

GULF COAST POWER ASSOCIATION: THE FIRST 30 YEARS

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I. Mission Statement

The Gulf Coast Power Association (“GCPA”) is a non-profit organization of individuals and corporations mostly in the Texas and Louisiana Gulf Coast region who are interested in promoting and sustaining a healthy competitive power market. The GCPA’s mission is to promote an improved understanding of issues and opportunities impacting contemporary power markets. This is achieved through a newsletter, meetings, conferences, and plant site visits, creating many opportunities to learn and interchange information and ideas. Benefits of membership include discounts on registration fees at most meetings and conferences, the newsletter, and other information on events of special interest.

II. Overview

Over its first two decades of existence, both the Association and its programs have evolved to reflect the significant changes in the electric industry, particularly in the Gulf Coast region. The organization’s initial focus was on cogeneration’s technical and regulatory issues surrounding the 1980s implementation in the Gulf Coast area of the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978 (“PURPA”), given its ability to provide lower cost and more efficiently produced power. The organization’s name at that time was the Gulf Coast Cogeneration Association (“GCCA”), and its members were predominately cogeneration developers and suppliers.

Legislative and regulatory changes in the early and middle 1990s brought Exempt Wholesale Generators and transmission “open access” for their “merchant plants” to the fore, and set the stage for the electric competition debate. This eventually led to the creation of a competitive wholesale market in the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (“ERCOT”), and the 1999 enactment in Texas of Senate Bill 7, which unleashed the competitive retail market and restructured electric utilities inside ERCOT. Responding to these changes, the organization’s name was changed to the GCPA in the mid-1990s, and it refocused its efforts to provide an open forum on competitive power issues and market solutions to industry problems. This change brought new members and voices to the exchange of information and ideas at our meetings and events. Members now include Retail Electric Providers, Market Aggregators, Qualified Scheduling Entities (“QSEs”), Power Generation Companies, and Transmission and Distribution Service Providers, among others.

As the industry continues to evolve, GCPA is committed to closely monitor the sense of the current membership so that GCPA’s vibrancy and effectiveness in its third decade will continue and reflect the changing needs and interests of our membership.

III. Creation of the Gulf Coast Cogeneration Association: An Industry Specific Initiative

In the early 1980s, an initial group of about 12 young engineers interested in cogeneration after passage of PURPA, began to meet informally to talk about the subject. The earliest available written record attributable to what became known as the GCCA is dated June 18, 1984, and lists the first few individual members, including Hal Jarrell who until quite recently has remained a member for almost all of the intervening years. At this same time, a bank account was opened with a deposit of \$312, and by year's end the account balance had reached \$2,121.

Initially, GCCA was formed as a Houston chapter of the International Cogeneration Society ("ICS"). While the ICS originated mainly from interests in the Northeast U.S., nine franchised chapters were formed around the country, including California, Chicago, New York, New England, and Houston. ICS put on successful annual conferences in 1983-1986, but disagreements between the national organization and the regional chapters lead to separation in 1986. On July 15, 1986, the Houston group declared its own independence from ICS.

During this period, there were several "firsts" which left an indelible stamp on the Association's nature and character:

- In 1984, our first corporate member, Cogen Technologies, joined on July 30. Corporate members have since been an important part of the successful financing of the Association's various educational and networking activities.
- The first issue of a newsletter was published on January 15, 1985. Eventually a monthly newsletter began to be published which has been a great source of information about the industry participants, regulatory developments, and Association members.
- That same August, the first lunch meeting was held in Houston with a talk on "Gulf State Utilities' Cogeneration Efforts and Cogeneration Policies." From that time on to this day, lunch meetings have been held in Houston every month with very few exceptions.
- The first public meeting, a half-day conference entitled "Cogen in the Oil Patch," was held on May 20, 1986. Around 80 delegates attended plus speakers and chairs, and state regulatory commissioners from Texas, Louisiana, and Oklahoma participated as panelists. As the Association continued to put on more and more conferences over the years, it has successfully carved out a niche of presenting programs of the highest quality.

- In November 1986, Houston Lighting and Power Company (“HL&P”) became the first electric utility corporate member, despite the company’s strong opposition to cogeneration and consistent condemnation of what it called cogenerators’ “obscene profits.” Even before the Association expanded its focus beyond cogeneration in the 1990s, the Association was viewed by the electric utilities as a key forum for engaging in the important dialogue with the cogeneration industry on how cogeneration fit into the electric industry.

At the September 15, 1986 Board meeting, membership dues were set at \$20 for individuals and \$250 for corporate members, and the name “Gulf Coast Cogeneration Association” was officially adopted. At this time, work was started on a first draft of Association Bylaws.

IV. The Early Years: Building a Successful Association Focused on Cogeneration

While the local group was establishing a solid footing and building a credible presence in the Gulf Coast region, there was a sense that a continued affiliation with a national organization was needed. Acting on that sense, the former chapters of ICS met later in 1986 in Houston and organized the American Cogeneration Association (“ACA”). Officers were elected and included Houston GCCA member Frank O’Brien as the ACA Treasurer.

The GCCA Board persuaded ACA to put on an annual conference in 1987, and loaned ACA \$2,000 to finance it. GCCA Directors Tommy John (believed to be the longest continuously active member of the Association), Frank O’Brien, and David Olver organized and ran the conference at the Houston Adams Mark Hotel on September 3, 1987. It was adjudged very successful, and eventually the GCCA \$2,000 loan was repaid. However, the geographic spread of ACA and its leadership made it difficult to build on this initial success. GCCA was not directly involved in the next ACA conference, and gradually drifted away from ACA.

During this early period, members of GCCA studied notices of the Public Utility Commission of Texas (“PUC”) and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (“FERC”) and related witness testimony, attended regulatory public hearings, and found several cases on which to submit substantive comments regarding cogeneration. For example, on June 15, 1986, a rebuttal was submitted to testimony of HL&P before the U.S. Senate Energy Committee regarding cogeneration rules. Later, testimony was submitted in a Gulf States Utilities (“GSU”) rate case concerning a proposed tariff that would allow GSU to negotiate industrial rates when cogeneration was proposed, down to the point where the cogeneration project was no longer economic. Key organization members also participated in telephone conferences with publications such as

Cogen Report and *The Cogeneration Letter* regarding hearings before the Senate Energy Committee.

In 1987, the State of Texas granted incorporation status to GCCA and exemption from the state franchise tax. In 1988, the Bylaws were finalized after discussions with the IRS that required the Bylaws to include a section on “Partisan activities and Grassroots Lobbying.” This states that the Association shall not participate in any political campaign on behalf of or against any candidate for public office. In October of 1988 the IRS approved federal tax-exempt status under the Tax Code. The first federal tax filing was made in May 1989. Membership at the end of 1987 was 97 individuals and 11 corporate members.

In 1988, with the organization’s growth requiring handling of more administrative details, the Board decided to retain paid staff to accomplish the work of the Association. David Olver, who had recently retired from Brown & Root, was asked to submit a proposal to be Executive Director. His proposal was accepted, and he remained in this position until December 31, 2003. In January 1990, he took over preparation of a monthly newsletter, which had been issued irregularly previously. The Newsletter has been published monthly ever since.

In 1988, the Association held two conferences – in Houston during May, and in Austin during November. The Board was looking for additional conference venues outside of Houston, and the PUC Staff was interested in learning more about cogeneration, hence the Austin event. With active members centered around Houston and Austin, a Spring conference has been held in the Houston area and a Fall conference in Austin each year ever since.

In 1989, GCCA agreed to coordinate its Spring conference with Texas A&M’s Industrial Energy Technology Conference (“IETC”), holding the GCCA event for one day ahead of the IETC meeting but with a common exhibit area. This continued for the next several years until 1996.

As part of an effort to broaden the organizations outreach, two lunch meetings were held in Dallas in the late 1980s, the topics being repeats of Houston lunch events, and conferences were also held in Baton Rouge in May 1989, and in Dallas in November 1990 in cooperation with the North Texas Chapter of the Association of Energy Engineers (“AEE”).

In 1990, then-President of the GCCA John Hart made a survey of all the cogeneration, self-generation, and small power producers in the Texas. Data collected included physical location, classification, distribution by utility service area, and megawatts by utility area. This information was included in a comprehensive 16-page article published by the magazine *Cogeneration & Resource Recovery* in its September/October 1990 issue. The article was co-authored by John Hart, Taylor Davis of Norton & Blair, and Gene Simmons of HL&P.

V. The Second Decade: Beyond Just Cogeneration

In 1994, the Board recognized that the interests of the Association's members were shifting and broadening. The "easiest" and most obvious of the larger cogeneration prospects had mostly been developed, and strong interest had developed in Independent Power Projects ("IPPs") – competitive power projects owned and operated by independent, non-utility companies and not covered by PURPA. Congress had stimulated this development by passing the Energy Policy Act of 1992, which authorized Exempt Wholesale Generators ("EWGs"), the formal name for IPPs.

The Association revised and broadened its focus to "promote the growth and preserve the health of a competitive power market that is available to all consumers." GCCA prepared and distributed a statement of future policy, entitled "Response to a Changing Industry," which stated:

The Association will provide an open forum to raise competitive power issues and to help resolve industry wide problems. It will stimulate the debate on competitive power and promote the growth of the competitive power market by exchanging information and views with the public and other stakeholders in the electric power market.

The name was also changed to Gulf Coast Power Association, to reflect its broader focus and membership base, and the Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation were revised accordingly.

The Association's bank balance, which had reached \$8,649 in 1988, increased steadily and fairly rapidly to around \$85,000 in 1994 and \$170,000 in 2000. Membership reached 133 individuals and 17 corporate members in 1989, 165 and 22 in 1990, and increased to a peak of about 260 individuals in 2000. Corporate membership reached 36 in 2003 and exceeded 40 in 2004. Though the number of individual and corporate members can vary from year to year for a variety of reasons – change of company focus, change of an individual's job, etc., individual and corporate memberships have continued to increase, in part due to the efforts that were made to broaden the segments of the industry represented in the membership ranks.

The industry downturn and the demise of energy trading activities in the early 2000s had a short term impact on GCPA membership, conference attendance, and the Association's finances. However, all recovered nicely in a short period of time afterward, because of the quality of the Association's programming and its relevance to the increasingly active competitive markets. At the end of its second decade, the Association is a financially stable and benefits from the wide range of talent amongst its members.

VI. The Association's Relevance to Today's Markets: Conferences, Programs, News

Over the years, keynoting a GCPA conference has become something of a rite of passage for new Texas PUC Commissioners and PUC Chairpersons. Not only are the Texas PUC

Commissioners frequent participants, but Commissioners and staff from FERC and the states of California, Louisiana and Oklahoma have also appeared. In addition, many other industry and government leaders have shared our conference podium, including Henson Moore, Deputy Secretary of Energy, US Representative Bill Archer, Texas Land Office head Gary Mauro, and Nobel prize winner Richard Smalley of Rice University.

While the Spring conference programs were originally based around technology, projects, and operations, the conference program focus changed as member interest changed. When membership interest evolved away from the pure technical focus at the time the industry increasingly out sourced more and more of its engineering and construction activities, financial and commercial topics became a greater portion of the program. The Spring conference then evolved to a more international project focus as our members changed their attention to international markets in the mid-1990s. The conference focus changed again in the early 2000s to greater legislative and regulatory issues because of their increasing impact on the financial and commercial topics. Over time, we found that a free standing, one day Spring Conference that offered industry leaders an opportunity to talk about their vision of change that was occurring in the industry was the most popular type of program.

The Austin Fall conference programs have been specifically designed with emphasis on legislative and regulatory matters, recognizing that individuals working in these areas are highly concentrated in the greater Austin area. The Fall conference has consistently earned recognition as an outstanding power event, and the PUC Commissioners have been very supportive of this conference. Indeed, former PUC Chairman and former FERC Chairman Pat Wood was particularly complimentary on several occasions, describing it as the best power conference available. Fall conference attendance has grown regularly from 100 or so in the early days to around 300 or more in 2001 and again in 2004.

Corporate sponsor donations have significantly enhanced the Association's conferences, particularly the Fall ones. In addition to monetary contributions, some outstanding features have included display of an Indy 500 car and a NASCAR car and the presence of the then-current Indy 500 winner. For the last several years, a golf tournament has been held on the afternoon preceding the Fall conference; corporate sponsors have provided favors and prizes for each tournament.

The Association has experimented with conferences of different durations - one day, one and a half days ending after the second day's lunch, one and three-quarter days ending at a mid-afternoon break on the second day, and two full days. In recent years, conferences have been one full day for the Spring event, and one and a half days closing after lunch for the Fall Conference.

Austin conference programs were expanded in 2003 and 2004 to include a pre-event workshop on ERCOT and on Texas' plans to move from zonal to nodal markets, respectively. In 2003, several post-event plant visits were arranged, primarily to renewable energy installations around the city.

Although a stand-alone GCPA conference program has proven to be the most successful approach, the Association been open to opportunities to work with other groups with related interests in coordinated dual events, including Electric Power 2002, the 1996 Annual Conference of the Texas Renewable Energy Industries Association, and the National Energy Service Association's 1998 Gas Fair & Energy Conference.

Over the years the Association has provided benefits to its members not only by discounting registration fees at its own conferences and lunches, but by obtaining discounts to other organizations' events through cooperative arrangements on mailing lists and advertising in the Association's newsletter. The Association has also received complimentary exhibit booth space at other conferences as part of these cooperative arrangements. Such arrangements have been made with the following organizations:

American Society of Mechanical Engineers	Infocast
Association of Energy Engineers	North American Regulatory Utility Commissions
Council of Boiler Industry	National Energy Service Association
Government of Canada	PowerGen International
Houston Energy Association	Team Canada
International Gas Turbine Institute	Texas Renewable Energy Industries Association

In the mid-1990s, the Association obtained approval from the State Bar of Texas for Mandatory Continuing Legal Education ("MCLE") credits for lawyers attending a Fall conference. Selected portions of the conference programs continue to qualify for MCLE credits based on content. Credit for mandatory continuing education requirements for Texas accountants was also obtained in the mid-1990s, and has continued for Spring and Fall conferences to this day. Mandatory continuing education requirements for Texas engineers have now been promulgated; credit for attending the 2004 conference was obtained from the State Licensing Board toward the 2005 requirements.

While some corporate and individual members with strong interests in Dallas and Louisiana joined the Association, it was the Austin contingent with its interests in monitoring and impacting the regulatory and legislative activities that were affecting the industry which caught traction and created a most active lunch program. Under the guiding hand of GCPA member Carrie Tiemann, luncheon meetings were started in Austin in the mid-1990s, infrequently and irregularly at first,

becoming more frequent and regular in 1998 and 1999. A flurry of legislative and regulatory activity caused a falling off of Austin lunches for the next two years, but since September 2001, due to a revitalization effort led by GCPA Board member Tom Anson, the Austin lunch meeting committee has arranged lunch events almost every month (with December off for the holidays). The Austin monthly lunches are now jointly sponsored by the Texas State Bar Public Utility Law Section, and can at times qualify for MCLE credit.

Monthly lunch meeting topics in both locations have covered the broad range of our members' interests in cogeneration, independent power, renewable energy, retail competition, transmission issues, legislative developments, regulatory changes, etc. The most popular Houston lunch topic, year after year without exception, has been Marianne Carroll's report at the Association's Annual Meeting in January on the PUC's activities during the previous year. Attendance has varied from meeting to meeting, from slightly less than 20 to over 90 for Houston, and averaging about 25 in Austin.

In the 1990s, in lieu of a Houston lunch talk, plant visits were organized to the Rice University cogeneration installation, the Stewart & Stevenson cogeneration module assembly plant, and the Ruston Gas Turbine plant. Tours were also arranged to the AES Deepwater power plant near Houston and the Solar Turbines plant near Dallas.

The monthly Newsletter, which had been issued regularly since January 1990, features news and information about the industry, Association members, and regulatory developments, including a section entitled "PUC Update" prepared by a number of different members over the years. In 2001, the newsletter went to an electronic format. A new section with an Executive Director's editorial column has recently been added.

The Association's early history of participating with larger, nationwide interest groups continued, because the need to stay informed on developments in other areas of the country remained clear. Thus, in 1996 GCPA became a regional affiliate member of the Electric Generation Association ("EGA"), a national organization supporting cogeneration and IPPs.

In 1998, EGA merged with a fellow trade group to become the Electric Power Supply Association ("EPSA"), and GCPA has been a Regional Member since then. David Olver attended several EPSA meetings (usually one of the four held every year), and at least two Association Presidents have also attended EPSA meetings. Membership in EGA and EPSA has been very useful in providing information on legislative and regulatory activities at the

federal level and in other regions in the U.S., both in the conferences and in the newsletter.

VII. Organizational Adaption (Again) to the Changing World

With the successful expansion of GCPA membership in the 1990s beyond the original predominately cogeneration developers and suppliers of the 1980s, the further changes occurring in the power industry in the 2000s presented the Board with another opportunity to consider whether and how the Association should transform itself in more ways that coincided with those changes. The Board therefore initiated a series of strategic planning meetings starting in 2005.

For the first of these meetings, professional assistance was brought in, and participants included Board members as well as Association supporters and members at large. The Board and these selected non-Board participants engaged in a one day retreat to help define the “ideal future for GCPA.” Input from a member survey helped focus the discussion.

One outcome from the process was the adoption of a new mission statement: “The Gulf Coast Power Association’s mission is to promote an improved understanding of issues and opportunities impacting contemporary power markets.” Issues identified for further focus included expansion of Board size, committee/task force structure, and the definition and formal adoption of organization policies to guide the continued growth of GCPA. A number of goals were agreed upon and action plans developed. Those goals included providing expanded value to GCPA members, enhancing GCPA’s recognition as a respected industry resource, building on and improving GCPA’s products and services, ensuring GCPA’s governance reflects the diversity of its membership, expanding the forums sponsored and/or provided by GCPA, and creating key alliance relationships with non-advocacy trade groups/educational institutions.

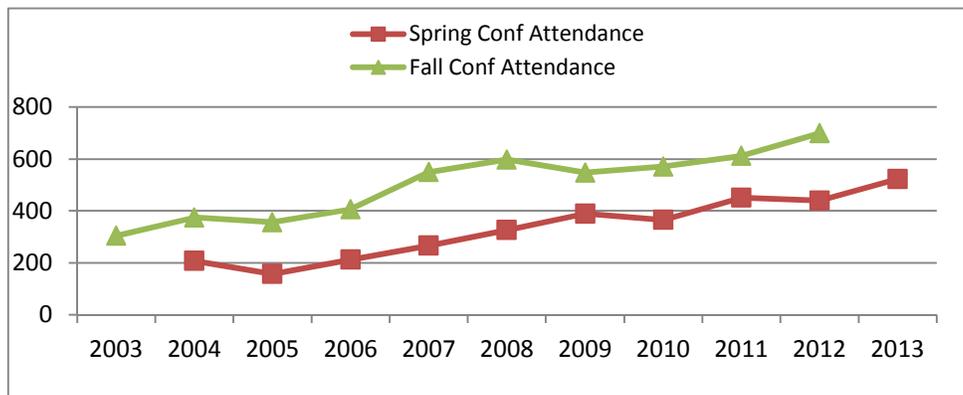
In 2006, GCPA’s bylaws were amended to increase the Board size from 11 to 13 with particular attention paid to choosing Board candidates from a balance of market segments. A noticeable surge of new corporate memberships from the Retail Electric Provider (REP) community and renewable developers was noted.

Strategic planning became the embedded focus of a GCPA board annual retreat following the session in 2006. Also, the goals identified at that time have continued to be reviewed and refined at subsequent annual Board retreats.

VIII. A Decade of Growth in Membership and Programing

Corporate membership grew steadily from 41 in 2004, to 75 in 2008, and to 110 in 2012. Over this same period individual membership doubled (160 in 2004 to 320 in 2012). The growth in attendance at the GCPA conferences went hand in hand with growth in membership. Conference attendance growth and breadth of speakers expanded significantly during GCPA’s third decade. By providing an impartial neutral site where all segments of the industry could come together, network, debate, discuss, and learn about the issues and opportunities that affect the electric power industry as a whole, GCPA conference attendance surged. Conference attendance in 2004 was 207 that spring and 374 in the fall. The spring program was expanded from a single day format to a day-and-a-half in 2009. Combined annual conference attendance exceeded 1000 in 2010. By 2011 there were 460 attendees in the spring and 634 attendees in the fall.

Figure 1 GCPA Conference Attendance



The spring and fall conferences have quickly grown into the “can’t miss” events of the year for networking and educational opportunities within the industry as the programs attracted industry leaders from the region, key GCPA member companies, and national scene speakers. Notable speakers during this time ranged from a Nobel laureate speaking on world energy needs to a co-founder of Green Peace now advocating nuclear power. Key elements in conference planning were to strive to offer a balanced view of the issues and challenges facing the industry, find respected and knowledgeable speakers, and ensure a diversity of opinions. Those key elements continue to be the touchstone today for conference planning.

The growth in both membership and conference attendance presented challenges to GCPA both as an organization and to the conference planning process. To better handle the work load and serve our expanded membership and conference audiences, Mary Armstrong was brought onboard as Director of Marketing and Member Services in 2007. In 2010, Penny Sullivan joined GCPA to provide services as an Executive Administrative Assistant. The growth in conference attendance, particularly at the fall conference in Austin, lead to a series of changes in venues as GCPA continued to need additional space to accommodate the increasing attendance levels the conferences attracted. A more diverse membership and conference audience lead to not only expanding the length of the Spring Conference from one day to a day-and-a-half, but also an experiment with multi-track programing and to adding a pre-conference workshop to the spring conference.

Robust and lively luncheon monthly programs in Houston and Austin continued to increase their draw during GCPA's third decade. In 2008, an occasional Dallas lunch program was added to the schedule of events. As a new comer to the DFW area for luncheon meetings, GCPA collaborated with existing organizations in the metro area including the Dallas Bar Association (Energy Sector), the Dallas Electric Club, and the Texas Institute to jointly sponsor lunches. While most Dallas meetings were held in downtown Dallas, starting in the fall of 2009 a university-based program was held at the University of Texas Arlington (UTA) to bring together invited engineering students and GCPA members. The program also included recognition of GCPA scholarship recipients from UTA.

A top draw during this period at all three luncheon locations was attorney Marianne Carroll's annual PUCT Regulatory Year in Review. A January luncheon tradition since the days of the Gulf Coast Cogeneration Association, it is also the lunch presentation at the Association's annual membership meeting in Houston. Marianne made her consistently popular presentation for many years, culminating with her final presentation in 2010. The tradition continued with attorney Tammy Cooper stepping up to the task for the next two years.

Due to the level of market change and activity in ERCOT relative to other regions, GCPA's membership and focus has had a strong orientation on the ERCOT region. Thus, a close relationship with the ERCOT organization has been a natural and desired result for both parties. GCPA focuses many of its events on ERCOT related issues and ERCOT leadership and staff are frequent speakers and participants in GCPA events. As the ERCOT market approached the implementation of the real time nodal market in 2010, GCPA collaborated with ERCOT to conduct a special briefing that focused on preparing Retail Electric Providers (REPs) and other market

participants for the transition. Over 200 attended the Houston briefing. GCPA assisted with a second session at the ERCOT offices in Austin, and over 120 attended in person plus even a greater number via the web. GCPA played an important role in ensuring market participants were made aware and participated in pre-nodal market sessions.

In recognition of the need to bring time-sensitive issues to GCPA audiences in a more rapid and detailed manner, the concept of special briefings found traction. Special briefings are typically a half-day filled with panels and speakers. When issues needed more time than a lunch program would permit and/or needed more time than one session at the next conference agenda, a special briefing was conducted to bring audiences up to speed on hot issues in a timely manner. Among the special briefing topics have been the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (within days of the signing of the Act, and the first programming in the country on it), the AEP and Mid-American joint venture on transmission investment in ERCOT, transmission developments in both ERCOT and the Southwest Power Pool (held in Dallas), Luminant's announcement of the development of multiple new coal generation facilities, changing credit requirements for ERCOT market participants (ERCOT—Got Credit?), Entergy's plan to join MISO and spin off its transmission assets to ITC, and resource adequacy in ERCOT. Typically, these events have attracted audiences in excess of 100.

IX. New Programs

Financial strength that followed the growth of membership and conference attendance allowed GCPA to establish a scholarship program in 2006. Strategic planning had identified the need to attract engineering and legal talent to the electric power industry. One means to accomplish this was establishing scholarship support to students that indicated an interest in the electric power industry as a career choice. Since GCPA's initial scholarship relationship with the University of Houston's Law Center, each year through 2013 saw at least one additional institution of higher learning added to the program. Currently, GCPA provides scholarship funding to eight educational institutions in Texas, shown in Table 1:

Table 1 GCPA Scholarship Program

University/Institution	Year Added
University of Houston Law Center	2007
University of Texas-Austin (School of Engineering)	2007
Texas A&M University (School of Engineering)	2007
University of Texas-Arlington (School of Engineering)	2009
Texas Tech University (Wind program)	2010
Texas State Technical College	2011
University of Texas-PanAm	2013
Texas State University	2013

After the passing of GCPA’s first Executive Director David Olver, the program was named the GCPA David Olver Memorial Scholarship fund in his memory. The long-term goal currently stated by the Board is to increase GCPA’s annual scholarship funding to \$50,000.

The GCPA scholarship program is just one example of the efforts GCPA undertook to increase students’ awareness of the electric power industry and the associated career potential by increasing its presence at regional college and university campuses. In addition to the scholarship program and the annual lunch at UT Arlington, GCPA has provided a number of free passes to pre-conference workshops for students selected by their faculty and free attendance to all conferences to the GCPA scholarship recipients. Scholarship recipients and their faculty representatives have been recognized and introduced at conference luncheons and selected use of scholarship funds has been used to fund attendance of UHLC students to Houston lunches.

In 2006, the GCPA Board established the Pat Wood Power Star Award. The award recognizes an individual who has made significant contributions towards the advancement of competitive energy markets and is named after its initial awardee Pat Wood III, former chair of the Public Utility Commission of Texas and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Wood is a long-time champion of competitive energy markets and supporter and frequent speaker at GCPA events. Since that initial recognition of Wood in 2006, each year the GCPA Board has chosen a recipient of this award and each year Pat Wood has presented the award to that year’s recipient at the GCPA spring conference. Table 2 below lists the Power Star Award recipients.

Table 2 GCPA Power Star Award Recipients

Year	Recipient
2006	Pat Wood III
2007	Sam Jones
2008	John Meyer
2009	Jess Totten
2010	Trudy Harper
2011	Marianne Carroll
2012	Mike Greene
2013	John Stauffacher

In 2013, GCPA embarked upon its new emPOWERing initiative. The initiative incorporates the previous discussed scholarship and Power Star Award programs and introduces a new program focused on women in our industry. As GCPA has grown over the years to become the leading electric power member organization in the ERCOT / Gulf Coast region, we have also broadened the scope of our original mission to include needed industry outreach programs. GCPA created emPOWERing to serve in three critical areas:

- emPOWERing Women - Established as a new program in 2013, GCPA is building a program that will actively offer opportunities for support, development, and networking to women currently working in the electric power industry as well as proactively encourage and inspire younger women pursuing technical degrees to consider careers in the electric power arena. The program will also support women already in the industry by providing tools to enhance their growth and development opportunities. Any interested GCPA members have been asked to participate. The GCPA webpage now includes an emPOWERing section with the capability for members and students to add their name to the GCPA emPOWERing mailing list and complete a short survey about their interest in specific programs that may be of interest such as networking/mentoring events, a college night, and targeted scholarships.

- emPOWERing Students - GCPA sees support of tomorrow's leaders and executives in the electric power arena as being crucial to the health of the industry. In response to this need, GCPA will continue to expand the David Olver Memorial Scholarship program to assist deserving students in attaining their educational goals while encouraging their participation in the electricity industry.
- emPOWERing Industry Leaders - GCPA believes it is important to recognize those who have been pioneers and prime movers in advancing competitive energy markets in the region. GCPA established the Pat Wood Power Star Award to annually recognize an individual who has made significant industry contributions.

X. Expanding and Updating GCPA's Presence Into the Digital Age

In 2004, the organization's monthly printed newsletter was replaced by an electronic version available on GCPA's website. The monthly newsletter included news about GCPA activities, general industry news, and selected articles about member companies. In 2007, an Executive Director column was added. While informative, the format became voluminous and at times stale with articles that had been available from daily news feeds weeks before the posting of the GCPA newsletter. In 2012, with the introduction of a newly redesigned website the newsletter was replaced with postings, articles, and discussions on the GCPA LinkedIn site. The posting could be made as the news articles became available and thus be a much more current source of information to the GCPA audience. By the end of 2012, the GCPA LinkedIn discussion group had attracted over 1,000 followers and achieved distinction as one of LinkedIn's top 5% most active sites.

The upgrade of the Association's website also enhanced user ease in obtaining information and registering for GCPA events, obtaining information about corporate and individual members, and updating critical information about our members. In late 2011, professional assistance with social media work was retained, and GCPA established not only the LinkedIn discussion group, but also Wordpress, Twitter, and Facebook accounts. In the early stages of the new website development project, a new logo was introduced replacing the original logo designed in the 1990s.

XI. Preparing for the Fourth Decade

John Stauffacher, who had served as GCPA Executive Director since 2004, announced his desire to retire after the end of 2012, so the GCPA Board formed a search committee to select his

successor. A list of strong candidates was compiled and after extensive review and interviews, a consensus choice was presented to the full Board—Tom Foreman. A long-time member of GCPA and a member of GCPA’s Board since the 1990s, Tom brings a deep knowledge of both our Association and the industry to his new position. Tom assumed his position as Executive Director of GCPA on January 1, 2013.

The well attended programs and membership growth has put the Association on a strong financial footing. This has allowed the organization to hold membership rates for both corporate and individual at the level set in 1991. It has allowed GCPA to provide deep discounted conference rates to members currently in a “job search mode” and to significantly increase the funding of the GCPA David Olver Memorial Scholarship program. With the foundation of its prior successful three decades and the time and effort being put into the continued development and implementation of a strategic plan, the GCPA is poised to continue to meet the needs and interests of our membership in its fourth decade.

A number of issues and goals identified by past Board retreats will continue to be reviewed and subject to further study. These include issues such as consideration of governance of the association and the role of committees. While annual surveys of members and of conference attendees provides important input, the need for or desire for added committee structure has not at this time been conclusive. Whatever the conclusions here, the goals of more openness and inclusion of multiple views is clearly the desired outcome. The goals around increasing membership and attracting as diverse a membership as possible is both succeeding but still being monitored for additional opportunities. Providing additional membership categories to attract more targeted members such as students, faculty, etc. has been considered. Opportunities to provide additional member services are under continued investigation. While historically ERCOT-centric in scope of interest due to the level of change and activity in that market, the more recent increase in changes and activities in other nearby markets such as SPP, the Entergy footprint, and MISO, has resulted in an increasing focus of Association attention on those markets. As a result a continued exploration of the boundaries of membership interest is a periodically addressed question. The recent growth in membership and program requires a continued review of staffing and outside services needed to maintain a high quality of services and programming. As the GCPA Board continues to address this wide range of issues, the answers will continue to focus on creating the “ideal future of GCPA”.

GCPA has experienced strong growth over the last decade and the Association in an excellent position to maintain its momentum. As GCPA Board President Paul Schulze noted in his

welcome to attendees at the 2013 GCPA Spring Conference: “GCPA boasts a membership of over 100 corporate members and over 250 individual members; our regular lunch briefings in Austin, Houston, and Dallas are always packed. And the future only looks brighter.”