

RM

Rural Montana

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VIEWPOINT

Dave Wheelihan

Your participation in annual meetings and co-op issues is important



Dave Wheelihan

It is that time of year again when your association is busy traveling across the state of Montana to attend annual meetings of the members of electric cooperatives.

We think that's a good time to remind you of the cooperative nature of your business.

As an electric cooperative member, you are part owner in a non-profit, cooperative corporation. That means the cooperative is set up not to generate profit for stockholders, since there are none. Instead, your co-op returns any excess money generated through operations to you in the form of capital credits paid out on a rotational basis.

As an electric cooperative member, you have one vote at the annual meeting as do all other members. Your vote is not weighted by the amount of electricity you

use. Truly, one person, one vote is alive in this co-op system.

As an electric cooperative member, you have the right to attend the annual meeting of the members and exercise that right to vote.

Each year at your annual meeting you elect directors to represent you on your local board and conduct other business of the members. The directors you elect are your voice on policy issues at the local, state and national levels.

As an electric cooperative member, we hope you use your say in your electric cooperative to help us work for you.

This month's Rural Montana continues with commentary on climate change, which we think is appropriate with various pieces of legislation in Congress being formulated. To lead off the discus-

sion on page 7, we present a summary of your national association position on possible climate change legislation that will affect your rates for electricity. CEO Glenn English of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association lays out the talking points that guide electric cooperatives all across America — cooperatives that serve 40 million members like you.

Then on pages 8 and 9, we give members a forum to speak out on global warming. The two essays each won \$50. In fact, the response to our forum was so strong that next month we plan to provide more excerpts from entries.

We hope you enjoy this month's Rural Montana, and we'll visit with you next month.

Dave Wheelihan is CEO of the Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association

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