

FEBRUARY  
2022

# UNITED NEWSLINE

Information for the members of United Power, Inc.

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### Date: 4/29/2022

United Power filed a non-conditional Notice of Intent to Withdraw from our power supplier in compliance with a recent Federal Energy Regulatory Commission ruling. This changes our previously announced Tri-State exit date of Jan. 1, 2024 to May 1, 2024.

## IMPORTANT DATES

FEBRUARY 11	Director Nomination Deadline Petitions due by 4 p.m.
FEBRUARY 21	Presidents' Day Offices Closed
APRIL 13	Annual Meeting & Director Election

## 2021: A Year in Review

### 100,000 Meter Milestone, Wholesale Power Announcement Highlight 2021

Year after year, United Power works toward an unmatched excellence in the level of service it provides for its members, the support it demonstrates in its communities and its exceedingly high standard for delivering continuously reliable power. Endless unpredictability over the past two years, caused by the ongoing pandemic and unproductive negotiations with its wholesale power supplier, has not inhibited the cooperative from pursuing these goals. Instead, its leadership has elevated its expectations, building on all United Power has accomplished over the past year.

#### Crossing A Meter Milestone

United Power experienced record levels of growth throughout its service territory in 2021, resulting in it surging past a significant meter milestone this past summer. The cooperative energized its 100,000th meter connection in Commerce City's fast-growing Reunion community in June, becoming just the second Colorado cooperative – and 31st nationwide – to surpass the meter milestone and highlighting a period of sustained growth for the cooperative that failed to slow even during the pandemic. It joins CORE Electric Cooperative, formerly Intermountain REA, as the only other cooperative serving more than 100,000 meters in Colorado.

#### Leadership Shift at the Top

The cooperative welcomed Mark A. Gabriel as its new President and Chief Executive Officer in March after a months-long nationwide search. A 25-year veteran in the electric utility business, Gabriel transitioned immediately to lead ongoing contract negotiations with Tri-State and to help position United Power for future success as a cooperative and industry leader in

the changing energy landscape. Prior to joining United Power, Gabriel served eight years as CEO of the Western Area Power Administration.

“I am extremely honored to have been selected to lead such an amazing organization as we approach a transformational time in the electricity business,” Gabriel said. “United Power is uniquely positioned to be engaged in the decarbonization of the grid and to take advantage of the introduction of new technologies as we move to a cleaner energy future.”

#### Reunited & Ready

United Power was able to resume normal activities this past summer after more than a year of altering its practices for the health and safety of members and employees. The Brighton office location was opened to members again in June. While office locations were closed, the cooperative also installed several payment kiosks around its service territory to allow members to continue accessing convenient payment centers.

A gradual return to normal activities also meant the return of community functions and events. From summer fairs and festivals to holiday



[www.unitedpower.com](http://www.unitedpower.com)

Report an Outage 303-637-1350  
Customer Service 303-637-1300

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# Along These Lines

## A Message from United Power's President & CEO



**Mark A. Gabriel**

President & Chief Executive Officer

### Have Feedback For Us?

Submit your questions, comments, concerns or general feedback at [www.unitedpower.com/CEO](http://www.unitedpower.com/CEO).

Charles Darwin put things into perspective when he noted, "it is not the strongest or the most intelligent who will survive but those who can best manage change."

The electric industry is the perfect example of creating and managing change. It brought light, heat and motive power to communities, replacing oil lamps, wood stoves and steam trolleys. Electricity freed us from drudgery, allowed education to expand and made previously uninhabitable places livable. In the generations since Thomas Edison, this amazing industry has been continuously reinvented, and today we are at yet another juncture.

As United Power members and residents of communities we serve, you are taking much of your electric consumption into your own hands. Smart thermostats are taking over, solar installations continue to increase and more than 4,000 electric vehicles now ply our roads. Even refrigerators have smart technology built in. The network of intelligent electricity is expanding, and we are looking at new ways to ensure the continued strength of viability of our networks.

We continue to improve the reliability and resilience of our system, thanks in large part to the support of our Board of Directors who have allowed the staff at United Power to make investments on your behalf. From vegetation management to covered cable, we continue to improve our system.

The coming move to new power suppliers is yet another step in the ongoing change and evolution for United Power. We are seeking to provide lower cost and lower carbon power, keep dollars in our communities and embrace the changes we are seeing across the electric enterprise. At the heart of this change is a more diverse generation portfolio, taking advantage of local power supplies and managing the system in a different fashion.

I am very pleased that a number of our members have reached out with specific questions – and I take pride in personally answering each and

every one. The majority of questions about our decision were affirming and positive. Others expressed specific concerns about rates during the 24-month transition period and some had worries or cautions regarding reliability, pointing to the situation in Texas this past February as well as ongoing problems in California. United Power has no planned rate increases forthcoming, and the unfortunate events in Texas highlighted the clear need for winterization of power plants and the state's lack of interconnectivity to other states and markets. And in California, public policy has been allowed to push ahead of physics.

While members can find detailed FAQs on our decision at [www.unitedpower.com/powersupply](http://www.unitedpower.com/powersupply), I can assure you the change we are making focuses on economics, reliability, environmental responsibility and critical operating decisions. Constraints on low- or no-carbon generation, for example, flies in the face of our members' own actions, as well as the state's mandates. Patiently waiting for power plant closures stretching decades neither yields savings for our members nor represents the change we are seeing in the electric industry.

At United Power, we are working to manage the change and continue being responsive to your needs every day. Whether it is providing information on solar energy, offering leases for EV chargers or working with developers on new energy efficient neighborhoods, we are focused on your needs today and into the future.

The staff at United Power is committed to supporting our rapidly growing membership. Please feel free to reach out to me with your questions, comments and concerns as we continue powering lives, powering change, powering the future – the Cooperative way.

## Continued Pandemic Response Also Impacts Year

parades, United Power was a pivotal partner in helping make many of them possible. The cooperative is a proud sponsor of community events throughout its service territory.

### Supporting Members & Causes They Care About

Cooperative leadership approved a support fund to provide relief to members struggling with the pandemic in 2020 called the Co-op Cares Fund. As pandemic concerns continued for many United Power members, the Board allocated another \$250,000 to the fund for 2021. Throughout the year, approximately \$212,000 in assistance was applied to 1,300 member accounts through Co-op Cares.

United Power also renewed its Member Choice Grant program in 2021. These grants allowed members to nominate local nonprofits to receive funds from the cooperative, ensuring our continued support for causes you care about. Six \$1,000 grants were distributed to nonprofit organizations that received nominations from members throughout the year.

### No Rate Increase for 2022

Rates are the single greatest concern for United Power members. Proactive efforts to reduce spending and control costs as a direct result of the pandemic allowed the cooperative to avoid a rate increase for

members in 2021. Continued cost-control measures, coupled with significant meter and load growth throughout the service territory this past year, allowed United Power to announce in December there would be no residential or business rate increases for the second consecutive year in 2022. The lack of a rate increase should provide a little relief to members who continue to feel the effects of the ongoing pandemic.

### Intent to Leave Wholesale Power Supplier

United Power's ongoing negotiations with its wholesale power supplier reached a defining point at the end of 2021. After more than three years of unsuccessful attempts to modify its all-requirements contract, the cooperative officially filed its intent to leave, effective January 1, 2024. As a member of the wholesale power supplier, United Power was saddled with some of the highest cost, carbon-intensive power in Colorado. The cooperative pursued contract alterations that would allow it to lower costs and expand member options, which its wholesale supplier was unresponsive to. Exiting the contract will allow United Power to deploy more renewable resources on its grid or source more renewable options from new suppliers and provide more competitive rates for its members.

## Annual Director Election Three Board Seats Up for Election

Three positions on United Power's eleven-member board are up for election at **the 2022 Annual Meeting which is scheduled for Wednesday, April 13, 2022**. The cooperative plans to host a hybrid event, available for members to attend either in-person or virtually. One seat in the East, West, and South districts will be up for a three-year term.

To be eligible to become or remain a director, a person must be a United Power member and receive electric service from United Power at the member's primary residence in the district he or she represents. United Power's bylaws (available at [www.unitedpower.com](http://www.unitedpower.com), any of our offices, or through mail) provide in-depth information on director districts, qualifications, terms, elections, meetings and officers.

Each member's district is printed on their United Power statement. Nominations by written petition must state nominee's name and district, be signed by 15 or more United Power members, and be filed with the Board no less than 60 days prior to the Annual Meeting.

#### The deadline for nominations by petition is 4 p.m. on Friday, February 11, 2022.

Petitions are available at United Power's headquarters office in Brighton at 500 Cooperative Way. Additional information can be obtained by calling United Power's executive department at 303-659-0551 or by visiting our website at [www.unitedpower.com](http://www.unitedpower.com).

# 2022

## ANNUAL MEETING & DIRECTOR ELECTION

### WEDNESDAY APRIL 13, 2022

The 2022 Annual Meeting will be held as a hybrid event. Members may participate online or attend in-person.

#### VIRTUAL MEETING:

[www.unitedpower.com/annual-meeting](http://www.unitedpower.com/annual-meeting)

#### IN-PERSON MEETING:

##### Riverdale Regional Park & Fairgrounds

9755 Henderson Road, Brighton, CO 80601

**4:30 p.m.** In-person Registration, Balloting & Dinner

**6:30 p.m.** Online & In-person Meeting Begins

*United Power is monitoring COVID-19 restrictions, and in the event conditions do not permit an in-person event, the virtual format will still be available. Visit [www.unitedpower.com](http://www.unitedpower.com) for updates and current health department requirements.*

### BALLOTING DEADLINES

**Balloting in the 2022 Director Election will be conducted by both electronic & paper balloting.**

#### FEBRUARY 11, 2022

Director Nominations by Petition Deadline at 4 p.m.

#### MARCH 18, 2022

Electronic balloting opens & paper ballots mailed

#### APRIL 12, 2022

Mail-in ballots must arrive at the P.O. Box by 12 p.m.

Electronic balloting closes at 12 p.m.

#### APRIL 13, 2022

Ballot boxes at United Power offices close at 12 p.m.

In-person voting at Annual Meeting location open from 4:30 - 6:30 p.m.

### CANDIDATE FORUMS

In March, United Power will host four candidate forums for members. Forums are free, RSVPs are not required and light refreshments will be served.

#### TUESDAY, MARCH 22, 2022 | 7:30 a.m.

Coal Creek Canyon Community Center

#### MONDAY, MARCH 28, 2022 | 6:30 p.m.

Riverdale Regional Park, Waymire Dome

**Hybrid Event:** Livestream at [www.unitedpower.com](http://www.unitedpower.com)

#### WEDNESDAY, MARCH 30, 2022 | 7:30 a.m.

Fort Lupton Recreation Center, Multipurpose Room 3

#### THURSDAY, MARCH 31, 2022 | 6:30 p.m.

United Power Carbon Valley Service Center



# Wildfire Safety & Prevention

## Marshall Fire Reveals Urban Fire Threat; March 6 Seminar to Cover Fire Safety & Preparedness

Historic wildfires have devastated large parts of Colorado and its neighboring states over the past few years. However, the Marshall Fire in late December opened our eyes to the reality that wildfires are not simply a threat for our mountain communities. Given the right conditions, wildfires can spring up anywhere and quickly become uncontrollable.

The Marshall Fire erupted in eastern Boulder County before claiming nearly 1,000 homes and businesses in Boulder, Superior and Louisville, just miles from Denver and even closer to United Power members living in Coal Creek Canyon and Carbon Valley.

United Power has made significant investments in system improvements and upgrades to mitigate the potential for fires off its power lines, particularly in its own mountain communities. With multiple strong wind storms in December, including the storm that fueled the Marshall Fire, those system improvements have more than shown their value to members in both reliability and safety. The cooperative has also provided additional resources members can use to help mitigate the threat of wildfires on their own

property, such as how to create “defensible space,” referring to the strategic removal of vegetation that could create a bridge for fire to pass over.

In March, the Firestone Free Thinkers 4-H Club, in partnership with United Power, is hosting a free one-hour fire safety and disaster preparedness training, presented by the Frederick-Firestone Fire Protection District and the Carbon Valley Emergency Management Agency. The training will discuss how to pack a “go kit” in case of an emergency, how to create defensible space, the difference between evacuations and shelter-in-place and hazards in Carbon Valley.

### FIRE SAFETY & DISASTER PREPAREDNESS TRAINING

**Where:** United Power Carbon Valley Service Center  
9586 E I-25 Frontage Rd, Longmont

**When:** March 6, 2022 @ 3:00 p.m.

**Contact:** CV Emergency Management, 720-526-6594  
[www.fffd.us/227/emergency-management](http://www.fffd.us/227/emergency-management)

**FREE 1-HOUR EVENT. NO RSVP REQUIRED.**

## READER REWARDS

FEBRUARY  
2022



**Three Winners Every Month!**

1<sup>st</sup> place: \$100 Bill Credit

2<sup>nd</sup> place: \$50 Bill Credit (two winners)

### Submit Reader Rewards Online

[www.unitedpower.com](http://www.unitedpower.com)



Visit [www.unitedpower.com](http://www.unitedpower.com) and click on ‘News & Community’ to enter Reader Rewards online. Answer the question below with your online entry:

### What member tool lets you monitor your energy usage?

By submitting this entry I agree to allow United Power to publish my name in subsequent issues of United Newslines if I am selected as a winner. For complete contest rules, visit [www.unitedpower.com/newslines](http://www.unitedpower.com/newslines).

**Members may also enter by mailing the following entry form to:**

United Power • Reader Rewards • 500 Cooperative Way • Brighton, CO 80603

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

## UNITED POWER PRIDE



The Maroon Bells are the most photographed location in the state – for good reason. This past fall, Steve & Sarah Roels made the 12-mile hike over West Maroon Pass just to snap the iconic photo with their *United Newsline*.

### United Power Pride Photos

Snap a photo with the United Newsline and you’ll get a \$100 bill credit if we print it. Submit your photo along with your name, address, email and a description of the photo online at [www.unitedpower.com/unitedpowerpride](http://www.unitedpower.com/unitedpowerpride).



# Democracy at the Co-op

## Member Votes Determine Board Representation

United Power members have the unique opportunity to have a say in the future of their electric cooperative. Each year our members' votes in the director election determine who will represent them on the co-op's Board of Directors. As an electric utility, your participation in the annual election is critical to helping the co-op better serve its members.

### Every Vote Matters Equally

United Power is a not-for-profit cooperative owned and controlled by the members it serves. When you become a member, you automatically receive the benefits all other members share, including the right to vote for board representation. Your vote always matters. As a member, your vote carries equal weight as any other member's vote, regardless of what kind of account they have or how large it is. This is a cooperative principle known as "one member, one vote." Director candidates must also live within United Power's service territory, so you know you'll be voting for someone who understands your community's needs. They could even be your friends or neighbors.

### Running for a Board Position

The primary difference between an investor-owned utility (IOU) and cooperative is democratic control. IOUs make decisions to appease stakeholders and shareholders who might not live in the same state, let alone the same community. Any United Power member in good standing is eligible to run for a position on the cooperative's eleven-member Board of Directors. Directors serve three-year terms in one of four geographical districts. Although directors must live in one

of these districts, members vote on an "at-large" basis, explained in more detail next.

### Voting in the Election

The cooperative mails director ballots in March and encourages all members to cast votes in the election. This year, members may also participate in the director election electronically through their online account. Although directors live in a specific geographic district, they represent all members and are therefore elected on an "at-large" basis. This means members may cast a vote for a director in each district and not just their own. Directors serve in geographic districts to ensure adequate accessibility for members and to provide a representative cross-section of United Power's members in their leadership role. Learn more about voting policy at [www.unitedpower.com](http://www.unitedpower.com).

Your vote always matters. To learn more about a director candidate, consider attending one of our Meet the Candidate events. (**Details on page 3.**) Candidate statements will be available online after February 11.

### 2022 Director Election

This year, three positions on United Power's board are up for election at the 2022 Annual Meeting & Director Election, scheduled for Wednesday, April 13, 2022. Members may submit ballots electronically, drop paper ballots off at one of the cooperative's office locations or via mail-in. More information about how members may submit their ballot can be found online at [www.unitedpower.com/annual-meeting](http://www.unitedpower.com/annual-meeting).

## RECIPES



### Chocolate Nutella Cheesecake

8 Oreo cookies  
 1 Tbsp unsalted butter, melted  
 1/3 cup plus 2 tsp heavy cream (for Nutella filling)  
 1/2 cup plus 2 tsp heavy cream (for Chocolate filling)  
 6 tsp granulated sugar  
 10 oz cream cheese, divided & room temp  
 4 oz Nutella  
 3 oz semisweet chocolate  
 5 tsp Dutch-processed cocoa powder

**Crust:** Pulse Oreos in food processor until finely ground. Add melted butter and pulse until combined. Spoon evenly into 4-6 serving glasses.

**Nutella Filling:** Whip cream and 2 tsp sugar to soft peaks. In medium bowl, whip 5 oz cream cheese until smooth. Add Nutella and whip until smooth and combined. Fold in whipped cream.

**Chocolate Filling:** Melt chocolate over double boiler or in microwave. Set aside to cool. Whip remaining cream and sugar to soft peaks. Follow previous instructions to combine cream cheese, chocolate, cocoa powder and whipped cream. If lumps form, pass through fine-meshed sieve.

Spoon fillings over crusts in individual serving glasses. Chill for at least 2 hours before serving.

*Source: Serious Eats*

### Share Your Recipes

Earn a free gift if we publish your recipe.

ONLINE: [www.unitedpower.com](http://www.unitedpower.com)

MAIL: United Power Recipes  
 500 Cooperative Way  
 Brighton, CO 80603



# Industry Standard in System Reliability

## United Power Consistently, Significantly Better than National Average

United Power understands the most important thing its members want is consistently reliable power. Being able to deliver uninterrupted power is prominently weighed in how the cooperative defines success each year. Since altering its maintenance practices a few years ago, United Power's reliability has significantly improved, as have its outage numbers. Already an industry leader in automated field devices and other innovative projects, the cooperative is also trending well below the national average in utility outage times, setting yet another standard for others to emulate.

The national average for outage duration among electric utilities in the United States has consistently hovered around 120 minutes per meter. This means the average electric consumer can expect to experience

approximately two hours of outage time at their home over the course of a year. When United Power's operations team instituted a new data-driven maintenance plan in 2017, its average outage times resembled the national averages. In the four years following the plan's launch, the cooperative's outage times per meter have dropped below 70 minutes.

The new maintenance practice focuses on analyzing data collected across thousands of miles of line to isolate the worst performing segments. With these segments identified, targeted maintenance projects can be scheduled to improve their performance.

"When you target maintenance efforts at the worst performing parts of the system it improves reliability for members served off of it," said Bryant Robbins, United Power's Chief Operating Officer. "Maintenance is an ongoing process, but as long as we continue analyzing the data, isolating problem sections and targeting our maintenance efforts to improve them, it improves the whole system's reliability and resilience."

Devices on the system, such as enhanced technology in substations and advanced metering equipment, collect data and transfer it back to system operators. In the event of an outage, these devices can capture important information, such as time, location and sequence-of-events. Armed with this, lineworkers in the field can use the information to restore power to members more quickly, which also contributes to decreased outage times. Without this information, not only would identifying problematic areas be difficult, or even impossible, it would also create additional delays in power restoration as lineworkers inspect miles of line to find the cause.

Some system improvements have served dual functions. United Power recently published its comprehensive fire mitigation plan, which includes new standards and program initiatives primarily focused on areas of the territory that are particularly at risk of wildfires, such as Coal Creek and Golden Gate Canyons. In December, storms blew through the territory with wind speeds in excess of 115 mph, including the storm that ultimately fueled the Marshall Fire. The cooperative activated its fire mitigation protocols during these windstorms, and due to proactive upgrades only experienced a few small outages.

"Our maintenance and system improvement efforts are already paying off for our members," said Robbins. "Implementing this new maintenance plan has been effective and is proving its value. It's hard to estimate how many outages you've prevented when you don't have them, but our proactive efforts have gone a long way in helping prevent and/or quickly resolving outages."

Regardless of the size or length of outage, United Power is continually investigating what causes them and how it can implement new practices to decrease their impact to members and duration. From system redundancies allowing the cooperative to restore power from a secondary location while repairs are being made to deploying an industry-leading number of automated devices, improving system reliability is one of United Power's core goals.



## ENERGY SAVERS

### Keep Up on Your HVAC system

A little do-it-yourself maintenance ensures that your heating/cooling system doesn't have to work as hard to keep your house warm. Swap out your air filters at least every three months.

# The Myths of Energy Efficiency

As your cooperative, we want to provide you with the most useful information and applicable resources to help you save on bills. To help you make more informed decisions, we tackle some common energy efficiency myths in this column.

## Reducing Energy Use is Too Expensive

A common and enduring myth about energy efficiency is cost. The stigma associated with it assumes it's too expensive and not worth it. While costly energy efficiency upgrades are possible, many immediate steps you can take are simple behavioral and habitual changes. These include turning off lights in unused rooms, unplugging or shutting down unused electronics, closing doors to empty rooms while heating/cooling systems are running, limiting use of vents in the kitchen or bathroom and remembering to close your curtains in the summer – and conversely open them in the winter – to keep sunlight from affecting the temperature inside your home.

## Setting Thermostat Higher Heats Home Faster

No matter what temperature you set your thermostat, your furnace will work equally as hard and fast to meet that goal. The only difference achieved by setting the temperature to a higher degree is that the system will work for a longer period of time, therefore using more energy. The same applies to air conditioners when set to a lower temperature than necessary. Although blasting your heater or air

conditioning does not heat or cool your home more quickly, adjusting your thermostat up or down a few degrees, depending on the season, can help you save energy.

## Closing Vents in Unused Rooms Saves Energy

Shutting vents in empty or unused rooms may seem logical to save energy. Heating or cooling an empty space does appear to waste energy. However, your system cannot detect closed vents and will continue trying to push air to them. When the air cannot escape, it reverses and can cause damage to your system. Instead of closing vents, practice closing doors to rooms that are not in use. When doors are open, it allows the hot or cold air from inside the room to escape and the air from outside the room to enter, which can force your system to work harder to maintain thermostat settings. Closed doors prevent air from entering or exiting so the system can properly heat or cool the room and maintain it more easily.

Using energy more efficiently isn't as difficult as you may believe. Small behavioral changes make a big difference. To review more ways to save, check out our website at [www.unitedpower.com/energy-tips](http://www.unitedpower.com/energy-tips) or contact an Energy Management Specialist at 303-637-1300.

# How to Monitor Your Energy Usage

## With Free Member Resources, Monitoring Your Usage is Quick & Easy

United Power members looking for ways to use energy more efficiently this year and save on their energy bills can utilize free resources available exclusively to the cooperative's members.

### View Usage With Power Portal

Power Portal was launched as an ancillary feature of the cooperative's online account tool for members to view advanced data on their energy use over the course of days, weeks, months and more. The software

breaks your energy usage down into 15-minute segments to provide you with a detailed picture of what activities or habits are controlling your energy usage. Members can even use the tool to evaluate on- and off-peak energy usage.

Armed with the ability to diagnose behaviors that lead to excess energy usage, members can begin taking real steps toward using energy more efficiently. Members can even use this tool to gauge the effectiveness of energy efficient updates to their home.

For more information, go to our website at [www.unitedpower.com/powerportal](http://www.unitedpower.com/powerportal).

### Demand Calculator

Adding or upgrading an appliance in your home? United Power recently debuted its new demand calculator, which allows members to toggle different appliances on and off to see what demand they could require in your home. To use the calculator or learn more about the demand rate, go to [www.unitedpower.com/demand](http://www.unitedpower.com/demand).

# Inside This Issue

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## Fire Safety Seminar

On March 6, United Power will host a fire safety and preparedness seminar at its Carbon Valley Service Center.

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## How Data Improves Reliability

System data allows United Power to make targeted improvements.

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## Democracy at the Co-op

United Power encourages its members to participate in director elections.

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## Energy Efficiency Myths

Part of becoming more energy efficient is separating fact from fiction.

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## STAY CONNECTED WITH YOUR CO-OP

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## CONGRATS READER REWARDS WINNERS

**1<sup>st</sup> Place:** Jordan Sheard, Fort Lupton  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Place:** Justin VanSlocum, Mead  
 Brandon Bromberek, Erie

See your name? Call 303-637-1325 within two (2) months of the issue date to claim your Reader Rewards.

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