

Municipal Power News



Thorntown Utilities
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History of Power in Thorntown

On the evening of March 31, 1880, a crowd in Wabash, Indiana stood breathless as brilliant light erupted from electrified carbon-arc lights atop the city's County Courthouse. The mesmerized locals who eagerly watched, some amazed and some frightened as darkness was driven away from the streets of downtown Wabash, experienced the birth of the first electrified community in the world. It was here in Indiana where the first city to provide electricity emerged, and when the Wabash City Council decided to own its electric lighting system instead of franchising the new utility to a private company, it became the first public power utility as well.

About 90 miles southwest, the town of Thorntown was, like many communities across the country, running things without electricity for years after Wabash's remarkable day in 1880. Most homes and businesses continued lighting their spaces with gas light and candles for decades after, but a landmark Executive Order by President Franklin Roosevelt in 1935 would pave the way for lights in Thorntown. The Rural Electrification Administration (REA) created by Roosevelt's Executive Order as a part of the New Deal was intended to promote rural electrification across the country, helping to bring struggling farm

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See how readers of the newsletter responded to this question.

40 Years of the Indiana Municipal Power Agency



The Indiana Municipal Power Agency (IMPA) began with a single idea to enable municipally-owned utilities to join and share power resources for a more reliable and cost-effective future. Before the formation of the Agency, individual municipal utilities in Indiana only had limited access to power supply options, and their small size kept them vulnerable to the changing energy market. However, the founders of IMPA believed in the adage of “strength in numbers,” and sought to withstand these challenges by working together. In 1979, representatives of 11 Indiana municipally-owned utilities organized themselves into a Joint Action Committee to investigate the feasibility of uniting into a joint action agency, which would allow them to share generation resources and bulk purchase power at a mutually beneficial low cost.

By 1980, Indiana state legislation was passed allowing the 11 representative communities to unite in the purchase of

wholesale electric power and transmission services, as well as issue bonds to pay for the cost of projects. This allowed the formation of the Indiana Municipal Power Agency, which had its first operating year in 1983—40 years ago.

In four decades, IMPA has been through a vast number of changes, but has always remained true to its strong founding mission of providing a low-cost, reliable, and environmentally-responsible power supply to its members. Through the years, the Agency’s membership has grown from 11 Hoosier communities to 61 towns, cities, and villages in Indiana and Ohio. The Agency has also grown to offer services beyond power supply, including economic development assistance, marketing and communications support, and government relations work. IMPA also formed its operations and engineering subsidiary—IMPA Service Corp—in 2001 to provide a cost-effective resource for members regarding engineering work, rate studies, and electric system management. These services continue to strengthen IMPA’s membership for the betterment of public power utility customers across the Midwest.

IMPA initially began in 1983 with 24.95% ownership in a coal-fired baseload generating facility called Gibson 5 in southwestern Indiana. As the Agency’s membership grew throughout the decades, IMPA would come to acquire additional power supply resources to support its



Some of the founders of IMPA

members and incorporate diverse fuel types into its portfolio. By 2023, IMPA has added seven combustion turbines operated primarily on natural gas, four with fuel oil backup for reliability, to its resources, as well as joint-ownership in other coal-fired power plants in Kentucky and Illinois. The Agency has also incorporated power purchase agreements of nuclear, wind, and solar power into its power supply portfolio.

Since 2014, IMPA has also developed its own solar power program—constructing 44 solar parks in member communities throughout Indiana. This solar park initiative has played an integral role in building the renewable portion of IMPA’s portfolio and diversifying resources to the benefit of all members. Moving forward, IMPA is working toward a projected energy portfolio made up of 46% no-carbon resources by 2026. As environmental regulations continually change, and as older generation units near their end-of-life expectancy, the shift is a necessity for the Agency’s future success.

Forty years ago, the founders of IMPA provided the building blocks for a resilient foundation, and this foundation remains strong. IMPA as an Agency today has truly been formed by its history — the visionaries



that created the Agency, the decisions that shaped the Agency’s operations, and the evolution of IMPA’s service and power supply over time. As the Agency embarks on its next 40 years of existence, IMPA will continue to write its own story and history as the Agency adapts for future generations. •

IMPA Adds 75 MW of Wind Power

This June, Alta Farms wind farm in DeWitt County, Illinois, announced it began operations to produce renewable wind power. IMPA previously signed a power purchase agreement with the wind farm’s developer, Enel North America, for 75 megawatts of power, which has

now been added to the Agency’s power supply portfolio.

IMPA continues to build upon its historic foundation with wise investments in the Agency’s power supply portfolio, ensuring that its members will always have their everchanging electric needs met.

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.

What are some of the benefits of solar energy?



Send your answer to 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 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!



History of Power in Thorntown

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families into the modern age. Finally, on May 22, 1936, Thorntown's local Woody family became the first to light their home through infrastructure constructed by the REA.

According to *Power to the People: A History of Rural Electrification in Indiana* by Emily Born, Thorntown native Clark Woody had rallied for electricity to be brought to the countryside for years and was thrilled to see his home become the first lit through the REA's efforts.

"Some fellas around here were really thinkin' hard about gettin' electricity, so I just kind of egged them on," said Clark on recalling how he fought through the 1930s for electrification. "Four of five of us went to Washington DC, drove a car over there; spent all night a drivin'. Went down to the



REA office and talked with the administrator.”

Finally, just one year after the REA was officially established, the Woody family turned on lights in their home.

“There were men everywhere—in all the rooms and closets, turning on all the lights and switches to make sure they worked,” said Clark’s wife Lois Woody in remembering the day her home was electrified. “They weren’t really sure it would work.”

While the Woody’s enjoyed their electricity, the community of Thorntown wasn’t far behind. Following in the city of Wabash’s footsteps, Thorntown purchased its power utility in 1950 to become a public power utility. This established Thorntown’s electric utility as a not-for-profit, locally controlled municipal entity, like a public school or a library. For decades afterward, Thorntown operated as an individual public power utility, purchasing power from larger utilities to supply citizens and business owners at a cost-effective rate. Then, in 2006, the town joined the Indiana Municipal Power Agency (IMPA), a wholesale public power provider that as of now provides electricity to 61 communities throughout the Midwest.

Thorntown’s decision to become a member of IMPA further solidified the town’s bright future. Now, the town has dozens of allies in IMPA’s membership to ensure the delivery of low-cost, reliable, and environmentally responsible power to residents. The community even recently signed up for a program with IMPA’s operations and engineering subsidiary, IMPA Service Corp, to receive regular maintenance of electric infrastructure and emergency repair and restoration when needed. The wise decision making of Thorntown leaders, from Clark Woody to current officials, have created a long history of power in your community! •

What’s the Word?

Circuit Breaker

A circuit breaker is a safety device typically used in homes to interrupt the flow of electricity whenever the current level gets too high. These devices are vital in preventing house fires or other electrical hazards caused by wiring problems or equipment failures.

Typically, homes have a circuit breaker panel, which acts as the control system for the electricity in a house. Here, you can use switch controls to alter the distribution of power around your home.

While circuit breaker panels are intentionally built for easy access and use, always call a professional if you need breaker modifications, or if you are in doubt about anything. It’s always best to prioritize safety when it comes to electricity!

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

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

Editor: Niki Dick
Senior Director of
Marketing Communications

Correspondent:
Whitney Hicks
Communications
Coordinator

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Cooking Corner

Darlington High School Pizza Burgers

Recipe submitted by Martha of New Ross, Indiana

- 1 lb hamburger
- 1/2 lb bologna
- 1 1/2 cups pizza sauce
- Italian seasoning to taste
- Salt and Pepper
- 1/2 tsp garlic powder
- 4-8 oz pizza cheese
- 1 dozen hamburger buns

Mix hamburger and bologna. Chop bologna in food processor. Brown until hamburger is no longer pink. Add salt, pepper, garlic, and italian seasoning. Stir in pizza sauce. Should not be too wet. Let cool slightly. Add cheese and spoon onto half of a bun. Bake 350 until hot. May add more cheese on top. Makes 2 dozen.

Apple Dumplings

Recipe submitted by Jamie of Linton, Indiana

- 2 cans crescent rolls
- 2 large Granny Smith apples
- 1 1/2 sticks butter
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 cup Mountain Dew

Cut apples into 8 slices each and wrap each slice into a crescent roll. Mix butter, sugar and cinnamon; bring to a boil then spoon over rolls. Pour on Mountain Dew next. Some people will add the Mountain Dew in with the butter, sugar and cinnamon. Bring to a boil. Bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes.

The Benefits of Electric Vehicles

In the last issue of the Municipal Power News, we asked readers to share some of the advantages of driving an electric car rather than a traditional gas powered vehicle. We received a number of great comments from our readers—check out what some of you said!



“One significant benefit of driving an electric vehicle (EV) over a gas-powered car is the cost savings associated with fuel and maintenance. Electric vehicles are more energy-efficient, allowing drivers to cover more miles per unit of energy compared to internal combustion engine vehicles. With electricity generally being cheaper than gasoline, EV owners can save significantly on fuel costs over time. Furthermore, electric vehicles have fewer moving parts and require less frequent maintenance. They don’t need oil changes, spark plug replacements, or timing belt adjustments, reducing ongoing maintenance expenses. This combination of lower fuel costs and reduced maintenance requirements makes electric vehicles a cost-effective choice for environmentally conscious drivers.” – Mario, Richmond

Spot on answer! The energy efficiency of EVs, as well as their low maintenance needs, make these vehicles remarkably safe and dependable. Like Mario, many of our other readers mentioned the environmental benefits of EVs:

“A benefit of driving an electric car is zero tailpipe emissions.” – Sue, Bremen

“Electric vehicles are better for the environment by having a lesser carbon footprint.” – Todd, Winamac

“Lower carbon footprint.” – Charlie, Bainbridge

This is also a great observation—No power source is completely benign environmentally. While the mining and production of the battery components causes emissions, EVs may have an edge when considering lifetime emissions of EVs versus conventional gas powered cars. As renewable energy generation becomes more popular, the electricity that fuels EVs is also becoming cleaner. This reduction in emissions improves the air quality of your community and supports renewable resource integration.

The popularity of electric vehicles steadily rises as consumers learn about the numerous benefits that they provide as compared to gas powered cars. While EVs may not be for everyone, their use is expected to grow in the coming decade. As a member of a public power utility, EVs also benefit your entire community as their fuel supply comes from your local utility. The energy purchased to charge an electric vehicle helps to support infrastructure upgrades, hometown jobs, and steady electric rates that are provided by public power utilities. Next time you’re in the market for a new vehicle, consider going electric!

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Save the Date: 2023 Festival of the Turning Leaves

Mark your calendars for this year's Festival of the Turning Leaves! It's the 50th anniversary of the celebration, and Thorntown officials have special events planned for the long weekend. Be sure to attend this year's festival from September 22nd to the 24th!

