

Municipal Power News



Bainbridge Municipal Electric Department

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110 Years of Public Power in Bainbridge

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.

Public power—an idea rooted in bettering local communities—serves local homes and businesses with customers as the central focus. As not-for-profit, locally controlled entities like public schools and libraries, public power utilities are owned by the community and run as a division of local government. With friends, neighbors, and family members working as utility staff at municipally-owned utilities, public power consists of local citizens working together to serve the needs of their own

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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. •



IMPA’s 50th Solar Park Ribbon Cutting

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, 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 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!



110 Years of Public Power

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community. With electric rates consistently lower than those of for-profit, investor-owned utilities (IOUs), public power communities provide affordable power too.

Only a few decades after Wabash became the first public power utility, Bainbridge joined the growing list of other public power communities throughout the US. By 1914, exactly 110 years ago, Bainbridge began supplying power to its entire community through this municipally-owned utility structure. Just as Bainbridge established itself as a public power provider, the energy industry's private sector was growing in power and began to control most of the electric market. As a result, public power communities were placed under threat through the 20th century. Most of these



utilities purchased wholesale power from IOUs to sell at a retail rate to local customers, but private companies imposed excessive wholesale rates, forcing some municipally-owned utilities to sell their systems to IOUs, including Wabash. Bainbridge was not immune to these dangers, but the local utility succeeded in persevering through the threat of privatization.

After years of operating as an individual municipally-owned utility, town leaders decided to strengthen their public power status by joining the Indiana Municipal Power Agency (IMPA) in 1989. IMPA is a coalition of 61 public power utilities across the Midwest that receive 100% of their power supply from IMPA and who share the philosophy that local communities are best suited to meet their own needs. IMPA members share power resources through the Agency for a more reliable and cost-effective future, and with strength in numbers, IMPA members are more able to withstand external challenges due to being part of a larger group. Bainbridge's decision to join IMPA further solidified its bright future as a public power community. With the Agency's help, the town has maintained low-cost, reliable, and environmentally-responsible energy for years and even established a solar park in the electric utility's service territory in 2015.

Consistently providing excellent electric service to the community for 110 years is no easy feat, but the town is carving a path toward even larger milestones in the future. Residents and business owners in the community can rest assured that with a rich history behind them and thoughtful preparation for the future, Bainbridge will remain a dependable public power community.●

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 1,500 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

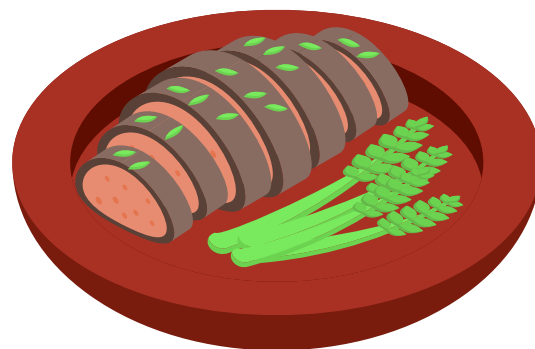
Recipe submitted by Marcie of Richmond, Indiana

- 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

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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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!

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Public Meetings in Bainbridge

Did you know that the public is welcome to attend all Town Council meetings and Utility Board meetings hosted in Bainbridge? Both of these meetings are held in the Town Hall on the second Thursday of each month, starting with the Utility Board meeting at 6:00 pm and following with the Town Council meeting at 7:00 pm. Bainbridge residents and business owners are encouraged to come to let their voices be heard, and to learn about what developments are occurring in the community. •

