

# Municipal Power News



Town of Chalmers

Volume 29, Issue 1 | Winter 2024



## Town Pursues Several Projects to Improve Community

Chalmers community leaders continuously look for ways to improve local quality of life, and several recently completed town projects have showcased these efforts. Not only have extensive utility upgrades been accomplished just in recent months, but the town is poised for several more improvements throughout the year.

One of the largest projects completed recently involved the town's water department replacing a main water line on Walnut Street from 7th Street all the way to the west side of town. Utility staff have encountered multiple problems with this infrastructure line in past years, with it being one of the leading culprits of water leaks in town. With a \$700,000 grant from the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs, the town was able to fund replacement of this main line along with replacing valves and all of the fire hydrants along the line.

In addition to the extensive water utility improvement, Chalmers is incorporating an Automated Metering Infrastructure (AMI) system for both its water and electric utilities throughout the community. AMI is an integrated system of metering technologies that enables two-way communication

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IMPA celebrates a decade of its solar program.

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Respond to the question featured on this page for a chance to win a prize!

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Look through reader responses from the last edition of *Municipal Power News*.

# IMPA Celebrates 10 Years of its Solar Program

With the goal to expand the diversity of its power supply portfolio with economically feasible renewable generation sites, the Indiana Municipal Power Agency (IMPA) launched its solar program to construct solar parks within its member communities in 2014. At the time, solar power was just emerging as a cost-effective fuel resource for utilities, but IMPA embraced the challenge of incorporating this resource into its power supply portfolio to further diversify its resources and prepare for the future. Now, 10 years and 50 solar parks later, IMPA is proud of the numerous accomplishments made through its solar program and the nearly 200 megawatts of power that it contributes to all 61 member communities served by the Agency.



IMPA began its program cautiously, only constructing three demonstration solar parks in Frankton, Rensselaer, and Richmond, Indiana in its first year. Each site was housed on about eight acres of land and with 4,000 solar panels, and by the end of the year, the three sites generated 1.5 million kilowatt hours.

Through this process, IMPA expanded its knowledge of solar power and the steps needed to successfully develop parks of this scale in the most cost-effective way possible. Besides relying on in-house expertise, IMPA worked with local contractors in each of the three member communities to keep costs down and support local businesses. When construction of the three solar parks came in under budget while reliably providing environmentally-responsible electricity, IMPA and its Board of Commissioners started to envision the vast possibilities of building solar in several member communities. A spark was lit, and by 2015, six more solar parks were constructed in member communities, adding over 9 megawatts (MW) of solar capacity to the Agency's power supply portfolio.

In the ensuing years, IMPA increased its renewable footprint by building solar in collaboration with its member communities. As time progressed, so did the Agency's proficiency in constructing solar parks. By 2017, IMPA was constructing each of its solar parks with a single-axis



tracking system, allowing solar panels at each site to effectively track the movement of the sun throughout the day and generate more electricity as a result. The program continued to expand with new solar parks being constructed in member communities throughout the state, as well as additional parks being added to some communities whose infrastructure were able to handle more than one solar park . With the help of this program, IMPA achieved at least 30% low or no carbon resources by 2020 while still offering some of the lowest wholesale electric rates in the state of Indiana.

The success of IMPA’s solar program continues to thrive in recent years. In 2023, IMPA had its most prolific year yet for its solar park program as the Agency brought seven solar parks online in member communities. The agency’s largest park – at 9.9 MW – was completed, and IMPA celebrated a milestone as the Agency’s 50th solar park came online late in the year. From a small, idealistic program that started with three, 1-MW parks in 2014,

the Agency’s solar park program has grown exponentially in under 10 years. The Agency now has over 196 MW of solar power in member communities. Plans are already underway for four additional parks, and the Agency expects to surpass 209 MW of solar capacity by the end of 2025. The solar park program plays a key role in IMPA’s diverse power supply portfolio, and with its proven success rate, the Agency continues to provide a diverse fuel mix that benefits both consumers and the environment. •



# Reader Feedback

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 does having reliable electricity mean to you and your family?



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!

## Topic 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!



## Projects to Improve Chalmers

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between utilities and customers' meters. This technology allows Chalmers' utility to read utility meters remotely, providing labor savings and more accurate billing and customer data. AMI also notifies the town immediately if issues are detected, allowing the utility to respond more quickly than ever to water leaks or power interruptions. All water meters have been swapped to an AMI system as of now, and the town is working with its not-for-profit power provider, the Indiana Municipal Power Agency, to change out all the electric meters.

Additionally, the utility recently completed maintenance repairs on the water tower in Chalmers Town Park.

"One of our largest priorities right now is just getting our infrastructure current," said Pam Brown, Chalmers Town Council Member. "These utility projects we completed in



# Prepare for Emergencies

If you or your family members have special circumstances that require electricity for health and wellness, please contact the Town Hall and let town staff know. In case of storms or outages, your information can be placed on a list that utility staff and partners will prioritize to ensure your safety is preserved. Call today at (219) 984-5494 or visit the Town Hall at 205 East Walnut St between the hours of 10am and 3pm, Monday through Friday. •

February will improve water quality and will also reduce the number of times that people are out of water due to main breaks or boil orders. We really appreciate the entire town for being patient with us while these projects were ongoing. They were much-needed repairs, and it was a huge undertaking, but we're so glad to improve our services for everyone in the community."

Moving forward, the town will be revisiting Walnut Street this spring to

complete yard work on land that was disrupted during the main line water repair in the winter. Additionally, Chalmers was approved by White County to replace two generators at the Water and Wastewater Treatment Plants that have aged beyond repair. The town looks forward to installing them as soon as they are delivered. Other future goals include paving more streets in town and installing sidewalks for pedestrians, putting in new restrooms and a picnic shelter at

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## What's the Word?

### *Investigating Power Terminology*

#### **Watt**

A watt is a unit of measurement used to show the rate of energy transfer over one second of time. Consequently, a kilowatt is equal to 1,000 watts, a megawatt is 1 million watts, and a gigawatt equals 1 billion watts.

You may have heard of a kilowatt hour (kWh), which is a common billing unit used by most utilities in the electric industry. Essentially, a kWh simply shows the energy use per hour of an appliance, device, or entire home measured in kilowatts. For example, a space heater rated at 1.5 kWh consumes 1500 watts of power in one hour of continuous use!

Watts are named after James Watt, an inventor and engineer born in 1736 who also created the concept of horsepower.

# Cooking Corner

## Meatloaf

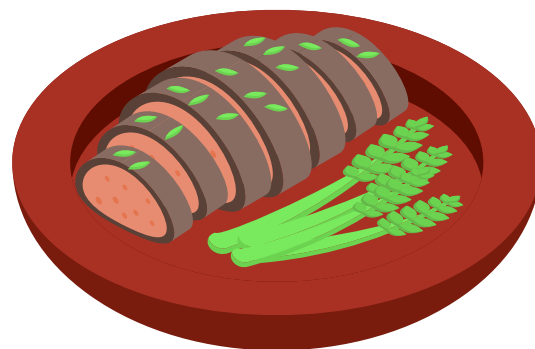
Recipe submitted by Marcie of Richmond, Indiana

- 2 lbs hamburger
- 2 eggs
- 10 to 12 crackers (crumbled)
- 1 onion diced
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 cup milk
- 2 pkgs instant oatmeal
- 2 to 3 squirts of ketchup

Mix all ingredients well. Form into a loaf and put into a greased loaf pan. Cover with ketchup. Refrigerate for 20 to 30 minutes covered to help the loaf firm up. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Remove loaf from refrigerator and bake in preheated oven for 1 to 1 1/2 hours.

Once meatloaf is baked, remove from oven. Let rest on top of the stove for 30 minutes before cutting into so that it won't fall apart.

This recipe serves about 4 to 6 people. Invite your friends and family over to enjoy!



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)

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# What are the Benefits of Public Power?

In the last issue of the *Municipal Power News*, we asked you what some of the benefits of public power are. As a reader of this newsletter, you live in a public power community, which means the electric utility that serves your power needs is a not-for-profit utility, owned and operated by your municipality.

The benefits of public power are numerous. Here is what some of our readers had to say about the advantages of living in a public power community.

**“By being a part of the community, public power utilities can boost investment in the community, support local education, and be involved with charitable programs. They also care about the overall well-being of the communities they serve.”**

**– Fred**

“Since public utilities are nonprofit organizations, their main focus is on providing affordable services rather than maximizing profit. This often leads to lower rates for customers, as any surplus revenue is reinvested into the improvement and expansion of services. Public power

also eliminates the need for shareholders and dividends, further reducing costs. Consequently, individuals and businesses can save money on essential utilities, allowing them to allocate their resources more efficiently.”

**– Chris**

**“There are many benefits to public power, such as being able to be provided with economic advantages. IMPA makes sure all electric needs of the community are met, as well. It boosts community investments, supports local education, and gets involved with beautification.”**

**– Bridgette**

These are all great answers that highlight how public power improves your community to help it thrive. Additionally, public power is affordable. According to a 2021 American Public Power Association (APPA) comparison, public power customers of Indiana and Ohio typically saved an average of more than 40% when compared to other types of electric utilities. APPA also reports that nearly 80% of projects currently under construction by public power utilities are solar and wind generating sources. This shows that public power utilities also recognize the importance of environmental stewardship and continue to invest in sustainable power sources.

Public power communities, including yours, consistently work to provide low-cost, reliable, and environmentally-responsible power to their consumers.

To learn more about public power, visit [www.impa.com/publicpower!](http://www.impa.com/publicpower!)

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IMPA Commissioner: Pam Brown



## Projects to Improve Chalmers

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the town's splash pad, and installing storm drains on the north side of town to help reduce flooding during storms.

The beautification of the downtown area is also taking precedence, with town leaders seeking input from residents on what they would like to see change in the community. Residents and business owners are invited to keep an eye out for flyers in the mail that encourage the sharing of community development ideas and feedback! •