

# RM

## Rural Montana

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## VIEWPOINT

Dave Wheelihan

# MONTANA

## More than a place, it's a personal connection



As you can see from this issue of *Rural Montana*, electric cooperative leaders from around the state completed their yearly visit to Washington, D. C., to brief Congress on issues of importance to rural electric cooperatives.

These leaders were joined by other electric cooperative representatives from around the country who delivered similar messages to their own Congressional delegations.

Those of us who go on this yearly trip are constantly struck by the differences among Congressional delegations of different states and how they receive visitors.

For example, Montana's Congressional delegation makes every effort to work with our time schedules, number of people, length of meetings, rooms for meetings and information about the issues.

It's not that easy in other states. We hear reports of people that can't get an appointment in other Congressional

offices, don't get phone calls returned, or get very little time if they do manage to see someone.

It points out the uniqueness of Montana and its people. Although large geographically, Montana is still a state where people know each other, take the time to deal with each other, and everyone seems to know each other or someone who knows someone they know. It is not uncommon to walk into the Montana Congressional delegation offices in Washington, D.C., and run into someone or a group from Montana that you know.

We found our delegation and their staffs to be up on the issues, willing to listen to what we had to say and willing to take the time to thoroughly discuss our issues.

As representatives of electric cooperatives, knowing we have the ability to get our issues across to our elected officials and knowing our voice is heard is something we hope never changes about Montana.

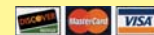
*Dave Wheelihan is CEO of the Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association*

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