



# Annual General Meeting Report

## April 21, 2016

### Positioning and Communications

- ✓ The Board sought professional communication and positioning advice to assist us in overcoming the notion that the Tomahawk REA had changed simply because of some operation decisions.
- ✓ The Board adopted many of the positioning recommendations to ensure our members know the Board remains committed to the Tomahawk REA and the membership. Making the decision to choose a different DSO or entering into Agreement for Co-operation and Joint Venture with EQUUS was made to strengthen the Tomahawk REA, and REA positioning within Alberta.
- ✓ Strategies and activities the Board undertook to strengthen and confirm that we remain the Tomahawk REA today and to introduce the Tomahawk REA to prospective new members include, but are not limited to, the following.
  - Developed a logo for use on our documentation – clearly identifying us
  - Developed a mission statement to ground and guide the REA
  - Launched the [www.tomahawkrea.com](http://www.tomahawkrea.com) website which includes a member email comment form
  - The website also includes reciprocal links with our DSO, EQUUS, clearly defining our cooperative advantage and positioning us as an effective and efficient choice as an electricity distributor in our service area
  - Created official email addresses for Directors and listed contact information on the website
  - Distributed timely newsletters to members and copied other pertinent stakeholders (MLAs, etc.)
  - For social media savvy members, we created a Facebook page
  - Scheduled individual and group meetings with members – including an information session on October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015 followed by a mailer providing general detail to the whole membership
  - We attended a government relations seminar with other REAs to learn how to be more effective in communicating the REA message
  - We met with local MLAs to educate them on the role of REAs in Alberta and in particular, the Tomahawk REA
  - We have kept abreast of other REA activities in the province so we will be in a position to respond to any opportunities that may result from rulings and/or legislative changes and, in particular, those that can positively impact Tomahawk REA
  - We invested in some minimal, targeted radio advertising, in collaboration with EQUUS, to encourage prospective services to choose the Tomahawk REA

## Operations, Administration and Asset Management

- ✓ Increased operation insight was achieved through the regular reporting process from our new DSO and partner, EQUUS.
- ✓ With the Agreement for Co-operation and Joint Venture, EQUUS has established a series of operations and maintenance programs to ensure the effective, efficient operation of the Tomahawk REA distribution system.
- ✓ With the Agreement, the Tomahawk REA is able to offer an investment program that not only mitigates potential member installation costs allowing us to compete with the Investor Owned Utilities, while incorporating REA investment into the assets of our system.
- ✓ In the last year, our system asset value was increased with the replacement of 91 poles at a savings of \$85K , the identification and replacement of 55 non-working meters (ensuring our compliance with Measurement Canada) and investigation and repair, as possible, of several energy anomalies such as flickering lights. We would also like to thank the many members who took the time to inform us of their satisfaction with work that was completed by EQUUS.
- ✓ Annually Tomahawk REA and EQUUS will meet in a timely manner to discuss system requirements and enable the REA to establish rates to ensure our system remains viable. **We are pleased to report that the distribution tariff will not increase for this year.**
- ✓ With the Agreement for Co-operation and Joint Venture, we were able to utilize additional support mechanisms to offset costs (e.g., facilitating mailings from the EQUUS office in Innisfail eliminated the cost of a postage indicia).
- ✓ Tomahawk REA records are now computerized and held in an industry recognized software program with EQUUS, and there is a clear understanding and delineation they are Tomahawk REA files, unlike the previous DSO.
- ✓ Tomahawk REA members benefit from an assigned EQUUS Member Services Administrator – someone who is now familiar with our service area, our members and their needs.
- ✓ We are pleased to report we add 17 services this year, bring our total services to 689.
- ✓ The REA responded to the 3-month early cancellation by EPCOR of their RRO contract with Tomahawk REA and hired URICA Energy Management to develop a request for proposal (RFP). Only one of several companies presented with the RFP responded and in September, EQUUS became the Tomahawk REA RRO provider.



*Pictured right:  
Members networking at the 2016 Annual  
General Meeting.*

*Pictured left:  
Retiring Director Joyce Goerz being thanked  
for her commitment to the Tomahawk REA  
by Clint Schwalbe (left) and Dave Rogers  
(right).*



## Financial Management

- ✓ Cash flow management is more efficient as estimates from our DSO, EQUUS, are accurate and we are no longer faced with invoices far exceeding estimates and requiring payment within 15 days.
- ✓ With our improved records management, the Member Services Administrator and our Secretary/Treasurer are working collaboratively to ensure that all individuals receiving services from the REA have signed contracts.
- ✓ With the support of membership, we engaged a new accounting firm to perform our annual audit. We believe that our financials are better organized and incorporate all aspects of the REA finances.

## Organization Development

- ✓ Pursuant to a member inquiry, the Board realized that in accordance with the Rural Utilities Act, any person elected as a Director at an Annual General Meeting is elected for a three-year term. The only time a Director may serve for less than that is if they are appointed by the Board as a replacement. The Board apologizes for the error and confirms in this report that both Mike Kos and Wayne Tourneur are fulfilling three year terms, effective as of April 2015.
- ✓ The Board instituted several policies to support the ongoing successful operation of the REA.
- ✓ The Board, in response to member inquiries and interest, obtained legal advice and opinions to enable us to accurately respond to those members.
- ✓ The Board also sought legal advice regarding allegations against the Board, and individual Directors, and invested in resources to affirm our responsibilities as your elected Board having regards to directing and managing the affairs of the Tomahawk REA. We also developed a Director Code of Conduct which all of your Directors sign when elected or appointed.
- ✓ The Board attended a government relations seminar to learn more about dealing with various levels of government in pursuit of positioning the REA and making REA concerns known.
- ✓ The Board held 10 regular Board of Director meetings and organized and attended the 2015 AGM.
- ✓ An information session was hosted on October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015 to listen and respond, as we were able, to member questions. The Board has endeavored to incorporate information from that session in our activities.
- ✓ The Board responded to the inquiry initiated by the Director of Rural Utilities. This included accumulating significant documentation for viewing by the consultant, being available for personal interviews and seeking legal advice as to what information was appropriate to release. (For example, specific member information from certain documents was redacted having regard to the Privacy of Information Act.) The report has not been provided to us as of this printing.
- ✓ The Board appointed two Directors to a Communications Committee to ensure timely communication and to advise the Board on communication issues. Additionally the Board sought professional assistance in this activity as a result of the increase in communications and to provide advice as to best practices in effective communication.

## Member Engagement

- ✓ Acted on member input and worked diligently to ensure the Tomahawk REA would remain a successful REA.
- ✓ Increased communication with members via:
  - regular newsletters providing information on Tomahawk REA pertinent topics and members requesting electronic communication are now receiving information via email
  - other timely mailings including an AGM Highlights to ensure members unable to attend the 2015 AGM were informed
  - other pertinent mailings to keep membership up-to-date , including authorizing a member communique from EQUUS introducing their services and staff and the RRO status update
  - development of a website for member information and links to our DSO, EQUUS, for timely information such as pre-planned power outages. Conversely the EQUUS website links to the [www.tomahawkrea.com](http://www.tomahawkrea.com).
- ✓ Hosted an information session on October 27<sup>th</sup> and provided a follow up mailing to all members in response to questions and issues that arose at that meeting
- ✓ Responded to increased member inquiries (mail, email, and phone) regarding the REA
- ✓ Met with several REA members, as per their request, to respond to questions and concerns
- ✓ Ensured that members were aware of the Privacy of Information implications with regards to listing their personal information in an REA member register and ensured that member requests to exercise their right to privacy was implemented

Respectfully submitted,

*Tomahawk REA Board of Directors*

## Election Results

Cheryl Thomas was elected as Director for a three-year term, replacing retiring Director, Joyce Goerz.

For power troubles or service requests,  
please contact EQUUS.

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Onoway, Alberta T0E 1V0  
[www.equs.ca](http://www.equs.ca)



**Tomahawk**  
Rural Electrification Association

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*It is important to note that your electrical distribution system provider will always be the Tomahawk Rural Electrification Association, regardless of who supplies your electricity. Members will not be disadvantaged in any way based on their retailer choice. For a list of energy retailers, contact the Utilities Consumer Advocate. In Alberta, dial 310.4.UCA (310.4822) or [www.ucahelps.alberta.ca](http://www.ucahelps.alberta.ca).*