

# Montana can lead the way in energy

*In his State of the Union address, President Bush said the best way for the country to break its addiction to oil was through technology. What opportunities do you see for Montana businesses and citizens in this declaration?*



## By Representative Denny Rehberg

**A**s I watch the President deliver the State of the Union Address each year, I listen intently for the comments that speak to those I represent in Montana. This year, President Bush spoke about how America's own resources, coupled with expanding research and technology, can create new energy sources to reduce America's dependency on foreign oil.

The President acknowledged the government's role in research and technology development and followed that up with increased funding levels, such

as a \$59 million increase for biomass fuels, like ethanol and bio-diesel. There's also up to \$70 million in new investment funding for wind and solar development. Montana's rich resources provide opportunities for alternatives such as ethanol, geo-thermal and wind.

Montana's farmlands produce the materials used in ethanol production, and several Montana communities are studying the prospect for developing ethanol plants. Our state is already utilizing biomass fuels, as Montana's "Fuels for Schools Program" has enabled several communities to employ biomass technology to heat their children's classrooms at considerable energy savings. The state is also beginning to tap its potential for wind energy production. The new Judith Gap Wind Farm is now supplying electricity for Montana households.

Montana also has another key

resource — our people — the engineers, researchers and businesses who are committed to driving this innovation. Montana is in a position to lead the way for the energy plan Congress passed last year. Montana is also a prime location for the development of clean coal-to-liquid fuel technology. We have the nation's largest coal reserves and new, clean technology means Montana can safely utilize this abundant resource to produce electricity, diesel fuel, home heating gas and hydrogen. All these advances will ultimately lower the cost of energy and provide a financial boost to our state.

Montana has all the tools to develop new technologies and energy sources. As a member of the Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee, I will ensure that Montana realizes the benefits of these important research and development investments.



## By Senator Max Baucus

**O**ne of my top priorities is to lessen America's reliance on foreign energy. As the top Democrat on the Senate Finance Committee, the panel with jurisdiction over tax policy, I'm continuously working on ways to make this happen.

Last year, as Congress worked on writing a new energy bill, I helped write and pass an energy tax package, which will provide tax incentives to spur domestic energy production, boost conservation efforts and help develop

alternative sources of energy such as wind, solar, bio-mass, ethanol and clean-coal technology. These new tax provisions, in effect this year, will be an important step in the right direction.

I also included a provision that could jump-start efforts to develop the Otter Creek coal tracts in southeast Montana into a clean-burning source of energy for the country and hundreds of high-paying jobs for Montanans. I worked with lawmakers to establish investment tax credits for coal gasification technology used in an updated version of the Fischer-Tropsch process, which produces a source of clean-burning fuel. I also included a provision in the Highway Bill that will further help develop this technology by providing a 50-cent per gallon tax credit for Fischer-Tropsch diesel.

This year I'm going to introduce the

Energy Competitiveness Act — a bill that will build on the 2005 Energy Bill and will develop energy technologies.

America's investment in alternative energy and conservation lags well behind other developed countries, and I want to do all I can to change that. My energy competitiveness bill will extend the tax credit for electricity produced from wind, biomass, geothermal and other renewable sources through 2010, as well as the incentives that promote investment in energy efficient buildings and equipment.

It also increases the caps on Clean Renewable Energy Bonds and coal gasification tax credits.

I'm committed to doing all I can to move our state and our country away from our dependence on foreign oil and to spur domestic production and alternative energy sources.



## By Senator Conrad Burns

**T**he Energy Bill which I helped pass last year provided the foundation for many of the energy initiatives the president outlined in the State of the Union. I appreciate the President's continued support for new technologies like clean coal, cellulosic ethanol and hydrogen fuel cells.

I agree with his sentiment that we as a country are "addicted" to foreign oil. I think with the support of his administration combined with actions from Congress, as well as our states and the

private sector, we can make great strides toward curbing that addiction.

We must look at ways to conserve. Turn off that extra light, ask yourself when you get behind the wheel if the trip is really necessary, and put on a sweater instead of kicking up that thermostat a notch. We must also combine conservation with responsible investment of our resources and wise investment in research of new renewables. Our state has the ability to play an important role in all three aspects.

Montana has the largest coal reserves in the country, and clean coal research will provide jobs to Montana. Ethanol in Montana will not be made from corn, but rather from wheat, barley straw, switchgrass and other agriculture by-products. I recently joined several of my colleagues in a letter to President Bush asking the administra-

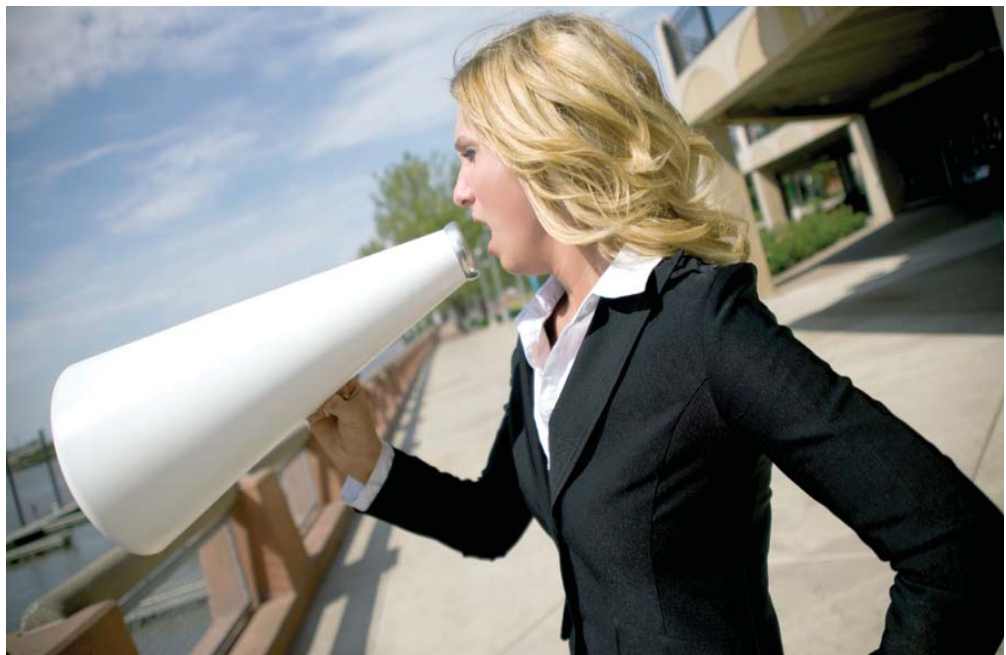
tion to implement key provisions of the 2005 Energy Bill that will spur investment in cellulose ethanol refining.

Montana State University is a center of innovation in fuel cell development. I have focused on helping researchers improve their programs and find better ways to build fuel cells. I started the HiTEC program at MSU, and they're making excellent progress. Working together, Montana can lead in research jobs for hydrogen fuel cells.

Developing renewable alternative energy sources is good for the country and good for Montana jobs. I see great potential for our state to be a key player in alternative energy development. Whether it's responsible extraction of our resources or creation of new technologies, Montana will be an important partner in America's energy future, and I look forward to playing a role.

## Cooperative help wanted

**POSITION:** Journeymen and/or Apprentice Lineman.  
**COMPANY:** Lower Yellowstone REA, Inc., located in Sidney, Mont., has positions open for a Journeyman and/or Apprentice Lineman. Applicants must possess the ability to perform skilled work in construction, operation and maintenance of a REA electrical system including transmission, substation and distribution for both overhead and underground line. Candidates must have a high school diploma or GED equivalent, possess a current driver's license, plus possession of or ability to immediately obtain a Montana Commercial driver's license. A drug test will also be required. To apply for this position, mail a resumé and cover letter to Donald Prevost, General Manager, Lower Yellowstone REA Inc. PO Box 1047, Sidney, MT 59270, or you may call 406-488-1602 to speak to Don or Ed Savelkoul, Manager of Operations. A complete job description and job application is available at Lower Yellowstone's office. Jobs will be open until filled.



## Calling for scholarship applications

Triangle Telephone Cooperative (TTC) and Central Montana Communications (CMC) along with the Montana Independent Telecommunications Systems Inc. (MITS) offer several scholarships to graduating high school seniors

and current undergraduate students for the 2006-2007 academic years.

Dependents of members or customers who receive their local telephone service from TTC or CMC are eligible to apply.

Winners are selected based on academic perform-

ance, school and community involvement, career goals and employment history.

Interested students should contact TTC or CMC at 800-332-1201 ext. 318 for additional information and an application.

Application deadline is March 15, 2006.