

The RM survey



PAYS Prizes

The *Rural Montana* readership survey has paid handsomely — in cash and prizes to those lucky winners on this page, and in data for us.

Congrats to the winners; and thanks to respondents.

We randomly selected a sample of 1 percent of readers and mailed to them, including a postage-paid return envelope. The 35 percent return rate, 391 of 1123, is high. Many mail surveys don't return even 10 percent.

Of those who responded, 55 percent were women, 41 percent were men, 4 percent did not reply to the question and one respondent refused to give an age or gender, asking, "Does it really matter?"

Readership strength

A huge 71 percent of respondents said they read all 12 issues. Another 13 percent indicated they read six or more. This tells us that co-op members pay attention.

Satisfaction

Overall, 87 percent express satisfaction, with 52 percent of readers very satisfied. Among the six somewhat dissatisfied or one very dissatisfied readers, one was unhappy with our take on global warming, one said our politics were propaganda and the third was displeased that we did not present more articles from the state's south.

Satisfaction by age

The first thing we learned was that 87 percent of our

readers were 46 years or older. Age does matter.

The second thing we learned was that the older our readers get, the more satisfied they are with the magazine. For instance, 77 percent of readers between the ages of 26 and 35 say they are somewhat or very satisfied with the magazine. In contrast, 94 percent of those 56 or older report being satisfied, and the groups between are on a rising straight line, a strong correlation between age and satisfaction.

The older a reader gets, the more likely he or she will report being very satisfied. Most striking, if you impose United States census data on the age of voters in the 2004 presidential election, you find a perfect correlation — the older a person is, the more likely he or she will vote, and the age groups are on a rising straight line parallel to that of readership satisfaction by age of *Rural Montana* magazine.

What readers want

About half of our readers said they would like to see more stories on new energy technology. Slightly fewer said they wanted more local cooperative news and 125 readers said they would like to see more information on electrical safety, with 110 wanting more reader opinion. Okay, check out page 13 to see how we'll respond.

Least favorite

We had 52 of 391 respon-

dents (13 percent) mention politics in some form, 11 chose global warming (many of those skeptical of disaster scenarios) five said recipes and two curmudgeons mentioned kids. Still, only seven readers wanted politics cut.

Most favorite

Recipes, 42 times (11 percent), kids 18 times, Youth Tour and local co-op stories eight times and the tribute to fallen linemen Wade Sukut, seven times.

Final inferences

We have room to recruit new readers, especially among the younger and in areas with more newcomers to Montana, the resort areas and more urban areas.

To discriminate ourselves from junk mail in those areas, we will be featuring the glamour animals of Montana for the next few months.

But the bottom line is, we don't want to agitate our core readership, and we find that RM is clearly an energy magazine at a time when energy issues are high on the radar of all Americans, including politicians at the state and federal level.

We thank you for your participation in the survey.

We remind you that you do not have to wait 10 years for a survey to express your opinion.

We are always as close as the nearest telephone, Internet hookup or mailbox.

Baseball Caps

Jason A. Clark
Flathead Electric
Jim Lockwood
Flathead Electric
Ira Ferestad
Northern Electric

Mack McConnells' "No Flying Flaming Gophers Please"

Gary Beeler
Beartooth Electric
Peter or Julianne Royer
Flathead Electric
Chasta Markham
Flathead Electric
Barbara J. Koch
Flathead Electric

More of the "Best of Rural Montana" Cookbook

Margaret Glynn
Sun River Electric
Janessa Guymon
Flathead Electric
Phyllis Jarrett
Park Electric
Jessica Juelfs
Flathead Electric

Consolation Prize — Berry Bonds Baseball

John R. Parker
Flathead Electric

\$25 Winners

Ross Christofferson
Big Flat Electric
Ben Wharta
Ravalli County Electric

\$100 Winner

Linda and Larry Warren
Flathead Electric