

MONTANA RENEWABLE ENERGY ASSOCIATION

Meeting 4/01

9 October 2001

Not for general publication

Marla McCombie called the meeting to order at 4 p.m. on Tuesday, October 9, 2001, at the Heritage Inn, 1700 Fox Farm Road, in Great Falls.

**Present:** Marla McCombie (in the Chair), Bob Anderson, Georgia Brensdal, Dave Ryan, LuMarie Strickland, Mikey Strickland, Lee Tavenner, Tony Boniface, Gail Snow, David Max, Walt Max, Howard Haines, Kathy Hadley, Bob Quinn, Kathi Montgomery, John Walden, and Jim Tracy.  
(There was no quorum, so no votes were taken.)

**Apologies:** Chris Borton, Chris Daum, Roy Nollkamper, Jerry Spencer, and Lee Tavenner.

**Minutes:** Minutes of the July 25 meeting were read and approved.

**Treasurer's Report:**

Treasurer Chris Daum reported that MREA had \$2,769.34 in its account and that Pine Ridge Products (Logan and Jenni Bryce of Great Falls) had paid dues and joined the association.

**Old Business:**

1. Jim Tracy reported that paperwork was completed for the MREA to file for 501 (c) 3 tax-exempt status with the IRS. (The IRS since acknowledged receipt of the papers in a letter dated Nov. 5, 2001, and has started an initial review. Here's what the letter says, in part: "Your application was entered into our computer system at our processing center in Covington, Kentucky, and has been sent to our Cincinnati office for initial review. We approve some applications based on this review. If this is the case, you will receive a letter stating that you are exempt from federal income tax." It says further that MREA should hear from the IRS within 120 days.)
2. Jim Tracy reported on the new MREA Website  
<http://www.montanagreenpower.com/mrea/index.html>
3. Dave Ryan reported on MREA's participation in the Sustainability Fair August 24 in Livingston. He noted that Lill Ericson, executive director of the Corporation for the Northern Rockies, sponsor of the fair, had asked MREA to become a co-sponsor in 2002. Ryan said the fair was a success and that MREA's booth was a popular stop. Members of the Montana Renewable Energy Association staffed a table at the Sustainability Fair 2001 Aug. 25 in Livingston. The fair featured a full day of exhibits, activities, speakers and performances about everything from recycled building materials to strategies for cutting energy costs. CNR is a Livingston-based nonprofit "providing education and technical support to sustain the Northern Rockies landscape and way of life." Erickson said the intent of the fair "is to bring sustainability in all its facets to Montanans."

The fair brought together some 60 vendors and eight speakers covering a variety of topics, including sustainable ranch management, local food, drought tolerant

landscaping, alternative building materials, and the newest electric hybrid cars. MREA members who helped at the Fair included Mikey and LuMarie Strickland of Dearborn Solar Electric; Dave Ryan of Montana Power Company; and John Walden and Jim Tracy of the National Center for Appropriate Technology. MREA enjoyed the use of a solar pumping demonstration system from Sunelco, a “sunflower” canopy from Solar Plexus and a wind turbine from Pine Ridge Products. Other MREA members who participated in the fair included Bob and Hopie Stevens of the Fanwood Foundation, Linda Welsh of Sage Mountain Center, and Bill von Brethorst of Planetary Systems.

The group agreed that MREA should co-sponsor the Fair in 2002 and to discuss the matter at the January 2002 meeting.

### **New Business**

Dave Ryan reported that he sensed a shift in emphasis in the committee that oversees Universal System Benefits Charge funds. “We’re seeing a movement to have USBC more oriented to low income needs,” Ryan said.

The group agreed that MREA could write a letter to the committee showing its strong support for continued funding of renewable energy projects and seeking advice on “low-income renewable energy” projects.

The group also agreed that similar letters expressing the same sentiment should be sent to the Public Service Commission and Montana Power Company management.

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Georgia Brensdal and Kathi Montgomery of the Montana Department of Environmental Quality reported that the DEQ is writing rules to implement certain provisions of Senate Bill 506, including a low-interest loan program for “alternative energy” projects. They reported that the loan fund, derived from penalties paid by parties violating clean air laws, had about \$29,000 as of October 9. The fund is expected to grow to as much as \$250,000 in five years.

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Bob Anderson reported on the National Wind Coordinating Committee meeting and Wind Powering America Forum Oct. 3-4 in Big Sky.

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Jim Tracy reported on the Million Solar Roofs Market Penetration Initiative. The meeting adjourned at 6 p.m.

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The group agreed to schedule MREA’s first meeting of 2002 on Wednesday, January 9, at the National Center for Appropriate Technology in Butte.