



Powering Into 2026 with Colton Electric Utility

Your trusted community-owned utility – reliable, and ready for the new year.



DECEMBER 2025

In this issue:

- 2 Message from the Director
- 3 Celebrating Fernando Velasquez's Retirement
- 5 Energy Efficiency Corner
- 6 Save Energy & Money in Your Mobile Home!
- 7 Community Highlights
- 8 Sustainability & Innovation
- 9 Winter Tips
- 11 New Employees



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Colton Community,

As we reflect on the achievements of 2025 and look with anticipation toward the opportunities ahead in 2026, I want to express my heartfelt appreciation for the trust you place in Colton Electric Utility (CEU). Public power is more than a business model, it is a choice, as well as a relationship, and every accomplishment this year is grounded in the strength, resilience, and spirit of the community we are privileged to serve.

Reliability and price competitiveness remain the foundation of CEU's mission, supported by our commitment to price stability and predictability for the families and businesses that rely on us. Delivering energy that is both dependable and competitively priced is not a matter of chance, it is the result of thoughtful planning, disciplined investment, and an unwavering focus on the performance and health of our electric system. To guide this work, among other things, CEU utilizes nationally recognized indicators, System Average Interruption Duration Index (SAIDI), which reflects the average duration of outages experienced by customers, and System Average Interruption Frequency Index (SAIFI), which measures how often those interruptions occur. Grounded in widely recognized industry standards, these tools help us evaluate reliability, prioritize investment, and remain transparent and accountable in how we make decisions. This past year, strategic upgrades, proactive maintenance, and continued focus on resiliency helped improve reliability and system uptime, reinforcing our promise to continue reinvesting and adding value to the community.

One of the most meaningful milestones of 2025 was receiving CEU's first-ever Reliable Public Power Provider (RP3) designation, awarded through a rigorous and comprehensive peer-reviewed process by the American Public Power Association. Of the more than 2,000 public power agencies nationwide, only 52 earned this recognition in 2025. This designation highlights excellence in reliability, safety, workforce development, and system improvement while reflecting not only

the technical standards we uphold, but also our promise to serve this community with purpose.

This recognition would not have been possible without the leadership and shared vision of our Mayor, City Council Members, and City Manager, whose dedication to selfless public service and mission to move Colton forward continues to shape the future of our city. Their focus on responsible growth, economic opportunity, and community well-being ensures that decisions made at City Hall reflect the voices and values of the people of Colton. I am also grateful for the service of our volunteer Utilities Commissioners, who contribute their time, insight, and thoughtful dialogue to CEU's mission. Their commitment exemplifies the heart of public power: neighbors working together, in service to neighbors.

I want to personally express my deep appreciation for the dedication and professionalism of CEU's employees, who often work behind the scenes and in challenging conditions to restore power, maintain essential systems, and support emergency response efforts. These individuals carry forward the responsibility of powering our lives while safeguarding the grid, supporting our residents, and serving our community with pride. Their commitment inspires me every day while serving as a reminder that CEU's strength comes from the people who dedicate themselves to this work. Together, we the employees of CEU work for you, the community that grants us the honor of serving Colton, and we embrace that responsibility with gratitude, respect, and purpose.

At CEU, we are not simply an electric utility, we strive to be your trusted partner in the growth, safety, and future of our community. The public power model ensures that decisions remain local,



revenues are reinvested locally, and priorities reflect the needs and aspirations of the people we serve. As part of a national network of community-owned, not-for-profit utilities serving over 55 million Americans in more than 2,000 communities, CEU continues to champion local control and community-centered investment that benefits Colton today and positions us for tomorrow.

Our commitment to reliability and prudent financial management is matched by our focus on delivering value. In 2025, we continued investing in CEU's workforce by recruiting, retaining, and developing industry talent who bring their consummate professionalism to a rapidly evolving energy landscape. As our industry experiences transformational changes that include renewable integration, decarbonization, electrification, grid modernization and cybersecurity, CEU is positioning itself as a regional leader in public power, ensuring our community benefits from the opportunities ahead.

Looking toward 2026, we will continue broadening the diversity of our power supply portfolio, advancing responsible energy strategies, and optimizing energy market participation to ensure long-term rate stability and resource predictability. We understand that competitively priced essential services play a meaningful role in the stability of household budgets. In the months ahead, I look forward to sharing more about CEU's efforts to support economic well-being and household financial security while ensuring reliability, price competitiveness, and value remain central to the commitment we make to every customer we serve.

Thank you for allowing CEU to power the places that matter most in your life. My team and I are honored to serve this community and we remain committed to earning your trust every day with integrity and purpose.

As we come together during this holiday season, may it be a time of connection, reflection, and renewed hope for the year ahead. I extend my warmest wishes to everyone in our community and hold in my heart those who are no longer with us. May those memories continue to brighten our lives and shape the stories of our families and our city, while bringing comfort, peace, and meaningful moments with those you love.

Best regards,

Dr. Charles J. Berry MBA, MS

Electric Director
Colton Electric Utility

Colton Electric Utility — Powering Today,
Protecting Tomorrow



HONORING A LEGACY OF SERVICE:

Celebrating Fernando Velasquez's Retirement



After 36 years of dedicated service to the City of Colton — including 25 years with Colton Electric Utility — we proudly celebrate the retirement of Fernando “Fernie” Velasquez, one of our most respected and experienced linemen.

Fernando began his career with the City of Colton in 1989, spending two years in Sanitation before moving to the Streets Department in 1991. In 2000, Fernie joined Colton Electric Utility, where he would devote the next 25 years of exceptional service. By 2003, he became a Power Line Helper, and in 2007, he advanced to Power Line Technician Apprentice. In 2011, he earned the prestigious title of Lineman. Thanks to his skill, reliability, and unwavering commitment to keeping our community powered, he later earned the role of Line Crew Supervisor.

“Fernando represents the best of what public service is all about,” said Charles Berry, Colton Electric Director. “His professionalism, teamwork, and dedication to the people of Colton have set an example for everyone who’s had the privilege to work alongside him.”

“Fernando worked tirelessly to become a skilled and knowledgeable Journeyman Lineman. When

he became a Line Crew Supervisor, he was determined to pass on what his years in the trade taught him. He always made sure those he led understood: he didn’t want them to be as good as him, he wanted them to be better than him,” said Abel Aguirre, Field Operations Foreman.

Throughout his career, he played a key role in maintaining and modernizing Colton’s electric system, mentoring new apprentices, and responding to countless emergency calls with calm expertise. Known for his steady hand and no-nonsense attitude, he earned the respect of coworkers and community members alike.

As Fernando begins this new chapter, we thank him for his outstanding service, leadership, and the many contributions he has made to the Colton community. His legacy will continue to shine through the reliable power that reaches every home and business in our city.

From all of us at Colton Electric Utility — congratulations on your retirement, Fernie! We wish you good health, happiness, and plenty of well-earned relaxation in the years ahead.



ENERGY EFFICIENCY CORNER

New Year, New Savings

Winter Energy-Saving Tips

Keep your home warm and your energy costs low this winter with these simple steps:

1. Adjust Your Thermostat Wisely

- Lower your thermostat by just **1–2 degrees** to save up to **5% on heating costs**.
- When you're asleep or away, set it to **65°F or lower** — every bit helps.
- Consider installing a programmable or smart thermostat to automatically manage comfort and efficiency — check out our [rebates](#).

2. Seal Out the Cold

- Check doors and windows for drafts — seal leaks with **weatherstripping or caulk**.
- Close curtains or blinds at night to reduce heat loss and open them during sunny days to let in warmth.

3. Use Energy-Efficient Heating Options

- Have your heater or heat pump serviced for maximum efficiency.
- **Clean or replace filters monthly** during heavy use.
- Space heaters may seem small, but they can use a lot of energy and should be used sparingly and safely.

4. Light Up Efficiently

- Switch to **LED holiday and indoor lighting** — they use up to **75% less energy** and last longer.
- Did you know CEU hosts a holiday light exchange every year at the City's annual tree lighting event? On December 3, 2025 CEU exchanged 300 lights, saving 2100 kWh of energy.
- Use timers on your holiday lights to avoid extra energy costs.

5. Save with Smart Appliance Use

- Run full loads in your dishwasher and washing machine.
- Use cold water for laundry when possible.
- Unplug chargers and electronics when not in use — many still draw power when turned off.
- Bonus Tip: Enroll in Efficiency Programs
- Take advantage of Colton Electric Utility's Online Home Energy Audit or Rebate Programs to find personalized ways to save energy year-round.

CUSTOMER CARE PROGRAMS

Check out our improved senior-income qualifying programs - <https://www.coltonca.gov/351/Low-Income-Assistance>

SAVE ENERGY & MONEY IN YOUR COLTON MOBILE HOME!

Did you know that CEU offers a specific program to assist those that live in a mobile home?

The City of Colton Electric Utility and SoCal Gas are teaming up to help low-income mobile home residents cut energy costs—at no cost to you!

What you get:

- LED light bulbs
- AC tune-up
- Duct sealing
- Low-flow showerheads & faucet aerators

Who qualifies:

- Live in a mobile or manufactured home in Colton
- Be a Colton Electric & SoCal Gas customer
- Participate in the low-income program
- Meet income guidelines (check here: [Colton Low-Income Assistance](#))



[Act now and make your home more comfortable while saving money!](#)



COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS

CEU: Bringing Light to Our Annual Tree-Lighting Tradition

For many decades, Colton Electric Utility has had the honor and privilege of supporting the annual tree-lighting event hosted by the City's Community Services Department. Our Electric Department line crews—working alongside the Public Works Department—proudly hang the holiday lights on our beloved pine tree at City Hall, using their bucket trucks to help make this celebration a continued centerpiece of community gathering. This long-standing tradition has been carried on for generations, bringing warmth and holiday cheer to our entire community.



Your Utility, Your Voice!

Public Utility Commission Meetings

Interested in learning more about our city-owned utilities? Join us for the Public Utility Commission meetings held at **6:00 p.m. on the second Monday of each month.**

(If a recognized holiday falls on that date, the meeting will be held on the third Monday of the month instead.)

Location:

City Council Chambers
650 N. La Cadena Avenue
Colton, CA 92324

For meeting agendas visit: <https://www.coltonca.gov/116/Utilities-Commission>

We welcome all community members to attend and stay informed!



SUSTAINABILITY & INNOVATION

Power Up with Electric Vehicles:

Curious about how many vehicles in Colton are running on electricity? According to the latest DMV records, the city now has 858 light-duty Zero-Emission Vehicles (ZEVs) registered since the end of 2024. That's over 2% of all cars in Colton embracing a cleaner, greener future!

Total Light-Duty Vehicles in Colton

- Zero-Emission Vehicles (ZEVs): 858
- Non-Zero-Emission Vehicles (Non-ZEVs): 40,357
- Grand Total: $858 + 40,357 = 41,215$ vehicles



Zero-Emission Vehicles (ZEVs)

Type	Count	Percentage of Total Vehicles?
Battery Electric (BEV)	619	$619 \div 41,215 \times 100 \approx 1.50\%$
Plug-in Hybrid (PHEV)	229	$229 \div 41,215 \times 100 \approx 0.56\%$
Fuel Cell (FCEV)	10	$10 \div 41,215 \times 100 \approx 0.024\% \approx 0.02\%$

ZEV Total %: $858 \div 41,215 \times 100 \approx 2.08\%$

ZEVs make up about 2.08% of all light-duty vehicles in the City of Colton.

(Data Source: California Energy Commission: www.energy.ca.gov)

Key Takeaway: While ZEVs still represent a small portion of Colton's vehicle population, adoption continues to grow steadily, reflecting the community's shift toward cleaner transportation options.



Colton Recharged Relaunch

Funding is expected to become available soon—stay tuned for updates!

Residents can visit coltononline.com to apply for:

- Electric Vehicle Charger Rebates and Used Electric Vehicle Rebates.

WINTER WISE: CEU SAFETY TIPS TO KEEP YOU COZY

Space Heater Safety Precautions

Space heaters often are not the most cost effective way to heat a home but when you have no other options follow these precautions. It provides local warmth and is typically used in individual rooms, workspaces, or areas where additional heat is needed.

PLACEMENT & ENVIRONMENT

- Keep space heaters at least **3 feet away** from anything that can burn (furniture, curtains, bedding, papers).
- Always place heaters on a flat, **stable, nonflammable surface**.
- Never use a heater in damp or wet areas unless it is **specifically rated for bathrooms**.
- Keep heaters out of high-traffic areas to prevent **tripping hazards**.
- Do not use heaters on **countertops or unstable surfaces**.

USE & OPERATION

- Plug heaters **directly into a wall outlet**. (Do NOT use extension cords or power strips—they can overheat)
- Make sure the heater has **tip-over protection and overheat shutoff features**.
- Never leave a space heater **unattended**, especially around children or pets.
- Turn off the heater when you **leave the room or go to sleep**.
- Do not operate a heater if the **cord is damaged or frayed**.
- Keep the heater's **air intake and vents unblocked** for proper airflow.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY

- Use a heater that is **UL, ETL, or CSA certified** for safety.
- Plug only the heater into a **single outlet**—avoid overloading circuits.
- Inspect cords regularly and keep them **away from foot traffic**.
- Do not run cords under rugs or carpets; they can **overheat**.

FIRE & CARBON MONOXIDE SAFETY

- Install and regularly test **smoke alarms** and, if using fuel-burning heaters, **carbon monoxide detectors**.
- Never use an **oven, stove, or grill** as a heating source.



Generator Safety Basics

Backup electric generators are cannot be connected to Colton Electric’s power grid. This means that during an outage, a properly used backup generator can restore power to essential appliances, equipment, and electronic devices—helping keep your home safe and functional.

PROPER GENERATOR PLACEMENT

- Keep generators **at least 20 feet away** from your home.
- **Never operate** a generator in an enclosed or partially enclosed space.
- Ensure **3–4 feet of clearance** above and around all sides for proper ventilation.
- Keep generators away from **doors, windows, and vents**.
- Always **direct generator exhaust away** from your home.
- Follow **all manufacturer directions** for safe operation.

SAFE GENERATOR USE

- Use **grounded extension cords** and inspect them for damage before each use.
- Choose extension cords that can handle the **appropriate wattage**.
- Always use **GFCI protection**.
- Start and stop the generator **only when no electrical load is connected**.
- Keep generators **dry**; do not use them in wet conditions.
- **Refuel only when the generator has cooled**.
- Do not **overload** the generator.
- **Never plug a generator directly into your home’s wiring**, plug in appliances directly unless you have a transfer switch installed.

TRANSFER SWITCHES

- Transfer switches—**manual or automatic**—allow you to safely switch between utility power and generator power.
- They are the **only safe method** to power your home’s electrical system using a generator.
- A transfer switch prevents **backfeeding**, a dangerous condition where electricity flows back into power lines.

Backfeeding can:

- » Damage your home or your neighbor’s electrical systems.
- » Endanger utility crews working to restore power.



FACES OF THE DEPARTMENT - NEW EMPLOYEES



Spotlight: Lucas Haines – Administrative Analyst I

The City of Colton Electric Utility is pleased to highlight **Lucas Haines**, who plays a vital role in supporting the City's commitment to transparency, reliability, and regulatory excellence. Lucas manages a wide range of compliance reporting for state and federal agencies, including CAISO, the CEC, CARB, and the U.S. Department of Energy.

In addition to compliance reporting, Lucas assists with long-term resource planning to help maintain a sustainable and dependable energy portfolio for the community. He also coordinates account transfers within the State's Cap-and-Invest Program and provides valuable administrative and analytical support to engineering staff and other departments.

Lucas remains actively engaged in policy developments by participating in the Southern California Public Power Authority's Legislative and Regulatory Working Groups, ensuring Colton stays informed and represented in state and regional discussions.

We appreciate Lucas's dedication and his continued contributions to Colton's mission of delivering safe, affordable, and dependable electric service to our residents and businesses.



Spotlight: David Navar – Joint Pole Coordinator

The City of Colton Electric Department is proud to highlight **David Navar**, who serves our community as the Joint Pole Coordinator. In this role, David helps manage the shared use of the City's utility poles, collaborating with communication providers, utility partners, and City departments to ensure that Colton's infrastructure remains safe, reliable, and well-maintained.

David is dedicated to supporting the City's mission of delivering dependable electric service while promoting responsible growth, system modernization, and strong partnerships that benefit the entire community.

We appreciate David's commitment to Colton and his continuing contributions to the residents who make our city exceptional.





Spotlight: Marco A. Baustista – Electric System Designer

Colton Electric Utility is pleased to welcome **Marco Baustista** to our team. With more than 20 years of experience in public power utilities, he brings extensive expertise in developing innovative solutions for utility operations and engineering. His strong background in transmission and distribution power systems is complemented by proven superintendent-level supervisory and leadership experience.

Known for his collaborative approach and ability to solve complex technical challenges, he prides himself on being a motivated problem solver who works effectively with teams at all levels of an organization. He looks forward to contributing to CEU's mission and vision and is excited to bring value to the community we serve.

He is also a proud Electrical Engineering alumnus of Cal Poly Pomona, graduating in the Class of 2006.

Please join us in welcoming Marco Baustista to Colton Electric Utility!



Spotlight: Amme Taylor – Office Specialist II

The Colton Electric Department is pleased to announce a valuable addition to the Sustainability Department team: **Amme Taylor**, our new Office Specialist II.

Amme's role is critical in supporting our commitment to both sustainability and customer service. Amme will provide essential administrative and operational assistance to the department, ensuring the efficiency of our key initiatives.

Importantly, Amme is also a direct resource for our community, assisting our customers with navigating the low-income assistance application process and maximizing their participation in the rebate programs we offer.

Her work directly supports our goal of making efficiency and energy-saving opportunities accessible to all our residents.

Please join us in welcoming Amme Taylor to the Colton Electric team!

Contact Us

Billing Questions

Customer Service:
(909) 370-5555
650 N. La Cadena Drive
Colton, CA 92324

Email: electricalengineering@coltonca.gov

Website: coltononline.com

Electric Inquiries

Electric Utility Administration
909-370-6132
150 S. 10th Street
Colton, CA 92324

Hours

Monday through Thursday

7 am to 6 pm

After Hours

(909) 955-6482



Sign up for outage alerts and newsletters - coltonline.com

Follow us on social media!

 @ColtonUtilities  @ColtonUtilities  @city_of_colton_electric

City Council

Frank J. Navarro, Mayor

David J. Toro, Council Member District 1

Kelly J. Chastain, Council Member District 2

Dr. Luis S. González, Council Member District 3

John R. Echevarria, Council Member District 4

City Manager

William R. Smith

Electric Utility Director

Charles Berry

Español/Spanish
Versión en Español

