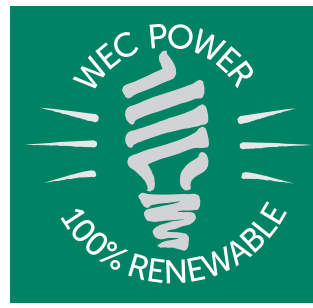




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CO-OP CURRENTS



Vol. 77, No. 3

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

April 2016

2016 Annual Meeting: **Fire-Safety Instruction To Keep Us Safe At Home**

Here's something you probably didn't know: The U.S. has the highest death rate from fires of all the industrialized nations. And this is despite the fact that this country spends more on fire protection—\$58.5 billion a year—than all those other nations combined.

David Morrison's career is devoted to changing those statistics. Morrison works for FireProTec, a Colchester, Vermont-based company founded in 1962 that provides fire-safety training and equipment to companies and organizations in Vermont, New Hampshire, and northern New York. His purpose is to provide the

naturalists, and other entertaining speakers). The idea developed after Morrison did a presentation for WEC employees.

"It was fantastic!" General Manager Patty Richards recalls. "It was informative and educational and entertaining all in one, and everyone at WEC just loved it. David has a passion for fire prevention and safety, but he's also a very charming guy and his energy just oozes into the crowd."

He knows where to start, because, frankly, he's got the goods on most of us. Thinking ahead to his talk at the Annual Meeting in May,

Morrison put it this way:

"You were told your whole life that when you had a fire you're better off getting out, so no one taught you in school or at your business how to use a fire extinguisher."

And, when actually faced with a fire, the choices might not be simple.

"When a fire breaks out," he continued, "you go into panic and do a bunch of crazy stuff to try to put it out; then when all that has failed you run and get the fire extinguisher you inherited when you bought the house 20 years ago or that you've picked up along the way, and none of them work and you don't know how to use them anyway!"

Sound familiar?

Morrison's instruction focuses on what to do when faced with "an incipient-stage fire," which is a fire that has just begun and has potential to get out of control.

"It's about empowering people to make one of two choices: either flight as soon as possible, or fight the fire if they feel they need to protect their own lives. It's not about trying to do the impossible; before they can fight it they have to understand the fundamentals of fire, and how to use the fire extinguisher. The idea is for people to not only know what to do but also how to react, and that's been a powerful message."

continued on page 8



education most of us didn't receive in school or anywhere else, so we'll be able to decide quickly, in a flight-or-fight scenario, which course of action to take – and if the latter, how we can fight effectively to save our lives and possessions.

He has instructed officials with OSHA (the federal Occupational Safety & Health Administration), and at institutions like Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center and the University of Vermont Medical Center. He's even trained the people who protect the rest of us from fires, taking his instruction to fire fighters associations and directly into town and city fire departments.

On Tuesday, May 3, he'll bring his expertise to Washington Electric Cooperative's Annual Membership Meeting. Morrison will be the Co-op's guest speaker at that event – something of a departure from the energy-related themes WEC often features (although, over the years, the Co-op has also brought in storytellers, filmmakers,

Inside

WEC's 2015 Service Quality and Reliability Performance Monitoring and Reporting Plan. The Co-op's annual "SQRP" report to state regulators is included in the Manager's Report. Page 3.

Officers' Annual Reports: WEC's President (page 2), General Manager (page 3) and Treasurer (page 6) update you on your Co-op.

Three candidates for the Board of Directors seek your support. Meet them on page 4.

WEC's annual meetings have been attracting more young families, which is a good sign for the Co-op. Last year, Leticia Long and her daughter Rayna were there, along with father Brian and little brother Noah. The family lives in Barre Town.



WASHINGTON ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

Tuesday, May 3, 2016

77th Annual Membership Meeting

Canadian Club

Agenda

- 5:00 p.m. Registration—Ballot Boxes Declared Open
- 5:30 p.m. Dinner Served— Choice of Entrée
(Reservations required- see form on Page 8)
- 6:30 p.m. Business Meeting Called to Order
(Ballot boxes open 5:00 - 6:30 p.m.)
 - Employee Recognition
 - Officers Reports
 - Voting Results
 - Question/Answer Session
- 7:15 p.m. David Morrison, FireProTec:
"You Look Hot – Pass the Fire Extinguisher"
- 8:00 p.m. Tentative Adjournment

Door prizes to be drawn at the end of the evening.
(must be present to win)

Official Notice and Annual Report

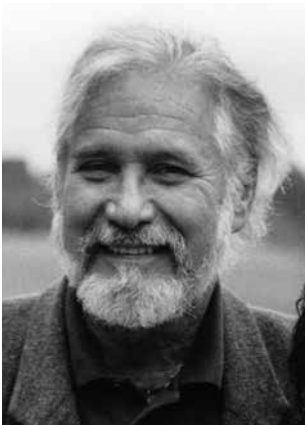
President's Message

2015: A Respite From Major Storms, And A Forward-Looking Approach To The Energy World

By Barry Bernstein

Looking back, 2015 proved to be another very busy, but fortunately very stable, year for Washington Electric Co-op. We had no major storms in 2015, as we had with Winter Storm Damon in December 2014. Damon became the most expensive storm in Co-op history, with some of our members being without power for several days, and some losing their power more than once as trees continued to fall under the weight of snow and ice.

In January, our crews were able to go back and replace the broken poles and wires that had been only temporarily fixed in December in the



hurry to get the power back on for our members. A cleanup of downed trees and rehabilitating the rights-of-way continued well into the year.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Patty Richards, our General Manager; Dan Weston, our Director of Engineering & Operations; Cheryl Willette, our Director of Finance & Administration; Operations & Construction Services Manager Brent Lilley; our WEC Board; and all of our Co-op employees for the extensive work that was done during the cleanup and recovery from Storm Damon. Employees worked tirelessly and gave up family events just before the 2014

Christmas holiday to restore power for WEC members, and then continued to address the significant after-effects of the storm well into the year.

I also want to thank our WEC members for their support, patience, and understanding during those stressful times. And that's why I'm doubly glad to be able to report that nothing remotely comparable happened to affect WEC's operations in 2015.

Our audit firm, Kittell Branagan & Sargent, recently completed the 2015 financial audit of WEC's books and gave your Co-op flying colors. When they met with the Finance, Administration & Power Planning Committee they praised the internal controls we have in place and complimented our Finance & Administration Department, headed by Cheryl Willette, along with Assistant Director of Finance Linda Nelson and Senior Accountant Teia Greenslit. The WEC Board knows how lucky we are to have this team at our Co-op, amplifying a culture of the highest integrity and dedication to the Co-op mission.

Later in the year, when the WEC Board allocates capital credit returns for 2015 and to members of record in 1993, it will appear on your bill as a credit. The net effect will be a decrease for your last year's annual bill total.

sister co-op, Vermont Electric Cooperative, will take that power from us until we need it. We will be able to access it if we have an emergency – for example, if we had a temporary shutdown of our Coventry plant. It's an arrangement serving both co-ops, securing HQ power for our future needs and filling a need for VEC in the meantime. A win/win for us both.

New Board Director

At the end of 2014, after interviewing several extremely qualified Co-op members, your Board of Directors appointed Stephen Knowlton of East Montpelier to fill the seat left vacant by the death of long-term director Marion Milne. Steve began his service on the Board in January 2015. He then ran in last year's May election and was elected by the members to a full three-year term. Steve is a retired physics professor, and has been a valued addition to the Board.

Commitment to Safety

Your Co-op's strong commitment to "Safety First" continued in 2015. The work of our employees in the field, often in very challenging and stressful weather conditions, requires WEC to maintain the highest standards and training for safety. The rest of our operations staff, and our office workers, too, need to be safety conscious. WEC's record of no significant accidents involving our employees over the past several years is something we're proud of. Scott Martino's extra efforts in this cause, since he became our Safety & Environmental Compliance Specialist a few years ago, are particularly commendable.

Coventry Generating Plant

WEC staff and our consultants have been working diligently toward the renewal of our Title V Air Quality Permit that covers both the landfill and WEC's generating plant in Coventry. In addition, WEC will be asking for regulatory approval to replace the existing gas-scrubbing equipment with a new state-of-the-art system, called a Siloxane Removal System. The SRS will clean the methane gas to a significantly higher efficiency level than is done today. The benefits will be lower emissions coming out of the engine stacks and less wear and tear (and therefore less down time) for the five engines we rely on to produce our power. The net result will be more kilowatt-hours of energy

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Co-op Currents

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

Board of Directors

President	BARRY BERNSTEIN (May 2016)	1237 Bliss Road, Marshfield, VT 05658 Bbearvt@myfairpoint.net	456-8843
Vice President	ROGER FOX (May 2018)	2067 Bayley-Hazen Rd., East Hardwick, VT 05836-9873 rfox@pivot.net	563-2321
Treasurer	DONALD DOUGLAS (May 2017)	21 Douglas Rd., East Orange, VT 05086 dondougla@gmail.com	439-5364
Secretary	ANNE REED (May 2016)	3941 Hollister Hill Rd., Marshfield, VT 05658 annereed48@gmail.com	454-1324
	ROY FOLSOM (May 2016)	2603 US Rt. 2, Cabot, VT 05647 RoyGrnsy@aol.com	426-3579
	STEPHEN KNOWLTON (May 2018)	160 White Rock Drive, #2, Montpelier, VT 05602 knowlsf@auburn.edu	223-2230
	DAVID MAGIDA (May 2017)	632 Center Road, Middlesex, VT 05602 vtmagida@aol.com	223-8672
	RICHARD RUBIN (May 2018)	3496 East Hill Rd., Plainfield, VT 05667 rrubin@sover.net	454-8542
	MARY JUST SKINNER (May 2017)	P.O. Box 412, Montpelier, VT 05601 mskinner@sover.net	223-7123

PATTY RICHARDS General Manager patty.richards@washingtonelectric.coop	WILL LINDNER Editor Willind@sover.net	TIM NEWCOMB Layout
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Editorial Committee

Patty Richards Donald Douglas David Magida Anne Reed 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 Dawn Johnson, at 224-2332.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer. If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.

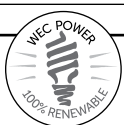
OTHER HIGHLIGHTS IN 2015

No Rate Increase

Being relatively free from significant storms, with a strong management team, robust production output (59 percent of our power supply) at our Coventry landfill gas-powered generating plant, stable prices for the sale of our renewable energy credits (RECs), and committed, hardworking employees, your Co-op had no rate increase in 2015. Later this year, when the WEC Board allocates capital credit returns for 2015 and to members of record in 1993, it will appear on your bill as a credit. The net effect will be a decrease for your last year's annual bill total. The additional bonus is that we are supplying our members' electricity with 100-percent renewable power, with the greatest portion originating from in-state power sources.

Original Hydro Quebec Contract Ends

2015 marked the end of our Co-op's 25-year contract with Hydro Quebec, which we had signed 1990, and we stopped receiving power from HQ on November 1, 2015. A new contract, beginning on November 1, 2016, will entitle WEC to an additional 4 megawatts of power and serve as a hedge against future needs. However, over at least the next five years, our



Manager's Report

WEC's Service Quality and Reliability Results for 2015

Plus: Navigating the Changing Waters of Vermont Utility Regulations

By Patty Richards

It was a good year for Washington Electric Cooperative. We had no major storms and we were able to step up tree trimming in our rights of way (ROW) due to low snow depths. We also paid off the remaining costs of Winter Storm Damon (from December 2014)



and avoided a rate increase in 2015. Reliability was up and WEC provided its members with 100-percent renewable power. These are all the hallmarks of a good year at your member-owned electric cooperative utility!

WEC's 2015 Report Card — Service Quality and Reliability Results

Each year WEC must report how it did in terms of service and reliability to its members, something akin to a report card. WEC, like all Vermont utilities, is required by the Vermont Public Service Board to report its performance through what is known as a "Service Quality and Reliability Monitoring and Reporting Plan" (SQRP). The SQRP measures the quality of our service to members and our reliability in 12 categories. Also, we are required to report our performance to Co-op members each year at this time. There are measurements or targets established by regulators for each category, and WEC is assessed on its performance in each area. This allows WEC to measure service, track trends, focus decision making, provide public accountability, and compare our performance with other utilities.

WEC usually does well in meeting the targets, and we did again in 2015, meeting all requirements. In many categories WEC performed significantly better than required. Our system reliability and outage-response time continue to improve.

Please note that outage and reliability measures are affected by factors outside our control: namely weather. In all other areas, we either improved or maintained our performance compared to past years.

- 1. Calls not answered within 20 seconds.** Our requirement is that no more than 15 percent of WEC's incoming calls take more than 20 seconds to answer. Our Member Services Representatives answered approximately 30,871 calls last year, and 11.5 percent of those took longer than 20 seconds to answer.
- 2. Bills not rendered in seven days.** Our target is that no more than 0.10 percent of bills (one in 1,000) be issued more than seven days after they were supposed to be. No bills

were issued late in 2015.

3. Bills found inaccurate. No more than 0.10 percent of all bills (one in 1,000) sent should be found inaccurate. We met our target here too with only nine bills for the year reported inaccurate.

4. Payment posting complaints. Our target was that no more than 0.05 percent of members

(one in 2,000) have complaints about payments not promptly and accurately posted to their accounts. We had no posting complaints in 2015.

5. Meter readings per month. Although there are situations where a meter can't be read and we have to issue an estimated bill, this should be kept to a minimum of no more than 5 percent of bills (five in 100). We had no reported estimated meter reads in 2015.

6. Requested work not done on time. When we extend lines to new homes or perform work requested by members, we want to complete the work in a timely manner and according to the member's timeline. Although schedules for a project may change, our engineering staff and line crews stay in touch with the member to complete the project in a timely manner. Our goal was that no more than 5 percent of requested jobs be completed later than expected. In 2015, as in past years, all jobs were on time (we had no late projects).

7. Average delay days after missed delivery date. Not applicable. If we had missed our timeline estimates in #6 above, we would have needed to report how long these delays actually were.

8. Customer satisfaction. WEC's SQRP requires a professional survey be conducted every five years that contains customer-satisfaction questions. We conducted a survey in late 2015 and received high marks. We reported the results in the December 2015 issue of *Co-op Currents*, which is available on our website. The five-year cycle calls for a new satisfaction survey to be performed in 2020 and we look forward to finding out our members' thoughts through this effort.

To highlight a few sections of this year's survey, we note that reliability was the most important service attribute to WEC members and we received high scores in this area, but we need to do more. We will continue to work to improve reliability in towns with rugged terrain. In addition, we continue to invest in equipment that will harden the grid system, with the goal to improve reliability in our remote areas.

Having competent, knowledgeable, and friendly staff also ranked as highly important to our members, as well as "value for the money you spend for your power." We will work on all these attributes to improve service and keep our rates affordable to all members.

9. Complaints to DPS/Consumer Affairs. Vermonters with complaints about their utility can report their concerns to the Consumer Affairs Division of the Department of Public Service (DPS). The DPS then contacts the utility to get more information about the matter. In most cases, issues are resolved by discussion, or the DPS determines that there is no basis for the complaint. However, when the DPS determines that a utility has not done something right and requires that it be corrected, this is recorded as an "escalation." WEC's SQRP requires that the number of escalations not exceed 0.07 percent of our membership (or about seven per year). In 2015, no escalations were reported.

10. Worker Safety Performance. We care greatly about the safety of our employees, both for their own well-being and as an indicator of how safely we operate as a utility. As members may know, the work many of our employees do is of high risk and it is strenuous. Our target is that we have no more than six incidents that result in lost work time, and that there be no more than 39 days of lost work among all employees in a year. In 2015, we had one incident and we had five lost days. Therefore, we met the worker safety performance measurements.

11. Outage incidents. The "System Average Interruption Frequency Index" (SAIFI) measures the average number of outage incidents that occurred per member (exclusive of major storms). Our target was no more than an average of 3.8 outages per member. We averaged 2.85 last year, meaning we were better than the target (again, excluding major storms).

12. Outage duration. The "Customer Average Interruption Duration Index" (CAIDI) measures the average time it took to restore power when there was an outage (exclusive of major storms). Our target was no more than 2.7 hours average duration. In 2015, our average interruption rate was 2.2 hours, comfortably satisfying this requirement.

Storm Damon Paid Off

WEC, as well as many other Vermont utilities, was impacted by an unprecedented winter storm in December 2014. The storm occurred in two parts

between December 9 and December 11, delivering between 9 and 18 inches of heavy wet snow, with larger amounts falling in higher elevations throughout WEC's service territory. The conditions caused widespread outages, and some of WEC's members suffered from interruptions in service that lasted for days. Restoration efforts system-wide took more than 10 days, and permanent repairs continued into 2015.

The storm resulted in restoration costs for WEC of more than \$600,000. Its impact on the state of Vermont was recognized by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as a national disaster in February 2015, qualifying for public assistance. WEC's FEMA reimbursement of eligible expenses is estimated to be 75 percent of our storm-restoration expenses in two out of the three counties where WEC is most active. Therefore, not all of our costs were reimbursed. We received \$428,003 from FEMA and we were able to offset the remaining costs in 2015 without raising rates. That was a great accomplishment given the scale and costs that WEC incurred related to this storm.

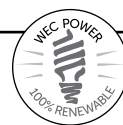
WEC is 100% Renewable

Our sources of power for 2015, before the sale of RECs, are shown as part of Treasurer Don Douglas' report on page 7. Washington Electric Co-op's elected Board of Directors has consistently supported renewable sources of power and moving toward clean, low-carbon energy sources. In addition to a clean power mix, WEC's power costs are among the lowest in the state and region. Normally power-supply costs are between 50 percent and 80 percent of a utility's total costs, but for WEC power accounts for only 37 percent of our costs. This combination of low power costs and renewable energy sources represents an impressive accomplishment in the utility industry.

In 2015, our generating facility in Coventry, which is fueled by landfill gas, provided 59 percent of WEC's power. Hydro Quebec and New York Power Authority, both hydro sources, provided 15 percent and 10 percent, respectively. The Sheffield Wind project provided 9 percent of WEC's energy, followed by contributions from WEC's own Wrightsville hydro facility which provided 3 percent. The Ryegate power plant, which uses wood, and small independently owned hydro power sources, provided an additional 4 percent of WEC's mix.

The Co-op is presently selling Renewable Energy Certificates from the Sheffield Wind facility and our Coventry landfill-gas plant, and thereby

continued on page 8



Position Statements of the 2016 Candidates for the Co-op Board of Directors

Candidate Profiles

Three candidates are seeking election to Washington Electric Cooperative's Board of Directors in 2016. The Board of Directors makes leadership and policy decisions for the customer-owned, non-profit electric utility, and works directly with senior staff. Three seats are available on the nine-member board this year, all of them for three-year terms. The 2016 candidates are **Barry Bernstein** of **East Calais**, **Roy Folsom** of **Cabot**, and **Annie Reed** of **Marshfield**. All three are incumbent directors whose seats are expiring this year. The WEC Committee on Candidates has verified that all the candidates have met the requirements of the election process as set out in the Cooperative's bylaws, submitting timely petitions with the requisite number of member-signatures.

In ballots cast at the Annual Meeting on **Tuesday, May 3**, and in mailed ballots returned to the Co-op by a deadline prior to the Annual Meeting (**check your election materials for additional balloting and deadline information**), members can vote for all or any of the candidates who appear on these pages. Ballots will also provide space for voters to write in the names of alternative candidates. People must be Co-op members to serve on the board.

To help inform members about the qualifications, backgrounds, and interests of the candidates, each candidate was asked to respond in writing to the following questions and requests developed by the Board of Directors.

The Questions

1. Please introduce yourself.

- Where do you live and how long have you lived there?
- Under what town is your Co-op membership listed?
- How long have you been a Co-op member?
- How may members contact you (address, phone number, e-mail)?

2. Please briefly describe your background – for example, your education, occupation and/or other experiences that you would like members to know about.

3. Why are you seeking a position on the Co-op Board? Why would you make a good director?

4. What do you think are the most important issues that the Cooperative must face in the next few years? What should WEC do about those issues?

5. Is there anything else you would like to tell the members?

Barry Bernstein

1. I live on Bliss Road in East Calais, and have owned a home there since 1976. I have been an owner-member of WEC for 45 years, since 1971. WEC members should feel free to call me at 456-8843 or e-mail me at bbearvt@myfairpoint.net, if they have any questions.

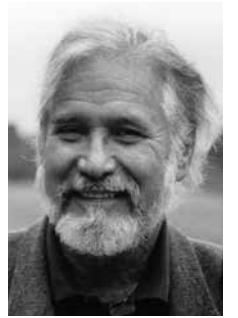
2. I graduated from the University of Southern California, Los Angeles, with a B.S. in Government and a minor in Business Administration. I attended Northwestern University, Graduate School of Business, Chicago, Illinois. I co-own Better World Energy LLC., the Northeast representative for Messersmith Mfg. Inc., a leading manufacturer of automated woodchip heating plants for schools, institutions, and commercial/industrial use. I have been involved in consulting and management for for-profit and nonprofit organizations over the past 50 years.

I have served on the WEC Board of Directors since 1997 and have been the president of the Board since November 1998. I also serve on the Board of ILR Inc., Northampton, Massachusetts, a disability-rights organization specializing in ADA technical assistance and training. I have served on the Board and Finance Committee of Woodbury College, Montpelier; the Board and as Treasurer of the Hunger Mountain Co-op, Montpelier; the Buffalo Mountain Co-op, Hardwick; and the Plainfield Co-op. I was a cofounder of the Vermont Center for Independent Living (VCIL), Montpelier, and served as its executive director (1978–1982, 1992-1993). I was a co-incorporator, and served on the Board and as an officer, of the former CVTA, a nonprofit organization providing transportation services to central Vermont elders, people with disabilities, and others.

3. As President of your Board of Directors I have worked closely with the Board and management on securing non-fossil fuel energy sources to meet our Co-op's energy needs through 2038. These include our Coventry landfill gas-to-electric generating plant, our Wrightsville hydro plant, the Sheffield Wind project, power from VEPPI (Vermont Electric Power Producers Inc., representing in-state hydro and biomass electric resources) and Hydro Quebec (which we are selling to our sister co-op – Vermont Electric Cooperative – until we need to draw on it).

I have worked closely with our General Manager, Patty Richards, and the Board over the past two years, to help insure a successful transition, after the retirement of our long-time GM, Avram Patt. I would like to continue to provide my leadership and support our Co-op's efforts for the next three years with the members' support.

I strongly believe that in addition to having a secure, long-term, stable, non-fossil power supply, our Co-op must keep focused on working with all of our members in their efforts



Barry Bernstein

to increase the energy efficiency and lower our carbon footprint in our homes, businesses, and institutions, individually and collectively. The continued and increasingly conscious support by each of our members in this effort is very important as we experience even more extreme weather occurrences, and 2015 being the warmest on record. As we replace old, less-efficient appliances, lights, etc., with more appropriate and energy efficient ones, and lessen our reliance on fossil fuels for heating, our Co-op needs to provide information and help our members connect to federal and state funds, when available, that may offer lower borrowing costs for those who need assistance.

4. Several critical issues face our co-op over the next few years.

Power Portfolio. In addition to the power sources cited above (Coventry, Wrightsville, Sheffield, VEPPI, NY Hydro, and Hydro Quebec), I also feel we will need to see how to best successfully integrate net metering and group net metering into the WEC system, which already has a 100-percent non-fossil fuel power supply. These new systems have the benefit of placing additional renewable energy on the grid, and with WEC's new program help contribute to the poles and wires/service and infrastructure costs. The Vermont Public Service Board (PSB) has recently issued proposed rules which will go into effect in 2017. How we all collaborate in working toward our energy goals will determine how successful we are in reaching them

Leadership. I feel it is very important for our Co-op to continue WEC's history of speaking out on critical energy-policy issues that affect our membership and Vermonters statewide. I feel strongly that, as a member-owned electric utility, we have a responsibility and obligation to provide a "yardstick" for others, showcased by good practices and good leadership. This is even more critical since the consolidation of more than 70 percent of Vermont meters under Gaz Metro/GMP. The issue of instituting a carbon tax in Vermont is now being discussed both in the Legislature and with the public. Our Board has not taken any position at this time but we are listening closely to the discussion and debate on its merits and pitfalls. A number of states and provinces in Canada are considering or have already implemented either a tax or carbon trading.

Report of the 2016 Committee On Candidates

The 2016 Committee on Candidates convened a teleconference on Thursday, February 18, at 7:00 p.m. to review the petitions and qualifications of those members who have submitted their names as candidates for the Board of Directors. There are three (3) positions to be filled. Three (3) members of the Washington Electric Cooperative, Inc., submitted their names as candidates for the three (3) board positions to be filled. The Committee on Candidates hereby affirms:

- that each candidate submitted a valid petition in accordance with Article III, Section 3A of the Bylaws;
- that each has signed a statement of affirmation indicating that they:

1. have been a member of the Co-op in good standing for at least six months;
2. are residents of Vermont;
3. are not employees of the Cooperative;

4. do not have a conflict of interest as defined in Article III, Section 2 of the Bylaws; and
5. have received and understand the responsibilities and time commitments required of a director.

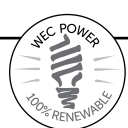
Therefore, the Committee determines all of the candidates to be qualified for the position of director in accordance with the Cooperative's Bylaws, and hereby presents the following official listing of candidates for the Washington Electric Cooperative 2016 election of Directors:

Barry Bernstein
Roy Folsom
Annie Reed

2016 Committee on Candidates:

Robin Arnell *Mary Ann Ludlow**
Genevieve Faherty *Scott Skinner*
Cathy Frey *Yvette Tomlinson*
*Charles (Bud) Haas**

**did not participate in teleconference*



WEC has provided leadership when we have spoken out on issues: against deregulation of Vermont's electric distribution system and the relicensing of Vermont Yankee, in favor of the state purchasing Connecticut River dams and for public ownership/input in VELCO.

Increased energy efficiency by our members. WEC must encourage this direction, both in new purchases of energy-efficient appliances and insulating/retrofitting our homes and businesses, while balancing the effect of these measures on our Co-op (lower kWh sales and revenue). Legislation passed last session requires WEC and all Vermont electric utilities to have programs in place to work with our members to help reduce their carbon footprint, starting in 2017. It offers us an exciting opportunity to work with interested members in reaching the 90-percent renewable goal by 2050.

Stable Rates. I am very aware of the high price per kilowatt-hour that our members pay, and will continue my commitment to supporting long-term decisions that balance our needs for system reliability and our need to keep our rates and the bills we pay as member/owners stable and reflective of good management and service to our members. I will continue to support WEC's low-cost initial block of 200 kWh to ensure that this is available to our members to support their basic electric-use needs at their homes. We are hopeful our members will not see a rate increase in 2016, along with continuing our capital refund credit for all current members, and also to those who were members in 1993-1994, which in effect gives our members a bill decrease.

5. Although serving on the WEC Board, and as President of the Board, demands a good deal of time and energy, and presents some challenges in terms of time commitment, I feel my efforts and work have been worthwhile, and hopefully they have benefited our membership and our Cooperative. I ask for your support in this election. Please feel free to give call me if you have any questions or wish to discuss any issues that concern you as a member-owner of WEC.

Vermont and continued to do the same work.

In 1985 my wife and I formed Crooked Brooks Farm. For 28 years we ran a very successful dairy farm here. The physical toll on me was more than I could take and we stopped milking cows and now raise replacement heifers and hay to sell. I also work for Nationwide Agribusiness in Vermont and New Hampshire, helping farmers with insurance for their farms. I have two employees with that business.

3. Learning the business of an electric cooperative doesn't come overnight. I try to take every opportunity to learn more to be able to do my job as Director better. I feel that my experience running my own businesses is very valuable in understanding the business of running WEC. On the Board I have tried to be the voice of farmers and other small business.

4. I believe that experience has its benefits. There is a lot to learn to become an effective WEC Director. Keeping the lights on is just as important as electric rates. We need to take every opportunity to replace our aging poles and wires to locations that are more accessible to our crews. WEC's rights-of-way comprise 5,000 acres. Only 20 percent of that is along roadsides. This means that 4,000 acres are cleared on about a nine-year cycle. Moving poles along roadsides makes it easier, faster, and safer for crews to restore power in a storm. It even makes for less outages.

It continues to be important to address net metering and how it affects WEC's power supplies and revenue. We need to continue our efforts to work with the legislature and PSB to make this work for all WEC members.

5. I very much enjoy being a member of the WEC Board and would like to be elected to another term. I feel that I offer a different view at times, and add diversity to the Board as a voice for farmers and small businessmen.



Roy Folsom

For the past 20 years I have been teaching field courses in college science, exploring forests and wetlands, geology, flora and fauna, and the natural history of Vermont.



Annie Reed

For fourteen years I chose to live without electricity of any kind. I learned to conserve resources out of necessity and those lessons have become habitual. Energy efficiency has become a high priority for me, as has leaving a light footprint. For many years I have valued raising food, which I continue to do for myself and my neighbors. Other passions include tending perennial gardens and learning the names of every plant and animal I see. As an ecologist, I recognize the importance of sustaining a healthy planet, and I continue to promote the programs the Co-op has instituted that encourage the conscientious use of its precious resources.

3. Six years ago I was elected to the WEC Board. I am a member of the Members & Markets Committee, the Editorial Committee, and the Policy Committee. Following the death of Marion Milne in 2014, I was appointed Secretary of the Board. I feel strongly aligned with the Co-op's mission to deliver affordable and reliable electricity to its members using renewable energy resources. I applaud the Co-op's outreach to our communities with its participation in the WARMTH Program, and Operation Roundup, the Community Fund, and its dedication to community economic development. I also respect the Co-op's model of shared ownership. I am proud of the Co-op's prudent fiscal management and reputation as a democratically run organization that is responsible to its members and respectful and supportive of its working staff.

My civic involvement has included being a member of the Marshfield Conservation Commission, a former member of the Marshfield Planning Commission, member of the Advisory Group on Vascular Plants for the Vermont Endangered Species Committee, and member of the Board of the Jaquith Public Library. For three years I served on the Goddard College Board of Trustees. For nine years I volunteered as an Emergency Medical Technician with the Cabot Ambulance and the Plainfield Fire and Rescue Squad. I am a member of two food co-ops and the NorthCountry Federal Credit Union.

4. I feel like we are living in a bubble that we know is going to burst.
- Petroleum prices are as low as they have been in many years, allowing us to continue to exploit this non-renewable resource.
 - Our understanding of our climate has evolved from "global warming"

to "global climate change" and now, to "global climate instability." We are seeing more frequent and more intense storms. Ice melt and ocean temperatures are breaking records every year. Greenhouse gas production continues to rise and we have passed the 2-degree increase in global temperature rise that was anticipated to be the point at which there would be no turning back.

- Every system and organism including the earth, has a "range of tolerance" to environmental conditions. I am afraid the earth as we know it has gone beyond its tolerance range and that we are now seeing a new world. As Roger Hill says, you can throw out your grandfather's almanac; we are in a whole new and unknown climate system now!
- The upcoming election is so unsettling. The media spin on candidates and issues, or lack thereof, has me sleepless!! I feel like everything is unstable, including democratic principles and the sanctity of the earth.

And the list continues. And still I wake up each morning, the sun comes up, I see the birds returning, the seasons revolving, the days lengthening. All seems as usual. And I am still in the bubble...

One stable place I feel is in the direction WEC continues to hold in addressing our energy present and future. We know the importance of the quality of life of our members, management, and staff. We are 100-percent renewable. We have been instrumental in talking with the Legislature about how to design programs to get us off fossil fuels. I am encouraged by data that proves our members are using less power. People are more and more aware of the benefits of energy efficiency, changing light bulbs, turning off lights, making weatherization a priority.

WEC will have to work hard to keep rates realistic over the long term. We need to focus on preparing for the impacts of our changing physical environment and energy resources. I think it is necessary to continue researching generation/distribution strategies and technologies that work with natural systems including wind, water, and solar energy. I hope our percentage of small hydro will increase as permitting becomes available. As we transition to the fossil-free energy future, we, as members and as a community, need to be proactive. We need to continue to be leaders in providing reliable, clean, and practically produced electric power.

5. I look forward to serving another term on the Co-op's Board. I believe in the cooperative way of doing business and I am committed to WEC's mission of delivering affordable and reliable electricity to its members in an environmentally sensitive manner. I am dedicated to keeping our Co-op strong, and am glad to share that aim with my fellow Board members.



Roy Folsom

1. I live at 2603 US Route 2 in Cabot, where I am the owner/ operator of Crooked Brooks Farm LLC, with my wife, Jackie. We have lived here since 1985, and have three Co-op meter accounts. I can be contacted at 426-3579, or 793-5916; by e-mail at RoyGrnsy@aol.com; by USPO mail at 2603 US Rt. 2, Cabot, VT 05647; or stop by the farm.
2. I graduated from high school in 1970, in Solon, Ohio. I attended Kent State University for one year. After that I formed a construction company with my brother. In 1973 I moved to

Annie Reed

1. My name is Annie Reed and I have lived in Marshfield, VT for 37 years. I have been a member of the Washington Electric Co-op since 2000. Members may contact me at 802-454-1324 or annereed48@gmail.com.
2. I graduated from Beloit College in 1970 with a B.A. in Anthropology, and in 1997 I received a Master of Science degree in Environmental Studies with a Concentration in Conservation Biology from Antioch University New England. Since 1996 I have been a freelance ecologist.

Treasurer's Report

WEC Avoids A Rate Increase In 2015

Low-Cost Coventry Power and REC Sales Make the Difference

By Don Douglas
Treasurer

2015 was a much calmer year for Washington Electric Cooperative (WEC) than the year before. There were no large storms or extreme weather events in 2015 that brought widespread power outages. Instead, the region experienced milder weather.

The price of wholesale electricity remains relatively low, but the cost of transmission continues to put upward pressure on our cost of service. In 2014, WEC had a rate increase of 3.78 percent; we were able to hold off on an additional increase in 2015 and we will work hard in 2016 to keep rates as low as we can. The fact that *wholesale* electric rates are low is not entirely helpful, as we continue to sell excess generation from sources like the Coventry landfill-gas generating facility which supplies nearly 60 percent of our power-supply mix. The facility produces electricity 24 hours a day but our members use very little of that energy after 11 p.m., so nearly all of the energy produced overnight is fed into the grid and sold at the wholesale rate during off-peak hours.

The bright spot for WEC finances continues to be selling Renewable Energy Credits (RECs). In 2015, WEC sold \$2,917,628 in class 1 RECs in the New England markets. These sales allow the Cooperative to keep our electric rates relatively low.

Margins

Washington Electric Cooperative ended the year with positive net margins of \$1,273,484. (Margins are revenues WEC collects that exceed expenses.) WEC reports margins in two categories: net and operating. Operating margins come from those revenues and expenses directly related to providing electricity to our members. Net margins include non-operating margins from interest on investments (mostly in VELCO, Vermont's high-voltage transmission provider) and other items that are



not directly attributed to keeping the lights on. Total operating margins for 2015 were \$596,053. The investment that WEC makes in organizations like VELCO helps to offset some of our transmission costs. Interest from the investments in VELCO is shown on the Non-Operating Interest line

in the Statement of Operations report on page 7.

Operating Revenue

Washington Electric Cooperative is a \$17,118,331, not-for-profit electric cooperative. In 2015, WEC revenues increased approximately \$170,000. However, this was not due to additional sales, as WEC members actually used less kilowatt-hours (kWh) in 2015 than in 2014 – approximately 0.005 percent (one-half of 1 percent) less. Rather, the increase in revenues comes from the rate increase from 2014.

REC sales were down \$16,524, but still were over \$2.9 million. The sale of RECs from our generating facility in Coventry and from the Sheffield Wind farm helps to mitigate upward pressure on our rates and keep our electric rates down for our members.

Cost of Purchased Power and Operating Expenses

Looking at the charts on page 7 you can see where our power comes from before we sell the RECs, and what each resource costs where the data is publically available.

Coventry is our largest single source of electricity – and it is very nearly the least expensive, too. Coventry accounted for nearly 59 percent of our total supply output. In 2015, the energy that we generated or received from our contracted sources (including Coventry, Hydro Quebec, Sheffield, New York Power Authority, etc.) exceeded what we needed to meet our members' energy needs. In fact, we had 25 percent more power than we needed. This power is sold back to the grid, and others in Vermont and New England are able to use it. Given the large amount of power Coventry produces, relative to other energy sources, Coventry has a significant impact on WEC's finances, and in 2015 it was a significant positive effect.

The energy generated at Coventry also produces RECs – renewable energy credits; in fact, this facility accounts for a significant number of the RECs our Co-op sells each year. The chart showing "Where the Dollars Went" (also on page 7) demonstrates that WEC is different from other electric utilities. For most electric utilities the

cost of power is their largest expense; many of them report power costs that range from 50 percent to 80 percent of their total costs. For WEC, the cost of power is less than 37 percent of the total budget. WEC's rates would be much higher if we had not built the Coventry plant and invested in secured contracts for other renewable sources of power such as Sheffield Wind, our Wrightsville hydro facility, New York Power Authority, and Hydro Quebec.

Capital Credits


In 2015, WEC reported \$1,273,484 in margins. These margins belong to the members, and are returned to our Co-op members through a system known as capital credits. The Board of Directors has been returning capital credits to the members for 12 years. So far, WEC members have received more than \$4 million back: \$4,813,411

The fact that wholesale electric rates are low is not entirely helpful. Nearly all the energy produced overnight at Coventry is sold to the grid at the wholesale rate.

to be precise. In 2015 the WEC Board authorized \$350,000 to be retired.

Margins are allocated to members proportionally, based on their use of power in a given year. Most of the money in these annual distributions is allocated to people who were members in earlier years, whether they are still with the Co-op or

not; we are presently, for example, repaying capital credits to members from 1993. But we also retire a modest sum to current members, to provide an example of the benefits of belonging to a cooperative.

On behalf of the Board of Directors I want to thank the entire Finance Department for their hard work and attention to detail. Copies of our audit are available for review on line at our website; www.wec.coop, and hard copies are available at the Co-op office. 

President's Report

continued from page 2

produced, and cleaner air. The new unit will be fully operational by the end of 2016. Another example of your Co-op stepping up to be a good environmental steward. I want to thank General Manager Richards, Operations Director Weston, our legal representative Joshua Diamond, John Murphy of our consultant company Stantec, and Dennis Plaster from ARIA (the plant operator) for their commitment to this important project. Members will learn more about this in upcoming issues of *Co-op Currents*.

Staff Changes

Our Co-op continues to develop its line-worker staff, with new and very promising apprentices. Over the past two years or so we have added Mike Bent, Scott Matheson, and Patrick Morrissey to our staff. These three young men are part of the Co-op's strategy, under Dan Weston, to bring on and train the next generation of a skilled and dedicated team in the field.

Long-term Administrative Assistant Debbie Brown retired in March 2016, after 15 years of service to WEC and its members. Debbie served in so many roles, with such competence and conscientiousness, that it is impossible to adequately thank her for all the work she did. Dawn Johnson has moved from the Member Services Department to take the administrative assistant job, and we welcome her in her new supportive role at WEC.

Climate Change — 90% Renewables by 2050 Statewide

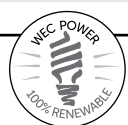
Your co-op has already exceeded Vermont's 90-percent-renewables goal in our power supply, but that is only one leg of the stool. Our Energy Coach, Bill Powell (Director of Products & Services), has worked with many of our members to achieve greater energy efficiency in your homes and businesses since the early 1990s. We completely renovated our East Montpelier offices to the highest efficiency standards after flooding destroyed the interior in 2011.

However, we still have much work to do to help in aiding our state, and most importantly our members, in your efforts to reach the 90-percent goal in fossil-energy reduction for thermal heat (particularly the propane and oil that many of us use to heat our homes) and transportation (gasoline and diesel for our cars and trucks). It's a very lofty goal but an important one to strive for if we are to collectively try to reduce the effects of climate change.

This past "winter" (definitely in quotes!) was the strangest I can recollect over the past 45 years, and the meteorological record supports that. I know we in Vermont cannot solve this pending crisis facing our planet alone. Yet I truly believe that if positive change is to take place it will be accomplished by smaller communities across the world, not by large political bodies which seem to be paralyzed about taking any meaningful action.

continued on page 7

Copies of the audited financial statements of Washington Electric Cooperative are available by contacting the Co-op's office, and will be available at the Annual Meeting. The audited financial statements are also posted on our web site (www.washingtonelectric.coop) under "About WEC."



Balance Sheet

Assets and Other Debits

	12/31/14	12/31/15	Increase (Decrease)
Utility Plant			
Total Utility Plant in Service	\$73,915,896	\$75,532,498	\$1,616,602
Construction Work in Progress	349,104	347,040	(2,064)
Total Utility Plant	74,265,000	75,879,538	1,614,538
Accum. Provision for Depreciation	25,291,852	26,920,800	1,628,948
Net Utility Plant	\$48,973,148	\$48,958,738	(\$14,410)
Other Property and Investment - At Cost			
Invest. in Assoc. Org. - Patronage Capital	272,812	306,484	33,672
Invest. in Assoc. Org. - Other	448,700	445,497	(3,203)
Other Investments	6,034,933	6,034,933	-
Total Other Property and Investments	\$6,756,445	\$6,786,914	\$30,469
Current Assets			
Cash - General Funds	286,034	726,524	440,490
Notes Receivable - Net	99	99	0
Accounts Receivable - Net	3,290,592	2,790,180	(500,412)
Materials and Supplies	271,931	282,472	10,541
Prepayments	127,330	311,038	183,708
Total Current and Accrued Assets	3,975,986	4,110,313	134,327
Deferred Debits	1,905,898	1,464,231	(441,667)
Total Assets and Other Debits	\$61,611,477	\$61,320,196	(\$291,281)
Number of Consumers	10,856	10,936	80
kWh Sold	69,992,526	69,698,998	(293,528)

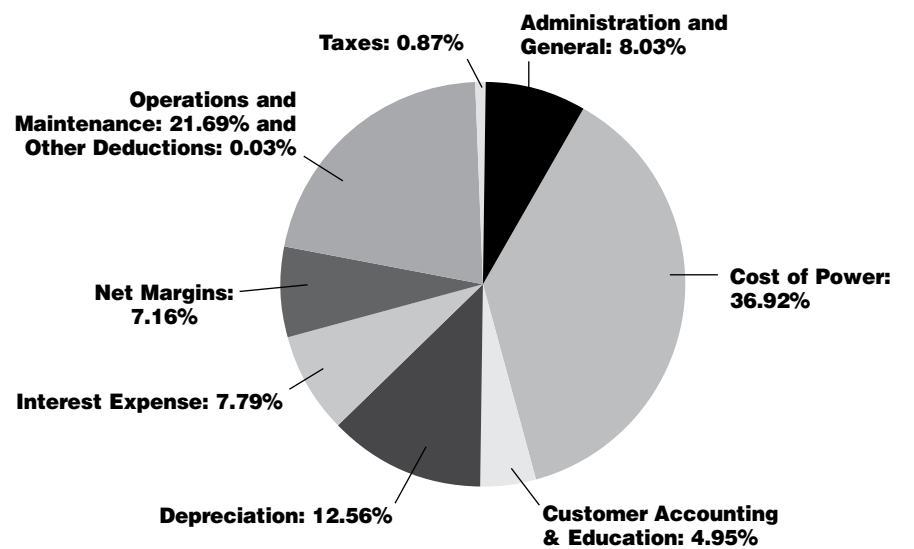
Liabilities and Other Credits

	12/31/14	12/31/15	Increase (Decrease)
Memberships	\$126,975	\$131,445	\$4,470
Patronage Capital Credits	19,989,768	20,972,691	982,923
Operating Margins - Current Year	648,708	596,053	(52,655)
Non-Operating Margins	646,394	677,431	31,037
Other Margins and Equities	238,164	246,854	8,690
Total Margins and Equities	\$21,650,009	\$22,624,474	\$974,465
Long-Term Debt			
Long-Term Debt - RUS	5,506,158	5,234,478	(271,680)
Long-Term Debt - Other	32,232,795	31,251,974	(980,821)
Total Long-Term Debt	\$37,738,953	\$36,486,452	(\$1,252,501)
Current Liabilities			
Notes Payable	61,981	0	(61,981)
Accounts Payable	1,101,164	1,036,402	(64,762)
Consumer Deposits	194,678	213,179	18,501
Other Current and Accrued Liabilities	692,699	766,322	73,623
Total Current and Accrued Liabilities	\$2,050,522	\$2,015,903	(\$34,619)
Deferred Credits	171,993	193,367	21,374
Total Liabilities and Other Credits	\$61,611,477	\$61,320,196	(\$291,281)

Statement of Operations

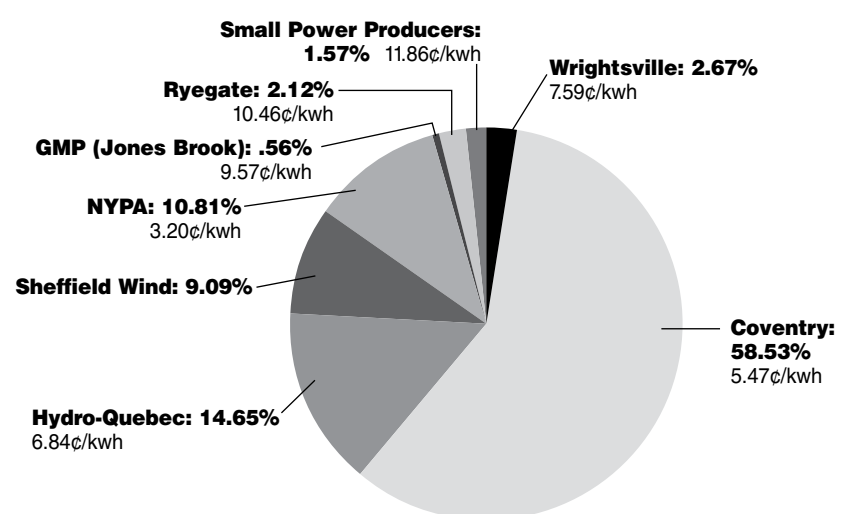
Item	Actual 12/31/14	Actual 12/31/15	Increase (Decrease)
Operating Revenue	\$16,962,104	\$17,118,331	\$156,227
Cost of Purchased Power	4,781,634	4,439,913	(341,721)
Cost of Generated Power - Wrightsville & Coventry	1,783,269	2,130,815	347,546
Total Cost of Power	\$6,564,903	\$6,570,728	\$5,825
Other Operation & Maintenance Expense			
Transmission Expense	87,118	95,708	8,590
Distribution Expense - Operation	1,620,868	1,766,347	145,479
Distribution Expense - Maintenance	2,001,198	1,998,454	(2,744)
Consumer Accounts Expense	646,596	695,356	48,760
Customer Service & Education	164,210	185,436	21,226
Administrative and General Expense	1,445,827	1,428,489	(17,338)
Total Other Operation and Maintenance Expense	\$5,965,817	\$6,169,790	\$203,973
Fixed Expenses			
Depreciation and Amortization Expense	2,190,058	2,234,331	44,273
Tax Expense - Other	153,445	154,449	1,004
Interest on Long-Term Debt	1,409,835	1,382,064	(27,771)
Interest Expense - Other	7,680	4,747	(2,933)
Other Deductions	21,658	6,169	(15,489)
Total Fixed Expenses	\$3,782,676	\$3,781,760	(\$916)
Total Cost of Electric Service	\$16,313,396	\$16,522,278	\$208,882
Operating Margins	648,708	596,053	(\$52,655)
Non-Operating Margins - Interest	717,489	777,793	60,304
Non-Operating Margins - Other	(71,095)	(100,362)	(29,267)
Net Margins	\$1,295,102	\$1,273,484	(\$21,618)
Times Interest Earned Ratio (TIER)	1.92	1.92	0.00

2015 Where the Dollars Went



2015 Sources and Costs of Power

(Total kWh Purchased and Generated)



Notice

Members may vote at the Annual Meeting on May 3 or by ballots accompanying this issue of *Co-op Currents*. **Mailed ballots must be received at the Barre Post Office no later than 3 p.m. on Monday, May 2.** Members mailing their ballots from out of state are advised to mail them several days before the deadline to be sure that their ballots will qualify. Local members, too, are encouraged to allow a few days for postal delivery. **Ballots hand delivered to WEC's office will be treated as spoiled ballots and will not count.** Anyone with questions about voting or deadlines can call Dawn Johnson at the Co-op.



President's Report

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Annual Meeting 2016!

Please join us on Tuesday, May 3, at 5:00 p.m., at the Canadian Club in Barre, for our Cooperative's 77th Annual Meeting of the Membership. Share a meal with other Co-op members, our staff, and your elected directors; enjoy

a presentation on safety that promises to be entertaining as well as instructive, and participate in the community aspect of belonging to an electric co-op. We look forward to seeing you there.

Also, don't forget to vote in this year's elections for WEC's Board of Directors. The best way to preserve a democratic institution is to participate in it.



Manager's Report

continued from page 3

selling the “renewable attributes” of the power that those certificates represent. However, our purchase of low-cost RECs from other resources restores those green attributes to our portfolio, and as a result we are serving 100-percent of our members’ energy needs with renewable power.

Net Metering

Legislative reforms to Vermont’s net metering laws were enacted in early 2014, and shortly thereafter WEC asked the Public Service Board’s permission to start a new program. We were qualified to do this because WEC had met the “achievement provision” in the PSB’s new rules (WEC was the only Vermont utility that met those qualifications, as we were 100-percent renewable and at that time had the most installed net metering in the state). As a not-for-profit, our mission is to serve our members’ needs and interests. Clearly, WEC members want us to provide a sustainable and fair net metering program. WEC created a program design that allows us to continue offering net metering to members while minimizing the potential impacts upon non-net metered members. We are proud of the program we’ve designed, which is sustainable over the long run and has had steady participation, with 52 members signing on since July 2014, bringing 348 kilowatts of new solar generation.

Through this net metering plan, WEC pays a generous premium for power contributed by these small (mostly solar) generation systems. WEC now requires net-metering members to pay the monthly “member charge” that all Co-op members pay (currently \$12.24), and a small grid-service fee that captures a portion of the costs WEC incurs to serve the net metered members; these charges help sustain the infrastructure that continues to serve members participating in the net metering program, and further benefits them by enabling them to receive credit for the surplus power they contribute to the grid.

The program also incorporates energy efficiency measures by having net-metering applicants who are high energy users review their energy needs with experts, by getting an energy audit. WEC believes the most environmentally friendly kWh is one that is not used, and that a comprehensive understanding of a building’s energy use is a great place to start when thinking about energy investment decisions. We want to encourage all members to make their homes and businesses as efficient as possible, and make decisions regarding their renewable energy systems compatible with an efficient building design.

As part of the 2014 legislation, the Vermont Public Service Board was tasked with issuing rules to promulgate new net metering plans that will go into effect in 2017. WEC is reviewing the PSB’s draft rules and will put forward a new tariff at the end of 2016. More detail to come on this issue, as the rule making is still underway.

DINNER RESERVATION WEC’S 77th Annual Meeting • May 3, 2016

Your Choice of One Entrée:

- A. Baked Ham
- B. Baked Stuffed Chicken Breast
- C. Steak
- D. Vegetarian Quiche

Dinner (at no charge) is by RESERVATION ONLY

To make your reservation, **return this form no later than Friday, April 22** to WEC, P.O. Box 8, East Montpelier, VT 05651. Walk-ins on May 3 will be charged \$15 each (no guarantee meals will be available for walk-ins).

Please indicate your meal choice: A B C D Member Guest Child/Age

Name: _____ _____
(Please print clearly)

Name: _____ _____
(Please print clearly)

Name: _____ _____
(Please print clearly)

Name: _____ _____
(Please print clearly)

Map/Account # _____ Tele. # _____

Cost: Free for reservations made on or before 4/22. Walk-in on 5/3: \$15 per adult, \$8 per child (10 – 16). Children under 10 free.
(Please do not return in ballot envelope.)

Ability to Reach us During Storms

We continue to work to improve your ability to reach us during storms. Washington Electric Cooperative works with CRC – the Cooperative Response Center – to help WEC perform a very basic duty to its membership: being prepared to answer members’ phone calls during high-stress, high-volume events, such as outages. The arrangement with CRC was instrumental in taking outage calls throughout 2015, and especially during December 2014 storm and the extended repair period that followed. We could not have been as productive as we were in our recovery work without them.

We have also instituted other improvements to get members information during outages and improve access. We have an online outage map that tracks outages for WEC’s service territory, and also a link to the statewide outage map so members can see what is happening in other utility areas during outage events (most driven by the weather). The maps are accessible on WEC’s website; they can be accessed from the home page by clicking on the “Current Outage Update” box, which is in bright orange.

Renewable Energy Standard


The other major legislative effort in the works impacting WEC are the requirements to comply a 2015 law passed by the Vermont Legislature: Act 56; An Act Relating to the Establishing a Renewable Energy Standard. There are three categories of renewable-related power that WEC must comply with by the end of 2017.

WEC has already fulfilled the first requirement by being 100-percent renewable. Being ahead of the curve (by already being 100-percent renewable) also allowed WEC to satisfy the requirements of the second category (Tier 2, having to do with distributed generation), as long as we continue to accept net metering systems in our service territory – which we fully intend to do.

The third part – referred to as Tier 3, or the energy transformation program

– will result in programs that the Co-op will offer to help members reduce their fossil fuel energy consumption (such as oil or propane used to heat homes, or gasoline used to drive cars), through such technologies as air source heat pumps, weatherization, solar hot water, electric vehicle charging stations, and more. Act 56 sets requirements that WEC achieve specific amounts of savings from the programs that will be offered under Tier 3: an equivalent of at least 2 percent of retail energy sales in 2017, increasing each year to 12 percent by 2032. Despite this focus on other realms of energy consumption, distributed generation such as net metering would also qualify under

Tier 3’s requirements. In effect, this tier recreates efficiency-like programs for any fuel source (such as fossil fuels); it is not limited to electricity.

In summary, 2015 was a year in which Washington Electric Cooperative continued to innovate to improve its services to members, and remained hard at work to provide reliable electric service while keeping costs down and avoiding a rate increase. It was also a year in which Vermont’s energy policies continued to evolve, setting new goals for the state’s electric utilities. Co-op members with questions, suggestions, and concerns are always welcome to call me at our central office in East Montpelier (223-5245). 


Fire Safety

continued from page 1

Safety is high on the list of WEC’s priorities. The Co-op’s operations employees, in particular, work in a field that poses unique dangers, so safety training is a core part of the Co-op’s mission. Richards sees the invitation to David Morrison of FireProTec as an extension of that commitment.

“Spreading the theme of safety is a good part of what we want to do as

good community stewards,” she says.

Added to the other attractions of this yearly event – a good meal, camaraderie with other Co-op members and families, and the opportunity to raise questions and express opinions to WEC’s leadership about policies and operations – a potentially life-saving discussion about fire safety is another reason for members to attend. Make your plans to come, and don’t forget about the dinner reservation on page 8. 



Washington Electric Co-op produced a number of these “Trash Power” T-shirts some years back in celebration of its Coventry electric-generating plant, which uses methane from trash decomposition to power five generating engines. Above, a Co-op member wore his to WEC’s 2015 Annual Meeting, where he shown chatting with a couple of Joes (Joe Kelly, left, and Joe Safranek, right).

