

# NEWS



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## **Sunflower joins national renewables cooperative organization and sets goal of 25% renewables by 2025**

Hays, KS—April 2— At its March meeting, Sunflower’s board of directors approved the investment required to become one of the founding members of the National Renewables Cooperative Organization (NRCO).

NRCO is a nationwide organization of electric cooperatives jointly working to develop renewable energy projects. Currently, more than half the states in the nation have adopted renewable portfolio standards (RPS). In fact, the Kansas Legislature is currently considering the adoption of a RPS which would require utilities to have 10% of their peak load coming from renewable facilities by 2012, then increasing to 20% by 2020. The federal government is also considering a national renewable standard.

Generation and transmission cooperatives like Sunflower, unaffiliated distribution cooperatives, and partial requirements cooperatives that have the legal ability to participate in the wholesale market are eligible for membership in NRCO.

According to Sunflower president and CEO, Earl Watkins, "NRCO offers cooperatives a way to pool their resources and efforts into a single national program that shows support for renewables and will put co-ops in a proactive position if a national standard for renewable energy becomes law."

Watkins added that NRCO also serves as a means for cooperatives that don't have a lot of opportunity for development of wind, solar or other green power to participate in a national renewables program. He said, "NRCO will help us facilitate wind projects and create new Kansas jobs to export Kansas wind energy elsewhere and import revenue."

During the same meeting, the Sunflower Board of Directors also adopted a renewable energy policy (REP).

The purpose of the REP is to establish a position of public support for distributed generation, including those often referred to as small wind or community wind projects, and a consumption goal of 25% renewable energy by 2025 for Sunflower and the Mid-Kansas Electric Company (MKEC), a regional utility owned by Sunflower’s six member distribution cooperatives.

Earl Watkins, Sunflower's president and chief executive officer, speaking about the board's decision said, "Once again, our board is setting Sunflower and MKEC on a path to meet our consumers' needs by pursuing the goals contained in this renewable energy policy."

The Board's policy decision directs Sunflower's staff to work to develop smaller wind projects that can provide benefits for communities in the service area. It also calls on both utilities to work with developers to support commercial wind, biomass and solar projects where possible.

Bob Johnson, Sunflower's executive manager, engineering and energy services, noted that the feasibility of all renewable energy purchases will be based primarily on long-term economics. Johnson said, "Acceptable pricing will be based on the cost of energy displaced by the renewable energy purchase."

Sunflower and Mid-Kansas will also be developing "green energy rider" rate schedules to facilitate the sale of renewable energy certificates, also known as "green tags" to their Members' retail customers, if a sufficient market develops for such sales.

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#### **About Sunflower—**

Sunflower Electric Power Corporation is a regional wholesale power supplier that operates a 1,257 MW system of wind, gas, and coal-based generating plants and a 2,300-mile transmission system for the needs of its six member cooperatives who serve more than 400,000 customers living in central and western Kansas. Visit Sunflower's website at <http://www.sunflower.net>

Sunflower's member cooperatives include Lane-Scott Electric Cooperative, Dighton; Pioneer Electric Cooperative, Ulysses; Prairie Land Electric Cooperative, Norton; Victory Electric Cooperative Association, Dodge City; Western Cooperative Electric Association, WaKeeney; and Wheatland Electric Cooperative, Scott City, Kansas.