

Jan Peterson for Poudre Valley REA Board of Directors



The current Board of Directors has supported Tri-State Generation & Transmission in its efforts to build new coal-fired power plants: three years ago, they were attempting to build three. But Coloradoans let them know that, across the board, large majorities of Republicans, Independents, Democrats, individuals and businesses wanted clean energy sources to replace dirty coal. So Tri-State abandoned the two proposed plants in Colorado, but they are still working to build one in Kansas -much to the dismay of Kansas residents.

All costs associated with dirty coal-fired power production are continuing to increase (an average of 12% per year from 2004 to 2009 in Colorado), while all costs associated with clean renewable energy production continue to drop dramatically: PV prices dropped 40-50% in 2009 alone; the National Renewable Energy Laboratory just announced that a new Concentrating PV Collector technology generates electricity for the same cost as gas-fired power plants (using no production water in the process); and wind power generation is now hovering around "break-even" with coal power! It doesn't take a rocket scientist to see where this is headed. Fiscal responsibility to co-op member/owners requires that we start a long-term transition into clean energy technologies (it won't happen overnight).

We should be pursuing strategies with the most benefit for member/owners. Subsidizing energy retrofits for members' homes can cost-effectively reduce the need for new generation sources. Distributed energy generation would allow individual member/owners to supply clean renewable energy to the REA grid, cutting single-source transmission losses, adding to grid reliability, and minimizing the adverse impacts of continuing fossil fuel price increases (solar "fuel" will remain free while costs of coal and natural gas continue to fluctuate and rise in volatile markets).

Without the need to pay billions for a new coal plant, we should have funding available to support more advanced technologies that eliminate the exorbitant water consumption, horrendous environmental degradation and appalling human health problems that are all a direct result of burning coal.

History shows us that refusal to face a problem doesn't make it go away: it only delays necessary action and makes that action more expensive.

We can clean up our water, land and air. We can free up water resources for use by farmers who are being pinched by surging water demands from others. We can limit inevitable future increases in the cost of electricity. We can create opportunities for member/owners to have a reliable income stream from distributed microgenerators.

"We can just as easily have an economy that is based on healing the future instead of stealing it." - Paul Hawken, entrepreneur

All we need is the will to make it happen. Vote for me and I will work diligently to see that it does!

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