

**2017 Environmental Focus Group Report – to be presented at the 2018 Annual Meeting business meeting.**

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## **Focus Group response –**

Platte-Clay has a “Member Viewpoint” blog set up on the website that has been in place for several years. It was communicated extensively through the monthly newsletter for a year. It is still available online and what you see is what has been received. There is a section of the blog specifically titled “Climate Change” that only has a few posts from the same member. Platte-Clay has been including relevant environmental information in their newsletter, the “Northland Connection.”

Platte-Clay does not produce power, they are a distribution co-op. They are one of 51 distribution co-ops that purchase power under a long-term contract with Associated Electric Cooperative. Associated has a diverse mix of power to ensure reliability and affordability, including 750 MW of wind and 478 MW of hydroelectric power. In 2016, 21% of Associated's power came from renewable sources. It was not mandated but they've done it because they wanted to be environmentally responsible. Further, Associated has invested over \$1.1 billion to reduce emissions and improve air quality at their power plants to proactively meet and exceed regulations.

With their current capacity, they don't project needing any additional capacity additions until 2035. With their proactive

and innovative environmental stewardship, they have reduced SO<sub>2</sub> (sulfur dioxide) emissions 90%, reduced NO<sub>x</sub> (nitrogen oxides) emissions up to 90%, and reduced mercury emissions up to 90% years ahead of regulations. Associated also has programs in place to protect and preserve wildlife, including peregrine falcons, Indiana bats, and monarch butterflies. Associated has received 2 national awards for its mining land reclamation from the U.S. Department of Reclamation, after a tough decision to close its mining operation in Missouri and purchase cleaner, low-sulfur coal from Wyoming.

Platte-Clay also works to be good stewards of the environment in ways within their control. They follow all EPA regulations in

daily operations. Platte-Clay has recycling programs in place and an aggressive energy efficiency program including energy audits, weatherization rebates, heat pump rebates, and energy efficient products. They have also done several community service projects over the past few years including planting 55 trees which offset 2600 lbs/year of CO<sub>2</sub> through the natural process of photosynthesis. They planted a monarch garden at the Kearney office in 2017 to help protect and preserve the species that is declining and approaching protected status. They partner with the Conservation Federation of Missouri to help protect and promote the wildlife and natural resources in Missouri. Platte-Clay installs wildlife protection on equipment as a win-win situation to protect wildlife and minimize

outages and blinks. Platte-Clay has several opportunities for members to voluntarily purchase renewable power, including the first utility community solar array in the state. Constructed in 2015, the solar project is 1/3 subscribed with 130 panels out of 416. Pricing for the solar energy represents true cost of the solar energy. Although members are interested in renewable energy, they have demonstrated that most are not willing to pay more for it. Platte-Clay also has a GreenPower program that allows members to purchase 100 percent of their home's consumption in green power if they choose to do so. The GreenPower charge is an additional 0.025 per kWh consumed. Since the inception of the program, over 2.4 million kWhs have been sold to Platte-Clay members. Platte-Clay works with members

who decide to install their own solar or wind systems with a net metering program to ensure safe connection to the electric grid and allow members to sell excess energy produced back to the cooperative.

Throughout the course of the year, the Focus Group did have discussions about their environmental concerns. At the end of the day, members expect affordability and reliability from their electric cooperative. The only way to ensure the reliability that members expect is through including baseload generation sources of coal, natural gas, or nuclear, which Associated does not have, in the generation mix. Members expect their lights to come on whenever they flip the switch.

The Focus Group discussed incorporating the environment into Platte-Clay's mission statement, and suggested it would be good for the Board to consider adding "environmentally conscious" into the mission statement to reflect the work that Platte-Clay and other parts of the three-tiered cooperative system in Missouri are already doing.

The Focus Group determined it was not necessary at this time to increase the cooperative's solar capacity. After extensive survey of the membership, Platte-Clay built the first utility community solar array that after two years is only 1/3 subscribed, with costs being true costs of the solar energy.

In conclusion, the Focus Group recommends that Platte-Clay is doing a good job of being environmental stewards in their daily operations and they continue to balance this with providing the affordable, reliable electricity that members expect.

At this time the Focus Group makes a recommendation that Platte-Clay is doing an adequate job and does not need to do anything further in regards to Tom Ruggieri's motion and comments at the 2017 annual business meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

2017 Platte-Clay Electric Cooperative

Member Focus Group