



## News Release

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**Contact Person:** Kurt Brautigam

**Phone:** 601.261.2348 or 228.861.0508 (cell)

**Email:** kbrautigam@smepa.coop

### **SMEPA Leads Cooperative Renewables Effort**

South Mississippi Electric Power Association (SMEPA) is a founding member of the newly created National Renewables Cooperative Organization (NRCO), a joint venture of the National Generation and Transmission (G&T) Managers Association and NRECA.

The organization's goals are to assist cooperatives nationwide in their efforts to develop new, economically viable renewable energy resources, while also enhancing the use of renewable technology currently available. Electric cooperatives across the country are now in the process of establishing a wide variety of renewable energy requirements and goals, and the new organization plans to help with research and development.

Jim Compton, SMEPA's General Manager/CEO, has been elected to the new organization's 15-member board of directors. The board includes ten G&T managers, with SMEPA and Oglethorpe Power (Georgia) representing cooperatives in the southeastern U.S.

"At this point, it is difficult to pin down exactly how best to develop renewable resources, because what works in one area of the country may not work in another area," says Compton. "This cooperative effort will try to help identify the best possible resources and assist with a coordinated plan to bring them on line. We hope to be able to identify renewable projects for Mississippi and our region. There will be co-ops of every size participating, so we want to ensure they can do so affordably and without unnecessary risks and duplication."

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NRCO will provide expertise and research tools needed to search for and evaluate renewable opportunities and projects. Several states have already adopted required renewable standards for utilities. Some national legislative initiatives are also considering making renewable sources mandatory components of any future energy policies.

“There is much to be explored regarding renewables,” Compton adds. “At this point, the demand required to keep up with ever-increasing customer growth far exceeds the potential for renewable sources, but every new source is important because the needs are so great. We want to find options that will be a good fit on the not-for-profit side of the electric industry, as well as what is beneficial for our members, if national standards for renewables are enacted.”

South Mississippi Electric, a generation and transmission cooperative headquartered in Hattiesburg, is owned by the eleven distribution cooperatives for which it provides wholesale power. South Mississippi Electric and its members are committed to delivering reliable, not-for-profit electric service to more than half the land area of Mississippi. Each day, more than 400,000 consumers in 56 counties are served via 56,000 miles of transmission and distribution lines throughout the system, demonstrating *The Power of Twelve*.

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