

Wisconsin Farm Electric Council, Inc. Strategic Plan 1994 - 2000

Mission Statement: To initiate, develop, support and coordinate education, research, and communication programs on significant and emerging rural energy issues for the consumer, energy suppliers and allied industries through cooperative efforts of council members.

Purposes

- To initiate, support, provide and coordinate programs and activities that will encourage the efficient and safe use of energy on farms and in rural areas.
- To identify, encourage and support research that will provide technology for new and improved uses of energy in agriculture.
- To promote safe and proper wiring, installation and use of electrical equipment.
- To serve as a primary source of information on proper, efficient and safe use of energy on farms and in rural areas.
- To work and cooperate with educational institutions, agencies, allied groups and organizations in developing and conducting educational programs including new and emerging issues in the use of energy in agriculture and food production.

Audience

Energy supplier personnel

Electrical equipment industry:

Engineering/Development

Marketing/Sales/Distribution

Dealers/Installers

Agricultural/Rural energy consumers

Electricians

Education Network

University Extension/Teaching

Vocational Agricultural Vocational

Technical Training

Research Institutions

Youth Organizations; 4-H, Future Farmers of America

Farm Organizations

Agricultural Media

Regulatory agencies

Public Service Commission

Department of Industry Labor & Human Relations

Department of Agriculture, Trade, and

Consumer Protection

Department of Natural Resources

Services

- Educational energy programs; Stray voltage investigators training course, Annual WFEC conference, National and state electric code updates.
- Open forum for members to discuss rural electric issues.
- Source of information and expertise on rural electric issues.
- Education at state agricultural events; Farm Progress days, Wisconsin Frame Builders Association and Wisconsin Potato and Vegetable Growers Association Conferences.
- Coordination of utility efforts in communication with electrical equipment industry, product information and testing and research and education programs.
- Response to critical rural electric issues and challenges.
- Participation in state electric code revision process.

Wisconsin Farm Electric Council, Incorporated

- Planning Guidelines

Rural Energy Issues

- Reliability of energy supply
- Electric power quality.
- Rural electric distribution system capacity, 3 phase availability and cost.
- Farm wiring and safety, cost and availability of farm wiring materials.
- Lack of integration of electrical system into farm planning and construction.
- Future of rural economy - Characteristics of consumers in the future.
- Electric load management. Demand Side Management, Direct load Control, Time of day rates,
- Load shifting, Consumer incentives.
- Poor image of rural distribution system maintenance, and upgrade.
- Difficulty of locating electric generation, transmission and electric and gas distribution facilities, due to growing public concerns.
- Side effects of electricity use (EMF, stray voltage, 'electrical trespass', 'objectionable currents')
- Increasing shortage of agricultural staff and expertise in Utilities.
- Increasing electrical demands of customers.
- Reduced emphasis on agricultural loads with declining number of agricultural customers.
- Lack of new agricultural electric technology development.
- Need for centralized, credible source of rural energy information and data.

Strengths

- Knowledgeable, interested members.
- Established functioning structure.
- Recognized record of performance.
- All major rural power suppliers are represented and involved.
- Diverse representation of membership, from field staff to management.
- Promotes unity and uniformity between energy suppliers.
- Strong support-financially sound
- Useful and well-attended educational programs. Small group encourages working together and focus on major issues.
- Provides central contact to key resources; National Food and Energy Council, Electric Councils in other states, American Society of Agricultural Engineers, Universities IEEE.

Weaknesses

- Lack of time available from board members, no formal staff.
- Need clearer vision of purpose and plan, members goals differ.
- Need better recognition and credibility outside WFEC.
- Board members have varied roles and responsibilities within their organizations resulting in absence of appropriate decision makers at council meetings.
- Limited official ties with trade allied organizations.
- Need for improved communications with council members and public.
- Need for better continuity and focus of education programs.
- Need for broader representation on council, i.e. Municipal utilities, Trade allies.

Key Results Areas

- Industry leadership
- Member service and education
- Research and development
- Communication with members and public
- Cooperation among members
- Improved quality of service

WFEC Goals and Strategies 1994-2000

Long Range Planning

Goal: Develop a long range plan for the Wisconsin Farm Electric Council for 1993-2000.

Action Plan:

1. Conduct a planning workshop with council board members to identify key issues, concerns and needs for future programming (July 1993).
2. Establish long-range goals (1995-2000) for WFEC (fall 1993).
3. Establish 1994 - 95 action plans (fall of 1993).
4. Develop process for annual review and update of long range goals and establishing action plan for following year (end of 1993).

Structure and Organization

Goal: Update the Farm Electric Council structure, mission, objectives and articles and by-laws.

Action Plan:

1. Update WFEC mission statement, purposes and objectives (1993).
2. Communication to membership of strategic plan (1994 conference).
3. Develop job descriptions for board of directors.
4. Reestablish incorporation of WFEC through secretary of state (1993).
5. Establish standing as non-profit organization (1993).
6. Revise council structure to include associate and other types of members.
7. Review and revise dues structure and funding mechanisms to meet objectives.
8. Review name of council and possible name change to reflect changes made in scope and function of council.
9. Expand focus of council to rural energy issues; farm, residential, small industry, and agricultural processors.

Education and Member Services

Goal: Provide conferences and educational opportunities on significant and emerging issues and concerns identified by WFEC.

Action Program:

1. Plan and conduct 1994 annual conference (fall 1993).
2. Identify and prioritize educational needs, plan educational strategy, schedule, develop and conduct special educational programs.
3. Identify and develop targeted curricula and materials on identified topics for educational institutions; High school, Vocational Agriculture, Technical Education, University Undergraduate and Extension.
4. Develop plan for providing education and information at agricultural events.

Research

Goal: Identify and support rural energy research.

Action Plan:

1. Review existing research and efforts and develop contacts with key organizations; University of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Center for Demand Side Research, American Society of Agricultural Engineers, National Food and Energy Council, Electric Power Research Institute, Cornell Agricultural Energy Program.
2. Identify and prioritize common research needs
3. Develop research plan and time line for identified issues.
4. Coordinate funding to implement research, e.g. grants from federal, state and industry groups.

WFEC Goals and Strategies 1994-2000

Communications

Goal: Establish WFEC as the primary source of information on agricultural and rural energy issues.

Action Plan:

1. Publish newsletter for membership to inform on upcoming events, current issue and aid in educational objectives.
2. Develop and promote speakers bureau on agricultural and rural energy issues.
3. Develop plan and mechanism for coordinated news releases on rural energy issues.
4. Identify key agricultural media personnel, develop relationship with agriculture media, and send periodic news release on current topics.

Allied Organizations

Goal: Broaden and increase interaction with allied organizations

Action Plan:

1. Establish/maintain formal communication link with allied groups:
State; Wisconsin Utilities Association, Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association, Wisconsin Center for Demand Side Research, Wisconsin Demand Side Demonstration, Wisconsin Public Power Inc., Municipal Electrical Utilities of Wisconsin, Municipal Wholesale Power Group, State of Wisconsin regulatory agencies.
National; American Society of Agricultural Engineers, National Food and Energy Council, Cornell Agricultural Energy Program, Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers Rural Electric Power Institute.
2. Establish formal communication link with key electrical equipment industry personnel; wiring materials, dairy equipment, and electrical equipment manufacturers.

Specialized Technical Services

Goal: Provide specialized technical services to members

Action Plan:

1. Investigate potential of offering fee-based consulting service.
2. Coordinate review and recommendations of sale and service tools, computer hardware and software, energy audit software, stray voltage test equipment.

Staffing and Financing

Goal: Provide staff and budget to meet short and long term plans and objectives of WFEC.

Action Plan:

1. Identify staff required to meet WFEC objectives.
2. Develop job description for staff position.
3. Develop funding plan for staff position, Fee for service, increased dues, conference fees, increased membership/dues.
4. Consider redirect of funds from NFEC to WFEC.
5. Obtain grants for federal, state and industry sources.