

RM

Rural Montana

National Winner, Award of Excellence

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VIEWPOINT Dave Wheelihan



Dave Wheelihan

A successful session in Helena but more work ahead in Washington, D.C.

Last month in Rural Montana we asked you to join the "Our Energy Our Future" campaign by contacting our congressional delegation asking them to work with electric cooperatives in crafting climate change solutions.

We are happy to report that within weeks we were over the thousand mark in responses and that number continues to grow as consumers send in their messages from home and at annual meetings, where contact information is available.

We have a feature on page 7 that tells what your neighbors have been telling our members of Congress.

This month, over three thousand electric cooperative leaders from all across the country will head to Washington, D.C., to further promote this

message. Additionally, the electric cooperative participants will tell Congress that we have long been leaders in energy efficiency and that any mandates in this area need to recognize what we have already accomplished.

Congress will also be asked to recognize that renewable portfolio standards need to consider the vast differences in regional ability to incorporate renewables and the difference in size and cost to individual electric cooperatives.

Also on the agenda is a discussion of rail costs to electric cooperative consumers and legislation aimed at reforming that situation.

At the state level, we are happy to report a successful legislative session for Montana's electric cooperatives. We were

able to defeat the bills that adversely impacted our ability to do business. Also we were able to pass metals theft legislation that gives law enforcement another tool to track down those people stealing copper and other metals from electric co-ops.

At press time, that bill, which passed the House and Senate by wide margins, is awaiting signature from the governor.

This month's magazine shows off Montana's winning entries in our national contest on page 2.

Besides two first-place finishes, your Rural Montana magazine won the NRECA Spotlight Award of Merit ahead of all other statewide magazines across America.

As always, we hope you enjoy this month's Rural Montana.

Dave Wheelihan is CEO of the Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association

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