

Global Warming



Global warming art by
Melissa Unger, 13, Glasgow

Two cooperative managers speak out



Jeanne Barnard



Jack Hamblin

There's somebody looking out for you on global warming, somebody with a mission to keep your rates affordable and the supply of electricity plentiful and reliable.

At the national level, it's the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. On page 7 of this *RM*, NRECA CEO Glenn English tells what the priorities are with Congress on your behalf.

In Montana, all 25 cooperatives of the Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association send representatives to statewide meetings to plan legislative strategies. Teams of trustees and professional staff continually research issues.

You may have already heard from your managers and directors. To those voices we add Jeanne Barnard, manager of Big Flat Electric, based in Malta, and Jack Hamblin of Ekalaka-based Southeast Electric. Their words are edited excerpts from columns to members.

The idea is to let you know what other co-op members in Montana and across the nation are hearing, to assure you that you are not alone.

Jeanne Barnard

Ten thousand years ago this area was a glacier. Before that it was a tropical paradise with free-roaming dinosaurs.

Whether global warming is perception or reality, in Washington, D.C., today, dealing with global climate change and a carbon-constrained environment is reality, and the hard reality of all of this is that costs will go up for everyone.

Cooperatives are working hard to deliver a message to our congressional delegation of a reality-based approach and to minimize rate increases to our members.

In our carbon-laden society, utilities are not solely responsible and should not have to bear the entire burden. Automobiles, trains, planes, heating systems, cooling systems, lawn mowers, and so on.

All these contribute to the problem. And, in order to fix this problem, we need to slow down, do the necessary research to figure out what needs to be fixed and then work on it at all levels of society.

Jack Hamblin

The global warming question has sparked a massive movement in this country.

It's called political momentum. I call it a "runaway issue." It is now out of control and beyond debate.

Good or bad, right or wrong is now utterly beside the point. Politicians have grabbed it and are running for the end zone, hoping to score a political touchdown.

Logic and reason will vanish in a cloud of political rhetoric. Laws good or bad, right or wrong will be enacted. I recently heard one politician say that any law that addresses global warming is better than no law.

Our elected officials seem willing to create legislation for legislation's sake, regardless of the fallout . . . so long as it's not political fallout.

Our only hope is to persuade our elected officials to make wise choices and write good laws that will make sense. We must try to convince them to avoid unrealistic mandates that appear to solve a problem but only succeed at throwing money at the problem.