

RM

Rural Montana

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VIEWPOINT Dave Wheelihan

Climate Change bill stalls in U.S. Senate

Last month in Rural Montana we asked you to contact our congressional delegation and in turn, ask them to make sure climate change legislation allows electricity supply to keep up with demand, to make sure any legislation is affordable and to make sure that new technology be fully funded to make greenhouse gas reductions a reality.

Electric cooperatives from around the country delivered the same message.

The climate change bill that was in front of the U.S. Senate was pulled off the Senate floor after many of the same concerns we mentioned were raised during the debate.

So while it is unlikely that a climate change bill will move forward until 2009, we want to work with Congress to come up with a bill that addresses our concerns and will achieve the proper balance between protecting the environment and meeting expected future

electricity demands.

This month in Rural Montana we will be talking about carbon capture. In essence, how to capture carbon dioxide emissions from power plants and other emitting sources.

As we discuss in this issue, the challenge is one of technology and affordability.

Electric cooperatives in America are already looking at and implementing pilot projects designed to capture those emissions.

And while the technological breakthrough to capture up to 90 percent of carbon dioxide emissions may be several years off, electric cooperatives are committed to that solution.

You may see in the news that carbon capture technology already exists.

True enough, but the current capture levels are significantly below where the new technology will get us, and of course, cost is still an issue.

Electric cooperatives

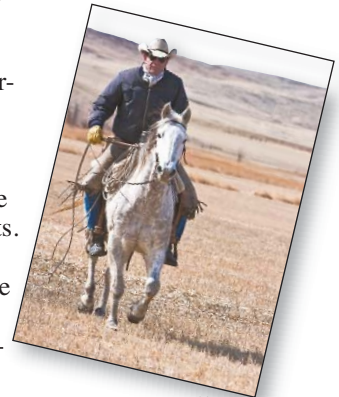


Dave Wheelihan

will continue to work for affordable technology that will get the job done.

On a sadder note, this past month we saw the passing of three long-time electric cooperative directors. Dean Hyatt, Ravalli Electric, Bob Fouhy, Northern Electric and Lynn Cornwell, Valley Electric. All three contributed greatly to the electric cooperative organization and will be greatly missed.

As always, we hope you enjoy this issue of Rural Montana.



Lynn Cornwell as he appeared on the cover of the May RM.

Dave Wheelihan is CEO of the Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association

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