

The last word on wolves, facts behind the NRECA survey

Howdy and hello, readers, and thanks again for spending your valuable time to communicate with your *Rural Montana* magazine, even if the editor doesn't always agree with you or you with him.

Wolves again

And we do mean *wolves*. Not *wolfs*, as last month's headline blared at the top of its dumb lungs. One reader pointed out the blunder, and dozens of you probably think somebody out here's an idiot.

I can deal with that. Except for the one reader. She works in the office, and I expect I'll never hear the end of it. So. If it gives you a certain sadistic satisfaction that I'll be tormented relentlessly . . .

Meanwhile a reader called to object to the snarling wolf photo because it "denigrates" wolves, her word. Another of you, a sheep rancher, wrote to object to the cover, which glamorizes the wolf.

Another called to complain that the story on sheep-killing wolves in Norway was improper to use in a Montana magazine because it had nothing to do with Montana. I was a bit abrupt

on that point, but called her back later to apologize, because I feel I have no right to be impatient with people who share their logic and who don't make personal insults. But . . .

I didn't do much better with her in the second call because I laughed at something she said, words to the effect that ranchers ought to raise extra livestock so they could sustain extra losses and then they could stop complaining about wolf kills.

I laughed for two reasons. Reason One because I know I could never repeat those words to a stockgrower except at risk of my front teeth. Reason Two because once the rancher's allotted quota of wolf kills was met, how was the wolf pack, now that it was accustomed to having beef (It's what's for dinner?), to know it was time to quit killing on any given ranch.

I offered the woman a chance to contribute her thoughts in writing to this column, but haven't yet heard.

And it's too late. I'm weary of wolves. Maybe we'll take up the topic again when the state licenses

hunters, sparking a new round of debate.

For now, I'll read your wolf letters and take your wolf calls (which, I believe, are technically howls, pun intended), but it's clear to me by now that bringing up wolves was not the brightest idea. One trustee of the state association fully agrees with me for the first time since I met him. "I liked last month's magazine," he said, "but I have to wonder about your IQ in putting a wolf on the cover."

That makes two of us.

Survey demographics

An alert reader questioned the survey story last month because *RM* neglected to give the methodology and demographics. It's a good point, especially since we've continued to use the survey data. Here you go:

The paid survey was conducted by Lauer Johnson Research of Washington, D.C., in September 2007 for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Respondents were 1,000 registered voters, electric consumers, both co-op and non co-op from all regions of the country. Urban respondents, 270; suburban, 540;

rural, 190, and rural is slightly over-represented. Other facts: Male 480; female 520, 70 Hispanics, 860 Whites, 10 Blacks, 10 Asians and some refusals to give race, with some double replies in there.

Finally, 74 questions and a 3.1 percent margin of error.

Is there a psychic in the Rural Montana house?

Somebody blundered on the public education message inside the back cover of this month's magazine.

Charles Patten agreed to let *RM* use his image to introduce our new consumer campaign. He did not, however, agree to change co-ops. The same guy who typed *wolfs* for *wolves* was at it again and wrote that Charles was a trustee at Circle-base McCone Electric, which he most certainly is not. Mr. Patten is a very senior trustee at Tongue River Electric Cooperative of Ashland.

For those now wondering why we just didn't correct it instead of airing the laundry, the covers are printed a week in advance of the rest of the magazine. Apologies all around. McCone *could* be civilized about it and adopt Mr. Patten as an trustee and let me off the hook.

Cooperative help wanted

POSITION:

Line Foreman

COMPANY: Fergus Electric Cooperative, Inc.
DEADLINE TO APPLY:

Open until filled

Please send your resume and application to Dale Rikala, Operations Supervisor, Fergus Electric Cooperative, Inc. 84423 US Highway 87, Lewistown, MT 59457.

POSITION: Journeyman Lineman

COMPANY: Northern Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Applicants not meeting the journeyman criteria may be considered for hire as an apprentice. Send resume to: John D Hofman, General Manager, Northern Electric Co-op, Opheim, MT 59250-0287 or email: necmgr@nemont.net or phone 406-762-4311.



\$200,000 grant for co-op development. Rich Owen, president of the Montana Cooperative Development Center board expresses thanks for a \$200,000 USDA grant to fund the organizing of co-op startups in Montana for 2008.