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In 1924 the residents of Colorado Springs voted to create a four-service public utility. Since then, as a municipal utility, our focus has been on the basics, providing exceptional, reliable service while keeping costs reasonable.

Today, we continue to provide electricity, natural gas, water and wastewater services to the Pikes Peak Region and our customers still enjoy competitive prices, hometown service, responsible environmental practices and a voice in how their utility operates.

We have infrastructure around Garden of the Gods Park and work hard to maintain it in the least impactful way.
Our highlights

Environmental stewardship has been a part of our business practice for decades. Our customers and community rely on us to meet their utility needs, and they also expect us to responsibly manage the environmental impact of their energy and water services. We’re working to protect our air, water and natural resources now and for future generations.

2017 was a phenomenal year for our continued commitment to environmental stewardship.

We approved a plan to add 95 megawatts (MW) of solar power to our generation, powering approximately 30,000 homes annually.

We recycled nearly 100 tons of porcelain for use in street paving and construction projects, significantly reducing landfill waste.

We distributed thousands of free LED light bulbs to local nonprofit agencies.

The Manitou Hydroelectric Plant was inducted into the Hydro Hall of Fame at the 2017 HydroVision International conference.

We received the Engineering News-Record 2016 Project of the Year Award in the Water/Environment category for the Mountain States Region for the Southern Delivery System project.

We won The Green Transportation Summit and Expo’s first-ever Sustainable Fleet Award for “Leading by Example.”

We enhanced power plants to fully meet new, stricter emission limits and continued planning efforts to retire aging units.

Thank you for sharing our commitment to the environment. We are lucky to live in the wonderful state of Colorado, and we are all responsible to keep it beautiful.
We were the first Colorado utility to open a community solar garden.
Energy Vision

We have an Energy Vision and it’s a big one.

By 2020, our goal is to provide 20 percent of our total electric energy through renewable sources with no more than a 1 percent electric bill impact. We are also working to reduce average customer electric use by 12 percent and reduce electric demand by 12 percent with no more than a 2 percent bill impact.

Renewable energy

To meet our Energy Vision, we use qualifying renewable energy credit purchases from the Western Area Power Administration and from solar and hydro-electric resources located in our service territory.

We meet the renewable energy requirements of the Colorado Renewable Energy Standard which requires municipal utilities to generate 6 percent of their electricity from renewable resources for years 2015 through 2019 and 10 percent for years 2020 and beyond.

The Colorado Springs Utilities Board approved a plan to add 95 MW of utility-scale solar.

Two projects, a 60 MW array and 35 MW array, are expected to be operational in 2020. These projects will increase our renewable energy portfolio to about 15 percent.

2017 Electric generation by fuel type

Quick reference:

Mcf - 1,000 cubic feet
MWh - megawatt hours
MW - megawatt
Renewable energy rebate program

Renewable energy helps protect the environment, diversifies our energy supply, creates energy independence and reduces our summer peak capacity requirements.

Our renewable energy rebate program for photovoltaics supports and encourages the installation of solar photovoltaic generating systems at homes and businesses.

In 2017, we issued more than $262,000 in funding for renewable energy rebates to our customers. This is already impacting our kilowatt hour capacity generated by solar and will increase greatly in the next few years.

Community solar garden programs

We were the first Colorado utility to open a community solar garden, helping solar become more accessible to our customers. Our first four solar gardens have a total capacity of 2 MW and 435 participants. Our second community solar program is a 2 MW array and has 21 residential and four business subscribers.

Quick reference:
kW - kilowatt
MW - megawatt

In 2017, our community solar gardens are fully subscribed by our customers.
Our facilities and fleet

We must lead by example. Reducing our own energy and water use is always a priority; we measure our progress every year.

Our goal was to reduce the total energy use of our major existing facilities by 20 percent. We achieved that last year with a 21.6 percent reduction in energy use.

We measure and benchmark the energy use of our facilities using the Environmental Protection Agency’s ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager tool. This helps us identify energy saving opportunities and quantify our energy reductions through construction and renovation projects. In 2017, our Utilities Customer Service Center, Pinkerton Service Center and Conservation and Environmental Center earned ENERGY STAR certifications.

We continued our LED lighting retrofit program for all of our buildings. We identified older lighting systems in need of replacement and began retrofitting the fixtures with energy-saving LED bulbs. Approximately 1,700 lamp conversions were completed in 2017, up from 900 conversions in 2016. The retrofitted sites saw a 9.2 percent reduction in electric consumption in 2017.

Martin Drake Power Plant is our community’s largest nonpotable water customer. Not sustainable for drinking, nonpotable water is safely used to cool plant equipment - saving energy and water.

We require an extensive fleet of vehicles to meet the needs of almost half a million customers. Through our use of alternative fuel, electric and hybrid vehicles we reduce air emissions and their impact in Colorado Springs.

We have 375 alternative-fuel vehicles.

We have 27 electric hybrid vehicles, eight electric vehicles, 306 ethanol flex-fuel vehicles and 34 compressed natural gas vehicles.

Our use of alternative fuels contributed to the City of Colorado Springs receiving first place in the first ever Western Region Sustainable Fleet Award.
Sustainable practices

Recycling materials and waste is not only a sustainable practice that helps the environment, it’s cost-effective. Because we can reuse and recycle materials, our costs go down and we are more efficient with your dollars.

In 2017 alone, we recycled:

- 39 tons of electronic waste
- 6,429 mercury-containing lamps
- 8,590 gallons of used oil
- 415 gallons of antifreeze
- 1,153 gallons of steel, aluminum, copper, brass, iron and tin

Commodes to roads

Since 1993, we have recycled excavated construction debris by taking the material and processing it through a screener that separates it into different reusable components. After the separation, the soil is reused as construction fill and the asphalt and concrete are crushed and re-used in Colorado Springs roadways.

In 2013, we added a toilet recycling program to our sustainable practices. Raw porcelain is accepted for recycling in cooperation with private and commercial entities. In 2017, more than 278 tons of porcelain were recycled or accepted for processing.
There are many reasons people decide to live in Colorado – one is our great outdoors. Our state is defined by its majestic mountains, rolling valleys and everything in between.

When it comes to utility projects and systems, we take special steps to ensure the integrity of our region’s habitat and the wildlife that depend on it. We always strive to preserve and protect wildlife, habitat and wetlands during construction and operation of our facilities.

We continually update protection standards for raptors, which often use utility poles as hunting perches and resting sites. We postpone projects as necessary, and we continually improve safety procedures to avoid electric shock.

We postponed two projects in 2017 to avoid interfering with nesting Swainson’s hawks. After the young hawks grew up and left the nest, we resumed and completed our projects.

We also participate in a workgroup established by Colorado Parks and Wildlife in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to protect federally listed fish species in the Colorado River Basin.
Water quality

Watershed planning and management is critical for ensuring adequate, high-quality water. Watersheds are areas of land that contain a common set of streams and rivers that all drain into a single body of water, such as a river, lake or reservoir.

Our watershed planning team is a group of biologists, natural resource planners, raw water operators and environmental engineers working to protect our water supply by ensuring the health of watershed ecosystems in the Pikes Peak Region and beyond.

We are proud to say that in 2017 our drinking water continued to meet or surpass all state and federal drinking water standards.

Each year, thousands of water samples are collected at our reservoirs and streams, at water treatment facilities and throughout the distribution system. Those samples are analyzed for numerous water-quality parameters to ensure that safe and reliable water is served to our customers. This analysis is not only performed to meet regulatory requirements, but also for research and operational improvements.

Read our most recent Water Quality Report.
Most of our water comes directly from high-country snow melt, which means we are primarily first-time users of the water.

We take water quality very seriously. Our laboratory is state certified with state-of-the-art instrumentation. In support of regulatory compliance, we operate 365 days a year, collecting and analyzing more than 12,000 samples annually. Our laboratory staff monitors drinking water for quality, conducting 400 tests per month. We know that each time you turn on your tap, the quality is what matters most.

We continue to actively participate in the Fountain Creek Flood Control and Greenway District in partnership with the Army Corps of Engineers and 11 local governments. We support its efforts to improve water quality and develop the greenway. We also work with Arkansas-Fountain Coalition for Urban/Rural River Evaluation to share costs of regional water-quality monitoring.

In 2017, we hosted the fourth annual Creek Week cleanup. This watershed-wide litter cleanup and awareness program connects community members to our waterways and helps make them safer and cleaner for all to enjoy.
Air quality

Air quality in Colorado Springs is among the best of all the cities in Colorado, and we do our part to keep it that way.

For decades, we have worked with the State of Colorado to measure the effects of population growth, energy production and increased transportation on air quality in the Pikes Peak Region. Our air quality is continuously monitored by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and the Environmental Protection Agency.

A key component of air quality compliance is reducing emissions, and they are lower today than ever before. With the closing of the Martin Drake Power Plant no later than 2035, we anticipate that additional electric generation will be shifted to natural gas and renewable sources, both which have low or no emissions.

Odor-related emissions from the Las Vegas Water Resource Recovery Facility are removed by a media-based pollution control system to help ensure that wastewater operations are compatible with homes and businesses nearby. The J.D. Phillips Water Resource Recovery Facility is equipped with fully enclosed, state-of-the-art odor control.

Treated wastewater disinfection is accomplished with ultraviolet light at both wastewater treatment plants, which eliminates the need to store, transport or work with chlorine and sulfur dioxide gases.
Reducing emissions
While the need for a diversified energy mix remains, we work hard to operate in a responsible manner and reduce emissions. In 2017, we completed several projects that have resulted in considerable emissions reductions from our electric generating units.

Recently the focus of our emission controls program has been on the reduction of nitrogen oxide (NO\textsubscript{x}) and sulfur dioxide (SO\textsubscript{2}) from the Martin Drake and Ray Nixon Power Plants. After a multi-year effort, we demonstrated compliance with new, stricter limits mandated by Colorado’s Regional Haze Rule. This was accomplished by the installation of SO\textsubscript{2} scrubbing systems and ultra-low NO\textsubscript{x} burners at both plants.

The scrubber technology at the Drake Power Plant is so efficient that the plant had the lowest SO\textsubscript{2} emissions on a pound per megawatt hour of all coal-fired plants in Colorado.

Drake was one of the first plants in the nation to install soot-removing baghouses to remove particulate pollution. This technology was also installed at Nixon when it was constructed. Baghouses collect more than 99.8 percent of fly ash. This technology is one reason these units continue to qualify as low emitters under state and federal regulations for control of mercury. Additionally, both plants use low-sulfur coal from the Powder River Basin in Wyoming.
Efficiency programs

Residential and business efficiency rebates help our customers use energy and water efficiently while decreasing waste.

In 2017, residential efficiency rebates alone saved:

- 10.5 million gallons of water
- 53,342 Mcf of natural gas
- 2,156 MWh of electricity consumption
- 0.9 MW of electricity demand

Change the Current

We launched a new customer engagement program to help our customers use utility services safely and efficiently. The program motivates customers to take a pledge and make utility-related changes in their homes and businesses. This saves them money and helps us meet operation goals and keep rates low.

The program exceeded our annual pledge goal. More than 6,000 four packs of LED bulbs were distributed to customers, equating to about 478 MWh/year of energy savings.

Experience [www.changethecurrent.com](http://www.changethecurrent.com) and take your pledge today.

Quick reference:
- Mcf - 1,000 cubic feet
- MWh - megawatt hours
- MW - megawatt
Customer assistance programs
Our Home Efficiency Assistance Program provides qualifying low-income customers with free energy and water audits and efficiency retrofits. 135 customers benefited from this program, and they can expect up to 20 percent savings on their energy bills and 10 percent on their water bills.

We partner with four local non-profits to distribute ENERGY STAR qualified LEDs to low-income and senior residential customers through our Electric Efficiency Product Promotion. In 2017, we distributed 42,887 free LEDs to our customers.

To help our low-income customers reduce their water and wastewater bills, we retrofitted 221 inefficient toilets with high-efficiency WaterSense models through our Low Income Toilet Retrofit Program. They can expect water savings of 70 percent for each new toilet.

In-store discounts
We pay local retailers and manufacturers to lower the price of ENERGY STAR qualified LEDs through our ENERGY STAR Certified Lighting Program. This markdown is passed along to our customers, encouraging the purchase of efficient light bulbs. A total of 901,998 LEDs were purchased by our electric customers in 2017. That means our customers are reducing annual commodity consumption by 23,404 megawatt hours of electricity.

As part of our Showerhead Exchange and Retail Markdown Program, our residential customers exchanged 576 old, inefficient showerheads for new WaterSense models. Similar to our lighting program, we paid local retailers to markdown WaterSense showerheads and our customers bought 1,535 of them.

We distributed or helped reduce the price of more than 968,000 LED light bulbs.

Our efficiency programs helped save more than 9.25 million gallons of water.
Customer education

As a community-owned utility, we have an obligation to educate our customers on their services, safety and more. It’s the best part of our work because it empowers our customers and saves precious resources in our community.

Our annual Efficiency Expo was a hit with more than 450 customers in attendance. The expo took place at our Conservation and Environmental Center where participants toured the Water Wise Demonstration Garden, energy and water efficiency exhibits and drove electric vehicles.

Water education

Our water education programs have grown significantly in the last few years. We now offer almost 650 classes and presentations annually. Our staff members give tours, teach classes and give presentations in the community. We interact with students, families, teachers and the public at schools, community events and more. We distribute shower timers and toilet leak test kits.

We coordinated with the City of Colorado Springs to host the first ever Pikes Peak Children’s Water Festival. More than 500 fourth grade students attended and learned about our water system, water quality and efficiency programs.

Water education classes and presentations 2008-2017

Energy and safety education

More than 850 customers participated in our LED holiday light recycling program, recycling 4,740 pounds of inefficient holiday lights.

Our experts made 286 presentations to local schools and community groups on electric and natural gas safety.

We use our own customer information channels, such as newsletters, website, social and paid media and more to help our customers use our services safely and efficiently.
We’re always trying to reach new heights for our customers.