



WEC CO-OP CURRENTS

Vol. 70, No. 6

The newsletter of Washington Electric Cooperative, Inc., East Montpelier, Vermont.

September 2009

How 'Green' Is WEC, Really?

Co-op Invests In a Sustainability Study

Washington Electric Co-op enjoys a reputation as a leader among electric utilities in providing its members with a high percentage of power generated with minimal harm to the environment. WEC's board of directors established that goal several years ago and has been working diligently toward it, just as the Co-op has also made it a priority to help Washington Electric members reduce their electricity consumption in homes, farms, and businesses.

But that's not all there is to "sustainability." How's WEC doing on the operations side of things? With a staff of 41 employees, a fleet of 17 vehicles (plus snow machines and other smaller equipment), some 1,260 miles of power line to maintain, an office building and a large garage and warehouse, the potential for waste, inefficiency, and missed opportunities could be sizeable.

When drafting Washington Electric's 2009 Annual Plan, the Board of Directors therefore decided to seek an independent, in-depth assessment of the Co-op's day-to-day practices, and recommendations about how the Co-op could improve its performance. WEC then contracted

with Spring Hill Solutions, LLC, of Burlington. Spring Hill spent several months working on the project and had access to the Co-op's personnel at all levels. The company presented its findings to the Board in August.

In summary, Spring Hill concluded that WEC's sustainability performance is superior among Vermont businesses, and credited staff members for innovative practices for preventing pollution and conserving energy. Spring Hill founder and President Greg Strong says, "I think [sustainability] is in Washington Electric's DNA, because you can see it in the Co-op's Mission Statement, particularly the section that says the Co-op should 'Minimize the environmental impacts of electric generation and our operations.'"

Spring Hill Solutions has worked with a variety of Vermont businesses. Strong says some of the companies and institutions making the most progress in sustainability, with or without Spring Hill's assistance, are Champlain College and Gardeners' Supply in Burlington, Vermont Butter & Cheese in Websterville, Green Mountain Coffee Roasters, currently in Waterbury, and the Vermont Energy Investment

continued on page 8



Two WEC employees making a difference: Products & Services Director Bill Powell (left) promotes sustainability by guiding Co-op members toward ways to reduce their electricity consumption; IT Manager Kevin Stevens (right) continually modernizes WEC's electronic systems, with an eye toward all aspects of efficiency.

Co-op To File A New Rate Design Proposal With PSB

How Will it Affect You? That Depends on Your Consumption

By Avram Patt
WEC General Manager

Washington Electric Co-op will be filing a revised Cost of Service and Rate Design proposal with the Public Service Board, and the PSB will open a proceeding to consider the proposal. The new rate design proposal has been in the works for a few years, as described further below.

The proposed rate design does four things:

- It allocates WEC's costs of providing service fairly among the different rate categories (residential, seasonal, commercial, and large power users).
- It clarifies definitions of WEC's rate categories.
- It eliminates the differential between regular and seasonal rates in the residential and commercial classes. (Seasonal accounts have been paying a lower rate per kilowatt hour.)

continued on page 3

Washington Electric Cooperative

East Montpelier, VT 05651

Inside

2009 Capital Credits program. The time for WEC to distribute annual equity payments is approaching. Details of this year's program, and a request to help us reach former members who qualify, are on page 4.

A gathering of co-ops. NRECA's Region 1 held its annual conference in Burlington this year. WEC played host, but parted ways on some issues. Page 6.

Fair and balanced. Co-ops should also tell their members how much it will cost *not* to address climate change. Read about WEC's proposed resolution, and the outcome at the regional meeting. Page 6 sidebar.

What does health care have to do with it? The national discussion affects us all. See President's Report, page 2.

Button-Up is back. Locations, schedules, page 7.



Former Washington Electric manager Joe Bongiovanni, Vermont's representative to the NRECA, welcomes Region 1 and Region 4 co-ops to Vermont. Stories begin on page 6.

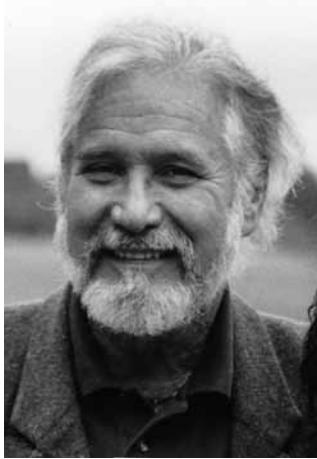
President's Report

Fall Brings Critical Policy Issues To The Forefront

By Barry Bernstein

Fall is coming, causing all of us to shift gears and begin new tasks. As with the change of seasons, there are many policy issues and legislation now being debated in Washington and in Vermont that will affect all of us directly, from health care to renewable energy portfolio requirements, energy efficiency, global warming, and whether to close the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant by 2012.

Some of these issues were discussed this month when several WEC Directors and staff members went to Burlington to attend the Region 1 and Region 4 meeting of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). It was hosted by the NEAEC (Northeast Association of Electric Cooperatives), Vermont Electric Co-op, and by ourselves, WEC. More than



1,100 people attended, representing distribution and generation co-ops serving a million or more members, from states as far west as Indiana, as far south as North Carolina, across the Northern New England tier to Maine, and along the Canadian border. The Region 1/Region 4 meeting was the first to be held this season; it is an annual event (though rarely held in Vermont) and will be followed by meetings convening the rest of the 10 NRECA regions.

Nationally, NRECA co-ops provide power to 18 million members – about 42 million people when households are included. Public power entities (municipally owned utilities, public power Districts, and other public authorities) serve an additional 45 million people.

The process was new to a number of us, who had not attended these regional meetings before. While all

who attended are big supporters of electric cooperatives, where our customers are our member/owners, it became abundantly clear that there were significant differences in regional perspectives. Many of our sister co-ops are reliant predominantly on coal for power generation, as well as nuclear plants. In fact, two-thirds of total co-op electricity in the U.S. is generated from coal. In the Northeast the co-ops rely largely on natural gas and hydroelectricity provided by NYPA (New York Power Authority). In Vermont, two-thirds of the power consumed in the state comes from Hydro Quebec and Vermont Yankee. As you know, at WEC our power comes from landfill gas, hydroelectricity, and biomass, and we have a history of holding down usage through energy efficiency.

The need to address global warming and climate change on a more active timetable than the NRECA presently advocates will not be easily accepted by our sister co-ops (see “RESOLVED: Co-ops Need To Educate Their Members,” page 6 of this issue). Change will be costly. But unfortunately, the status quo is no longer justifiable, and doing as little as possible could prove to be *far more* costly when weighing the prospect of global flooding, crop failures, and other consequences of climate change. There is a reason that the U.S. National Security Agency has raised the threat of global warming as a major national security issue.

Rate Design/Cost of Service

WEC will soon be filing our first new cost-of-service study and rate design proposal in nearly 20 years. Your Board of Directors and its Members and Markets Committee have spent many, many hours over the past four years in discussions and work with staff members and our consultant, La Capra Associates, to arrive at this final version. As we worked through the process our guiding principles were:

- Fairness in allocation of costs by rate class;
- Concern for the impact on our members in each class;
- Desire to maintain a lower-priced initial block of power for all our members, to cover essential household needs such as lighting and refrigeration, and other basics;
- To ensure that the second block of power accurately reflects the marginal cost of providing power, and the reality that going forward every new kilowatt-hour WEC has to purchase or generate will be at increasingly higher costs.

Although a new rate design will not increase the total amount of revenue we collect, the monthly electric bills for some of our members will go up – and for some they will go down. We also felt it was important not to put off implementing a new rate design until such time as we will find it necessary to implement a rate increase, possibly in 2011 or 2012.


Please read Manager Avram Patt's article on page 1 for more details on our rate design filing.

Health care

The discussion about what to do with a health care system that almost everyone agrees is not sustainable is now front and center in the news, as Congress moves closer to debating the various Senate and House committees proposals. The cost of health care coverage both for WEC as a business with 41 employees and for our 10,000-plus membership – which represents more than 25,000 people – is an ever-greater burden. I recently attended a community meeting in Peacham held by U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders, and what struck me most about some of the comments made that night was the fear that some people felt about government involvement, when as Bernie pointed out so many Americans already are receiving medical coverage through Medicare, the Veterans Administration, as government employees, or through Medicaid.

Having just recently become covered by Medicare, I cannot tell you how reassuring it is that I no longer have to worry about losing my insurance due to a change in employment or loss of business. While I am still working, I now know that when business is good I will pay more in premiums and during a severe economic downturn I will pay less. I can assure you that was not the case with my previous, private insurance coverage.

I know there are folks who oppose any government involvement and have faith that the marketplace will solve all of our problems. However, the past 18 months of “The Great Recession” (or Depression, if you have lost your job and house) should have shattered that myth.

I truly hope all Vermonters will become more engaged in the discussions taking place in this area, remaining open to hearing each other's perspective as we search for solutions. In the end, no matter what change takes place, we must also take more individual responsibility for our and our children's health. 

Co-op Currents

Co-op Currents (Publication No. USPS 711 -210 and ISSN No. 0746-8784) is published monthly except February, May, August and November by Washington Electric Cooperative, Inc., Route 14, P.O. Box 8, East Montpelier, Vermont 05651. The cost of this publication is \$.45, which is included in the basic monthly charge to each member. Periodical postage rates paid at East Montpelier and at additional offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to *Co-op Currents*, P.O. Box 8, East Montpelier, Vermont 05651.



WEC is part of the alliance working to advance and support the principles of cooperatives in Vermont.
www.vermontcooperatives.coop

Board of Directors

President	BARRY BERNSTEIN (May 2010)	1237 Bliss Road, Marshfield, Vt. 05658 Bbearvt@aol.com	456-8843
Vice President	ROGER FOX (May 2012)	2067 Bayley-Hazen Rd., East Hardwick, Vt. 05836-9873 rfox@pivot.net	563-2321
	ANDREA COLNES (May 2012)	918 Jacobs Road, East Montpelier, Vt. 05602 alc@sover.net	223-8474
Treasurer	DONALD DOUGLAS (May 2011)	21 Douglas Rd., East Orange, Vt. 05086 dondougl@gmail.com	439-5364
	KIMBERLY CHENEY (May 2010)	143 S. Bear Swamp Rd., Middlesex, Vt. 05602 kcheney@cbs-law.com	223-3181
	ROY FOLSOM (May 2010)	2603 US Rt. 2, Cabot, Vt. 05647 RoyGrnsy@aol.com	426-3579
	DAVID MAGIDA (May 2011)	632 Center Road, Middlesex 05602 vtmagida@aol.com	223-8672
Secretary	MARION MILNE (May 2011)	1705 E. Orange Rd., W. Topsham, Vt. 05086 milne@tops-tele.com	439-5404
	RICHARD RUBIN (May 2012)	3496 East Hill Rd., Plainfield, Vt. 05667 rrubin@sover.net	454-8542

AVRAM PATT
General Manager
avram.patt@washingtonelectric.coop

WILL LINDNER
Editor
Willind@aol.com

TIM NEWCOMB
Layout

Editorial Committee

Avram Patt Donald Douglas David Magida Will Lindner

The Board of Directors' regularly scheduled meetings are on the last Wednesday of each month, in the evening. Members are welcome to attend. Members who wish to discuss a matter with the Board should contact the president through WEC's office. Meeting dates and times are subject to change. For information about times and/or agenda, or to receive a copy of the minutes of past meetings, contact Administrative Assistant Deborah Brown, 802-223-5245.

Manager's Report

New Rate Design

continued from page 1

- For residential members, it maintains the existing two-tiered inclining rate structure, with a different cost per kilowatt-hour depending on how much you use. Because of changing costs and sources of power, there are changes compared to our present monthly customer charge and kWh rates. Most lower-use members will see their bills reduced, and higher-use members will see a modest increase assuming that their monthly usage stays the same. The inclining rate structure maintains and reinforces the incentive our rates already provide to use energy efficiently and to conserve.

Is this a rate increase?

No. A utility files a rate-increase request with the PSB when it is not getting enough in total rate revenue to cover its costs of providing service. As we have noted a number of times, WEC has not had a rate increase in more than nine years. While a rate increase will be needed in upcoming years, this proposed rate design is "revenue neutral," which means it is not intended to collect more money from members in total than we collect now.

What is a Rate Design?

WEC and other utilities are required to conduct a Cost of Service (COS) Study from time to time. The study analyzes all the costs associated with supplying power, running our distribution system, and running our business. Different classes of customers cost the Co-op more or less to serve, and these costs change over time. Once the COS determines what classes of members currently are responsible for what costs, we design a rate structure that, as closely as possible, collects the right amount in rates from the different classes.

The Co-op's rate design has not been updated in nearly 20 years. Almost everything about our costs has changed over that time, and therefore some inequities have developed among the different rate classes. Again, the purpose is not to collect more in total, but to collect it fairly among our members, based on what it costs to serve them.

Recent history

WEC members may remember that we began discussing rate design and inclining rate structures with members in 2007, at our fall community meetings, our annual meetings, and in Co-op Currents. We filed a proposed rate design in the spring of 2008 and the PSB opened a docket to consider the proposal. However, in the course of preliminary review, an error was discovered in the Cost of Service Study which had a significant impact. In late 2008, the PSB agreed to allow WEC to withdraw the proposal.

WEC staff, our Board of Directors, and our consultant, La Capra



WEC General Manager Avram Patt

Associates, have put together a revised proposal. We also took into account that certain costs have changed just since the time when we had first started the process prior to 2007. While the numbers are different from the previous proposal, the basic inclining rate structure remains for residential accounts, which make up 98 percent of our membership.

Cost changes' affect on the rate classes

The Cost of Service Study showed that since the cost of serving the different rate classes has changed, we are now under-collecting somewhat from the residential class, and over-collecting from the commercial and large power classes.

Another significant change affecting residential members is the decline in the amount of low-cost hydro power we receive from the New York Power Authority (NYPA). The cost per kilowatt-hour of this power has also increased at the same time. For many years, residential customers of co-ops and municipal utilities have received an allocation from NYPA. On WEC members' bills, the first 150 kWh you use is presently sold at a lower cost, and you then pay a higher rate for the electricity you use after that amount. (This is an "inclining rate," which we will continue to have under our new proposal.) Unfortunately, we are now receiving only about 70 kWh per month per residential customer from NYPA – less than 50 percent of the power we previously received from this source – and its cost has risen. This has a fairly large impact on residential members in our rate design proposal.

Why is the Co-op proposing to continue an inclining rate structure?

WEC's Board of Directors and staff, and our consultant, La Capra Associates, have put a lot of thought into this proposal. In addition to crunching the numbers and making sure our costs are allocated correctly, our proposal is consistent with directions and priorities set by your elected Board members (as well as by the Vermont Legislature) to encourage

wise energy use as we move into an era of more limited resources and higher costs.

An inclining rate structure serves to alert the 98 percent of our members who are residential consumers that we are not in an era of energy abundance, that traditional energy sources are getting scarcer, and that the cost of all energy sources including renewables will remain high. (Although energy prices have dipped from the extreme and historic highs they reached in the summer of 2008, in the long run energy is predicted to remain costly, and will also cost more as our nation implements carbon reduction measures in response to climate change.)

In the future, WEC, along with other utilities, may also begin offering "time of use" rates which discourage energy use during peak times when wholesale electricity costs the most. The inclining rate structure we are proposing now maintains our present rate incentive, which encourages wise energy use at all hours regardless of what the wholesale energy price happens to be at any given moment.

How will this affect members' bills?

The bottom line on your bill has always been determined as much by how much power you use as by the rate per kWh. In estimating bill impacts for members (below), we are assuming that your usage remains the same every month and that it will not vary before and after the rate design change is implemented. Neither of these assumptions is true in reality, so impacts will be different for every member.

The proposal does not make significant changes in the flat monthly customer charge. The changes that would affect the amount of the bill come primarily from what is paid for actual electric usage – the kWh rate.

- Residential.** All residential members will pay approximately 7.7 cents/kWh for their first 200 kWh of usage, and 17.2 cents for all usage beyond that. Most residential members using less than around 550 kWh per month (about a third of our residential

members) will see a decrease in their bills compared to what they pay now. The average usage for WEC residential members is 523 kWh per month and the median usage is 482 kWh per month. For higher-use residential members, most will see bills increase between zero percent and 4 percent, and the increase for the small number of very large users will be in the 5-percent-to-6-percent range. (The Co-op's very lowest users, using less than about 150 kWh/month, will also see a very slight increase in their bills, because their usage, until now, has been charged entirely at the lower cost rate.)

- Seasonal Residential.** Most seasonal residential accounts will see a bill increase, assuming their usage stays the same. As previously noted, seasonal accounts have been paying less per kWh than regular residential accounts, and the Cost of Service Study showed that this differential is no longer justified. They will pay the same rates as regular residential members, except that they will continue to receive semi-annual rather than monthly bills.

- Commercial and Industrial.** As noted before, the Cost of Service Study showed that the small commercial and seasonal commercial members and our very small group of large power users should be paying somewhat less than they have been. These members should see lower bills, assuming their usage is the same as it has been.


The bill impacts summarized above are for illustration purposes. Every member's usage varies from month to month and the dollar amount of your bill is determined by two equally important factors: the rate structure, and how much you use.

The inclining rate structure for residential members is one way of letting you know that using more electricity not only costs you more, but also costs the Co-op more to provide that power. Ultimately, the most important comparison is not with what your bill might have been under our present rate structure, but what it might be if you used less (or more) electricity.

What's next?

We are about to file our rate design proposal with the Public Service Board. The proposal, including a chart showing our present rate structure compared to the proposed new one for each rate class, will be posted on our website.

The PSB will then establish a schedule for their review proceeding, which will include opportunities for member participation and comment, including a public hearing. Members will receive notice of that hearing and other information related to the PSB docket once that proceeding gets underway.

If you have questions about Washington Electric Co-op's rate design proposal, feel free to contact me at the WEC office or by e-mail (avram.patt@washingtonelectric.coop). 

WEC 2009 Equity Distribution Plan

Co-op Seeks Former Members For Capital Credit Refunds

Washington Electric Cooperative is preparing to issue capital credit refund checks to current and former members, as authorized by WEC's Board of Directors. Under the 2009 Equity Distribution Plan, capital credits will be returned to eligible people who bought power from the consumer-owned electric utility during the following three years: 1990, 1991, and 2008. Safeguarding the Co-op's financial stability, the Board of Directors has targeted a total amount of approximately \$275,000 for distributions in 2009, which is a reduction from the \$325,000 allocated in 2008.

Capital credits are returned to Co-op members (customers) for those years in which WEC's revenues exceed its operating expenses. Capital credits are a way of dividing those surplus revenues – called margins – among the member-owners. The amount of a member's refund is based on the size of the Co-op's margins in the years in question, and how much electricity that member purchased. Each co-op member has a capital credit account – which is a bookkeeping entry managed on an annual basis by the Cooperative – in his/her name.

This year \$157,935.32 of the money earmarked under the 2009 Equity Distribution Plan will go to Co-op members from 1990, which fully covers the Co-op's margins from that year. The plan then targets \$42,063.68 to begin retiring credits from 1991, when the margins reached \$315,319. The 2009 distribution will cover about 13.3 percent of that year's margins. (When distributions for a given year are allocated in part, it does not mean that some members are paid and others aren't; rather, each qualified member is paid proportionally.) The remaining \$75,000 in the plan will address capital credits for 2008. WEC's margins last year totaled \$615,214.

For former members, no longer with the Co-op, refunds of \$20 or more will be paid by check. These checks will be issued once the Co-op has received a properly executed authorization form (contact WEC for details).

Current members who are eligible for refunds under the 2009 Equity Distribution Plan will receive their refund as a credit on their electric bill, regardless of the amount.

Members and former members will be given the opportunity to contribute their 2009 capital credit refund to the Community Fund administered by Washington Electric Cooperative. Funds contributed by members in 2009 will be combined with any remaining 2008 contributions and with the contributions from people who have elected to always defer their capital credit refunds to the Community Fund rather than claiming them themselves. These monies will be used to make donations to qualifying community causes via the Fund in 2010, per WEC Policy 6. A year-end report on the 2009 Community Fund donations will be published in *Co-op Currents* early next year.

All individual retirements will be reduced by any uncollectible or delinquent amount(s) owed to the Cooperative, as permitted by the WEC Bylaws. No early retirements will be made to the estates of deceased members. No distribution will be made for construction capital investments credited to patrons' accounts from contributions-in-aid-of construction for new power line extensions. No distribution will be made to patrons who purchased and paid for renewable energy credits (RECs) in 2009.

WEC may impose a \$10 annual service charge on all patronage (capital credit) accounts for years in which the credits have been retired and went unclaimed. This service charge can be applied to unclaimed accounts annually, until the balance in those accounts is \$0.

Earlier this summer WEC sent out Capital Credit Patronage Refund Authorizations to eligible former members, using the person's last-known address. Listed below are the names of people or accounts whose authorizations were returned as undeliverable. WEC is asking friends, acquaintances and relatives of the people listed here to contact those potential recipients or their rightful heirs, and have the former member or beneficiary contact Washington Electric Cooperative directly at 802-223-5245, or toll-free at 1-800-932-5245.

WEC will issue this year's capital credit refunds in November 2009.

A & W Artesian Well
Abbiati, Stuart M.
Ahearn, III, Donald R.
Aldrich, Georgia
Allen, Charlotte A.
American Tel & Tel Co
Anderson, Lou Ann
Anderson, Roland V.
Andrews, Kathleen
Appleton, Sylvia
Arndt, Jr., Walter T.
Ashtek Properties, Inc.
Asquith, Laura
Atkinson, Elliott R.
Atwood, Renee
Austin, Norma O.
Austin, Walter & Virginia
Ayer, Patrick

Baack, Gary L.
Bair, Samuel (Estate of)
Baker, Joseph
Baker, Jr. Leonard & Ulla
Barfield, Coy L.
Barnard, Kathy B.
Barnard, Leon
Barnett, Anna F.
Barnett, Dorothy K.
Barnett, V. & H. Wald & M. Griggs
Barnocky, May A.
Barral, Robert & Line P.
Barrett, Rita
Bassett, Paula P.
Beadle, Rubie A.
Beardsworth, Rhonda
Beaupre, Ronald R. & Donna J.
Beck, Florence L.
Beckler, Minnie W.
Beebe, Jr. Charles C.
Beede, Philip G.
Beier, Deborah J.
Bell, Richard
Bellemare, Susan A.
Bello, Donna & Gary
Bennett, Jr. Donald S. & David K. Sturges
Bent, Robert
Bergeron, Laurie A.
Berry, Alan R.
Bettis, Jr. Roy
Bevins, Kelly A.
Bicknell, Bernice
Bielecki, Mark
Billado, Robert W. & Regina
Bishop, Clara
Blair, Richard N.

Blair, Robert J.
Blais, Raymond A.
Blanchard, Beverly
Blanchard, Robert
Blau, William
Blodgett, Arthur D.
Blow, Paul J.
Boguzewski, Michael J. & Sharon
Bohn, Mary A. & Lee M.
Boisvert, Robert & Catherine
Bolton, William
Bosma, Mikel
Bottiggi, Richard
Bowell, Erlene M.
Bridges, Lucy L.
Briggs, David H.
Brissette, Robert R. & Susanne E.
Brock, Bernard J.
Brolin, Ruth
Broner, Heidi
Brooks, James D.
Brooks, Karen
Brown, James E.
Brown, Philip F.
Brown, Walter F.
Bruleigh, Nicole M.
Bryant & Dailey
Buck, Arthur D.
Bunce, Harold S.
Burdick, Louise S.
Burgielwicz, Sheila
Burnham, Ellen
Burton, Rima
Butler, Daniel E.
Butler, Jr. Walter R.
Buttitta, Mary E. & Mary S. Pierce
Buxton, William

Callahan, Timothy E.
Campbell, Judith
Canfield, William J.
Cantlin, Timothy & Gail
Cantwell, Richard J.
Carignan, James A. & Doris G.
Carlson, Katherine M.
Carrig, Blaise & Leslie
Carroll, Wayne M.
Case, John E.
Casey, George
Cavalier, Marie
Ceplikas, Alison P.
Chamberlin, Shirley
Chamberlin, Roger M.
Chater, John A.

Cherington, Davis
Chipman, Stanley J.
Choen, David & Gertrude
Clafin, Kathryn
Clark, Daniel H.
Clark, Harry
Clark, Susan
Clarke, Robert A.
Clifton, Glenn S. & April
Cobb, William W. & Cindy L.
Colburn, Judith P.
Collins, Charles M.
Colombo, Robert
Coltey, George J.
Converse, Joseph
Costa, Jr. William T.
Counter, Dorothy B.
Coutu, David & Beth
Couture, Laurent P.
Cox, Mark
Craig, Ken
Crow, Robert W.
Crawford, John R.
Crowther, Irene M.
Cullen, Joan M.
Czajkowski, Frances T.

Dagostino, James
Daino, Robert
Davies, Christopher
Davis, Ernest E. & Theresa
Davis, Lorena
Davis, Sr. Clayton
Delaney, George O.
Demingware, Cora
Depalo, Caroline
Deuso, Lisa M. & Timothy
Deutsch, Irving
Devenger, Glen & Connie
Dexter, Gregory K.
Dexter, Robert R.
Dickinson, C. F.
Dickinson, Ernest
Dillon, Susan
Dilts, William C.
Dimick, Vince
Donahue, Russ W.
Donahue, Timothy A.
Dorr, John L.
Dowd, Blanche M.
Drew, Marie A.
Driscoll, Peter
Driscoll, Peter M.
Drury, Denise
Duchaine, Jr. Morris
Duggan, Rita C.
Dunbar, Bessie B.
Duncklee, Norman

Dunham, Violet
Dunster, Gary C.
Dupont, Roxann
Durkee, Debbie
Dux, Thomas J.
Dwinell, Joanna R.

Eastman, David B.
Edson, Theresa & William
Eiriksson, Karl J. & Susan
Eldred, Allan
Eldridge, Laura
Elkin, Milton
Emerson, Charles A.
Emerson, Russell
Eniti, Anita T.
Ennis, John (Estate of)
Estes, Brian
Evans, Marie M.

Fadden, Linda
Fagant, Carol L.
Fairbrother, Lawrence W.
Farland, Eugene W.
Farnham, Conrad
Farnsworth, Gary F.
Fenner, Ernest
Ferguson, Floyd
Ferno, Herbert W.
Feuerstein, Robert G.
Finley, III James T.
Finnegan, Jr. Walt & Mary Jean

Fisher, Stephen C.
Fletcher, Romaine
Flint, Lois & Grace
Flood, Shirley
Fogg, Alan C. & Julia L.
Folsom, Jennifer L.
Fontaine, Marc
Foote, Peter A.
Fortin, Lawrence
Franks, Hope
Freeman, Ronnie
French, Beverly
French, Colleen
French, Jr. Bert

Gable, James
Gahagen, Jacqueline
Gallucci, Anthony J.
Gardella, Sandy E.
Garfield, April
Gauthier, Linda A.
Gay, Cora (Estate of)
Gazaway, Sr. David L.
George, Christie
Giantonio, Patrick

Gilbert, Louise B.
Gillander, Mae E.
Gilman, Charles A.
Gilroy, John
Giro, Gregory
Glidden, Benjamin T.
Godin, Brenda H.
Gonyaw, Myrtle
Goodenough, Beverly
Goodine, Henry A.
Goodrich, David S.
Eldridge, Laura
Gospodarek, Melanie
Gove, Robert
Grab, Robert
Graves, Virginia H.
Gray, James R.
Gray, Joan
Greaves, Pamela
Greenberg, Leo F.
Gregory, Mary A.
Griffin, Bridget R.
Griffin, Dennis R.
Griffin, Robert
Griffith, James A.
Griffith, Joseph (Estate of)
Griffith, Jr. Kenneth E.
Groschner, John & Holly
Grout, Clifton J.
Guarcello, Giovanni
Guillette, Robert
Guy, Stuart

Haggett, Dana L.
Haile, Dennis R.
Hale, Warren
Hamelin, Charles E.
Hance, Jr. Borden L.
Haney, Shirley J.
Hankins, Nancy C.
Hansen, Hans
Harrington, Dean A.
Harrington, John
Harris, Frederick J.
Hart, John R.
Hatch, Margaret
Hatch, Ralph
Hathway, Lynn M.
Hawthorne, Jarrett & Arthur Stout

Hawthorne, Jarrett N.
Hayes, Julia G.
Hayes, Kathleen
Hayes, Walter
Hayward, David A.
Heald, Lester R.
Heath, Donald
Heath, Parker Jr.

Heath, Richard (Estate of)
Hebebrand, William E.
Helburn, Margaret
Helgesen, Bernice F.
Henderson, Gary
Henderson, Kevin & Julie
Henry, Tom
Herman, Sylvia
Herrick, Jr. James E.
Hill, William G.
Hilliker, Leonard
Hilton, Susan W.
Hiner, James D. & Patricia G.
Hodgdon, Clara T.
Hodgeman, Irma T.
Hodgkins, Sr. John R.
Holder, Steven G.
Holliday, James
Holmes, June E.
Holmstrom, Raymond & Robert G. Lister
Holtermann, Hildegard C.
Hooper, Curtis J.
Horowitz, Michael F.
Horst, John
Houghton, Elliot C.
Houle, Roger E.
Howard, Jeffrey S.
Howe, Mandeville
Howell, Gail A.
Howland, Susan (Estate of)
Hughes, Leslie A.
Hunka, Ronald G.
Hunt, Miles D.
Hunt, Thomas G.
Hurt, Charles
Hutchins, Gerald H.
Hutchinson, Ann

Irving, Marion R.
Isham, Christine

Jackson, John & Paul J. Dubois
Jacobs, Donald
Jacobs, Thomas J. & Trish L.
Jamele, Peter
Jarvis, Kelley
Jarvis, Lucy M.
Jewell, Adelaid R.
Johnson, Arthur
Johnston, Kenneth
Jones, Corey A.
Jones, Robert W.
Jones, Robin A.
Jones, William B.
Joy, Sandra L.

Jurkiewicz, Helene
Justice, Marjorie

Keefe, Carolyn
Keene, Patrick A.
Kehoe, William V. & Kathy B.
Keiser, Kimberly A.
Kemberling, Rick & Doreen
Kidd, Marla A. & randie
Kilburn, Rebecca J.
Kilian, Jon
Kimball, Andrew
Kindestin, William R.
Kinney, Wayne
Kjier, Christine
Knapp, Leo D.
Knowles, Florence S.
Knowlton, Deborah
Kober, James
Kohl, Arlene w.
Kokoszka, Lawrence A.
Kopacz, Frederick
Koss, Arnold J.

Labadie, Patricia
Labrie, Hughes
Ladd, Thurman
Lagasse, Donald (Estate of)
Laird, Robert
Lakotos, Peter
Lamp, Michae A. & Jael L.
Lance, John E.
Landino, Henry A.
Lane, Dennis A.
Langford, Dennis
Langlois, Robert
Langone, Robert J.
Lanphear, Doris H.
Laperle, Alan
Laquerre, Sandra
Larivee, Annie (Estate of)
Larkin, Edwin
Larow, Gary
Lash, Jonathan
Laundry, Reginald
Lawless, Bernice (Estate of)
LeBlanc, George
LeClerc, Michael
Lefebvre, Michael D.
Lemay, Juliette
Lemieux, Teddi & Lloyd
Leonard, Mark R.
Lever, Roger
Lewis, Brian L. & Stephanie A. Schmitz
Lindberg, Steven
Listebarger, James K. & Michele Posey

Long, Eugene M.
Lord, Charles D.
Lord, Marian B.
Lorentzen, Doreen
Lori, Michael
Lovelette, Lisa
Lyman, Rodney H.
Lyn, Vincent
Lynn, John C.
Lyons, Prescott M. &
Barbara Towne

Macauley, James
Machen, David
Mack, Roger G.
Maclaren, Shirley
MacLarin, Richard N.
MacNaughton, G.
Magoon, Richard G.
Magoon, Sr. Edgar S.
Magoon, Stanton R. &
Marjorie E.
Makinson, Diane
Manchester, Sheri Ann
Mandel, Lisa
Manges, Darcy &
Mark Russell
Mangino, Albert L.
Manning, Kelly L.
Maple Corner Waters
Markham, Larry C.
Marsh, Harold N.
Marsh, Marylou
Marshall, Francis A. &
Carlene
Martin, Annette
Martin, Laurie E.
Martin, Lawrence K. &
Elizabeth L.
Masi, Victor
Massey, Edward
Mayhew, Wanda
Maynard, Donald &
Louise B.
McBride, Christine
McDanolds, Doris
McFarland, Stephen
McFarland, Stephen J.
McGill, Charles H. &
Shirley H.
McGrath, John R.
McLaughlin, Harold
McNaughton, Diane L.
Mears, Edgar
Meau, Annemieke G. &
James A. Miller
Medlock, A. Aaron
Meeks, Charles
Meier, C. Padma
Menard, Katherine A.
Menard, M. Ellen
Menard, Robert W.
Merchant, Melvyn
Merritt, Barry
Messer, Richard K.
Miller, Frederick (Estate of)
Miller, Iva
Miller, Lawrence J.
Mills, Ellen
Misiak, Ronald A. & Karen
Montgomery, Milton
Montgomery, Robert E.
Moody, Beverly J.
Moore, Pearl F.
Morande, Mary Ann T.
Morgan, Lorraine A.
Morgan, Lyn
Morgan, Ruth M.
Morin, Julie
Morris, Nicky
Morris, Richard (Estate of)
Morris, Robert
Morrison, David L.
Morrison, June K.
Morse, Linda A.
Morse, Lucille L.
Moses, Jessie
Moulton, Carolyn E.
Mowery, Mary I.
Mudge, George C.
Mugford, Don G.
Mullen, Carol
Mullen, Jeremiah S.
(Estate of)
Mullenbrock, Edwin W.
Munger, Ellen
Munro, Linda
Murphy, James P.
Murray, Vincent & Deserre
Bates
Myers, Howard B.

Nadeau, Gregory P.
Nelson, Darleen & David
Nevens, Virginia I.
New England Tele Co.
Newman, Patricia S.
Newman, Ric & Lisa
Newton, Grant
Nichols Trust
Nickerson, Benjamin
Noel, Lorenzo W.
Noll, John C.
Norman, Melissa A.
Northrup, Jack
Nugent, Berkley
Nye, Karl

Ohland, Henry N.
Ohlendorf, Keith

Olsen, Harley D.
Olson, Arthur E.
O'Rear, Jay
Ostrum, John P.
Oszejca, David
Otis, Michael

Pacini, Cecile A.
Page, Elizabeth P.
Page, Howard E. Dr.
Paige, June S.
Palmer, Scott T.
Papineau, Fonda
Paquin, Heather L.
Paradise, Stephen
Parauka, Marion
Parker, Charlene
Parker, Edith O. (Estate of)
Parker, Isobel
Parker, Mariann
Parker, Thelma F.
Parrot, Kenneth H.
Paton, Julia A.
Paton, Kenneth
Paul, Armenthia
Paul, Kathleen L.
Payne, Douglas
Payne, Thomas W.
Pearson, Robert A.
Pendleton, Rugh E.
Perdue, Charles G.
Perkins, Timothy
Perreault, Lawrence
Perrin, Merle
Perry, III Courtland L.
Perry, Linda J.
Perry, Mark T.
Perry, Sherman
Perry, Timothy L. & Jennifer
Persons, D. W. Dr.
Peterson, Susan M.
Pettibone, Mary
Pierce, Ben
Pierce, Donald W.
Pierce, Linda R.
Pierson, Alan
Pike Hill Auto Serv Inc.
Pike, Francis H.
Pilbin III, William L.
Pilette, Susan
Pilz, Matthew V.
Plante, Kathy
Plante, Renee
Plourde, Julie
Pope, Arthur
Porter, Marie B.
Potvin, Laura
Powell, David L.
Powers Sr., Roger J.
Powers, Wilfred H.
Pratt, Rebecca & Bruce R.
Preble, W. J.
Preston, Larry
Prosser, Robert
Protas, Alan
Proulx, Annie
Pryce, Steve
Puffer, David
Pyrik, Walter
Pytte, Anders

Rasco, Sharlene M.
Reid, William
Relation, Jr. Ralph
Repine, Terence
Reynolds, Charles R.
Richardson, Joseph
Richmond, Janice B.
Ricker, Julie
Rider, John
Riley, Thomas
Ringlee, Sarah
Ripley, Beverly A.
Riviere, Michael S.
Robertson, Dale R.
Robinson, Dain & Jerry Jay
Perantoni
Robinson, Marilyn
Rogers, David A.
Rollins, Philip R.
Romero Jr., Jose L.
Rooney, Robert L.
Rose, Robert C.
Rouelle, Frances C.
Roux, Ellen L.
Roux, Robert F.
Rowell Jr., Francis E.
Roy, David
Roy, Mary H. & Brian A.
Rummell, Ralph E.
Rutledge, Josiah
Rutledge, Shirley A.

Saldi, Robert F.
Sales, Suzanne
Salter, Gary
Saltimbocca, N. V.
Sangermano, Peter & Diane
Sargent, Amy B.
Savioli, Catherine M.
Sawlan, Raymond P. &
Diane C.
Sayers Sr., Willie
Sayles Jr., Thomas D.
Schibut, Norman
Schiffert, George A.
Schmidt, Christel H.
Schumacher, Michael
Schwartz, Robert & Alice B.
Scott, Gary

Scott, James F.
Secor Sr., Bruce
Selph, Sharon K. & Ben H.
Sense, E. Dr.
Shangraw, Warren A.
Shatney, Harry
Sherman, Linda K.
Shor, Betty
Shper, Paul A.
Shubert, Cynthia
Sicely, Grace M.
Simard, Michael
Simmons Cable TV of Barre
Simoes, Nancy H. &
Stephen W.
Simpson, Danita
Sirois, Michael
Skyview Casino, Inc.
Slack II, Dale A.
Slayton, Ina
Sleeper, Alfred
Slopnick, Patricia H.
Smith, Daryl
Smith, Eric
Smith, Jane E.
Smith, Linda S.
Smith, Lisa
Smith, Peter
Smith, Philip M.
Smith, Richard
Smith, Sharon
Smith, Stuart J.
Smith, Trent
Smith, Wayne G.
Smith, William S.
Snyder, Marvin W.
Spaulding Ruth M.
Spaulding, Robert W.
St Cyr, Marcia
Starr, William H. (Estate of)
Starti, William G.
Steitz, James
Stephens, Alan T.
Stetson, Harvey B. Dr.
Stevens, Craig N.
Stevens, Jacalyn M.
Stevenson, Hazel (Estate of)
Stiles, Lewis B.
Stoeckel, Ronald
Stone, Harvey A.
Strayhorn, Alvin
Street, Alison
Stridsberg, Joseph G.
Stridsberg, Lawrence
Stryker, Jon
Sullivan, Robert E.
Surviva, Joyal
Sweetser, Clyde
Swenson, Susan E.
Symons, Helen D.
Symons, Richard A.
Szulc, Alfred

Tanner, Ardith S.
Taylor, Theophilus
(Estate of)
Teehan, Dianne B.
(Executor)
Tellier, Raymond R.
Tenney, Francis
Terry, Carlton P.
Tescher, Donald B. &
Margaret E.
Thibeault, Georgette
Thivierge, Roger J.
Thomas, Judson S.
Thompson, Colm
Thompson, Helen
Thompson, Jason
Thompson, John D.
Thompson, Thomas B.
Thorne, Philip
Thorstensen, Thomas
Thuren, Linda
Thurston, Andrew S.
Thurston, Eva M.
Tibolt, William
Tierney, Patricia
Tierney, Robert G.
Tillotson, Shirley (Estate of)
Tim's Repair
Tolassi, Jane B.
Tomaszewicz, Dave
Towne, Carol
Townsend, Zada
Tripp, Yvonne L.
Trombly, Joanne
True, Gerald
Turley, Christopher A.
Turner, Elizabeth

United Pentecost Church
Unitted, Jon W. & Mimi
Utt, Timothy

Vail, Edith
Vazquez, Siro Dr.
Veech, Roberta L.
Verchereau, Michelle
Vermette, John A.
Vermont Institute for
Self Reliance
Vermont Sports Apparel, Inc.
Vigeant, Michael
Vitt, James M. & Dianne
Volpini, Frank
Vreeland, Kurt A.

Wade, James M.
Walbridge, Kathy

Wallace, Marlene B.
Ward, Marion
Watson, Christopher A.
Webster, Daniel
Webster, Thomas D. &
Lucinda
Weed, Candace
Weir, James R.
Shper, Stephen L.
Weiss, Stephen L.
Welch, Randy
Welch, Raymond R.
Welcome, Dennis J.
Wentworth, Roderick S.
Wheeler, Vicky

White, Josephine I
White, Roderick
White, Sherry
White, Wayne M.
Whitman, Emil F.
Whittemore, Charles L.
Wild, David
Wild, Hazel B.
Willey, Douglas
Williams Jr., William J.
Williams, David
Williams, Douglas
Williams, Roy
Williams, Steven T.

Willis, Kendall & Susan
Wilson, Cindy
Wilson, Daniel
Wilson, Edward J.
Winter, Linda
Wiseman, Warren
Witham, Wendell
Wnukoski, Joseph G.
Wojcik, Walter P.
Wolf, Guenther G. &
Christina H., &
Ralph Boch
Woods, Diane
Woodward, Joanne M.

Woodward, Patricia
Works, Greg & Lisa Miller
Wright, Andrew
Wright, Andrew H.
Wright, Jeffrey F.
Wright, Robert

Yeager, Peter & Jodi
Young Jr., Edward
Young, J. Peter
Young, Roland A.

Zimmerman, John

Scores of central Vermont men and women, members of Washington Electric Cooperative, have stepped up to help lead the Co-op during its first 70 years, devoting countless hours of their time voluntarily by serving on the Board of Trustees (renamed the Board of Directors in 2002). In recent issues of *Co-op Currents* we have saluted the Trustees who served from 1939, the year the Co-op was founded, through the 1970s. This month we are pleased to present the names of all the Trustees who served during the 1980s and 1990s.



Eva Morse: 1973-1982
Donald B. Welch: 1976-1986
Gene Parent: 1977-1980
Frank Sahlman, Sr.: 1977-1985
Gordon Booth: 1977-1992
Norman Bitterman: 1977-1980
Frederick Ladue: 1978-1990
William Waite: 1978-1984; 1986-1988
John Bober: 1981-1986
Theodore Chase: 1981-1988
William Gehr: 1982-1987
Rita Edwards: 1983-1991
Nancy Huelsberg: 1985-1987
Richard Cawley: 1987-1988
Karen Storey: 1987-1998
John Bellefeuille: 1987-1999

Michael Duane: 1989-1996
Daniel Wing: 1989-1991
Sally Goodrich: 1989-1992
Avram Patt: 1989-1996
Roger Fox: 1991-
Cort Richardson: 1992-1996
Charles Haas: 1992-1997,
(also 2002-2004)
Charles Smiler: 1992-1998
Wendell Cilley: 1993-2008
Carla Payne: 1997-2003
Cornelia Swayze: 1997-2002
Barry Bernstein: 1998-
Monique Hayden: 1998-2003
Richard Rubin: 1999-
Donald Douglas: 1999-

WASHINGTON ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE



Above, WEC's leadership, June 1983. From left, General Manager Bob Toombs, with Co-op Trustees Donald Welch, William Waite, Gordon Booth, Fred Ladue, Rita Edwards, John Bober, Ted Chase, Will Gehr, and Frank Sahlman, Sr.



Above, a new look for the Board in the early 1990s. From left (front row): Karen Storey, John Bellefeuille, Michael Duane, and Avram Patt. Rear: General Manager Joe Bongiovanni, with Trustees Gordon Booth, Sally Goodrich, Dan Wing, Rita Edwards, and Roger Fox.

Left: the infamous ice storm of January 1998.

National Electric Co-op Movement Lights In Burlington

Vermont Hosts NRECA Regional Meeting

Every year in September, WEC General Manager Avram Patt finds himself flying away somewhere to attend the annual meeting for Region I of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). The regional conferences are a

big deal for the NRECA, a means of gathering input and policy direction from the 900-plus electric cooperatives that the Alexandria, Virginia-based national organization represents. There are 10 NRECA regions. Vermont, with its two electric co-ops (WEC and the

Vermont Electric Cooperative), is in Region I, along with Maine, New Hampshire, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina. No other region contains as many states, but some have more co-ops, and much

larger ones. Texas alone has 71 electric cooperatives, including G&Ts (generation & transmission co-ops), which produce and provide power to the distribution – i.e., retail – co-ops that own them.

The Region I conference is held

RESOLVED: Co-ops Need To Educate, Not Just Alarm, Their Members

WEC's Voice in the National Discussion

WEC decided to make its stand at the meeting of the Resolutions Committee. It wasn't a do-or-die stand. In fact, Washington Electric's leadership considered it to be moderate, measured, and considerate of the circumstances of electric cooperatives that are heavily dependent on coal and fossil fuel-generated power. WEC's resolution – offered for the approval of the representatives of other co-ops at the September 8-10 regional meeting of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association – asked that the organization and its member co-ops provide more leadership and public education about the necessity for the country to move toward sustainable energy generation.

The Resolutions Committee seemed a good forum for raising these concerns, partly because WEC General Manager Avram Patt chairs that committee for Region I. Six other proposed resolutions were already on the agenda; WEC would add its resolution – titled "Balancing Concern for Cost with the Need for Change" – after those were discussed and voted on.

"What frequently happens is that co-ops who stand to be affected by anti-pollution requirements and carbon and greenhouse gas regulation tell their members how much it's going to cost them, and encourage large numbers of them to complain to their congressional representatives," Patt explained before the meeting. "There's very little attempt to explain why carbon mitigation and pollution controls are necessary, and what the costs are of not doing them.

"Our resolution is really about language – how co-ops talk about these important issues," said Patt. "And we express solidarity with co-ops dependent on coal by saying that the entire country should share in the costs of the climate change measures we need to take."

The resolution cited an existing NRECA document – the Electric Cooperative Platform for our Energy Future – but sought to broaden the organization's public message. WEC wrote:

"While the Platform rightfully notes serious concerns about potential costs of new environmental requirements . . . NRECA is urged to balance its lobbying and grassroots efforts to more prominently emphasize its acknowledgment of the need for change in our energy future and its support for effective long-term solutions.



From left, WEC President Barry Bernstein, Vice President Roger Fox, and Treasurer Don Douglas listen to the debate spurred by the Co-op's proposed resolution at the NRECA regional meeting.

"Recognizing that:

- *Climate change and the effect of human activity on carbon emissions are now generally accepted by the national and international scientific communities...*
- *There are costs to not changing to cleaner energy sources as well as costs to doing so,*
- *Increased costs should not unduly or unfairly affect cooperative members compared to other utility ratepayers.*

"NRECA should:

- *Further strengthen the commitment of cooperatives to reduce energy consumption through conservation and efficiency [measures for members],*
- *Support significant public funding to develop and install advanced pollution control and carbon mitigation technology for coal generating plants, to retire those plants that are most polluting, and to help convert our generation supply to renewable resources and natural gas. These costs should be borne nationally...*
- *Communicate a balanced message by more positively affirming the need for and benefits of change in our future generation supply...*

WEC brought its proposal before the Region I and Region IV resolution committees at the Sheraton Hotel and Conference Center in Burlington. The previous six resolutions had addressed a variety of issues, generally seeking to protect co-ops as new federal policies governing the electric utility industry are crafted. Most of the resolutions generated little discussion, and all but one were passed.

WEC's resolution fared differently. Co-op Vice President Roger Fox explained its intent: "It's a resolution to effect more balance in the education that co-ops provide for their members."

But the response from a representative of a

Pennsylvania co-op was typical of the proposal's reception. "I think the intent is honorable," he said, "but it shouldn't be in our national policy. States and regions can take it up for themselves."


An Ohio representative said: "This proposal tries to turn the ship around too fast. Energy efficiency is not going to displace significant coal in the foreseeable future. And wind turbines? Yeah, but there's not enough transmission capacity to get it from the Dakotas to Vermont."

An Indiana representative had a stronger reaction: "We can't do an attack on coal. This language is threatening to us."

WEC President Barry Bernstein sought to calm the waters. "Our intent is not to close all the coal plants," he explained. "We feel that everyone built their plants with good intentions. That's why we believe that [the costs of redirecting electric generation] should be borne by all of us." And he added: "Change is happening, regardless of what happens with this resolution."

In the end, the proposal failed in Region I, as Washington Electric was the only co-op to support it (two co-ops abstained). It was unanimously rejected by Region IV.

Patt, however, was satisfied. He said the most important thing was that the discussion provided WEC an opportunity to enunciate a position that might gain ground over the longer term, and Co-op board members were able to engage on the subject with senior NRECA officials like CEO Glenn English.

"It's a hot issue," Patt acknowledged. "But there's much more that co-ops have in common, in terms of democratic governance, their concern for the consumer, the challenges and obligations of providing power for rural people. This was just one aspect of a very productive regional meeting." 

jointly with the Region IV conference, which includes Midwestern states like Ohio, Michigan, Missouri, and Indiana. Therefore Patt often ends up traveling to places like Indianapolis and Dearborn, Michigan.

However, this year was refreshingly different. The Region I/Region IV meeting returned to Vermont for the first time in 16 years. It was held at the Sheraton Hotel Conference Center in Burlington, from Tuesday, September 8, through Thursday, September 10. Hundreds attended, filling the Sheraton's ample conference spaces. There were board members and senior staff from the Region I and Region IV electric cooperatives; CEO Glenn English and other senior officials from the NRECA; and members of NRECA's board of directors.

Former Washington Electric general manager Joe Bongiovanni now represents Vermont on the NRECA Board of Directors. Bongiovanni acted as host and emcee for Wednesday's session.

For Patt, the Burlington location came as a welcome break from his



NRECA's Mary McLauri (left), Vice President for Education & Training, and Dena Stoner, Vice President for Government Relations, discuss the organization's lobbying efforts in Congress.

September routine.

"It was all the same as usual," he said afterward. "The same people were there that I see and work with every year, the same format of speakers, informational sessions, and committees. I had to pinch myself and say, 'What am I doing in Burlington?'"

"But it was good. We made a point ahead of time of telling people about Vermont's attractions, and we know that some people came early for part of the Labor Day weekend or stayed a day or

two afterward and got around our state a little bit. A lot of people commented on how much they enjoyed Vermont."

Tough Choices

The NRECA represents co-ops like WEC all over the country – electric utilities that serve and are owned by mostly rural people. Providing power in places where density (number of electric meters per mile of line) is low and maintenance is more difficult, often makes electricity more expensive

for co-op members than for urban ratepayers. Like WEC and VEC, all NRECA co-ops are nonprofit utilities run by elected boards of directors. The regional meetings therefore provide Patt, and WEC board members who are able to attend, an opportunity to work with others who have much in common with Washington Electric.

This year there was serious business to be done. The electric utility industry is on the hot seat in the matter of climate change, and NRECA co-ops cover the full spectrum in regard to energy policy and electric-generation sources. Co-ops everywhere are sensitive to the retail costs of the power they provide and feel a duty to keep their rates as low as possible, especially in current economic times.

The commanding issue that confronts the NRECA is that Congress is moving toward some new structure governing carbon-producing industries like electricity and transportation. Whatever form that takes, it will be too little, too late for some electric co-ops, and too costly and too punitive

continued on page 8

Button-Up Is Back For 2009

Central Vermont Community Action Council is reprising its "Button-Up Vermont" program, which it took to 100 communities all over the state last fall. "Button-Up" facilitators present free, two-hour workshops that educate people about how homes lose heat, effective solutions for those problems, and energy conservation measures that people can perform themselves (or pay for from a contractor). Related issues of health and safety, and information about technical and financial resources also are addressed. Following is a list of workshops scheduled around central Vermont. Further information is available through CVCAC at Button-up@CVCAC.org, or by phone at 479-1053 (toll-free 1-800-639-1053).

Tues., Sept. 29; 7:00pm
Berlin Elementary School, Berlin
Andrea Chandler
Town Energy Coordinator

Wed., Oct. 7; 6:30pm
Room 136B,
Barre Technical Center
Doty Ricks
Barre Technical Center

Wed., Oct. 14; 7-9pm
Twinfield Union High School
Marshfield/Plainfield/E. Montpelier
Rich Phillips
Town Energy Coordinator

Wed., Oct. 14; 6:30pm
Morse Center, St. J Academy
St. Johnsbury
Jim Wuertele or Tom Manges
St. Johnsbury Academy & Tech. Ctr.

Thurs., Oct. 15; 7-9pm
Williamstown Middle-High School
Williamstown
Wally Roberts
Town Energy Coordinator

Wed., Oct. 28; 6:30 PM
Aldrich Library, Barre City
Karen Lane
Aldrich Public Library

Wed., Nov. 18; 8:00am
Waitsfield offices
Waitsfield
Mike Alderman
Waitsfield Telecom

Mon., Nov. 23, 2009
Warren/Waitsfield
Kate Stephenson
Yesterday School

CVHHH
Berlin
Kerri Oakes
Central Vt. Home Health and Hospice
(For date and time, contact CVCAC.)

WEC CO-OP STORE

WHOLE HOUSE SURGE PROTECTION

Protect individual appliances, valuable equipment with a meter-based SURGE DEVICE. Be Safe, Not Sorry! Special Member Discounts!



A Full Line of "Plug & Play" (DIY installation) Surge Devices

Panamax MAX 2 SPECIALS!

Highest protection, compact size.
Three models, all in stock.
Offer good through November 2009.

Product	List price	Member discount price
Max2	\$39.95	\$32.95 (save \$7.00)
Max2 Coax	\$49.95	\$34.95 (save \$15.00)



If you own a single item such as a TV, a VCR, a computer connected to the internet by a cable or satellite provider, audio equipment or pay TV service, without surge protection you'll have to make up the replacement cost out of pocket in the event of a surge striking. Full protection, and an iron-clad warranty for all connected equipment.

Your equipment is exposed to power surges until you connect your equipment to one of the Panamax heavy-duty Max2 family of products. Be safe, not sorry!

Call the Co-op at 800-932-5245 or visit us on the web at: www.washingtonelectric.coop/pages/prod.htm

How Green is WEC?

continued from page 1

Corp. (VEIC, parent company to Efficiency Vermont).

Even among these progressive companies, WEC General Manager Avram Patt explains, the Co-op's focus was unique.

"A lot of socially responsible companies ask for outside analysis of how they're doing in terms of being environmentally responsible," says Patt. "Typically, the first thing a consultant will look at is where they get their energy from and how much energy they use. But we're an electric utility and we've spent years concentrating on those issues. We wanted them to focus more on the rest of our operations, not necessarily the energy part."

Greg Strong concurs. "The story about WEC and its energy sources is well known. Particularly, people know about Coventry [where Washington Electric generates power for its members using landfill gas], and WEC's support for wind energy. The operational side of things is less well known, and it turns out to be just as interesting, with rich offerings for further opportunities."

Findings and ...

The word "sustainability" is much in vogue these days, but what does it mean?

Spring Hill Solutions begins its report to the Co-op with a definition of sustainability, for WEC's purposes:

"WEC defines it as (1) minimizing the impact of its business on natural

systems, (2) creating a healthy and happy workplace for its employees, and (3) contributing to its communities in a positive way."

With that understanding, Spring Hill divided its report into five categories, looking at sustainability practices in:

1) operations and engineering; 2) products and services; 3) administration (office) practices; 4) information technology (IT); and 5) power supply. Strong conducted extensive interviews with "key staff members . . . charged with various aspects of sustainability at the Co-op." They were Safety & Environmental Coordinator Steve Anderson, Administrative Assistant Debbie Brown, Stockkeeper Scott Martino, Products & Services Director Bill Powell, IT Manager Kevin Stevens, Operations & Engineering Director Dan Weston, and General Manager Patt.

"Findings from the interviews indicate that WEC has made tremendous progress in pursuing green initiatives," Strong reported.

He highlighted several examples:

- the use of non-toxic, biodegradable soy-based oil in transformers at WEC's Maple Corner substation and Coventry generating plant;
- recovery of some 9,700 gallons of waste oil per year, which is burned for heat in the warehouse or diverted for recycling;
- outreach and assistance to

members to help them reduce their electricity usage;

- conversion of all 40 computer screens to LCD (liquid crystallized display), which reduces monitor power consumption by two-thirds;
- office-wide recycling.

But these were just highlights; Strong's report documents dozens more initiatives, either ongoing, in planning, or under consideration, aimed at bringing the Co-op's practices

further into alignment with its principles.

Some of these are: "a verbal 'common-sense' policy that encourages WEC drivers to idle fleet vehicles no longer than needed"; preventive spill-containment systems at WEC's three rebuilt substations, with the

intention eventually to install them at all eight facilities; use of recycled paper in all printers and photocopiers, and donation of used electronic equipment to schools and nonprofit organizations. WEC is also considering office renovations to increase both energy-related and workplace efficiency.

... Recommendations

But the report also concluded that WEC could do better.

"In many cases WEC's efforts appear to be disconnected from each other," the report says. "As a result [the interviews reflected] a feeling of isolation and a sense of 'going it


alone."

To remedy this, Spring Hill suggests Washington Electric should draft an environmental vision statement and make it part of the Co-op's culture, giving employees a sense of a common goal, and celebrating when they meet their targets. Strong said this would ensure that sustainability and efficiency practices continued their momentum when new employees were hired. Employees should play a central role in drafting the vision statement and seeing that everyone was brought into the loop.

Spring Hill encourages its clients to begin their sustainability efforts by determining specifically what they want to achieve.

"Companies should align their goals and their metrics for measuring progress," Strong explains. "What are they shooting for? Is it about [reducing] greenhouse gases? Is it about toxic chemicals? Recycling? Is it about education, within their staff or in the community?"

"Once that's done, we're suggesting that WEC talk about it broadly, with staff, with the membership at large, and with peer businesses, who can also be a resource to help WEC clarify and reach its goals.

"Even now," he says, "WEC is a premier example of sustainable practices among utilities and in the business world in general. They have not only a right but an obligation to help change the way the world does things." 

NRECA

continued from page 7

in the view of others. Coal remains the country's largest source of fuel for generating power, and it is also the most polluting, both in terms of particulate matter and greenhouse gases.

"A high percentage of electric co-ops get their power from coal," says Patt. "And it's not only because they're situated near coal fields in the Southeast and the Northwest. During the 1970s it was the United States' federal policy to compel those co-ops to burn coal, to support the domestic industry. Now the tables have turned on them, and they have a legitimate concern about how quickly they can convert to other sources of power and how much money anti-pollution requirements will cost them."

Washington Electric's position – conveyed in a proposed resolution that called for stepping up the pace of conversion to renewable fuels (see "RESOLVED," page 6) – was stronger medicine than its sister cooperatives were prepared to take. The proposal was not adopted in either region, and WEC's leadership didn't expect it to be.

"Our purpose was, and is, to keep our viewpoint on climate change and renewable resources in front of people, in a steady way but not a pushy way," said Patt. "Over the long haul we think our position will help move the NRECA's policy on these issues. We



NRECA Chief Executive Officer
Glenn English

have already seen co-ops nationally beginning to embrace renewable energy and efficiency, which could not be said a few years ago."

The co-ops may have defeated WEC's proposal, but there are more immediate and tangible threats to business-as-usual on the horizon. Cap-and-Trade legislation being debated by Congress, and a U.S. Supreme Court decision classifying greenhouse gases as pollutants subject to regulation under the Clean Air Act, could force major changes for carbon-producing industries.

The concern was evident at the Region I/Region IV meeting, and the NRECA is working in Washington to represent those cooperatives' interests. However, the NRECA also represents

co-ops like WEC and VEC that are proactive in reducing or eliminating fossil-fuel generation. It's that dichotomy that Vermont Representative Joe Bongiovanni referred to in his welcoming remarks.

"Each year at the regional meetings we find ourselves facing controversies," Bongiovanni said. "But always our fight is on behalf of our membership."

Pointing to a banner behind him, he said, "Our theme this year is 'Tough Choices Call for Strong Voices.' Our goal will be to emerge from the regional meetings with a strong voice on behalf of our millions of co-op members everywhere."

'Accommodation'

Bongiovanni was followed by Glenn English, a former Congress member from Oklahoma who has headed the NRECA since 1994. English stressed that the need for co-ops to find a unifying message was based in their minority status among electric utilities in the U.S.

"The electric cooperative program represents 12 percent of the people of the country," English said. "But there are only three states that don't have electric cooperatives. In the Senate, that means 94 senators have cooperatives in their constituency, so we can have some influence there; more people in the Senate [than in the U.S. House] are going to listen to you."

"In the House . . . you used to have more people from districts with

cooperative representation. Those days are gone. The people in leadership in the House can't remember the days before you could flip a switch and the lights would come on. They don't know co-ops. That's what we've got to deal with. That's reality."

To contend with that reality, English emphasized that co-ops and other interests involved with legislation needed to re-learn the art of compromise rather than demanding everything they want. He hailed the late Sen. Edward Kennedy as a beacon of that kind of effective politicking.

"The political system is based on accommodation, but that's a foreign word to a lot of people these days," said English. "It's about people from different parts of the country working out accommodations with each other."

His message was true as much for co-ops, in their interactions, as for the NRECA's lobbying efforts in Congress. Through discussion and debate at the regional meetings, co-ops needed to arrive at accommodation with each other, so they could effectively do the same in Washington as national energy policy evolves.

The differences among the co-ops attending the regional meeting were apparent, and no one denied or hid from them. But, as Bongiovanni said, so was their need to find a strong voice to represent the interests of rural Americans in an uncertain energy future. 