

The Repower REC Story

Pro Co-op - Pro Member - Pro Democracy

Who Is The “REC” In Repower REC?

Rappahannock Electric Cooperative (REC) is a member-owned electric cooperative serving over 165,000 residential, commercial, and agricultural customers in portions of 22 Virginia counties.

The Usual and Customary Disclaimer

Repower REC is a grassroots coalition
of concerned REC members and friends
and is not affiliated
with Rappahannock Electric Cooperative.

REC Service Area

Albemarle, Caroline, Clarke, Culpeper
Essex, Fauquier, Frederick, Goochland, Greene
Hanover, King and Queen, King William, Louisa, Madison
Orange, Page, Rappahannock, Rockingham, Shenandoah
Spotsylvania, Stafford, and Warren County

Back To The Story

It all started with an annual meeting and three passionate and inspired REC member-owners...

- One life-long (and retired) educator (Mike)
- One small business owner & electrical contractor (Tony)
- One retired Army general & incumbent REC board member (John)

REC Annual Meeting - August 10, 2017

- Mike Murphy
 - Ran for the REC Board... and lost
- Tony Bastianelli
 - Ran for the REC Board... and lost
- John Levasseur
 - Ran for his position on the REC Board... and lost
 - Won the “member” vote as the incumbent board member
 - Tenure terminated by the REC Board via the proxy vote

In The Months After The Annual Meeting

- Many “seek to understand” moments...
 - Mike, John, and Tony talked at length and with others
 - Sour grapes vs. the right to fair and democratic elections
- Consensus reached...
 - Something must be done about REC’s undemocratic process
- In a random and unrelated event...
 - Mike calls Solar United Neighbors about going solar
 - Aaron Sutch answers and refers Mike to Seth Heald

Enter Two New Key Players

- Seth Heald
 - Common sense advocate for transparency and democracy
 - Concerned about REC management practices for a decade
 - Retired Justice Department attorney and REC member-owner
- Aaron Sutch
 - Program Director for Solar United Neighbors in Virginia
 - Sustainability and policy advocate for distributed solar
 - Provider of technical support for residents and organizations going solar

Why Solar United Neighbors

Solar United Neighbors is the only Organization in the country dedicated to representing the needs and interests of solar owners and supporters by helping people go solar, join together, and *fight for their energy rights.*

Something Must Be Done - November 29, 2017

- First In-Person Meeting
 - Discuss issues and concerns
 - Sketch out “baby steps” action plan
 - Determine what “success” might look and feel like
 - Commit to restoring transparency and democracy at REC
 - Leave feeling overwhelmed but hopeful about the future of our co-op

Repower REC Becomes A Reality - March, 2018

- Commitment by all parties
 - Solar United Neighbor becomes a partner
 - Seth, Mike, and John agree to serve as co-founders
- Core team established
 - Mike, Seth, and Aaron with additional support from SUN
- Website and Facebook sites developed
 - www.repowerrec.com
 - www.facebook.com/RepowerREC/

Initial Concerns

- Board Elections
 - Process
 - Candidate bio, two minute speech, proxy votes, door prizes, etc.
 - Transparency
 - Teller role with ambiguous info, new and “secret” process, etc.
 - Access to information
 - Voting results not made public, “legalistic” info request form, “fluffy” content devoid monthly magazine, etc.

Evolutionary Progression

- Work plan has evolved
 - Access to information
 - Fiscal transparency
 - Fair elections
- Growing list of collaborative partners
 - We Own It (www.weown.it)
 - Others...
- Two “We Own It” Fellowships Awarded
 - Integrity, transparency, clean energy, lower rates – and above all – restored democracy

Why Bother - Two Perspectives

“Most people don’t care as long as the lights come on when they throw the switch”

vs.

Access to information, financial transparency, and fair elections are important in everything we do (and we might even help save the planet in the process).



Repower REC is working to transform Rappahannock Electric Cooperative

into a transparent, member-driven
utility offering local, reliable, and
economical energy solutions.

Need A Break?

Stand up and stretch!

Just don't leave!

Ask lots of questions!

There is more!

Seven Cooperative Principles

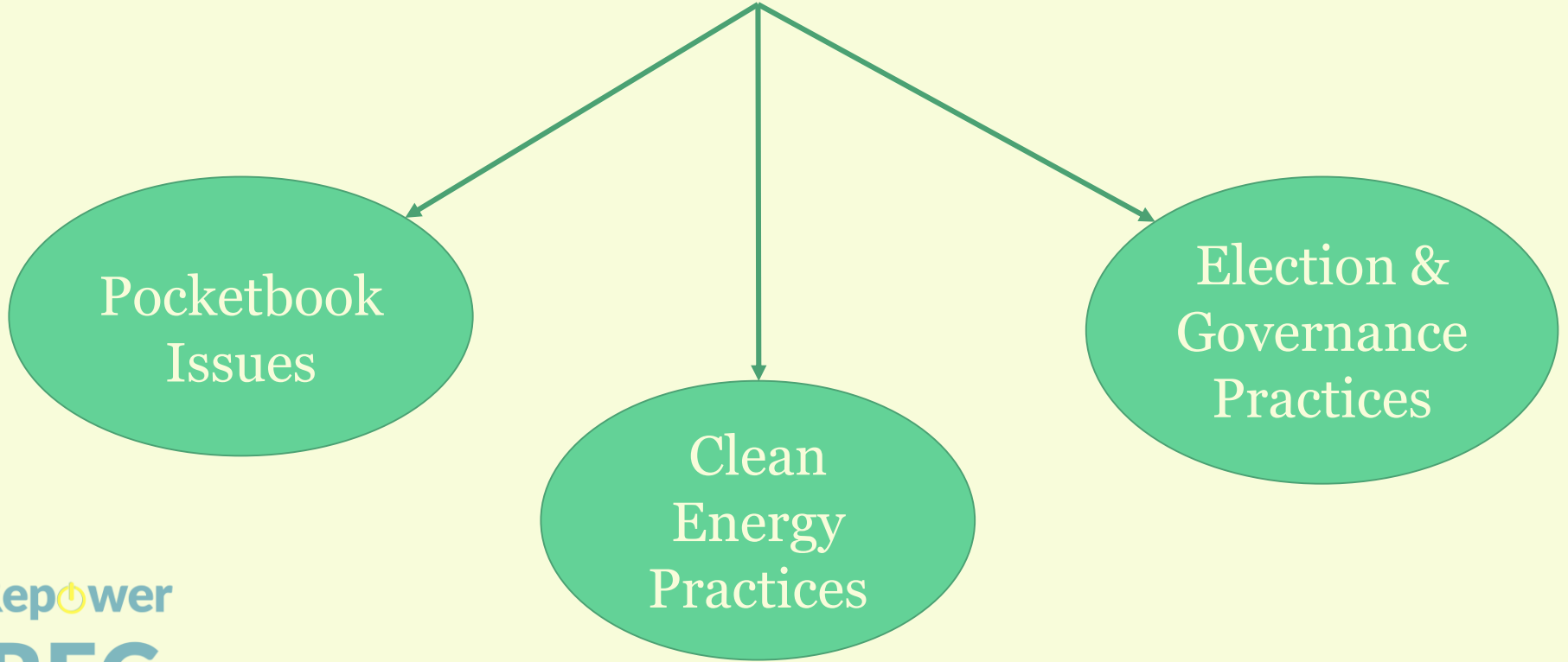
#2 - Democratic member control

#5 - Education, training and information

#7 - Concern for community

<https://www.myrec.coop/aboutus/cooperative-principles.cfm>

Issues for Reform



Pocketbook Issues

- Fee Increases/High Energy Rates
 - REC locked into long term agreement paying 23-50% more than market costs
 - Customers pay 1.5-2.5 cents per kWh more for ODEC power than if from wholesale market
- Capital Credit Reimbursements
- Board Compensation



Clean Energy Practices

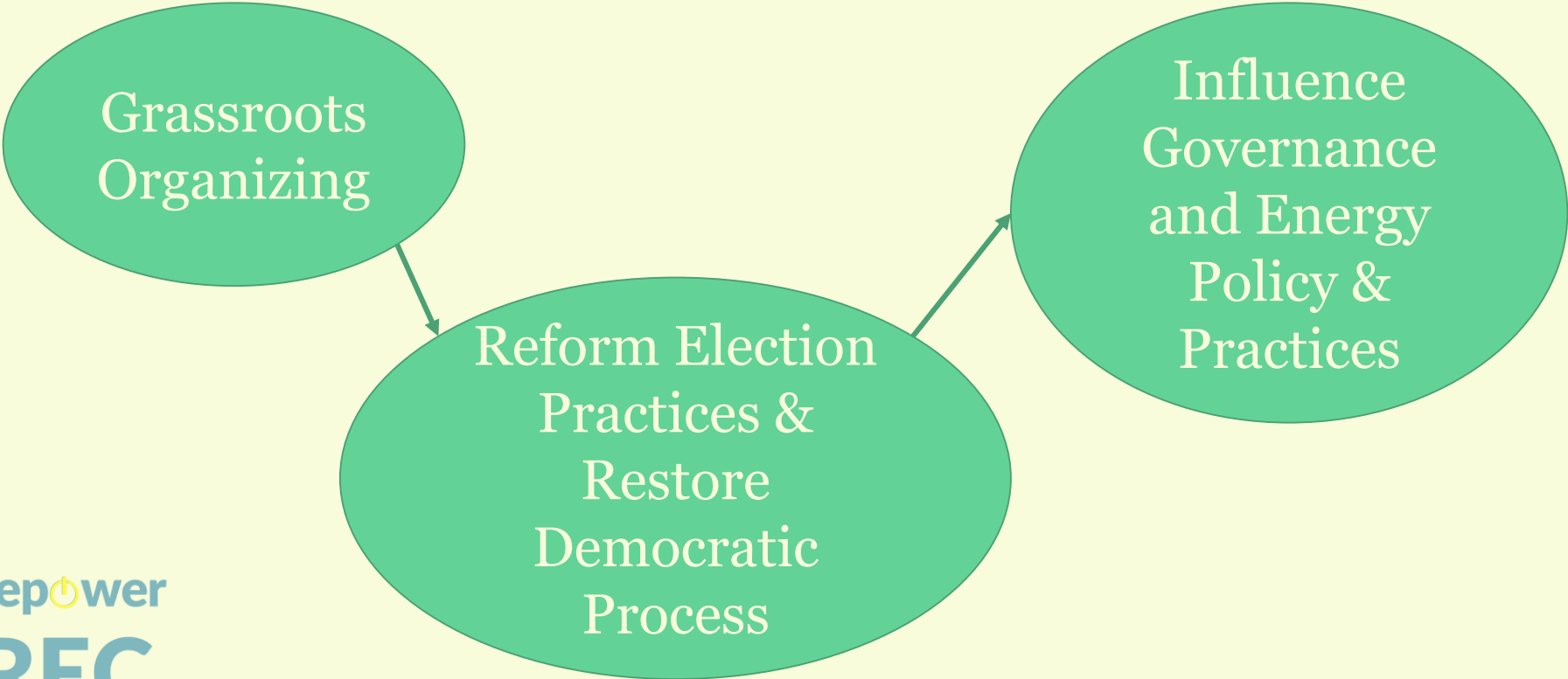
- Increased access fees disproportionately impact low-income, energy efficient, and solar members
- General culture supports non-renewable fuel such as coal, gas, and oil



Election & Governance Practices

- Board controls proxy votes
- Annual meeting process devoid of practical, policy related, member-driven issues
- Culture of secrecy (difficult for member-owners to access information)

Long-Range Plan



Long-Range Goals

- Support transparent, fair, and unbiased elections
- Build member-owner participation in the democratic process
- Gain public access to financial information affecting all REC member-owners
- Promote local, reliable, and affordable energy choices

Some Of Our Actions To Date

- Requests to REC Board (almost all unfulfilled)
- Media presence via press releases/website/Facebook
- SCC filing
- Study and report regarding REC wholesale energy costs
- Public meetings and house parties

Some Of Our 2018 Achievements

- Media and press releases
- Growing cadre of supporters and informed members
- REC published audited financial statements
- REC published election tallies after Annual Meeting
- REC Board Chair received member-owner questions at Annual Meeting

Immediate Next Steps / Action Items

- Identify “region captains” in all nine REC regions and build small teams for on-the-ground member relations and signature gathering
- Identify and support reform-minded board candidates
- Ramp up media relations to increase visibility and educate member-owners about their co-op
- Continue to hold public meetings and forums

Join Our Partners



Mike Moore
Angus Cattle



virginia interfaith
power & light

www.vaip.org

Repower
REC

How You Can Help

Become a partner and help share the word.

Educate supporters about Repower REC's campaign.

Become a steering committee representative.

We Want To Hear From You!

We are pro co-op, pro member and pro democracy.

Your ideas, questions, and concerns are important to us!

Contact Us

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