distribution companies struggling to identify and woo qualified replacements even for jobs with above-average pay. That includes line work, which in 2019 had a median annual salary of nearly \$80,000.

IREA is pursuing numerous recruiting strategies to meet these challenges and ensure we continue to have the personnel needed to keep our system safe and reliable.

A start in line work typically requires a high school diploma or equivalent. Most entry-level positions offer extensive on-the-job training or an apprenticeship that includes both classroom instruction and hands-on field work. It typically takes an apprentice line worker four years to achieve journey level, which means they can perform most work without supervision.

Most utilities currently need journey-level line workers who already know how to safely perform important, often-times complex work on and around high-voltage lines and equipment. This need is not likely to diminish. On top of attrition, utilities must keep up with growing demand for electricity. New lines and facilities require maintenance and improvements to ensure reliability.

IREA regularly has openings for line workers at all skill levels. We offer competitive compensation, generous paid time off plans and an excellent benefits package. Visit our Careers webpage, [www.IREA.coop/careers](http://www.IREA.coop/careers), for more information.

## Two at IREA earn journeyman lineman status

Two IREA linemen – Zach Reynolds and Levi Collison – recently completed their final qualifications for journey-level

work. Journey-level certification requires years of apprentice-level experience, extensive knowledge of electric

work and a true commitment to the trade. Congratulations to our two newest journey-level linemen!



## New substation to serve growth in Franktown area

IREA is building a substation in Franktown to serve load growth between our existing Bayou and Castle Rock substations.

The new 115-kilovolt to 12.5-kilovolt facility will provide reliable power to the area and help relieve the hardworking Bayou and Castle Rock substations.

We broke ground at the site in mid-May and anticipate

construction will be completed by December, with the substation in operation by February 2022. Twelve feeders will be built over the next three to five years as additional load is added to the system.

Visit [www.IREA.coop](http://www.IREA.coop) > About IREA > System Improvements for information about IREA's current and planned system improvement projects.



# Education grant recipients named

Since 1988, IREA has awarded grants to graduating high school seniors who plan to continue their education. This year we awarded grants to five recipients from each of our seven director districts. Recipients' names were randomly drawn at the IREA Board of Directors' June meeting. Each

recipient will receive \$2,000 to help with higher education expenses. The application window for next year's grants will open in January. Students from the class of 2022 can visit [www.IREA.coop/education-grants](http://www.IREA.coop/education-grants) now to request notification when next year's application is available.

## District 1



Taj Tinnin  
Colorado State University



Megan McFeeters  
Colorado School of Mines



Taryn Pratte  
Brigham Young University



Cooper Brown  
Drake University



Emily Glynn  
Texas A&M University

## District 2



Sydney Reinoehl  
Colorado Mesa University



Riley Elliott  
Colorado School of Mines



Emma Mead  
Colorado School of Mines



Cheyenne Oramas  
Colorado State University



Ian Booth  
U. of California, Irvine

## District 3



Michael Prior  
U. of C. Colorado Springs



John Siegel  
University of Wyoming



Flynn Kirk  
U. of C. Colorado Springs



Jessica Tanis  
Colorado State University



Kylie Hereau  
U. of C. Colorado Springs

## District 4



Abigail Webb  
U. of Colorado Boulder



Brady Ingalls  
CSU-Pueblo



Natalie Lanigan  
University of Iowa

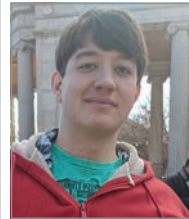


Mason Ballou  
Grand Canyon University



Genevieve Bower  
University of Rhode Island

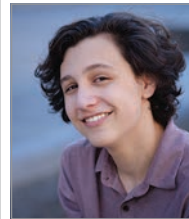
## District 5



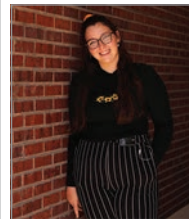
Timothy Perrin  
U. of Colorado Boulder



Seneca Lamphier  
U. of Colorado Denver



Ari Kaye  
University of Central Florida

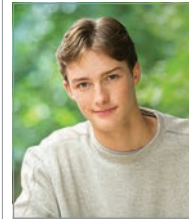


Grace Stebbins  
Colorado Mesa University



Colton Laverenz  
Colorado State University

## District 6



James Frantz  
Colorado State University



Marijane Seward  
U. of Colorado Boulder



Jordan Carrillo  
Pickens Technical College



Cara Guydish  
Colorado State University



Kyra Dooley  
Pacific University

## District 7



Joshua Bronley  
BYU-Idaho



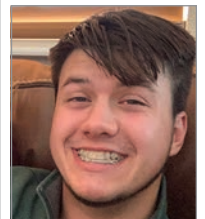
Zoe Torres  
Savannah College of A&D



Lauren Livengood  
Montana State University



Mallory Wilson  
U. of Colorado Denver



Kooper Holman  
Arizona State University