

• September 11, 2025 •



CEO'S BOARD MEETING BULLETIN



Virginia Harman

OUTAGES IN NORTH PARK LINKED TO WILDFIRE PROTECTION

Staff explain Fire Protection Mode and other wildfire mitigation efforts

Members of the Walden community and surrounding areas responded to the open invitation to attend the MPE Board Meeting in Walden and to ask questions or share their thoughts during Member Comments.

In response to questions about recent outages in North Park, staff explained that the MPE system has been operating in Wildfire Protection Mode since Jackson and Grand counties moved to Stage 2 Fire Restrictions. In this mode, system settings are adjusted to higher sensitivity—also known as “one shot.”

Similar to a “red tag” setting that protects contractors or line crews working on or near power lines, one shot automatically shuts off power to a circuit when contact is made with a power line. This rapid de-energizing helps reduce the risk of a spark or arc igniting a wildfire. When this occurs, line workers patrol the de-energized lines to ensure tree limbs or other contacts are cleared before re-energizing. Because of the

counties’ rural nature, feeder lines span many miles, requiring extra time for these patrols.

Staff shared that SmartHub—an online app/tool for members to track usage, pay bills, and manage their accounts—has outage notification alerts for which they can sign up.

On Sept. 9, Grand County moved from Stage 2 to Stage 1 Fire Restrictions. On Sept. 11, Jackson County also moved to Stage 1, after which MPE’s entire system returned to normal settings.

Staff also highlighted other wildfire mitigation efforts, including a new partnership with Pano AI. Two high-resolution, smoke-detecting camera systems are being installed to monitor high-fuel areas within MPE’s territory, including one on Walton Peak at Rabbit Ears Pass. If a camera detects potential wildfire smoke, Pano AI’s team of analysts quickly reviews the footage, pinpoints the location, and alerts MPE and local fire and emergency crews—often before 911 calls begin.

Other Board Meeting Items

- The Board and MPE staff hosted the bi-monthly Jackson County Council on Aging’s (JCCOA) Senior Meal at the JCCOA Senior Center during the Board Meeting lunch break. MPE had the lunch catered by River Rock Cafe, and co-op representatives enjoyed this opportunity to dine and visit with the JCCOA seniors. CEO Virginia Harman shared how MPE has been pleased to continue funding and helping facilitate the Smile Box Program in coordination with Mountain Family Center. This program provides participants with a monthly box of grocery items delivered to their homes. There was also a brief presentation about MPE’s member programs by Megan Moore-Kemp. It included the new Boost program, which provides MPE bill assistance to income-qualified members, as well as MPE’s Rebate Program.
- Before the Board Meeting, the Board and staff toured the North Park Pioneer Museum. At the July Board Meeting, the Board approved a \$25,000 donation to the museum from the Unclaimed Capital Credits Fund and the Clean Power Program to support artifact digitization and LED lighting upgrades.

The Board Meeting Bulletin summarizes highlights from the recent MPE Board Meeting. MPE Board Meetings are open to the public, and agendas, minutes, and more information can be found at www.mpei.com/board-meetings or by contacting memberrelations@mpei.com.