



# 2020 US Department Of Energy Office Of Indian Energy

## December 2, 2020 Webinar



**GILA RIVER INDIAN COMMUNITY UTILITY AUTHORITY  
(GRICUA)**

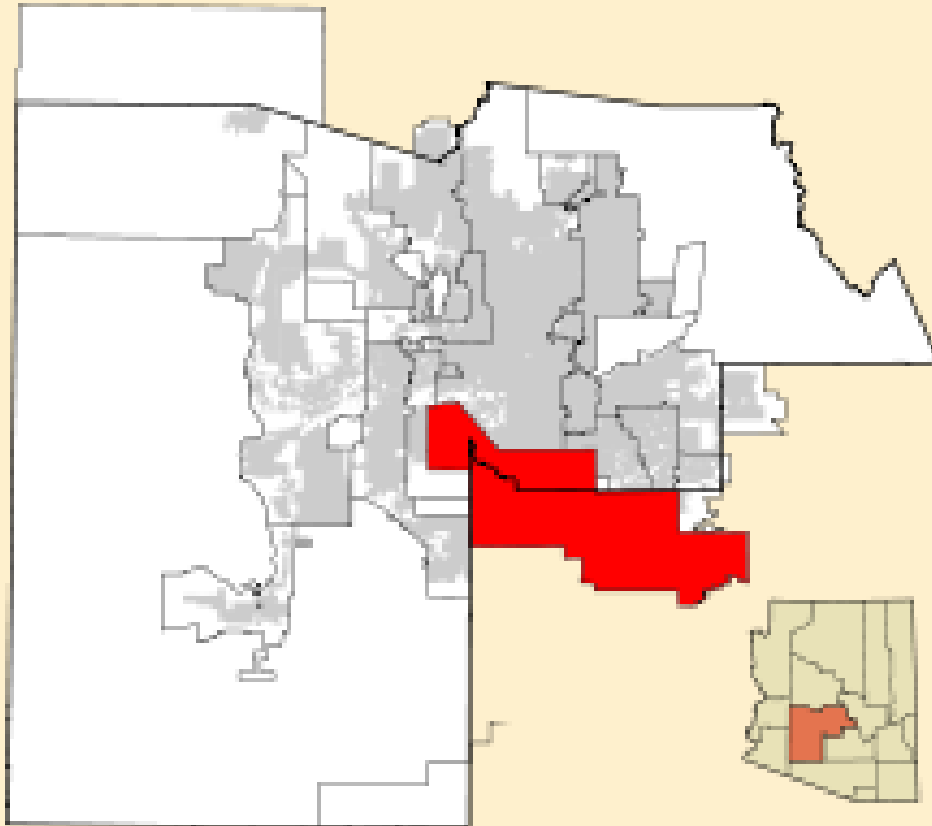
## **OUR STORY**

**DECEMBER 2, 2020**

**LEONARD S. GOLD, GENERAL MANAGER**

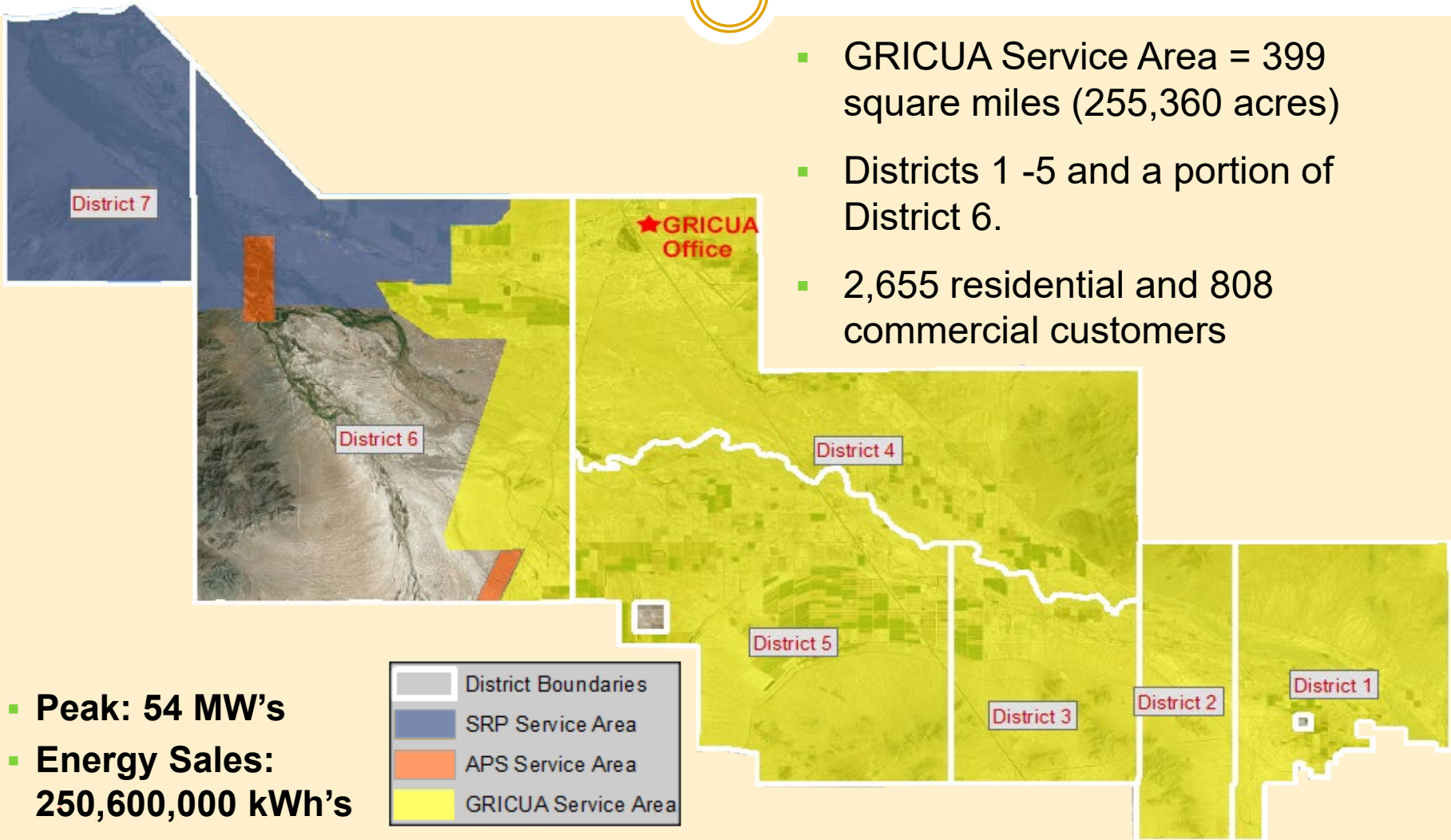
# Gila River Indian Community Utility Authority (GRICUA)

## An Entity of the Gila River Indian Community (GRIC or Community)



- Reservation Area = 585 square miles (374,400 acres)
- On Reservation population  $\approx$  11,700
- Total enrollment  $\approx$  22,600

# What We Serve



# In The Beginning..... GRICUA



## □ History

- 1998
  - GRICUA established by GRIC Council Resolution:
    - ✓ to retain ownership of new infrastructure,
    - ✓ to address reliability concerns and
    - ✓ for self-governance.
- 1999
  - Plan of Operation approved
  - Initial service area defined as the Wild Horse Pass area
  - **GRICUA begins providing service to customers in the Wild Horse Pass area**



# In The Beginning.....

## GRICUA



### ❑ **Mission**

- To plan for, provide and furnish utility services
- To promote and encourage the conservation of electricity
- To improve the health and welfare of the residents of GRIC
- To acquire, construct, operate, maintain and expand utility services
- To promote economic development and employment opportunities

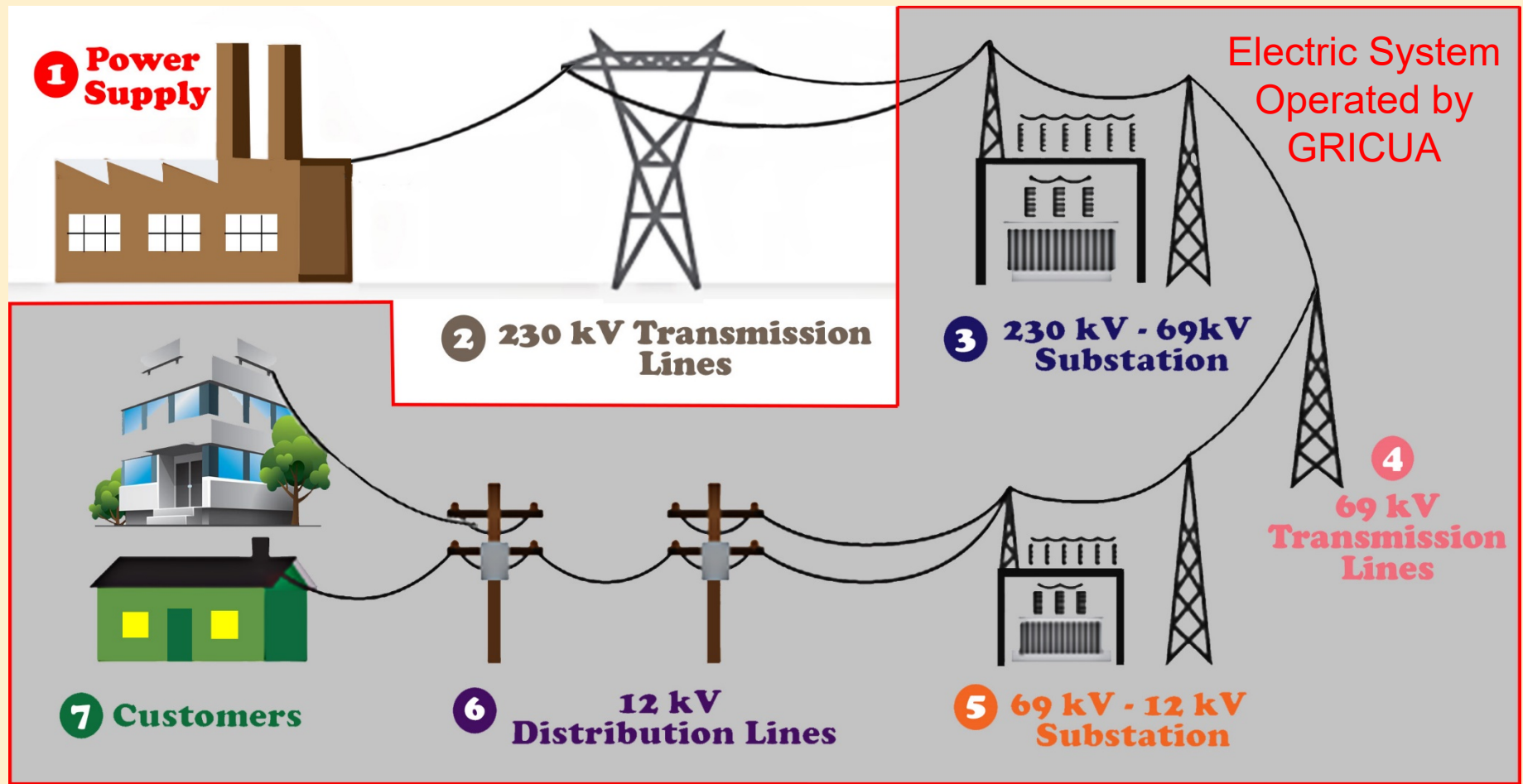
# The Electric System



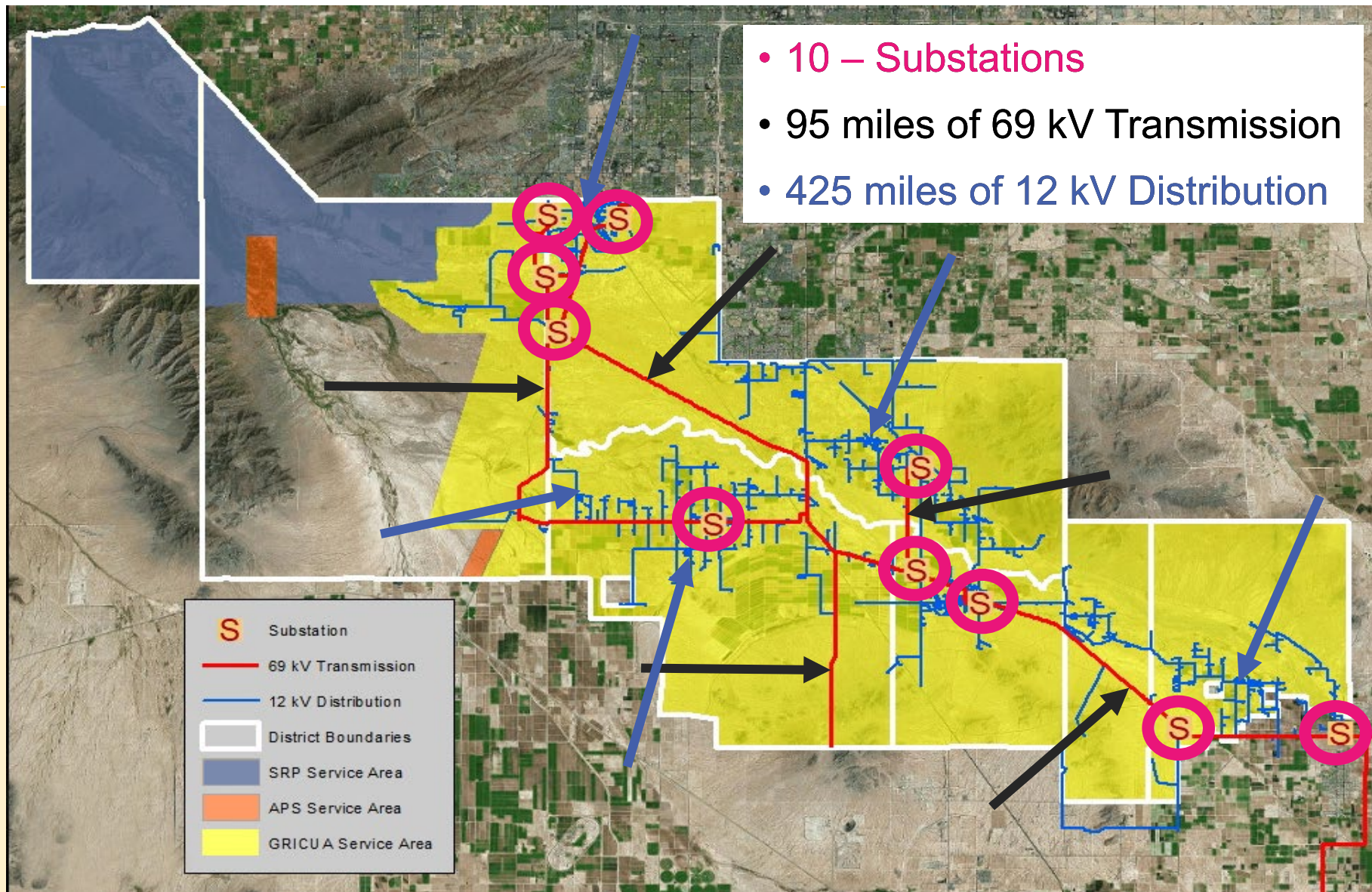
- GRICUA's service area overlaps with the service area of the San Carlos Irrigation Project (SCIP), an agency of the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs.
- SCIP owns significant infrastructure within the Community which is operated and maintained by GRICUA via a 638 Contract.
- GRICUA serves all retail customers except for SCIP irrigation wells.
- GRICUA responds to all outages within its service area.



# Example of an Electric System



# GRICUA Electric System





# GRICUA Statistics - Then and Now



Description	FY2000 [1]	FY2005 [1]	FY2010 [1]	FY2015 [1]	FY2019 [1]
Total Number of Employees	2	4	22	23	27
Number of Customers	12	20	2,400	2,595	3,463
Billing Done By	GRICUA Staff	Consultant	GRICUA Staff	GRICUA Staff	GRICUA Staff
Substations (GRICUA & SCIP)	0	1	7	8	9
Number of GRICUA Lineman	0	0	7	7	8
Peak Load at Customer Meter - MW	3 MW	6 MW	26 MW	32 MW	52 MW
Energy Sold at Customer Meter - MWh	5,500 MWh	28,100 MWh	118,800 MWh	160,000 MWh	274,200 MWh
GRICUA Owned Facilities O&M	SRP Contract	3rd Party Contract	GRICUA	GRICUA	GRICUA
SCIP Facilities O&M - 638 Contract			GRICUA	GRICUA	GRICUA
Respond to Outages	SRP Contract	3rd Party Contract	GRICUA Staff	GRICUA Staff	GRICUA Staff
GRICUA Provides Retail Service in SCIP Area	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
GRICUA Serves All SCIP Reservation Customers	No	No	No	No	Yes
Purchase Power Contracts	1	2	3	3	4

[1] Fiscal Year October 1 - September 30

# GRICUA's Duties and Responsibilities

- **Operations**

- Line crews
  - ✦ Outages (day/night) due to equipment failure, fire, accidents, weather
  - ✦ Maintain and repair existing facilities
  - ✦ Construct new facilities
- Warehouse inventory
- Meters
- GIS - mapping

- **Finance**

- Operational accounting
- Financial reporting
- Budgeting
- Collecting revenue
- Cash flow adequate
- Payroll
- Benefits
- Compliance

- **Planning**

- Load forecasts
- Monthly scheduling of Purchased Power to Serve Load
- Energy accounting
- Power purchasing

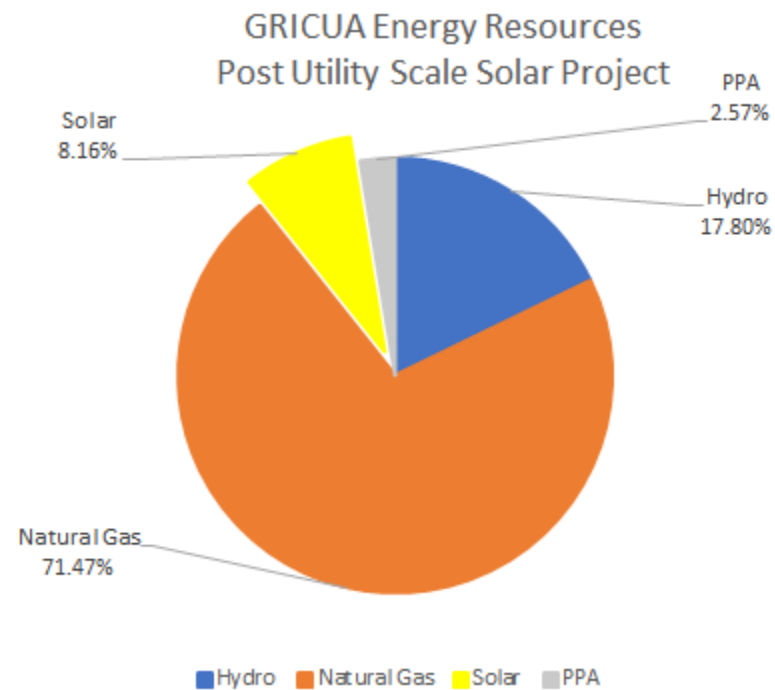
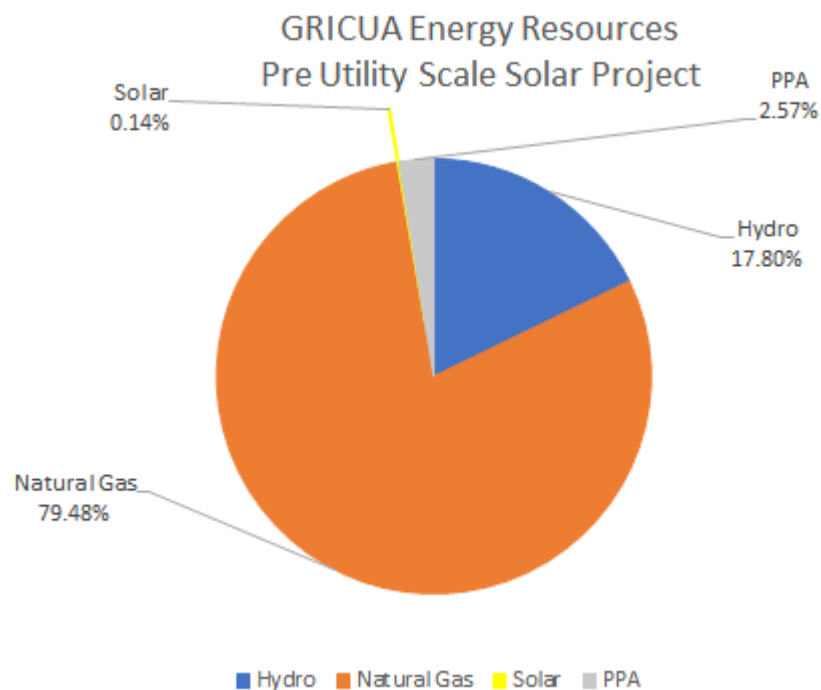
- **Customer Service**

- Disconnects
- Billing issues
- Energy audit – trained staff person
- After hours call center – be available 24/7

- **Customer Outreach**

- Website and Facebook
- Newsletter
- Gila River Indian News (GRIN)
- Apprenticeship Programs
- Youth Programs
  - ✦ Washington Youth Tour
  - ✦ College and HS Internships
  - ✦ Science, Technology, Engineering, Architecture, Agriculture, Arts & Math (STEAAAM) Summer Program
  - ✦ Youth Board Intern

# GRICUA Existing & Future Resources



# Finance Department



- GRICUA's Finance Department is made up of three areas:
  - **Customer Service** includes billing, remittance processing and opening and closing accounts. In addition, payment arrangements and general customer care is handled within this department.
  - **General Accounting** includes operational accounting, budgeting and financial reporting.
  - **Energy Forecasting** includes forecasting our customers energy demand and working with our energy providers to schedule delivery. In addition, energy contract management is also a responsibility of this area.



# Customer Advantages



- Average residential customer bill is 2–5% lower than SCIP and on par with SRP
- No Disconnect Fee
- GRICUA works with customers to develop a payment schedule to avoid disconnection
- No initial deposit required
- Better customer service & faster response to outage calls
- More responsive to customer and Community requests

# Operations Department



- GRICUA's Operations Department is made up of three areas:
  - Engineering, Design & Mapping
  - Purchasing & Warehouse
  - Operation, Maintenance & Construction
- GRICUA's Operations Department Provides the Following Services:
  - New Construction
  - System Maintenance
  - Outage Restoration
  - Planning for Growth
  - Reliability
  - Future Substations
  - Future 69kV Transmission Facilities

# Maintenance



- We fix equipment
  - Poles
  - Broken wires
  - Transformers
  - Meters



# Planning



- We build new infrastructure
  - Poles
  - Wires
  - Transformers
  - Meters





# Operations

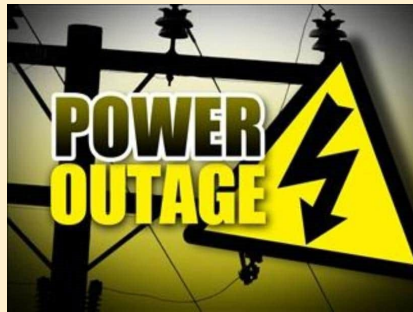


- Conduct safety and skills training
- Maintain trucks, equipment & materials
- Perform maintenance & tree trimming
- Have sufficient manpower
- Man phones 24x7x365
- Crews available around the clock
- Outage notifications & updates
  - To customers
  - Call-out crew, Management & Board
  - Community Leaders
  - Coordinate with other tribal departments & entities.

# Outages



- We are prepared to respond to customer outages 24x7x365



# GRICUA Investment In The Electric System O&M and Capital



- From 2009 – 2020 GRICUA has spent approximately \$44.3 million for system improvements and maintenance.
- Some examples of projects are listed below:
  - Replaced transformers and did upgrades at 5 of 8 existing SCIP substations (Santan, Firebird, Casa Blanca, Blackwater and Park).
  - Constructed 2 new substations (Wild Horse Pass and Desert View).
  - Constructed multiple circuit ties to improve reliability & restoration times.
  - Casa Blanca 69 kV facilities reconstructed and extended.
  - Lone Butte 230 kV breaker bay addition.
  - WHPDA feeder circuits upgraded.
  - Blackwater substation upgrades and circuit addition.
  - Implemented SCADA at Lone Butte and Wild Horse Pass substations.

# In-House Training



- Apprentice Lineman Program (4 years)
- Technical Training Program (1 year)
- Designer In Training Program (1–2 years)
- Solar Technician Training Program (1–2 years)



# Customer and Community Outreach



- GRICUA has implemented the following activities:
  - Newsletter – GRICUA includes a monthly newsletter with bill statements.
  - GRIN Articles – submitting articles regarding GRICUA news.
  - Youth Programs
    - ✦ Washington Youth Tour Program - sponsorship of two or more students.
    - ✦ Three (3) Internship Programs:
      - High School Summer Internship
      - College Summer Internship
      - Youth Board Member Internship
    - ✦ STEAAAM – offers middle school students (5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade) interested in Science, Technology, Engineering, Architecture, Agriculture, Art and Math an environment to explore these diverse subjects.
  - Web Page – used to provide information about GRICUA, customer service topics, safety tips, youth programs, employment opportunities and business opportunities.
  - Facebook Page – used to provide updates, news and outage information from GRICUA.

**NOTE: GRICUA Youth Programs are solely administered by GRICUA and not affiliated with the GRIC Tribal Education Department.**

# GRICUA Benefits to the Community

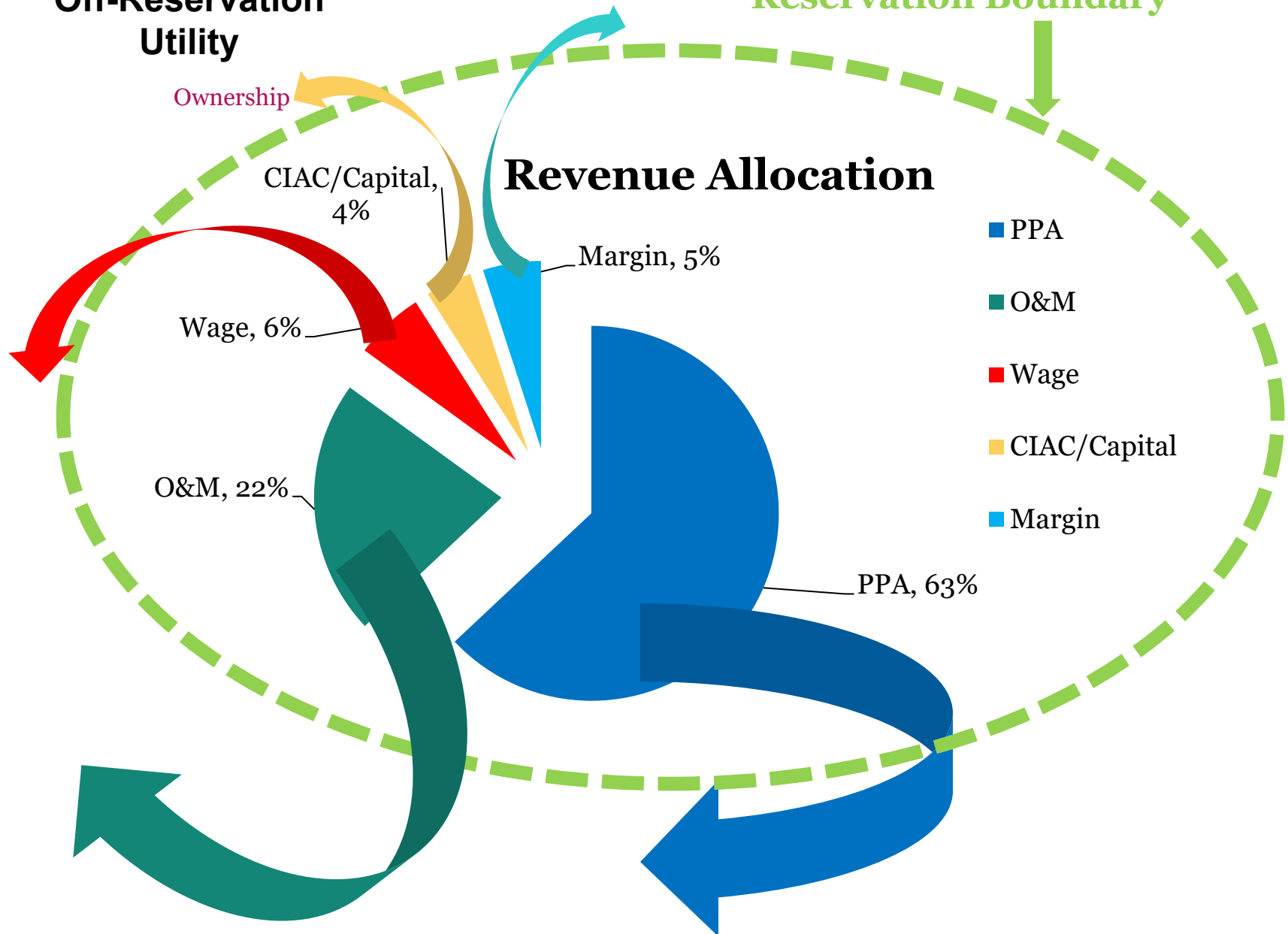


- Furthers Community's goal as stated in GRICUA's approved Plan of Operation:  
"The Gila River Indian Community Council ...**seeks to promote the Community's rights of self government** ...; and  
... **In time, GRICUA shall provide utility services to all Community governmental offices, programs and enterprises and all other residential and commercial users on the Reservation.**"
- Prevents Community from paying twice for same electric facilities if operated by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party.
  - Once to install facilities by existing third-party provider.
  - Then paying again in the future when Community wants to take ownership of third-party facilities.
- Gives Community input in operating and maintaining of electric facilities.
- All GRICUA costs for operations, maintenance and administration are paid from electricity sales revenues.
- GRICUA does not receive operational subsidies from the Community.
- GRICUA does not make any profit from contribution in aid of construction.
- GRICUA's Board reviews operations and finances on a monthly basis.
- GRICUA makes quarterly report covering operations and finances to the Economic Development Standing Committee (EDSC) and the GRIC Council.
- GRICUA makes annual audit report(s) to the Government & Management Standing Committee (GMSC), EDSC, and the GRIC Council.
- Provides opportunity to reinvest margins back into electric infrastructure for betterment of Community and its members, as shown on the next two slides.

## Off-Reservation Utility

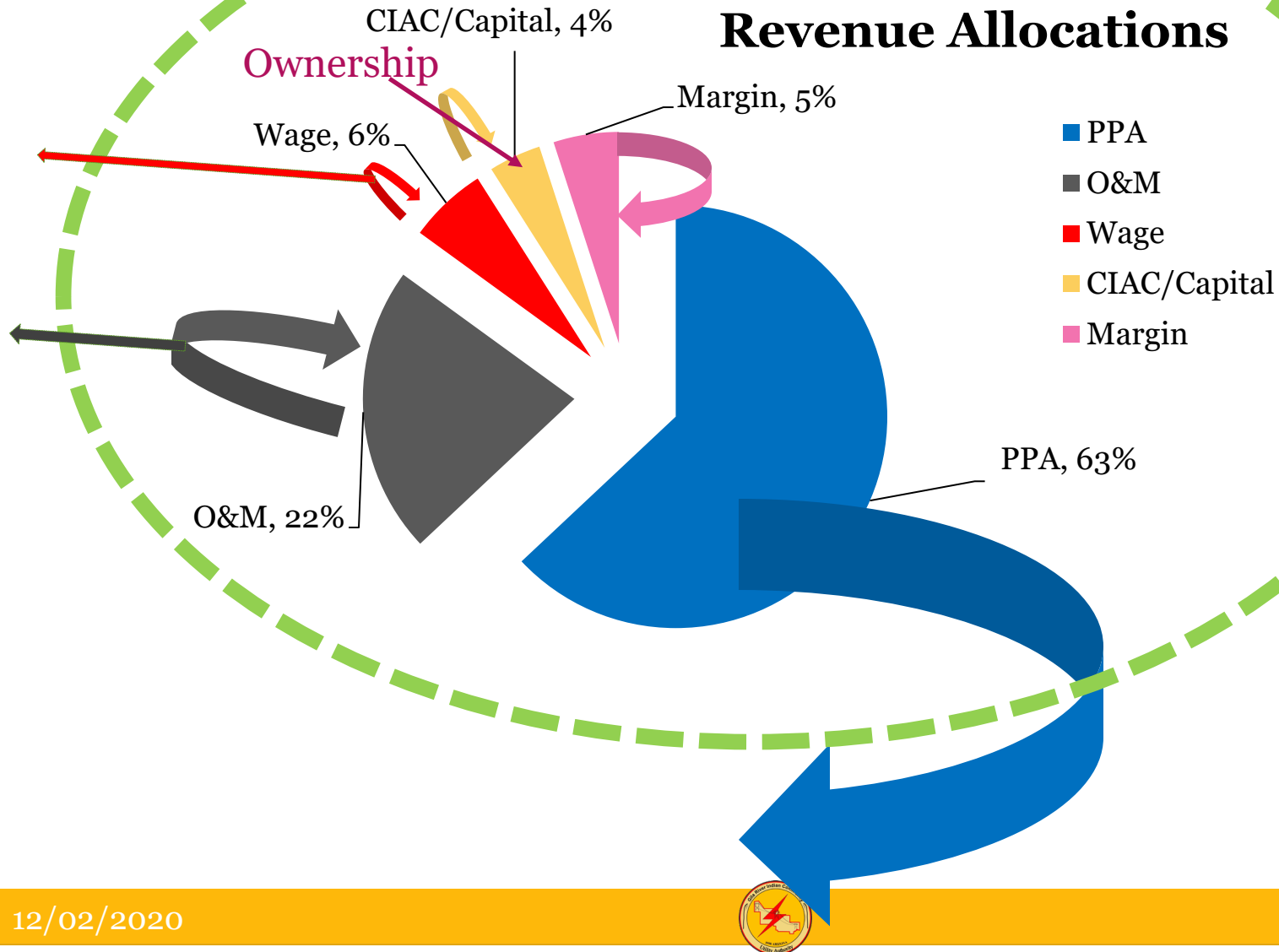
## Reservation Boundary

### Revenue Allocation



# GRICUA

Reservation Boundary





# GRICUA Capabilities



- GRICUA reinvests margins back into improving the electric system.
- GRICUA manages and keeps rates stable.
- GRICUA creates employment, training and mentoring opportunities for Community members.
- GRICUA has the organization, equipment and computer systems in place to handle new customers.
- GRICUA staff is familiar with the Community and works with Community Departments.
- GRICUA provides 24x7x365 outage response to Districts 1-5 and a small portion of District 6.

# GRICUA's Home Today



48 kW Covered Parking  
Lifetime Energy = 409,220 KWh  
Lifetime CO2 Saved = 311.1 tons



# GRICUA Board



- Pamela Thomas, Chairwoman
- Belinda Nelson, Vice-Chairwoman
- Felicia Kaufman, Treasurer
- Neil Banketewa, Secretary
- Robert Horton, Board Member

# Questions?



**Please contact  
GRICUA General Manager Leonard Gold  
at (520) 796-0600 or [manager@gricua.net](mailto:manager@gricua.net).**



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