

RM

Rural Montana

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VIEWPOINT

Dave Wheelihan

The people and processes that make our co-ops work

In March of 2007, thousands of rural electric cooperative leaders from across the country met for the annual meeting of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

In addition to being updated on the latest industry trends and technologies, members of NRECA adopted resolutions to guide the association in the upcoming year.

The resolution process is a classic example of the power of grassroots participation.

Resolutions are considered at local cooperatives throughout the year, passed on to statewide organizations and brought forward to regional meetings held throughout the country from September to November.

The resolutions that pass are then brought before NRECA standing

committees at the national meeting for further debate, refinement and consideration.

The membership as a whole then votes on the resolutions, which in turn, give direction to NRECA for the coming year.

The number of issues facing electric cooperatives is daunting. Rural Utility Services financing, climate change, renewable energy, taxes and captive rail shippers to name a few.

The resolutions process allows electric cooperative members to learn, educate and debate. That's healthy to the ultimate goal of representing consumer owners.

On a different note, this month's Rural Montana introduces a series of stories about rural electric cooperative linemen. The series, about the nature of the job and the unique qualities of the men who



Dave Wheelihan

do it, will run for the next few months.

The series gives us yet another chance to tip our hats to the folks who go out in all kinds of weather conditions to keep your lights on. They truly make our electric systems work, and we appreciate all they do.

On yet another subject, the Montana Legislature continues to do its work. By next month, we should be able to give you a wrap-up on how electric cooperative legislation fared. We'll tell you whether other legislation affecting cooperatives passed. And we'll also analyze the impact on you because of a bill's passage or failure.

Dave Wheelihan is CEO of the Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association

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