



## What's Inside this Issue?

Inside this issue you'll find:

1. An Overview of the Electrical Energy Options the District is considering
2. An Update on legislative activity happening at the Colorado General Assembly
3. An overview of the Reapportionment Process



## Electrical Energy Options

By Wendy Anderson and Andy Nelson

The conveyance and treatment of wastewater requires a considerable amount of electrical energy. Each year, the Metro District spends about \$7.5 million on electricity, enough to power 11,000 homes. In addition to its cost, the electrical systems which energize District facilities must also be reliable to prevent interruption to services. Assessments of District infrastructure repeatedly point to the electrical supply and gear as being some of the most critical points of failure of service.

A newly formed Energy Program Team, comprised of subject-matter experts across Metro District departments, is leading efforts to ensure the District is effective in its energy-related decisions to provide cheaper, more efficient, more sustainable, and most importantly, reliable electricity.

### Transmission-Level Service

Since its first day of operation in the 1960s, the Metro District has received its electricity from what is called distribution-level service. This is the same "power pole" grid system used in commercial and residential neighborhoods. In time, this electrical service for the Robert W. Hite Treatment Facility (RWHTF) has become complex and less reliable due to increased grid demand and outages caused by storms or other vulnerabilities.

Infrastructure deemed critical to protection of public health in times of emergency is moving to direct transmission-level service to provide more resilient, reliable, and lower-cost electrical service.

The Energy Program Team is working on a series of infrastructure improvements which will transition the Metro District to transmission-level service and provide a new electrical backbone to serve the RWHTF for decades to come.



Figure 1 - Transmission towers

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## Solar Energy at NTP

Colorado's electricity from renewable sources has more than doubled since 2010. Water and wastewater treatment facilities are good options for solar energy due to the combination of high site energy use and available land. Given Colorado's sunny climate and dramatic reductions in solar energy installation costs, numerous water and wastewater facilities in Colorado have installed solar panels to reduce annual electricity costs.



Figure 2 – Solar panel install at a wastewater facility

High electric energy utility prices at the Northern Treatment Plant (NTP) make it an ideal candidate for operating cost reductions through on-site solar installations. The NTP also has a lot of land set aside for future capacity expansion which won't be needed until well beyond the lifecycle of a solar equipment installation. Multiple business models exist, including those where the solar installer carries all capital investment.

## Wind Energy

Wind is abundant across the eastern half of Colorado, and the cost for turbine-based electricity generation has experienced a dramatic drop over the last ten years. This has helped Xcel Energy (Xcel) commit to increase its wind energy development partnerships in eastern Colorado. Under Xcel's Colorado Energy Plan, more than half of its portfolio will come from low-cost clean energy, and this is continuing the drive for significant wind energy development.

The Metro District's 52,000-acre METROGRO® Farm near Deer Trail, Colorado has multiple features which make it an excellent candidate for wind energy lease development through a third party. Energy developers have expressed interest, and a lease agreement could be made allowing the District-as landowners – to receive revenue while not owning or investing any capital.

## Battery Electrical Storage

Demand charges are calculated monthly on electricity bills which include the peak rate of electrical draw within a given billing period. For the RWHTF, this demand charge costs the Metro District \$200,000 monthly. Battery Energy Storage (BES) is allowing large energy consumers to simultaneously improve energy resilience while providing the ability for energy arbitrage, whereby batteries are charged during periods of low energy demand and used during the peak demand period of the day. At the District, the peak demand unfortunately corresponds to the most expensive times of the day for electricity.

The Metro District is charged more for electricity during these peak events, so supplementing energy needs with stored energy from a battery system could provide savings and lower demand payments to the power utility. As with wind and solar, the installed costs for BES have dropped dramatically in the last ten years and are projected to drop further in the coming years. Energy sources such as wind and solar could be transferred to a battery system where energy can be stored.



Figure 3 – Battery storage facility

# Legislative Update

## 2021 Regular Session Summary

The General Assembly reconvened on February 16. To date, over 500 bills have been introduced. Session is scheduled to end on June 14. The Metro District will provide a comprehensive list of bills tracked and engaged on at the end of the session. In the meantime, below is a summary of legislation the District is currently tracking.

- Energy and Emission Benchmarking** (Rep. Kipp, Sen. Pettersen) The Colorado Energy Office is spearheading legislation that would create statewide energy performance benchmarking program aimed to improve efficiency for properties over 50,000 square feet. The Metro District is seeking amendments to clarify the definition of local governments to include all special districts, which, if amended, would protect the District from civil penalties.
- HB 21-1110--Colorado Laws for Persons with Disabilities** (Rep. Ortiz) requires local governments to ensure that individuals with disabilities are not excluded from participation or access to services or programs provided by the public entity. Additionally, the bill requires that local governments comply with the most recent web content accessibility guidelines identified by the World Wide Web Consortium Web Accessibility Initiative. The Metro District along with other local government organizations has worked with Rep. Ortiz to create a three-year phase in of the website requirements. Additionally, the Office of Information and Technology will provide technical assistance to a requesting local government.
- HB 21-1105—Low-Income Utility Assistance** (Rep. Kennedy, Sen. Hansen) creates a utility assistance program for electric and gas, as well as water and wastewater utilities. Participation in the water and wastewater assistance program will be voluntary for water and wastewater utilities. The Metro District is supporting this legislation.
- HJR 21-1002—Water Projects Eligibility List** (Rep. Arndt, Sen. Donovan) is an annual resolution that approves water projects identified by the Colorado Water Resources and Power Development Authority.
- SB 21-176-- Protecting Opportunities and Workers' Rights** (Sen. Winter, Sen. Pettersen & Rep. Gray, Rep. Lontine) is intended to modernize anti-discrimination laws and expand access to justice for Colorado workers. While the legislation is well-intended, the Metro District along with several other organizations have raised concerns that certain provisions in the bill will make settling discrimination cases more difficult. The bill also allows a claimant to bypass administrative remedies and go straight to court, which could encourage more claims. The bill also expands the definition of a "hostile work environment" and allows employers to be sued for the conduct of independent contractors. These changes to current law will expand employer liability and could result in increased insurance costs. The District is part of a coalition that is working with the sponsors to identify amendments to the bill to address these concerns.



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- **Dredge and Fill (Sponsors unknown)** CDPHE will seek legislation granting the authority to develop and establish a statewide dredge and fill permit program. This legislation will attempt to protect “gap waters” that may have otherwise been missed as a result of the 10<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court decision. Additionally, the draft legislation attempts to identify permitting fees to fund the permitting. Lastly, CDPHE will be hosting a weekly meeting for stakeholders. For those interested in participating in those conversations, please follow this [link](#).
- **SB 21-200, Reduce Greenhouse Gases Increase Environmental Justice** (Sen. Winter, Sen. Moreno & Rep. Jackson) Attempts to supplant many of the goals originally negotiated and identified in HB 19-1261. Under the proposed legislation, the AQCC will now be required to:
  - Direct each wholesale generation and transmission electric cooperative to file with the public utilities commission a responsible energy plan that will achieve at least an 80% GHG reduction by 2030 as compared to 2005 levels and specifying that if a plan is not filed, the cooperative must achieve at least a 90% greenhouse gas reduction by 2030 as compared to 2005 levels
  - Direct each retail, wholesale, and municipal electric utility and cooperative electric association to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by at least 95% between 2035 and 2040 and by 100% by 2040
  - Requires the AQCC to consider the social cost of greenhouse gas emissions
  - Create, if needed, a multi-sector in rule in-lieu sector-specific limits in order to achieve greenhouse gas reduction goals
- Adds the definition of “regulated pollutant” and prohibits the AQCC from excluding greenhouse gas emissions from the requirement to pay annual emission fees that are based on emissions of regulated pollutants
- Creates an environmental justice ombudsman and advisory board

## 2021 Board Reapportionment

Every four years, as directed by Colorado Statute (C.R.S. § 32-4-509) the Metro District is required to reapportion representation on the Metro District Board of Directors. During this process the District has reached out to Member Connectors as well as the Colorado Office of Demography to determine number of sewer connections/population within each service area.

“In districts having eleven or more member municipalities, the board shall consist of one member from each municipality included within the district for each seventy-five thousand of population, or fraction thereof, in such municipality, plus one member for each additional seventy-five thousand of population, or fraction thereof, in any such municipality; except that no municipality shall be entitled to more than one-half of the total membership or representation upon the board; and further except that any municipality that has fifty percent or more of the total population of the district shall have one-half of the total membership or representation on the board”

Directors will approve reapportionment numbers on May 18.

Thank you to everyone who worked with the District to gather this information before April 1!

## Metro Needs Your Help!

As part of the delegation agreement between participating Connectors and Contracting Municipalities, the Metro District’s Industrial Pretreatment Program (IPP) must continuously update the current list of businesses/industries in the entire 715 square-mile service area throughout the year. Updating the businesses/industries in our service area allows us to identify new and potentially harmful contaminants before they become a problem in our sewer lines and at our plants. It is critical the IPP knows what industries are contributing to our system. For example,

- Auto body shops generate waste that has the potential to be harmful to District employees working in sewer lines.
- Medical facility waste could impact the District’s ability to comply with environmental permits, laws, and regulations.
- Car washes discharge contaminants that could be poisonous to fish.
- Breweries discharging low pH waste could potentially corrode sewer lines.

Connectors should provide updates at the end of each quarter, by the 15th of following month (i.e. April 15, July 15, October 15, January 15) to Brandy DeLange or Meg Parker. Please contact Meg Parker if you have any IPP Questions ([mparker@mwrld.dst.co.us](mailto:mparker@mwrld.dst.co.us) or 303-286-3253).

Your help in identifying new and/or changing industries in your service area is greatly appreciated.

## Resources for Connectors

Do you have a project that needs funding? Please follow [this link](#) to find a list of resources available to Connectors.



## Important Dates to Remember

April 15, 2021	Q1 2021 Sewer Connection Charge due
June 15, 2021	Q2 Annual Charges 2021 due
July 15, 2021	Q2 2021 Sewer Connection Charges due
September 15, 2021	Q3 2021 Annual Charges due
October 15, 2021	Q3 2021 Sewer Connection Charges due
December 15, 2021	Q4 2021 Annual Charges due
January 17, 2022	Q4 2021 Sewer Connection Charges due

## Keep Us in the Loop

Do we have the best contact information for your organization? If staff or board members have changed, drop us a line and we’ll update our contact list.