

MEPAV monitors development of state energy plan, studies

THE MUNICIPAL ELECTRIC Power Association of Virginia worked throughout the year to monitor the development of the state's official energy plan and the work of the State Corporation Commission in preparing its Energy Conservation Study, which was requested by the 2007 General Assembly. MEPAV also continued monitoring the deliberations of the Commission on Electric Utility Restructuring and the Virginia Coal and Energy Commission.

MEPAV and its legislative consultant, Thomas Dick, continued responding to issues important to the state's city and town-owned electric utilities. The association worked successfully to ensure that major changes to the laws governing electric service did not adversely affect its members.

The 2008 General Assembly considered several proposals that affect energy providers. The legislature adopted a measure that continued the Commission on Electric Utility Restructuring as the Commission on Electric Utility Regulation and extended its scheduled expiration until July 1, 2010. The commission had been set to expire on July 1. The municipal electric systems continue to be self-regulated by their local governments.

MEPAV was successful in preventing passage of any legislative requirement to establish a mandatory renewable portfolio standard for energy. Renewable energy can still be considered at the option of the locality. Because of the higher cost of renewable energy, a mandatory requirement to include this in power supply decisions would have increased the cost of power to municipal

customers. The association was also successful in preventing the passage of any requirements that might adversely affect ongoing power supply planning activities and establish unnecessary oversight requirements on the municipal electric utilities.



Tim Logwood
MEPAV President

The General Assembly also established the Virginia Commission on Energy and Environment as a legislative study commission. Its purposes include reviewing and recommending steps to implement the Virginia Energy Plan and the Climate Change Action Plan; promoting energy efficiency and energy conservation; identifying reliable supplies of energy; promoting

research and development in the field of alternative and renewable energy sources and recommending measures to secure Virginia's energy future. MEPAV will be working throughout the year to monitor and respond as needed to the work of this commission, the Governor's Commission on Climate Change, the Governor's Energy Policy Advisory Council and other legislative, regulatory or executive branch studies and initiatives.

Not only did MEPAV members meet to discuss legislation, the Engineering and Operations Committee held one meeting this year in Harrisonburg. There were 50 attendees representing eight utility members and 10 associate members. Attendees heard presentations on LED lighting applications, Arc flash, Department of Energy transformer efficiency standards, and American Public Power Association safety manual updates.

In addition to the Engineering & Operations meeting, the MEPAV Annual Conference was held in Virginia Beach May 21-23. The event

attracted vendors and utility members eager to learn and share information. The conference was attended by 105 members and guests, and supported by 33 businesses.

Speakers included Sen. Frank Wagner, who discussed Virginia's energy issues; Sue Kelly, vice president of policy analysis and general counsel for the American Public Power Association, who spoke about the critical federal issues facing public power; Howard Spinner, director of economics and finance for the State Corporation Commission, who discussed energy conservation programs in the state; and Richard Hirsh, director of the Consortium on Energy Restructuring at Virginia Tech, who talked about energy efficiency, renewable energy and innovation in Virginia's electric utility systems.

Now in its 54th year, the Municipal Electric Power Association of Virginia's mission continues to focus on meeting the needs of its members by providing support and information to those 16 localities that operate their own electric utilities. Municipal electric utilities in Virginia have effectively served their customer-owners since the late 1800s. Fostering a continuing spirit of cooperation and communication among Virginia's municipal electric systems is a high priority for the association. Coordination of legislative efforts with municipalities and other utilities is critical to the success of the organization.

Tim Logwood, assistant director of the electric department in Radford, serves as president. Executive Committee members are Mark Bly, director of power & light for Culpeper; A.K. Briele, director of the Electrical Department in Salem; and Lynn Short of B&T Services of Martinsville.

MEPAV is an affiliate of VML. Kimberly Pollard, a legislative associate at the league, serves as its executive secretary-treasurer. 