



Schweitzer tentatively accepts invitation to address NRECA fest

NRECA has invited Gov. Brian Schweitzer to address an annual meeting symposium in 2007 on energy technologies, and he has accepted, schedule permitting.

"I'd love to share our ideas about energy in Montana with the rest of the country and co-ops," he said.



Nancy Greenfield



Jay Laber



Laber at labor

Where are they now?

We gotta lotta faces of Montana this month, A (for Artist Jay Laber) to G (for Great-Granddaughter of a Montana pioneer) to Z (for Zee governor of Montana, Brian Schweitzer, if you'll pardon zee word play). So many faces, we had to carry their stories over to page 10.

We're looking back at some of the people and issues we've featured in the magazine since 2005, updating you about them. And we're looking ahead to 2007. A retrospective prospective perspective, if you'll indulge the alliteration.

We're following up on **Lois Lonnquist**, author of a book on the boomtowns of Fort Peck; **Dorothy Staggs**, First Lady of the bitterroot, our state flower; Army Command Sgt. Maj. (and Missoula Electric trustee) **Harry La Friniere** and "Roping the Bear" figure **Leonard Matteson**.

Blackfeet sculptor **Jay Laber's** art adorned the cover and centerfold of July 2005. Laber creates works of art from automobile parts he scavenges. He's still welding, as you can see here, and a photo of one of his latest creations anchors page 10. Laber would like to exhibit a

collection, but, "People keep buying up my stuff before I can put on an art show." All artists should have his problem.

Nancy Greenfield is following the steps of her great grandfather, **H.H. Nelson**, recapturing some of his life in words and photographs, an ultimate, loving form of retrospective. We have two sketches in this issue and another set for a future issue.

Finally, The Energy Governor, **Brian Schweitzer**.

Schweitzer made a passionate appeal to cooperatives to share his energy vision for Montana when he spoke to the MECA annual meeting in 2005. After complimenting co-ops for keeping power supplies sustainable, predictable and affordable, he sketched a bright energy future for the state.

If his energy vision were realized, he said, "this could create more wealth for the state than anything, up to and including copper."

He then went on to sponsor a statewide energy symposium to define and refine an energy policy, and MECA helped shape that policy.

What progress?

"There's not a state in America that has a more comprehensive energy plan than what we've laid out," he said in a recent interview with *RM*. "We have proposals to encourage the development of wind power, ethanol, transmission lines and clean-coal technology. We will propose incentive packages for companies to locate here."

Already two companies have indicated commitment. One, DKRW Advanced Fuels, is to build a coal-to-liquid plant near Roundup.

The other, TransCanada, is to build a \$2 billion transmission line from southeast Montana to Las Vegas.

"We've been working on that for the last year and a half," Schweitzer said. "It will be dedicated transmission with on-ramps in Montana."

Increased transmission capacity is key to alternative energies such as wind power, he said. "You've got to move the electrons very rapidly and seamlessly from where the wind is blowing."

Schweitzer rejects a national power grid with federal control of transmission.

"That would be a monumental mistake," he said. "Western governors are the ones who are taking the lead on transmission lines."

Schweitzer is quick to point out that he was the first governor to sign on with the national 25 x 25 initiative to reduce dependence on foreign oil 25 percent by 2025, a growing energy movement.

Something new for 2007?

We've had a few readers send photos, wondering if *RM* would share them statewide. Why not?

Send prints or CDs to: **RM Photo Page**, Box 3469, Great Falls, MT 59403. E-mail rural@sofast.net, subject line: *RM Photo Page*.

We'll try out a few on the occasional page and see what shakes out, maybe even pay a few bucks to contributors, budget willing.

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