

# RM

## Rural Montana

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## VIEWPOINT Dave Wheelihan



Dave Wheelihan

## Thanks for joining the dialogue on warming

This month in Rural Montana we will explore power supply options for electric cooperatives as they face the uncertainties of climate change legislation.

When we began our articles on climate change last year, the goal was to present both sides of the climate change debate.

We thought it would be important to frame the issue before taking a look at legislation aimed at addressing the problem or non-problem, depending on your point of view. To this day, our readership continues the debate, which you can see in our Reader's Forum. From "get your facts straight, global warming has not been proven to be man-made," to "global warming is here, adjust or perish," our readers continue to send us information.

We appreciate the exchange; it is always a good thing to have more information both pro and con.

Having said that, we are now turning our attention to the political reality. There are numerous proposals before Congress, and we anticipate numerous proposals at the state level to address climate change.

Many of these proposals deal with constraining the amount of carbon dioxide that is put into the atmosphere by man. We feel it is important to our membership to educate them on these proposals, make sure they understand what they do and the potential impact on the way your local electric cooperative does business and on the economy in general.

Our visits with Congress, and the visits of other electric cooperatives in America with their congressional delegations, has given us the distinct impression that the debate has shifted from: "Is global warming occurring and is it man-made," to: "global warm-

ing is occurring, what are we going to do about it?"

We have already told you that it is projected that demand for electricity is expected to increase 40 percent by 2030, and our challenge is to keep the lights on while protecting the environment. That challenge has many components and over the next several months we will attempt to tackle them issue by issue.

So, this month power supply, next month a new challenge, the transmission grid.

In addition to our continuation of the climate change perspectives, we are pleased to have two of our state leaders weigh in on Montana issues that may take center stage in 2009. We hope you will take a look at the Montana ghost ranches, and our historical look at lynchings and hangings in Montana.

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

Dave Wheelihan is CEO of the Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association

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