

Meeting 2/01

11 April 2001

Not for general publication

Present: Marla McCombie (in the Chair), Lee Tavenner, Georgia Brensdal, Chris Daum, Chris Borton, Rusin Van Dyke, Tim Ranf, Charles Van Hook, Gail Snow, Beth Bernard, Dan Healy, Bob Anderson, Marla McCombie, Dave Ryan, Bill von Brethorst, Jerry Spencer, Shad Baily, Edward Roe, Howard Haines, Spencer Shropshire, Paul Tschida, Kathi Montgomery, Vicki Lynne, Bob Stevens, Tom Livers, Hopie Stevens, and Jim Tracy.

Apologies: Tony Boniface, Mikey Strickland

Minutes: Minutes of the January 10 meeting were read and approved.

Treasurer's Report:

Treasurer Chris Daum reported that the association had \$1,593 in its account, and still was waiting for dues from some members. Acceptance of the treasurer's report was moved, seconded and approved.

New Business:



1. Chris Borton unveiled the MREA logo, which has been imprinted on stationery and envelopes. "Looks great" was the consensus. Discussion ensued about the need for bumper stickers, pens, magnets and the like with the MREA logo. Group decided an MREA banner to be displayed at fairs and other similar events would be useful. Dave Ryan moved, with a second by Chris Daum and approval by the association for Jerry Spencer to create a banner.
2. The association discussed upcoming trade shows and fairs. Dan Healy of Sunelco and Marla McCombie of BPA volunteered to organize an MREA booth at a holistic health fair June 23-24 in Missoula. Discussion ensued about MREA handouts that could be distributed. It was decided that all MREA members that care to provide literature, catalogs, pamphlets, whatever, could have them on the table at the show, and that, for this show, the information could be sent to Sunelco so it could set up the literature with the other display items. Chris Borton of Sage Mountain Center volunteered to be in charge of reporting upcoming events to MREA members. Members are encouraged to contact Chris with event information.
3. Vicki Lynne of NCAT announced details of a PV stock water pumping workshop in Great Falls on May 22.
4. Jim Tracy read the policy report and confirmed the previously agreed upon designations of the Executive Committee – Marla McCombie, Jim Tracy and Dave Ryan. A motion to recognize them officially as the executive committee was made, seconded and approved. The committee may act on behalf of MREA as needed.

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5. Bob Anderson (Policy Committee) described pending legislation he believed the MREA should support, including extension of the universal system benefits charge for another 2.5 years and incentives for renewable energy systems. Tom Livers of the Department of Environmental quality provided web addresses for information about pending energy legislation. Dave Ryan noted that Jerry Spencer represented MREA in a number of hearings on pending legislation. If anyone had questions on these, they were to e-mail Bob Anderson to get specifics.
6. The Marketing Committee offered several ideas. Despite the general lack of time and organization of these committees, the consensus was work was being accomplished.
 - Press releases and how to have good things to report on renewable energy.
 - Marketing is closely tied to the education and policy committees, and we should probably be working with these folks.
 - E-mails and faxes should be sent to all co-ops explaining what MREA is and asking for input about how MREA and co-ops can work together.
 - Russ Van Dyke had tried to contact several large wind generator manufacturers but to little avail. They just didn't seem interested.
 - Time to contact other RE organizations - how do they get things done, establish contacts, get funds, etc.
 - Montana RE retailers should contact their customers about supporting universal system benefits charge funding, and e-mailing, faxing, and writing their legislators to promote the RE cause.
 - It was agreed that the marketing and education committees should work in tandem.
 - Dan Healy offered to share an electronic list (spreadsheet) he has compiled with contact information for Montana rural electric cooperatives.
7. The Education Committee passed around copies of draft fact sheets it had developed covering photovoltaic basics, home energy conservation, small business energy conservation, financing, grants, net metering and geothermal energy. Chris Borton explained that other fact sheets covering wind energy and renewable energy economics are in the works. The group agreed to distribute the fact sheets to MREA members for review and comment and then make them available for distribution at trade fairs and other venues.
8. The fundraising committee reported it had made little progress, but discussed needing funds for the projects the MREA would like to take on and support.
9. Bob Anderson, a member of the National Wind Coordinating Council, keeps abreast of wind generation issues on a national level. He announced that the NWCC will hold a public meeting in Montana Oct. 3-4, 2001. The agenda is still to be determined.
10. Howard Haines of the Department of Environmental Quality discussed a proposed Harvesting Clean Energy Symposium (in Montana) in October and asked the MREA to be a co-sponsor and provide speakers. The Symposium would concentrate on wind and biomass energy and surrounding issues. It was moved by Jerry Spencer, seconded by Jim Tracy and approved unanimously that MREA participate in the Harvesting Clean Energy Symposium.

11. Lee Tavenner talked about Trace Engineering's five-year warranty; an additional cost of \$350 for Trace's grid-tie products (done by Trace in response to California's rebate plan, which demands a five-year warranty to get their rebate). Discussion ensued on this topic.

NEXT MREA MEETING: July 11th, 12:30 to 4 p.m. in Missoula. Contact Marla McCombie for information.