

In 2015, a small group of energy co-ops joined forces to create new retail energy opportunities in Alberta. They teamed up to form ACE.

In 1963, Polly Anna was learning something new. Known as Grandmother Powell to her family and a few other volunteers, she was mastering the art of gluing plastic pipe. All over Alberta, farmers still had wood piles. They bought coal and relied on propane trucks, because gas companies couldn't afford to bring natural gas to rural homes. The distance from farm to farm was prohibitive. Grandmother Powell wanted heat and, along with her neighbours, took the matter into her own hands. Literally. As part of Alberta's first gas co-op, she put pipe in the ground herself to help build a distribution system that is now part of the world's largest rural gas system.

It wasn't the first time this had happened in Alberta.

In the 1950s, the Investor Owned Utilities had refused to deliver electricity to rural districts, so neighbours did it themselves. They planted poles, rigged up powerlines and formed electricity co-ops. These Rural Electrification Associations or REAs still bring electricity to many parts of the province today.



When Grandmother Powell helped dig trenches and lay pipe in the 1960s, she understood you can't wait for change. You need to initiate it.

Today, Alberta Co-operative Energy—ACE—agrees. Throughout the province, all customers can now receive co-op prices. REAs and co-ops usually serve specific districts. But with ACE, Edmonton and Calgary high rises, homes and businesses can buy electricity and natural gas without mark-up. All Albertans can pay the discounted prices co-op members charge themselves. Everyone can also be part of the new energy co-operative. ACE customers can become part of the SPARK Green Offset Program and invest in green energy in Alberta. ACE customers can help transform the power grid by supporting innovative green-energy producers building systems in their own neighbourhoods.

In the 1950s and '60s, the REAs and gas co-ops showed Alberta that communities can own energy. And when we do, everyone benefits. Individual members have a stake in running a good business. Prices stay low. Customers get good service.

ACE is a second-tier cooperative whose members include Alberta Co-operative Energy membership holders and the following existing energy businesses:

- Northern Lights Energy and Power - Incorporated 2011 (a wholly owned subsidiary of North Parkland Power Rural Electrification Association Ltd. which was incorporated 2000 as a merger of four REA's and is cooperatively owned by 2800 members)
- Merit Energy & Power – Incorporated in 2013 (a wholly owned subsidiary of Lakeland REA Ltd. which was established in 2001 as a merger of five and then again in 2010, Lakeland REA grew once more when it merged with two more REA's, increasing the membership to over 1,400 co-operative members)
- Gas Alberta Energy – Formed as a joint partnership with Gas Alberta Inc. and Horizon Energy in 2003 (Gas Alberta Inc. is a private corporation owned by its 74 natural gas utility customers (i.e. gas co-ops) that serve approximately 75% of the natural gas franchise areas in Alberta).

ACE effectively merges the capacities of its members who collectively have over 50 years experience in the energy industry and is able to provide electricity and retail gas services throughout Alberta.

Today, ACE is ensuring that Albertans continue to own their power and that our future right here at home is innovative and green.