

The Association of Rural Electric Generating Cooperatives (AREGC):

Continues to Promote the Exchange of Knowledge and Experience Among Member Cooperatives

Key Highlights

- When it was founded 74 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 topics of discussion have evolved over time based on changes in the industry. Recently, issues shaping discussions include the deployment of renewables, energy storage, carbon capture, hydrogen as a fuel, and fleet transformation-related topics. The focus now is to assess how these developments impact the cost and reliability of existing plants.
- Every year, the AREGC convenes a meeting. This year's gathering will be hosted by Golden Spread Electric Cooperative and held **June 15-18 in San Antonio, Texas**. It will provide co-ops with the opportunity to meet with experts, collaborate with peers, and acquire knowledge and insights into new practices and technologies to enhance the effectiveness of electric generating cooperatives.

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 have been added to meeting discussions. These include management challenges, EPC (engineering, procurement, and construction) and state and federal environmental regulations. Recently, several issues have emerged to shape discussions, including the deployment of renewables, energy storage, carbon capture, hydrogen as a fuel, and fleet transformation-related topics.

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

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

What has changed?

To a major extent, the purpose of the AREGC has not changed, although the environment in which cooperatives operate has evolved. Today, the growing need to safely operate and maintain assets along with potential regulatory obligations to reduce carbon dioxide emissions while incorporating additional non-dispatchable resources has spurred broad research and development of new carbon capture technologies and energy storage options. Through AREGC, co-ops can stay up to date on technical, regulatory, and financial developments and trends in the electric utility industry.

What is the impact on cooperatives?

Through participation with AREGC, cooperatives benefit from discussions on a wide array of industry issues. Associated Electric Cooperative is organizing the technical program, including selection and management of presentations.

Targeted presentation topic categories are listed below:

- ***Emerging technology use*** – Artificial Intelligence/Pattern Recognition, sensors in equipment (health monitoring), big data and drones.
- ***Power generation safety*** – Case studies and trends.
- ***Environmental/Regulatory*** – 111b/111d updates and environmental/regulatory updates.
- ***Asset management*** – DCS and system obsolescence, equipment/spare parts management, whole life cycle models, and benchmarking.
- ***Plant processes*** – Operational excellence, predictive maintenance, heat rate improvements, plant staff training, controls/tuning/alarms management, outage and work management and enhanced flexibility.
- ***Plant equipment*** – Gas turbine advanced technology, maintenance/operating experiences, steam turbines, generators, reciprocating engine experiences and boiler/HRSG experiences.
- ***Bulk energy storage*** – Batteries, fuel storage (fuel oil, LNG), small modular nuclear reactors, and bulk energy emerging technologies.
- ***Resiliency/Cybersecurity*** – Winterization/weatherization and regulatory updates.
- ***Market*** – Capacity requirement changes (summer/winter), trends, and impact of data centers and large loads.

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 members of the AREGC 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 Golden Spread Electric Cooperative in San Antonio, Texas, June 15-18. It will provide co-ops with the opportunity to meet with experts, collaborate with peers, and acquire knowledge and insights into new practices and technologies to enhance the effectiveness of electric generating cooperatives. Information and registration is available on cooperative.com.

The AREGC Conference & Expo focuses on best practices in plant safety, 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 keynote speaker D.W. Richerson, Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of ERCOT.

Related Information

- [AREGC Website Information](#)
- [2025 AREGC Conference Information and Registration](#)

Contact for Questions

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