

The Association of Rural Electric Generating Cooperatives (AREGC): Continues to Promote the Exchange of Knowledge and Experience among Member Cooperatives

Highlights

- When it was founded more than 70 years ago, the Association of Rural Electric Generating Cooperatives (AREGC) provided an opportunity for the personnel who operated REA-financed power plants to discuss operational and maintenance challenges and solutions with their peers.
- To a great extent, the purpose of the AREGC has not changed, although additional topics—such as management challenges, EPC (engineering, procurement, and construction) and state and federal environmental regulations—have been added to the meeting discussions over time. Most recently an emphasis on deployment of renewables, energy storage, carbon capture, hydrogen as a fuel, and fleet transformation-related topics—and how these developments impact the cost and reliability of existing plants—has emerged to shape the agenda.
- Every year, the AREGC convenes a meeting. This year's gathering will be hosted by Deseret Power Electric Cooperative and held in Park City, Utah, June 11-14. It will provide co-ops with the opportunity to meet with experts, collaborate with peers, and acquire knowledge and insights into new practices.

AREGC – A Long History

The Association of Rural Electric Generating Cooperatives (AREGC) was founded back in 1950 by the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) with the goal of bringing together the personnel who operated REA-financed power plants. Through the association, these personnel had an opportunity to acquire knowledge by discussing operational and maintenance challenges and solutions while learning about new technologies.

To a great extent, this remains the purpose of AREGC, although additional topics—such as management challenges, EPC (engineering, procurement, and construction) and state and federal environmental regulations—have been added to the meeting discussions. Most recently an emphasis on deployment of renewables, energy storage, carbon capture, hydrogen as a fuel, and fleet transformation-related topics has emerged to shape the agenda.

Soon after its creation, AREGC was turned over to the members to run. Since then, the cooperatives have served as the meeting host, while other cooperative members participate as members of the planning and program committees.

Membership is open to all G&T past and present borrowers of the Rural Utilities Service or its predecessor, the REA.

What has changed?

To a great extent, the purpose of the AREGC has not changed, although the environment in which cooperatives operate has changed significantly. The growing need to reduce carbon dioxide emissions has spurred broad research and development of new carbon capture technologies and energy storage options, as well as the use of hydrogen as a future power generation fuel. Through AREGC, co-ops are able to stay up to date on technical, regulatory, and financial developments in the industry.

What is the impact on cooperatives?

Today's meeting programs include information on natural gas-fired technologies, as well as operation and maintenance of equipment to reduce power plant emissions. While the exchange of such information is valuable, the most important and rewarding aspect of the meetings may well be the chance to meet and get to know peers in the cooperative community. Through AREGC, co-op personnel can find out who to contact when seeking assistance on their operating units.

What do cooperatives need to know or do about it?

Cooperatives are encouraged to become a member of the planning committee, which entails a three-year term. In the first year, the cooperative acts as the program chairman for the meeting's upcoming annual meeting. In the second year, the member is the official host, planning the location and logistics. In the third year, the member acts as an advisor to the other members of the committee.

"By serving as a forum, the Association promotes collaboration of its member co-ops," said Dan Walsh, NRECA Senior Director of Power Supply and Generation. "In a changing industry, it facilitates the exchange of real-world experience, benefitting the entire cooperative community."

Annual AREGC Conference

AREGC convenes a three-day annual meeting, usually in the summer months. This year's gathering will be hosted by Deseret Power Electric Cooperative and held in **Park City, Utah, June 11-14**. It will provide co-op operations, maintenance, and engineering personnel with the opportunity to meet with experts, collaborate with peers, and acquire knowledge and insight into new practices. Information and registration are available on cooperative.com.

The AREGC Conference & Expo focuses on best practices in plant operation and maintenance. The proposed agenda will include presentations and panel discussions led by industry experts and cooperative leaders who will share experiences and ideas on how to improve plant performance.

In addition to presentations on safety, environmental, asset management, and plant processes, the meeting will feature two keynote speakers focusing on the energy transition, as well as a "Post-Storm Elliott" presentation by NERC.

Related Information

- [AREGC Website Information](#)
- [2023 AREGC Conference Information and Registration](#)

Contact for Questions

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