

The Generation Member Advisory Group: Exploring Its Value to Cooperatives

Key Highlights

- The NRECA Generation Member Advisory Group (GMAG) represents 41 Generation & Transmission cooperatives from across the country. The Group provides a critical resource to NRECA, to support the Generation work group of the Business and Technology Strategies department.
- NRECA's Generation work group focuses on identifying the opportunities and challenges associated with electricity generation. It looks at the various aspects of generation technology, including market status, related policies and regulations, and business models to assist cooperatives in making operational and investment decisions.
- The GMAG member co-ops dedicate time, effort and assistance in planning and reviewing the Generation work group's efforts, and provides input to help ensure that NRECA's research is on target for our members' needs.

The Role of the GMAG

NRECA's Generation work group is one of the main internal teams within NRECA's Business and Technology Strategies department. Its mission is to help G&T members by providing useful information and resources through research, development, technology transfer and demonstration projects to help co-ops maintain cost-effective and reliable generation while complying with environmental regulations. The work group is led by Dan Walsh, Senior Director of Power Supply and Generation, and includes several topic experts with decades of direct experience in industry generation roles.

The GMAG consists of volunteer participants from 41 co-ops with expertise in the electricity generation industry (see Appendix for current listing). GMAG members come from across the country, bringing valuable, diverse experiences and perspectives. These members engage with NRECA's Generation work group through regular meetings and correspondence. "We welcome members from all areas of the industry – from co-ops, to municipals, to IOUs," Walsh said. "That way, we can ensure rich discussion and the best learning experience for all involved."

The Value of GMAG

The GMAG members perform a crucial role as advisors to NRECA's Generation work group's efforts. They provide input and insights about member needs and help to ensure NRECA's efforts for members remain on point. This supports NRECA's commitment to being "member-driven."

"The GMAG members are an active group who readily offer their expertise to benefit our co-op community," Walsh explained. "Their insights help us to develop research initiatives, collaboration opportunities, and resources that address what is most important to our members today."

Peer-to-peer learning is also a key component of the GMAG and its meetings. One of the greatest shared member benefits is to hear from other plant owners and operators, R&D managers and all those who contribute specific ideas for future research that will provide solutions to the generation challenges co-ops face.

NRECA spoke with two members of the GMAG about what they saw as the benefits to being involved. Here is what Scott Wright, Technical Superintendent at PowerSouth Energy Cooperative, said about GMAG:

"The meetings enable me to learn what others are doing and what they think is important." He added: "I communicate to other folks in our co-op [about these topics]." And, he noted: "When everyone [in the co-op community] understands what others are working on, we can learn from each other and take a couple of steps down the road to solving problems that we see."

Wright further said the advisory group provides him with a helpful industry overview. "A lot of what I do is focused on gas turbines, so the GMAG has broadened my exposure." He tries to "spread the word" on topics from transmission to new technology.

Brian Heinbaugh, VP of Operations & Asset Management at Old Dominion Electric Cooperative, has been a member of GMAG for 9 years. He sees the role of the work group as "taking a lot of members' input on issues of interest or issues they need help with, such as new technologies." This information should be provided to NRECA member co-ops, he said.

"My role is to share [those issues] that are keeping us up at night. We don't have time to figure out all the technologies and find out who the snake oil salesmen are. GMAG is great at helping us sort through these issues." And, he added, "I don't have to spend 3 months to understand a technology. It saves time and money."

Turning to existing technology, Heinbaugh said it is helpful to learn what kind of upgrades are being carried out by co-ops and what issues they can share.

Asked about the value of GMAG to him personally, Heinbaugh cited networking. "If I have a question, someone in the group has had experience with it or can put me in touch with the right person."

According to PowerSouth's Wright, Dan Walsh, who leads GMAG, runs a tight ship. "Dan gets good content for the meetings. And the fact that the meetings are fairly short helps us to focus. He's candid in his comments, but he welcomes opposing views."

Wright said he liked the fact that Walsh brings in people from other utilities, such as TVA and Southern Co.

GMAG Meetings

The GMAG meets four times a year, with two meetings in-person and two virtual. Additional conference calls occur as needed to support the Generation work group's efforts.

During the in-person meetings, tours are arranged at a nearby DOE laboratory or energy-related OEM facility, to provide additional learning opportunity. In December 2024, the GMAG visited the Vogtle nuclear facility in Waynesboro, Ga. for an inner working tour including the airlocks and control room. At the June 2025 meeting in San Diego, Calif, the GMAG toured a Solar Turbines Kearny Mesa plant. Most recently in September, the GMAG was joined by NRECA's Distributed Energy Resources (DER) MAG in Anchorage, Alaska to visit Chugach Electric for a tour of the Southcentral Power Project Energy and Energy Storage Installation, and Matanuska Electric Association's Wartsila Engine Site in Chugiak, AK. See highlights in the photos below.

December 2024 Meeting in Georgia



Figure 1: GMAG Touring Vogtle Power Plant



Figure 2: Inner Working Tour at Vogtle Power Plant

June 2025 Meeting in California



Figure 3: Solar Turbines' Titan 350 Gas Turbine



Figure 4: Touring Solar Turbines Turbine's Kearny Mesa Manufacturing Plant



Figure 5: Learning about Solar Turbines' 350 GT Exhaust Gas Recirculation

September 2025 Meeting in Alaska



Figure 6: Visiting Chugach Electric Association



Figure 7: Tour of Southcentral Power Project Energy and Energy Storage Installation



Figure 8: Matanuska Electric Association's Wartsila Engine Site



Figure 9: Touring Matanuska Electric Association's Wartsila Engine Site

GMAG Professional Community

For the sharing of resources and in support of generation-related topic discussions, NRECA has a professional community for the GMAG available via cooperative.com. Through this online community, co-ops can explore related NRECA publications, meeting notes, and other resources, and post questions or participate in conversations with the NRECA Generation work group and other co-op colleagues. (Please note: This community is exclusive to NRECA voting members.)

Invitation to Participate in the GMAG

NRECA member cooperatives interested in joining the GMAG are welcome to contact Dan Walsh at Daniel.Walsh@nreca.coop. In addition, all NRECA members are invited to participate in any of the four annual meetings.

Related Information

- [NRECA Generation Work Group Website](#)
- [Generation Member Advisors and Technical Liaisons Website](#)

Contact for Questions

Daniel (Dan) Walsh

NRECA Senior Director of Power Supply and Generation

Daniel.Walsh@nreca.coop

Appendix

List of Current GMAG Members

- Arizona G&T Co-ops
- Arkansas Electric Co-op Corp
- Associated Electric Co-op
- AVEC
- Basin Electric Power Co-op
- Brazos Electric Co-op
- Buckeye Power
- Central Electric Power Co-op
- Chugach Electric Association
- Cloverland Electric Cooperative
- Cooperative Energy
- Copper Valley Electric Co-op
- Corn Belt Power Cooperative
- Deseret Power Electric Co-op
- Duke Energy Services
- East Kentucky Power Cooperative
- East Texas Electric Co-op
- Golden Spread Electric
- Golden Valley Electric Assn.
- Great River Energy
- Homer Electric Cooperative
- Hoosier Energy
- MEA Cooperative
- Minnkota Power Cooperative
- North Carolina's Electric Cooperatives
- Northern Virginia Electric Cooperative
- Oglethorpe Power Cooperative
- Ohio Electric Cooperative
- Old Dominion Electric Cooperative
- Peoples Cooperative
- PowerSouth
- San Miquel
- Seminole Electric Co-op
- Southern Company Services
- Sunflower Electric Power Corp
- Tennessee Valley Authority
- Trico Electric Co-op
- Tri-State Generation and Transmission Assn.
- Wabash
- Western Farmers Electric Cooperative
- Wolverine