



## A MESSAGE FROM YOUR ELECTRIC UTILITY REGARDING THE COVID-19 IMPACTS ON OUR CUSTOMERS

Lathrop Irrigation District is committed to our customers, the residents of River Islands. As a publicly-owned utility (which means we are not-for profit, we are owned by the customers we serve), it is our mission to manage the utility in a way to best serve our customers while providing the lowest cost, most reliable service possible.

This is an unprecedented time - no one could have imagined that our Country, in fact, our world, would be in a situation such as this. Nearly every aspect of our lives has been affected. Small business owners and employees have suddenly been sent into a tail spin to scramble for income and employees of non-essential industries have been sent home to wonder when they will again be able to work.

As your local utility, we understand that many of our customers will be facing difficult choices-whether to feed their family or pay their bills. While many industries can shut down during this time, our utility cannot shut down. LID will take every precaution possible to protect our employees and our customers. One step we have taken is to reduce the potential physical contact between our employees and the public. This means all transactions need to be handled via email, phone, or our website. These safe and time-saving options have always been in place, so this is nothing new to many customers. Those who want to pay by cash may be impacted. As a precaution, we would prefer not to take cash as it is difficult to know whether it may have been contaminated.

A question we receive often (and now more than ever), is why LID charges for the use of credit cards? The fee is imposed by the credit card companies themselves, and is a pass-through. Everyone pays this fee every time you use a VISA or MC card- whether its debit or credit. Most retailers just pass the fee along and increase the cost of the item you are purchasing. These fees are captured directly by the credit card companies, and is one way they can give out those “free” airline miles and “cashback”. Historically, LID has opted not to absorb these fees into the rates, but to pass the fees directly to the credit card users rather than spread it amongst all customers through the rates. LID is working with our third-party software companies to see if during this time the credit card companies can lower the fees charged to utilities as an essential business. If this option works, we will notify customers as quickly as possible.

Another way we are trying to help customers is to work with those who have been impacted financially and have to make that critical decision to feed their family or pay a bill. Since LID does have to purchase all of the power to serve our customers and the only way to pay for that power is through rates, we cannot “discount” or give power away. We can, and are, looking at ways to lessen the burden to customers through budget cuts, waiving late penalties, working with credit card companies to reduce the fees they charge, and offer payment arrangements to customers whose income has been reduced. We can also look into ways to allow neighbors to help neighbors by putting money toward their bills. If you need some extra time to pay, please contact our office at 209-888-4799 to make payment arrangements. **NOTE OUR OFFICE IS CURRENTLY NOT STAFFED FULL TIME, PLEASE LEAVE A MESSAGE AND WE WILL CALL YOU BACK.** You will continue to receive the late notices which are required by law but if you have an approved payment arrangement your account will be noted.

Remember, as a customer-owned utility we are all in this together. We will be updating customers through our website when situation changes may affect our customers. Please help us in keeping our community safe and please contact us if you need some help. LID cares about our customers, who are our neighbors and friends.