

# Municipal Power News



Blanchester Board of Public Affairs  
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## All About Residential Solar

As a utility customer of Blanchester's Board of Public Affairs (BPA), the electricity powering your property comes from a diverse power supply portfolio that includes renewable resources like solar and wind energy. This diverse portfolio is capable of providing power to your home around the clock, every day of the year. Still, some residents have shown interest in installing their own rooftop solar panels or small-scale renewable generation. If you are considering a renewable installation on your property, you may have several questions about the advantages and drawbacks of such a project. Here are some answers to the most frequently asked questions about solar installation:

### Should I install solar panels at my home/business?

Anyone thinking about solar installation should consider what aspect of renewables interests them. Do you believe it will benefit the environment? Or do you want to simply have backup generation if there is an outage in the village? Rooftop solar is generally not an effective backup generation resource unless it is installed with additional equipment,

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Winter storm reminds the utility industry of the importance of reliability.

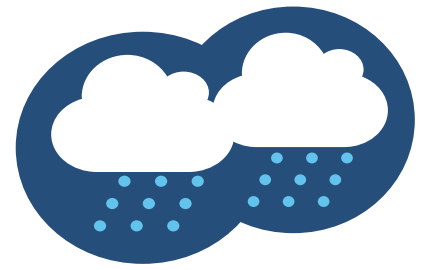
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# IMPA Responds to Winter Storm Elliott



From December 22 to the 26 of 2022, Winter Storm Elliott swept across North America, causing record low temperatures and severe winter conditions throughout the United States. Snowfall, ice, and blizzard-like conditions blew through much of the Midwest while hazardous road conditions kept many of us hunkered down inside through the holidays. During these days of sub-zero temperatures, approximately 1.5 million utility customers throughout the country lost power (according to [www.poweroutage.us](http://www.poweroutage.us)).

Fortunately, Indiana utility customers were only a small portion of those without power, and the Indiana Municipal Power Agency (IMPA) worked diligently with neighboring utilities and the state's Regional Transmission Organizations to ensure the reliability of the power grid. IMPA's seven combustion turbines—totaling 249 megawatts (MW) of capacity in Anderson, Indiana, and Richmond, Indiana—were staffed and operational through the winter storm. The Anderson and Richmond units are run by IMPA employees who worked day and night through December's winter storm to ensure power was delivered to utility customers. These units,

which primarily run on natural gas and are built to operate in temperatures down to -20 degrees Fahrenheit, are a vital dispatchable resource in extreme weather events due to their capability to utilize ultra-low sulfur No. 2 fuel oil as a backup. The backup fuel allowed the units to run and provide power during the whole severe winter weather event.

Other staff members who were out in the field during the cold weather event included IMPA Service Corp's linemen and operations employees who responded to outages in member communities. During Winter Storm Elliott, IMPA Service Corp's crews responded to eight IMPA member communities to assist with power restoration to keep utility customers warm in their homes.

IMPA is grateful to the dedicated staff members who braved the historic winter conditions to ensure the rest of us could remain safe and warm at home. The Agency's reliability, whether during a typical day or an extreme period of uncertainty, is its upmost priority. Now, as we head toward the warmer weather of spring, IMPA looks forward to continuing its legacy of reliable operations and excellent electric service for all member communities. •

# How Does Reliable Electricity Reach Me?

Your power is unique as it is distributed not by a for-profit electric utility, but rather by your municipally-owned, locally controlled electric utility. Your municipal electric utility—also known as a “public power” utility—receives its power from the Indiana Municipal Power Agency, a not-for-profit organization created by 61 public power utilities in the Midwest. This is where your electricity begins!

## STEP 1

IMPA is the wholesale power provider to your community, meaning that it produces or purchases electricity (depending on what is most economically advantageous) and transmits that energy to your local utility. IMPA’s power supply portfolio is made up of coal, natural gas, solar, wind, and nuclear energy. By providing its member communities with power from multiple sources, IMPA can maintain stable costs.

## STEP 2

Once the power is generated, no matter from which type of resource, a set of equipment located within a substation is used to “step up” the electricity’s voltage. A higher voltage means that the electricity can travel longer distances over high-voltage transmission lines with lower energy losses.



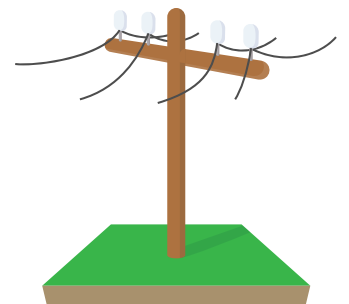
## STEP 3

Once “stepped-up,” the electricity is sent along transmission lines, allowing it to reach IMPA’s member communities. IMPA jointly owns a portion of the state’s transmission system, which covers about 2/3 of Indiana.



## STEP 4

Once the electricity reaches a community like yours, it is “stepped down” by a local substation, bringing the power to a lower voltage that will allow it to travel on your local community’s distribution power lines.



## STEP 5

The power then travels along local distribution lines owned by your public power utility to reach homes and businesses in the community.



# Tidbits & Trivia

The **Indiana Municipal Power Agency** (IMPA) is a not-for-profit organization that provides a low-cost, reliable, and environmentally-responsible power supply to its members. IMPA provides this wholesale power to 61 communities in Indiana and Ohio, who collectively make up the Agency's membership.

Question: What is one benefit of driving an electric vehicle rather than a gas-powered car?



Send your answer to [newsletter@impa.com](mailto:newsletter@impa.com), along with your name, e-mail address, and address for a chance to win an energy efficiency prize pack!

## Reader Survey

Is there more about your community that you would like to know? Do you have questions about how public power or your municipally-owned utility works? Would you like to learn more tips and tricks as to how you can improve your home's energy efficiency?

Reach out to [newsletter@impa.com](mailto:newsletter@impa.com) to suggest topics for future *Municipal Power News* newsletters and let us know what articles you enjoy most, and what you'd like to see next!



## Residential Solar

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such as batteries and a transfer switch, which also make it much more expensive. Home backup generators powered by natural gas, propane, or diesel are generally more cost-effective options, and are more reliable than renewable power would be since they are available for backup power at all times. However, if your motivation to install rooftop solar is because you want to help the environment, then doing so could certainly help you contribute to environmental-responsibility. Blanchester and its wholesale power provider, the Indiana Municipal Power Agency, are increasingly expanding their reliance on renewables, so the power supplied to your property becomes greener each year already. Additionally, even with a solar installation, your home or business would likely still rely on your local utility's



power supply at night and on cloudy or snowy days. Therefore, individuals must consider if the benefits would be enough to outweigh the costs of installation and maintenance.

### **Will investing in residential/commercial solar save me money?**

As customers of a public power utility, local residents and business owners already have access to some of the lowest electric rates

in Ohio. Additionally, if you live in a small home and own energy efficient lighting and appliances, installing solar may not be worth the financial investment and time. Solar installation generally requires high upfront costs that take years of smooth operation to pay themselves off. Even then, you would still have to pay a monthly electric bill to your local utility for remaining connected to the village to be able to have reliable electricity supply when your solar panels aren't generating energy.

### **Will I be able to live “off-the-grid” if I install solar panels?**

Solar panels are only able to generate electricity when the sun is shining, so they would not be able to supply energy to your property at all times. Battery technology for electric storage is possible, but this would be an additional cost on top of solar installation, and most batteries are expensive due to their novelty. Also, remember that batteries have to be recharged about every four to eight hours depending on the electric load placed on them. This means that the times when you use electricity the most—in the evening when most people are coming home from work or school—is when your panels would generate the least throughout the day. If you'd still like

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## **What's the Word?**

### **Gas Turbine Plant**

*noun*

A facility which uses natural gas or other liquid fuels to power a combustion turbine and generate electricity. The first true gas turbine was patented in 1791!

IMPA owns seven combustion turbines and associated facilities totaling 419 MW in the aggregate. These include three units in Anderson, IN, two near Richmond, IN, and two in Indianapolis, IN. IMPA employees operate and maintain the combustion turbines located in Anderson and Richmond, while the plant in Indianapolis is operated and maintained under a contract with a separate utility that has two other units at the same facility.

# Cooking Corner

## Broccoli Casserole

Recipe submitted by Kimberly of Paoli, Indiana

- 2 lbs broccoli, frozen or cooked
- 1 roll ritz crackers, crumbled
- 1/2 lb velveeta, cubed
- 1 stick butter divided in half

Cook broccoli according to package directions. Add velveeta and 1/2 stick butter. Cook until melted. Butter a 2 qt casserole dish. Pour broccoli into casserole dish. Pour crumbled crackers on top. Melt remaining 1/2 stick butter and pour on crackers. Bake on 350 degrees for 30 minutes and enjoy!

## White Mountain Salad

Recipe submitted by Jean of Middletown, Indiana

- 1 small can crushed pineapple (in juice)
- 1 can chopped pecans
- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- 1 eight oz tub cool whip (thawed)
- 1 can Eagle brand milk

In a large bowl, stir all ingredients together. Cover and refrigerate for 2 hours.

“When I take this recipe to a dinner, I always get several requests for the recipe!” - Jean

For a chance to be featured in the newsletter and win a prize, send your recipe to:

MPN Recipes  
11610 N. College Ave.  
Carmel, IN 46032  
or  
[newsletter@impa.com](mailto:newsletter@impa.com)

The MUNICIPAL POWER NEWS is a periodic publication of the Indiana Municipal Power Agency and the 61 communities that it serves with wholesale power.

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# How Do I Save Energy in Hot Weather?

Last year, we asked *Municipal Power News* readers, “What are some of the methods you use to reduce your energy consumption in hot weather?” Here’s what Kenneth had to say!

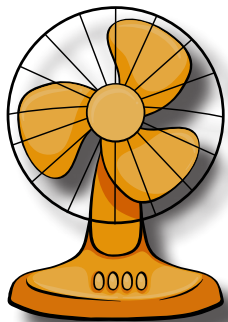
*“Our answer at home is to close the drapes, blinds, and try to cook with the air fryer, microwave, or outside on the grill instead of using the stove or oven on the really hot days. We’ve already purchased new thermo sliding glass doors with blinds and low-e ratings. We’ve also spray-foamed the basement*

*walls and the underside of the roof. For a 1964 house, we feel pretty efficient.*

*At work, we try to close the blinds and raise the thermostat a degree or two. We also bought two digital smart thermostats and replaced the old mercury bulb sliders.”*

-Kenneth E

That’s a great answer, full of energy efficiency tips! Below are a few other ways you and your family can save on energy this summer.



## Energy Efficiency Tip #1

Use fans around your home to circulate cool air. Set ceiling fans to turn counter clockwise, as this will push air down and create a cooler feeling in the room.

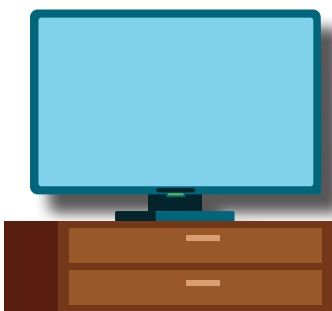
## Energy Efficiency Tip #2

Replace air filters in your home with each season. Dirty air filters can cause your system to work harder and longer, using unnecessary energy as a result.



## Energy Efficiency Tip #3

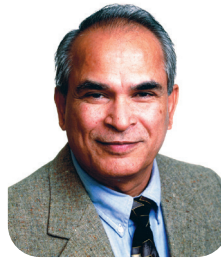
Keep lamps and TV sets away from your thermostat. Thermostats can sense the heat that these items give off, which can cause the A/C to run longer than required.



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IMPA Commissioner and  
Director of BPA Utilities: Ram Reddy

## Residential Solar

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access to electricity at these times, without batteries, you'd need to continue relying on power from the BPA.

The BPA does not discourage anyone from considering solar installation—as a public power utility, the organization wants what is best for all utility customers in the community. However, anyone interested in a solar project should be educated on the various factors that could affect the costs, installation, maintenance, and operation of



such a project before investing. If you have any further questions about residential solar, call the BPA office at (937) 783-2141, where the staff will be able to get you answers to more questions. •