

RM

Rural Montana

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Managing Editor: David Wheelihan

Communications Director, Editor: James V. Smith, Jr.

Office: 501 Bay Drive, Great Falls, MT 59404

Telephone: (406) 761-8333 – Fax: 761-8339

Website: www.mtco-ops.com E-mail: rural@sofast.net

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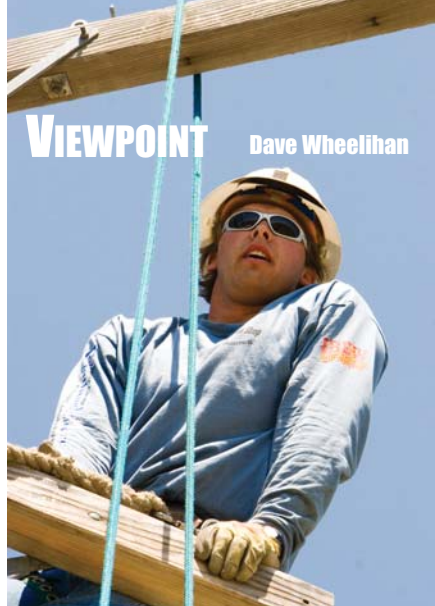
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Hats off to our co-op linemen

As you can see from this month's Rural Montana, the people who work on keeping poles and wires in working order sometimes choose a different way to have fun in their time off, the lineman's rodeo.

But then again, being a lineman for a utility is not your average job.

These people work daily with electricity, knowing full well the danger that goes with it. Injury, serious injury or even death accompanies the lineman as he goes about the business of replacing, repairing or rebuilding the power lines that we take for granted.

In an electronic age where we as consumers expect our electricity to be there at the flick of a switch and groan when our power blinks or goes out, these people are out there every day at the risk of their own lives to make sure our automatic coffee maker will provide us with a hot cup when we wake up. They are called out to get the power back on

in blizzards, ice storms, summer storms, fires or any other condition that causes the power to go out.

They take safety seriously, for they know that even a routine job can turn life-threatening with one misstep. And when someone does get injured or killed on the job, they want to know why it happened and how it can be prevented from happening again.

I suspect they also spend some time reflecting on the perils of their chosen profession.

So the next time you are having that first cup of coffee in the morning, remember the people who are out there putting their lives on the line so you are able to enjoy the comforts of home.

They are your neighbors, your friends. They contribute to your community and have families just as you do in your own community.

And they want you to be safe around electricity, too.

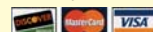
Dave Wheelihan is CEO of the Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association

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