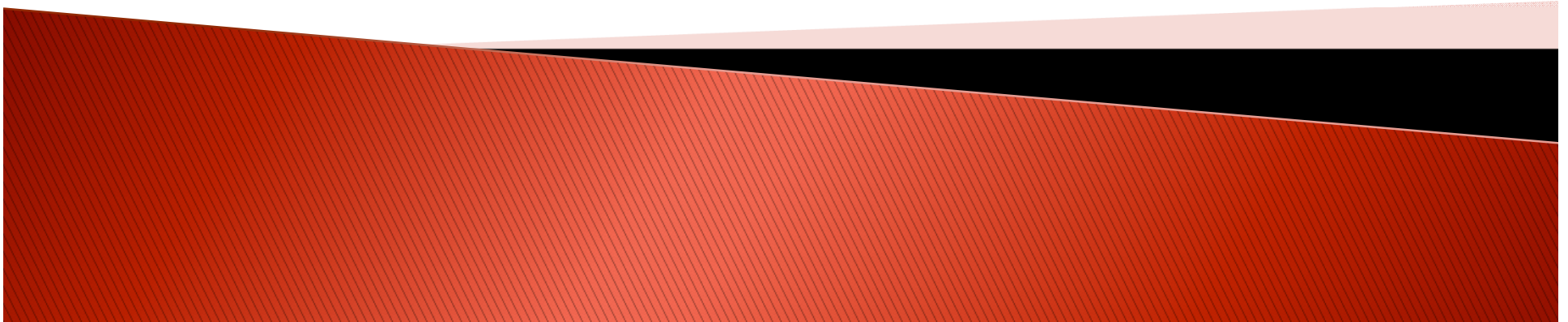


Building & Leveraging a Peer to Peer PAC Program

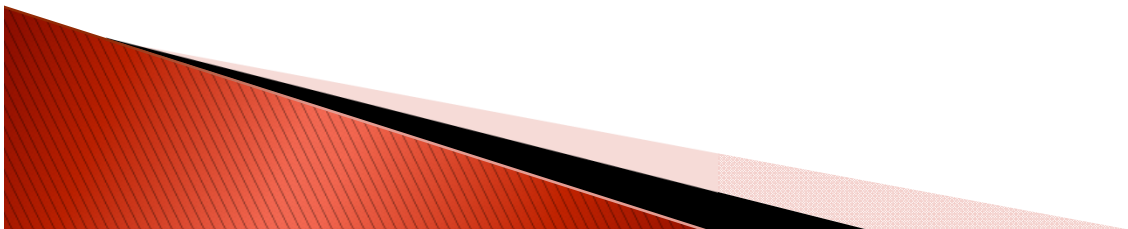
Public Affairs Conference

Alden Knowlton, Director of Political Affairs, MBA
March 8, 2017



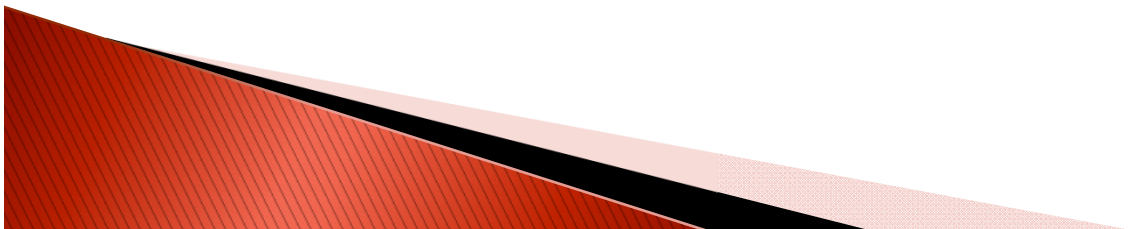
Goals for Today

- ▶ About NRECA/ACRE
- ▶ Our Success Story: Strategy vs. Tactics
- ▶ Program development at MBA



The Challenges

- ▶ Little Commitment to ACRE
- ▶ Little Ownership of the Program
- ▶ Confusing:
 - What Is ACRE?
 - Why Is It Important?
- ▶ Overwhelming:
 - Co-ops Didn't Know Where to Start...



Ladder of Political Engagement



Full Political Participation
Integrated Grasstops, Grassroots & PAC Programs



Grassroots Participation
Member-Owner Advocacy Program



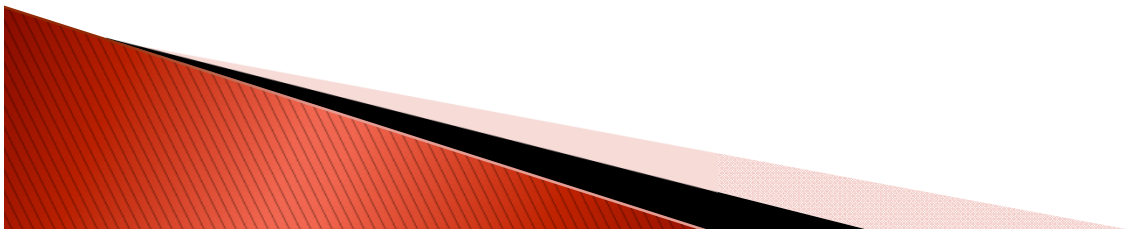
Grasstops Participation
CEO/BOD/Employee Advocacy Only



Minimal Participation
Inconsistent participation at all levels

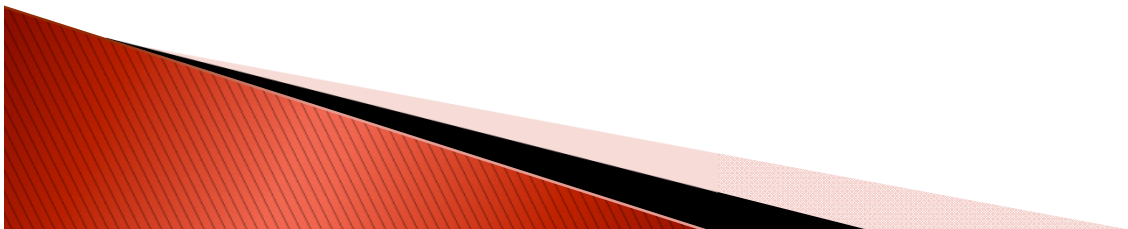
Project Success Factors

- ▶ Define the Goal
- ▶ Develop a Plan
 - Overall path
 - Clear responsibilities
 - Measures progress
- ▶ Communicate
- ▶ EDUCATE
- ▶ Control the Scope
- ▶ Management Support



What is a Political Game Plan?

- ▶ Dated, written document
- ▶ Details actions that will build/strengthen relationships with government officials and opinion leaders who direct policy that affects electric cooperative business
- ▶ Contains a strategy to turn co-op member-owners into advocates and advocates into champions
- ▶ Customized by co-op
- ▶ Designed to improve the co-op's overall political strength
- ▶ Reviewed periodically by the Board



Incorporate ACRE® in Your Political Game Plan

- ▶ Set annual goals for ACRE participation
- ▶ Outline a plan to increase participation from employees, directors, and members
- ▶ Launch a Co-op Owners for Political Action® program at your next annual meeting
- ▶ Plan to engage the board with regular ACRE updates at board meetings



Craft an ACRE® Strategic Plan



2015 Go-Forward Plan
Michigan

TALKING POINTS

- ACRE is a political action committee for electric cooperative member-consumers.
- ACRE creates a favorable political environment for electric co-ops.
- ACRE builds a community of advocates that support the co-op mission.

MISSION

ACRE is a political action committee (PAC) for electric cooperative member-consumers who support safe, reliable, affordable energy. Together, we advocate for responsible energy policies in Washington, D.C. and Lansing.

STRATEGY

ACRE creates a favorable political environment for electric co-ops through strategic relationships with elected officials who speak for and protect the interest of electric co-ops, regardless of political party. We will achieve this strategy by:

- Engaging with every state legislator representing co-op service area, as outlined by the annual M-ACRE contribution budget.
- Maintaining relationships with legislators to achieve 100% voting support on co-op issues.

ACRE builds a community of advocates that support the co-op mission through their financial contributions and grassroots engagement. We will achieve this strategy by:

- Advancing all Upper Peninsula co-ops to a 2-star rating by 2016.
- Advancing all co-ops to a 4-star rating or greater by 2018.
- Maintaining NRECA "Top Ten" ranking for total funds contributed nationally.

CO-OP GOALS

	DIRECTORS & CEO	SENIOR STAFF	ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES	CO-OP OWNERS
★★★★★	100% Participation (\$500+)	100% Participation (\$100+)	90-100% Participation	5% Participation
★★★★☆	100% Participation (\$500+)	100% Participation (\$100+)	90-100% Participation	1% Participation
★★★☆☆	100% Participation (\$500+)	100% Participation (\$100+)	90-100% Participation	—
★★☆☆☆	100% Participation (\$100+)	100% Participation	—	—
★☆☆☆☆	100% Participation	—	—	—

CO-OP SUPPORTING TACTICS

Each co-op should select several supporting tactics which will help achieve the strategy and purpose of ACRE. Co-ops should select from among tactics that are at, or below, the rating the co-op is currently working towards.

- ★★★★★ ☐ Develop goals for employee community engagement in local boards and leadership positions
- ★★★★★ ☐ Host community legislative event(s)
- ★★★★★ ☐ Develop an ACRE communications calendar
 - Michigan Country Lines features and ads
 - Bill Inserts
 - Newsletters
 - Social Media
 - Targeted direct mail
 - Email campaign
- ★★★★★ ☐ Feature local ACRE Advocates in Michigan Country Lines and/or as speakers at district/annual meetings
- ★★★★★ ☐ Staff an ACRE booth at district/annual meetings
- ★★★★★ ☐ Develop goals for directors to actively recruit/enroll co-op owners
- ★★★☆☆ ☐ Solicitation/renewal letters to eligible employees
- ★★★☆☆ ☐ Provide ACRE/grassroots training opportunities for co-op employees
- ★★★☆☆ ☐ Provide quarterly ACRE newsletter to all ACRE advocates
- ★★☆☆☆ ☐ Solicitation/renewal letters to senior staff
- ★★☆☆☆ ☐ ACRE presentation/discussion at senior staff meetings
- ★★☆☆☆ ☐ Dedicated ACRE Advocate Leader to coordinate efforts
- ★☆☆☆☆ ☐ Solicitation/renewal letters to directors
- ★☆☆☆☆ ☐ ACRE presentation/discussion at board meeting



- Provide renewal/solicitation letter templates and database to co-ops to mail-merge and distribute.
- Revise renewal documents to make auto-renewal option more prominent and encourage greater contributions than previous year.

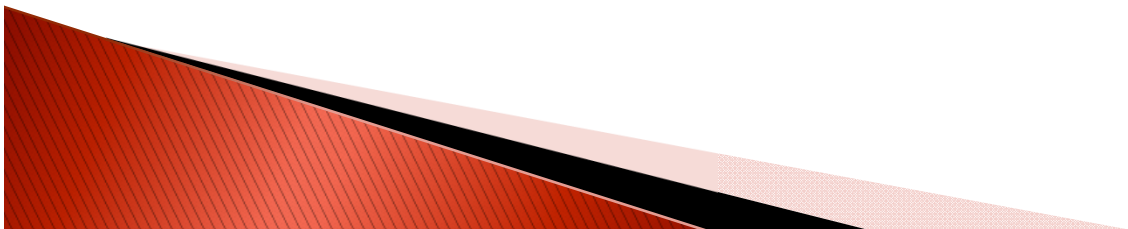
- Develop ACRE Content Calendar with co-op communicators for Michigan Country Lines and ACRE Owners Newsletter with more local information.
- Provide ACRE Leaders with printed collateral and social media materials (i.e. graphics and posts) to support advocacy efforts.

- Feature national "ACRE Success Stories" and interviews with key legislators in Michigan Country Lines (quarterly).
- Produce "ACRE Owners" newsletter template (quarterly).

- Host semi-annual meetings (in-person and/or by phone) for ACRE Leaders.

Build The Team



- ▶ Sponsor / Champion
- ▶ Project Manager
 - Coordinate at statewide level
- ▶ Project Team
 - Designated “ACRE Advocate” at each co-op (non-CEO)



Cooperative.com: Tools for ACRE® Coordinators

Cooperative.com > Government Affairs > ACRE

Action Committee for Rural Electrification



Action Committee for Rural Electrification®


Founded in 1966, the Action Committee for Rural Electric cooperatives. ACRE supports candidates for state and protect the interests of electric cooperatives and the contribution of \$56, making it a truly grassroots PAC.


ACRE gives us a powerful, persuasive tool to counter political consumer-owners. Your participation in the nationwide nation's capital and in your state legislature.


ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action®


ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action® is the program to be politically engaged in ACRE and in other important of millions of dedicated co-op advocates, strengthening cooperatives and the communities they serve.


For more information on who can join ACRE and ACRE cooperative, please check out the links below or email the ACRE staff at acreteam@nreca.coop.


 Legal Guidelines


 ACRE Newsletters


 ACRE Map: Supported Candidates

 Resources

 Education/Training Materials

 ACRE Calendar

 Events/Annual Meetings

 ACRE Governance

Make a Personal Contribution

Many co-op employees can now join ACRE online using their credit cards! To get started or to learn more, click on the button below.

[Contribute to ACRE Now!](#)

Make a Personal Contribution

» Contribution FAQs

Legal Guidelines

Newsletters

ACRE Map: Supported Candidates

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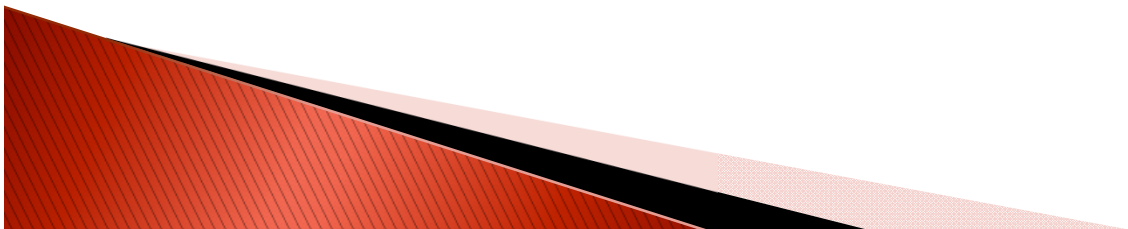
Contact the ACRE Staff

Role of the Leadership

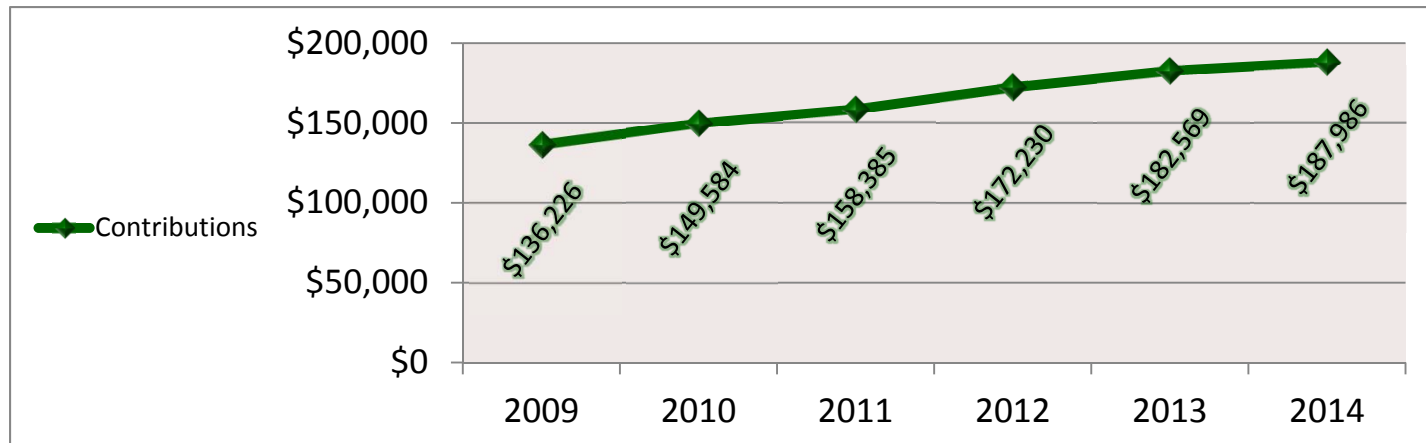
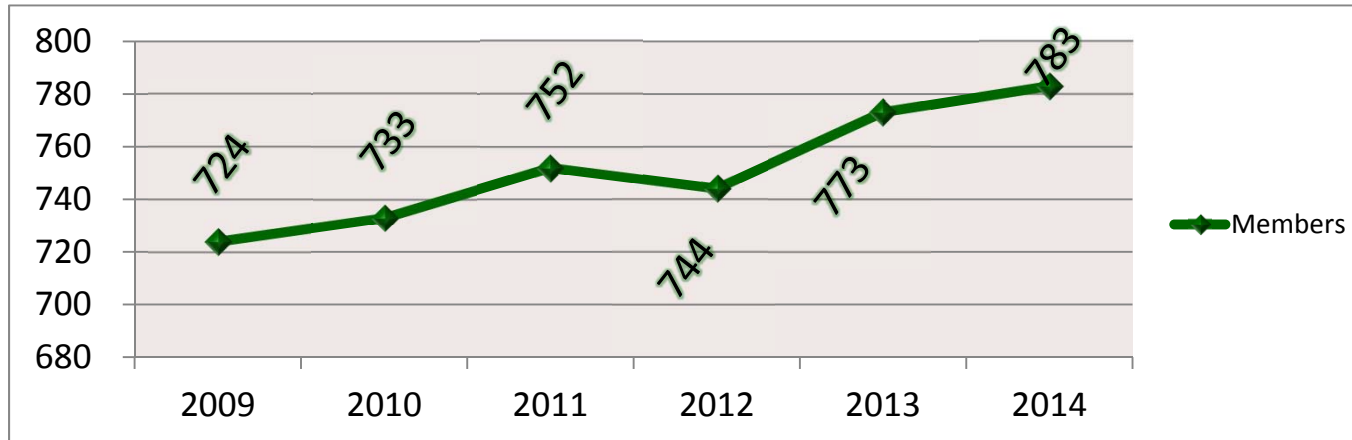


Setting the “tone at the top” by:

- ▶ Discussing the political game plan
- ▶ Requiring that a political game plan be included in the co-op’s strategic plan
- ▶ Allocating budget to grassroots activity
- ▶ Monitoring performance
- ▶ Evaluating results

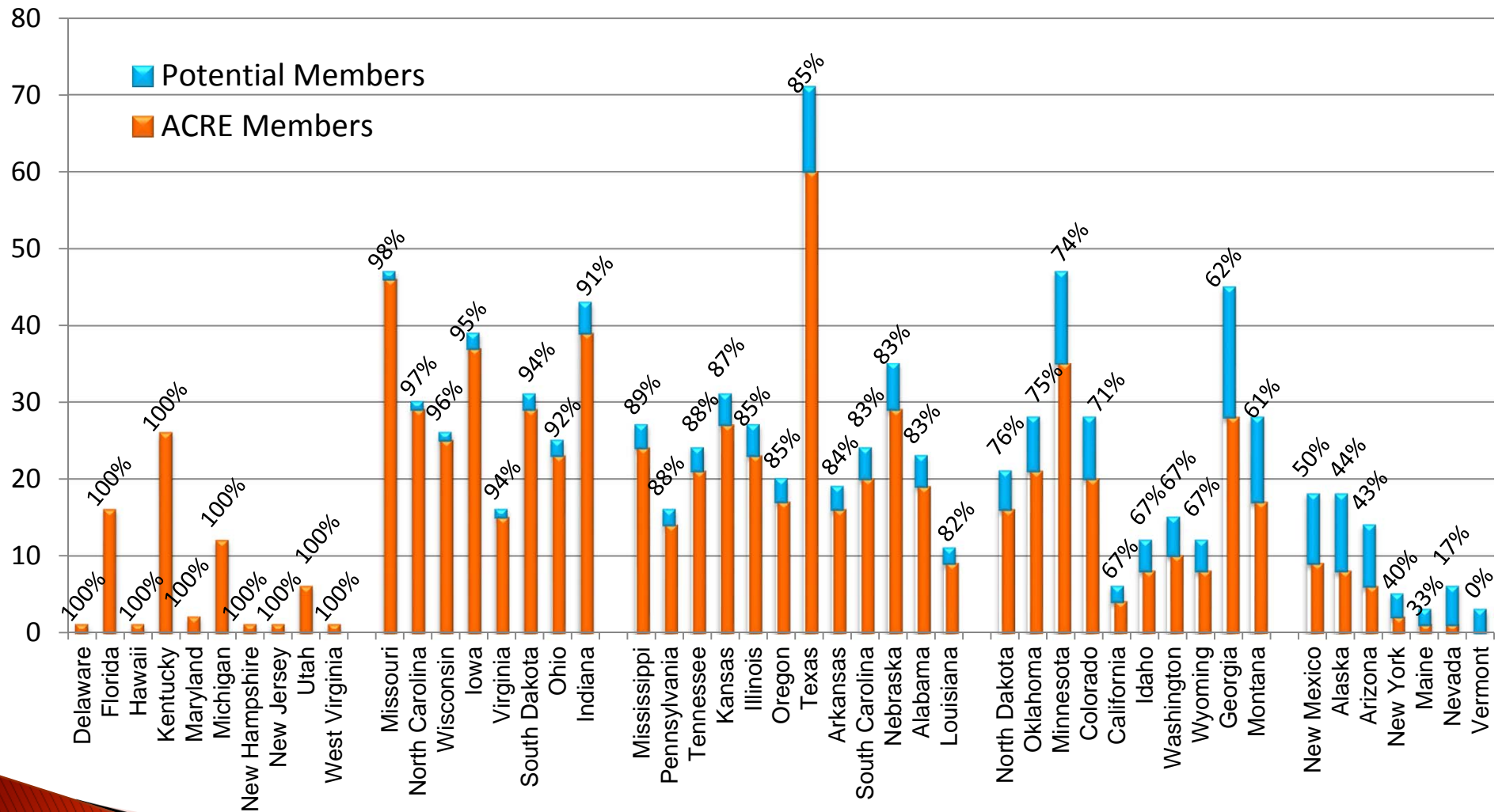


ACRE[®] MEMBERSHIP – CEO/GMs

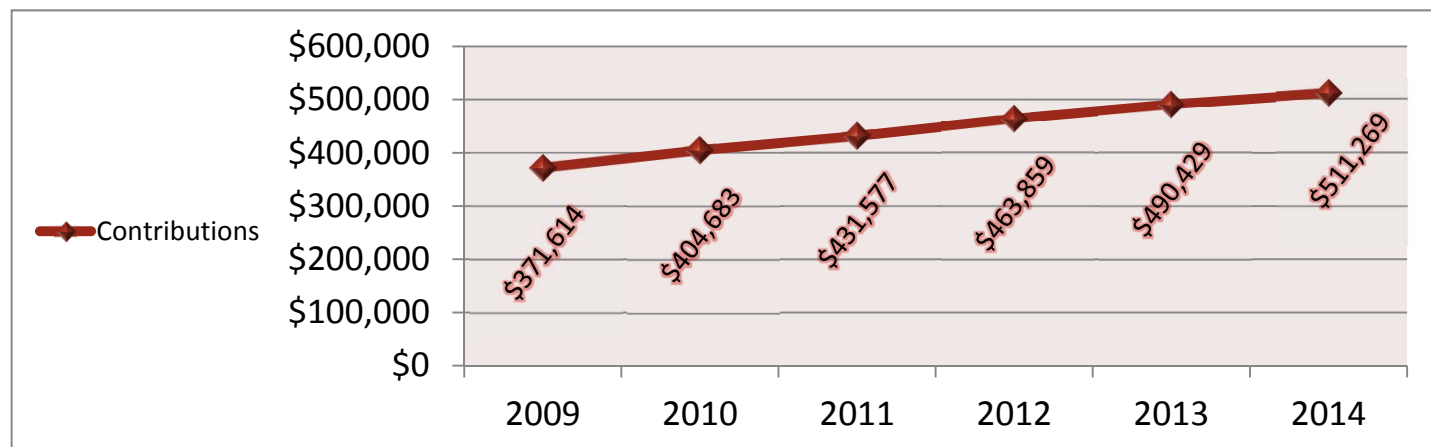
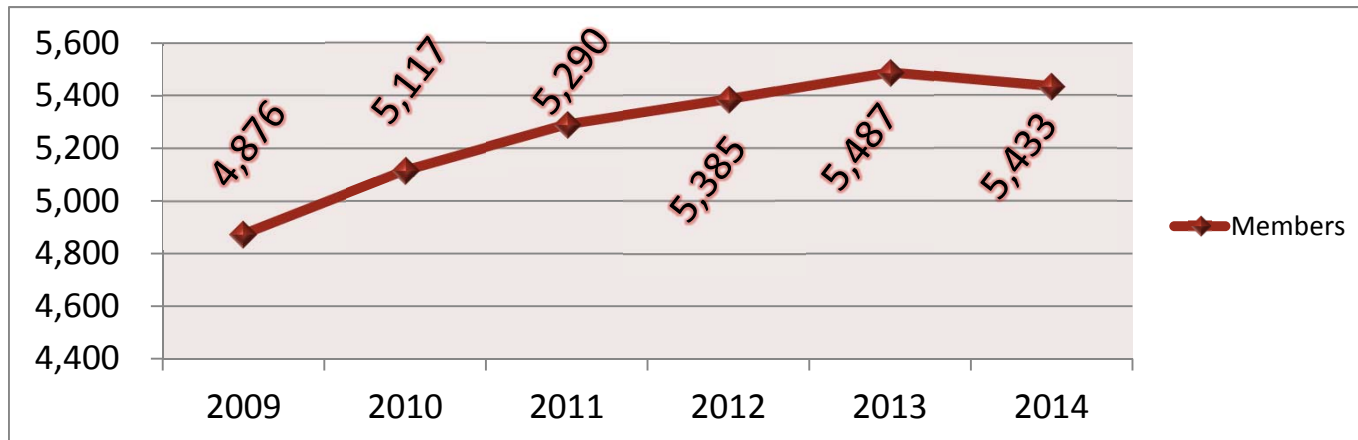


Based on a total of 963 active CEOs and General Managers.

ACRE® MEMBERSHIP – CEO/GMs BY STATE



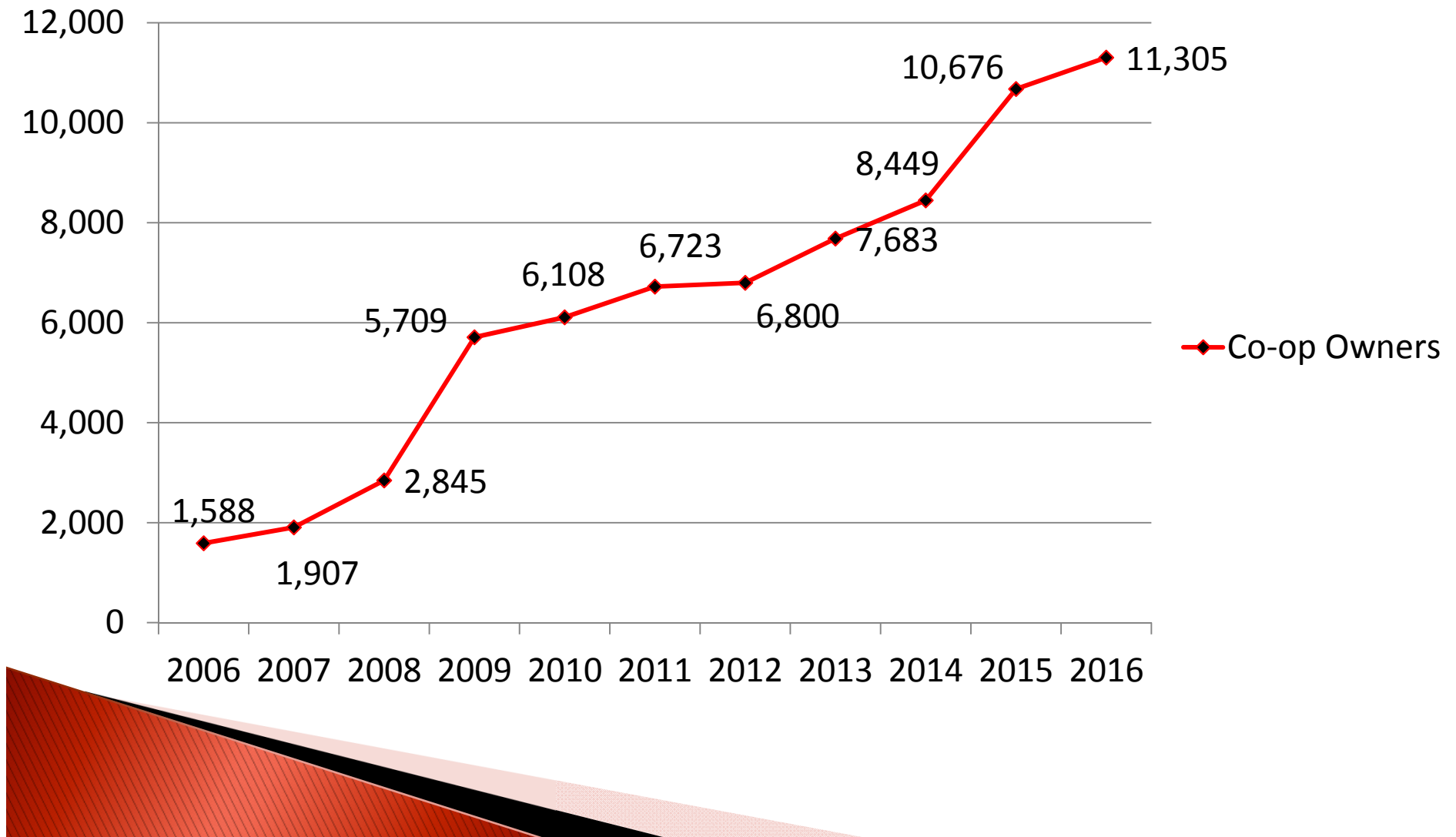
ACRE[®] MEMBERSHIP – DIRECTORS



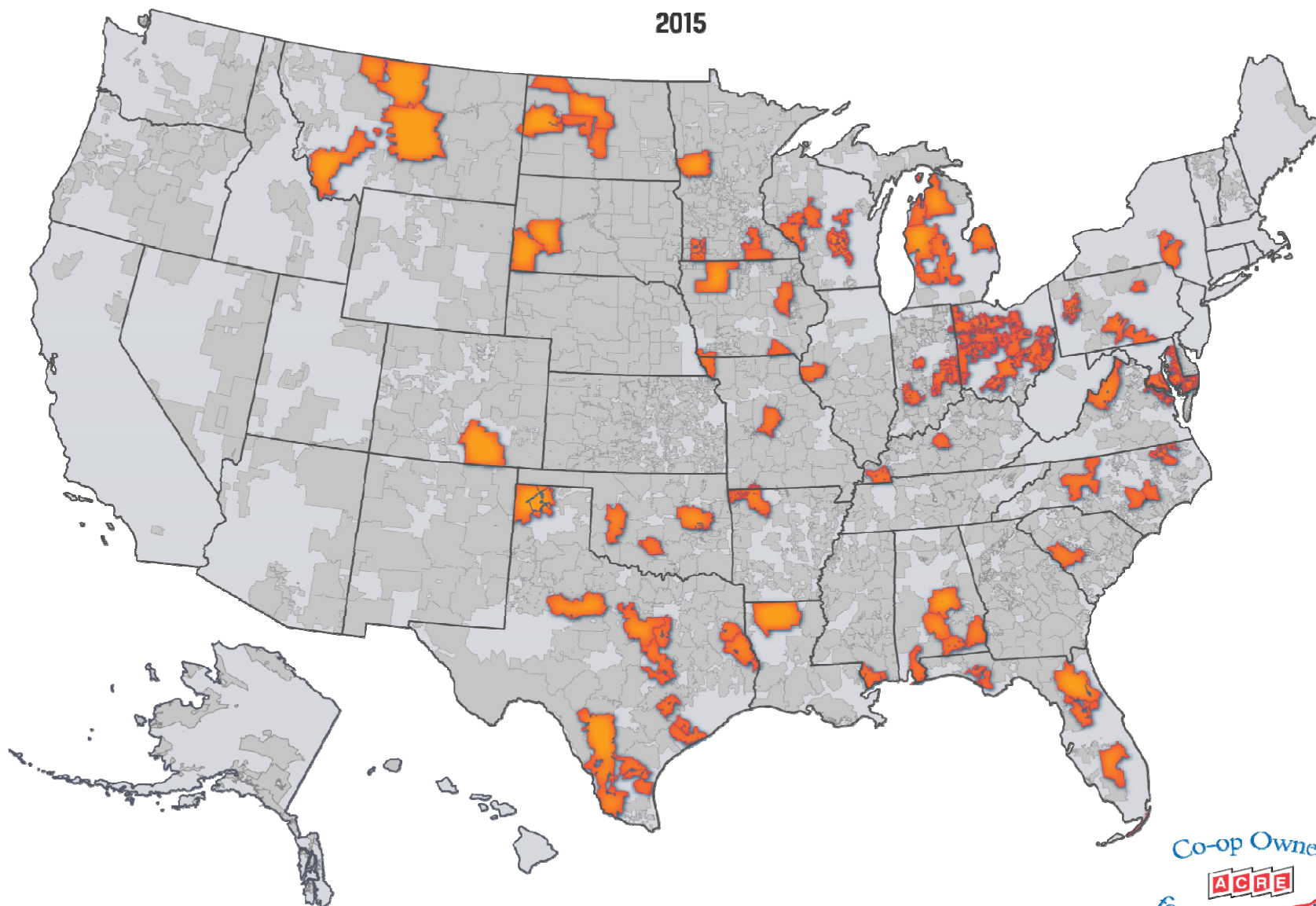
Based on a total of 7,699 active Directors.

ACRE CO-OP OWNERS FOR POLITICAL ACTION[®]

GROWTH TREND



Co-op Owners for Political Action 2015



REV. January 2016

BTS Strategic & Economic Analysis
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Co-op Owners
ACRE
for Political Action

2016 ACRE YEAR UPDATE-SAMPLE

ACRE:

- ▶ 23,811 total members
 - 879 members ahead of 2015 rate
 - 30 “Double President’s Club” Members
 - 130 Vice President’s Club Members
- ▶ \$1,063,138 in total receipts
 - \$50,800 ahead of 2015 rate

Co-op Owners:

- ▶ 9,878 members
 - 1,090 members ahead of 2015 rate
- ▶ \$141,652.20 in total receipts
 - \$3,243.29 ahead of 2015 rate
- ▶ 21 Co-ops with 1% or more participation in Co-op Owners
 - Newest states with co-ops to join those ranks: LA & PA



ACRE® EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES


▶ **Annual ACRE Training Camp**

- June 7-8, 2015 at NRECA Headquarters
- 15 ACRE Coordinators from 11 different statewide associations & individual co-ops

▶ **NEW! ACRE Educational Webinars**

- 40 ACRE Coordinators and CEOs from 17 co-ops in Ohio (including 6 directors)
- 20 ACRE Coordinators and CEOs from xx co-ops in Tennessee

▶ **NEW! ACRE On-Site Workshops**

- 24 ACRE Coordinators from 17 co-ops in Arkansas
 - 10 ACRE Coordinators from 8 co-ops in Pennsylvania & New Jersey
 - 6 ACRE Coordinators from 6 co-ops in Utah, Nevada & Wyoming
- 

ACRE® 50TH ANNIVERSARY

- ▶ Working with Marketing/Communications to develop strategic media/marketing plan for 50th Anniversary
- ▶ Goals:
 - Connect the ACRE brand and America's Electric Cooperatives (for our members and on Capitol Hill)
 - Grow ACRE in dollars and memberships
 - Celebrate the 50th Anniversary of ACRE
- ▶ Nationally focused messaging; tools & resources for co-ops to use to market & promote the program; increased ACRE presence at scheduled events & conferences





CELEBRATING
50 YEARS

OF AMERICA'S ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVES TAKING
ACTION



NATIONAL ACRE® CHALLENGE

Goals:

- ▶ 2016:
 - 100% CEO ACRE participation (currently 55%)
 - 100% Director ACRE participation (currently 42%)
 - Co-op Owners: 130 co-ops, 33 states, 13,000+ members

Challenge:

- ▶ Help us grow!
- ▶ Encourage your statewide and distribution co-op Directors to support ACRE
- ▶ ACRE Champions

Increased ACRE Outreach Opportunities:

- ▶ What's in it for me? Collateral in development
- ▶ Increased information sharing to update progress & evaluate results

