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Abstract
The Rural Electrification Administration was created by Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1936. There were attempts at rural electrification prior to that date, but FDR's program, as part of the New Deal, was the beginning of the modern system. The REA was put into operation by Morris L. Cooke, and expanded by John Carmody and Harry Slattery through 1944. The Fifties ushered in a conservative presidential administration that opposed organizations such as co-ops, and, consequently, funds were cut. But on the local level, co-ops continued to grow. The Sixties brought with it financial cooperation from Washington, and many co-ops around the country found that there was enough money available to begin generating their own power. In Louisiana, the REA came not as a government organization, but as a generous banker—a lender of low interest money. The co-ops began in Louisiana in late 1937 at Teche Electric, and developed to a total of thirteen individual groups through the late Forties. During the War, the thirteen co-ops in the state organized a statewide association, the purpose of which was to lobby and to promote the idea of rural electrification in the early Fifties they founded a newspaper and threatened to generate their own power in the face of excessive fuel costs from the private power companies in the state. In 1962, prices again rose and the state's co-op leaders, through their statewide organization, began a serious move to generate their own power. After a hard-fought struggle, a loan was finally approved in 1964. But it was not until four years later, after extensive compromise with the private utilities, that the money was finally granted for the construction of the first plant. It was also at this time that the group fought battles over right-of-way regulation and Public Service Commission regulation. Between the completion of the first plant in 1972 and today (1983) Cajun Electric has completed three other plants, all coal.

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