



Statewide Organizing for Community eMpowerment

Statewide Organizing for Community eMpowerment (SOCM) is a member-run organization that encourages civic involvement and collective action so that the people of Tennessee have a greater voice in determining their future.

The mission of SOCM is to empower Tennesseans to protect, defend and improve the quality of life in their communities. SOCM is working for social, economic and environmental justice for all. It is committed to becoming an anti-racist organization by overcoming social and institutional racism and by embracing our diverse cultures.

In The Beginning...

SOCM had its origins in the five isolated, major coal producing counties of East Tennessee located high in the Cumberland Mountains. Originally named Save Our Cumberland Mountains, the name would endure for 36 years. In 1971, armed with research about the failure of absentee land corporations to pay taxes on their mineral lands, East Tennessee residents won an appeal to require taxation. In January 1972, SOCM, a grassroots community organization, was formed to address and solve other critical problems in these poor communities. Strip mining of coal was virtually unregulated, allowing destruction of land and water. Revenue for schools, roads and other services was insufficient. County and state officials were non-responsive and generally neglectful. SOCM was membership-based and affordable (first dues \$1!) and from its beginning was democratically run. In 2008, the SOCM Board made the decision, ratified by the members, that SOCM's name needed to reflect the current reality of the organization. The new name, Statewide Organizing for Community eMpowerment, keeps the identity while reflecting the growth and development of SOCM.

Today...

More than 2,500 SOCM members support environmental, economic and social justice efforts that help improve the quality of life in Tennessee. Empowered members take on initiatives to protect natural resources, encourage public policy that meets the needs of the majority, and supports anti-racism activities. The goal of these efforts is to create a healthy state that meets the needs of all the people. As a grassroots organization serving all the people of Tennessee, SOCM encourages members to bring their unique skill sets and passions to the work of the organization. The activities of the chapters are as diverse as the membership of SOCM. Chapters are encouraged to address diverse issues that affect their local communities.



SOCM works to stop mountaintop removal, the effects of which can be seen at Zeb Mountain located in Eastern Tennessee (pictured top, right). SOCM promotes community awareness through events such as the Jackson Save Our Community Day (attendees pictured bottom, right and left). And SOCM encourages the development of green, good jobs through renewable energy use. SOCM member Lenora Clark shows off her solar panel (top, left).

Working for Justice...

SOCM currently works on local issues in ten counties across Tennessee and promotes several state-wide initiatives. Chapters are the building blocks of SOCM's democratic structure and grassroots approach. They can be city, county or regionally based. Chapters offer local residents a place to meet, discuss and address concerns. Chapters are effective in bringing about change in their communities



SOCM members and staff take part in a tug-of-war during the SOCM Annual Meeting, when members are invited to help set organizational priorities for the upcoming year.

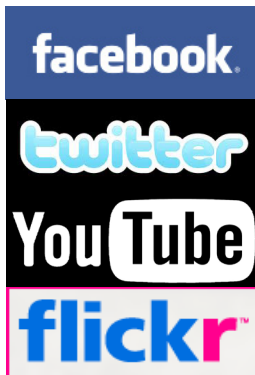
because they identify the issue and develop a plan of action to address it.

SOCM Committees involve members in statewide initiatives that range from mountaintop removal to promotion of diversity within the organization. SOCM Committees currently are: E3 (Energy-Ecology-Environmental Justice), Green-Collar Jobs, and an internally focused Anti-Racism Transformation Team.

Committees and chapters often work together to encourage successful campaign development and implementation at the local, state, and federal levels.

How to Get Involved

Follow SOCM on...



The best way to get involved is to become a SOCM member. When you join SOCM, your voice joins 2,500 other strong voices to create and influence important changes in Tennessee.

Benefits of membership include: access to leadership development trainings and anti-racism workshops, the SOCM Sentinel (quarterly), e-newsletters, action alerts and legislative updates. SOCM keeps you informed about the latest social, economic, and environmental justice developments. SOCM gives you the tools you need to take action for your community and for the state of Tennessee. Join Today. Or simply write a check to support our work.

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Contact SOCM by writing to the East or West Tennessee office, or email the SOCM team at info@socm.org. Visit us on the web at socm.org to join the e-news list.

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