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Ripples

OCTOBER 2024

Our grass needs roots

Getting involved in grassroots is key moving forward

GETTING involved in grassroots communications on behalf of your cooperative is an important role. Please join the group if you are inclined to share your views on important legislative and congressional issues. Our elected legislators and congressmen need to hear the message, not just from us that work for you, but also from you – the member.

The list of topics that have the potential to influence how we operate is long. I cannot think of any other time in my career that the attack on energy has been this strong. Common sense needs to come back to the discussion table; currently, the ideas and positions are leading us back to the times of intermittent power service. Let me touch on a couple of the issues.

The movement is leaning on CO2

MESSAGE

FROM THE MANAGER

COLUMN BY **BRAD BAUMAN**



as the big climate-change producer. I am not going to tell you how to feel about CO2, but let's be careful that we educate ourselves on plant-life sustainability and atmosphere characteristics. The current atmosphere has a CO2 concentration of 4 percent. At 2.8 percent plants begin to die because of lack of carbon dioxide (*Climate.gov*).

Another way of comparing is that

currently the P.P.M. (parts per million) is around 400. The lowest historical records were during the Quaternary glacial period (which we are currently still in) beginning 2 million years ago, and the P.P.M. was 180. The highest P.P.M. was during the Cambrian Period, about 500 million years ago, when the level was 4,000. In 1958, the Mauna Loa Volcanic Observatory recorded 315 PPM.

The levels of carbon dioxide have been falling in the United States for the last two decades. David Gattie, associate professor of engineering for the University of Georgia in a presentation titled "Powering America in the 21st Century" shared that from 2000 to 2023, the U.S. reduced its carbon-diox-

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MESSAGE

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ide emissions by more than 893 million metric tons. In the same timeframe, China increased CO2 emissions by more than 8,854 million metric tons. Atmospheric levels are being affected, but the alarmism being used to influence the American public is overdone and needs to be reined back in.

Carbon sequestration is being experimented with by injecting CO2 back into the ground to allow coal to still be a viable generation source. These injection sites are deep underground and serve as reservoirs while the CO2 re-adheres to the rock formations.

North Dakota (Basin Electric Power Cooperative) has geologic formations that are perfect for these injection wells, but not all formations in the country are as ideal. The sites are promising to allow for continued use of baseload coal and natural-gas generation.

We need to study this technique to assure ourselves this is the way we should move forward. These techniques are promising, but we must not get ahead of ourselves in the movement away from these legacy generation methods. Let's make certain we leave a sufficient amount of carbon dioxide for the photosynthesis process of our green plant life. 207594

The replacement sources of wind and solar are intermittent, and battery storage is not available in large utility scale for long durations. Until these technologies can be shaped into baseload fuel sources, we need to continue to use our legacy coal and natural-gas resources. It could take us several decades to get to that point. If we do not slow down with our conversion, rolling blackouts are very real possibilities. Having patience in resource development will keep the American grid stable and less prone to interruption.

Conservation methodologies are not just a buzz-word for the people

who have strong feelings about the environment that we live in. Research the Freedom Coal Mine in Beulah, ND. The reclamation that takes place as the coal is extracted from the earth is nothing short of amazing. These stories are not seen on our national evening news because they do not fit the narrative of the environmental push to be 100-percent renewable by whatever date you want to pick from the various political promoters of climate change. To witness the replacing of topsoil and planting of native grass and tree species that attracts wildlife to cohabitate with coal extraction is an amazing example of habitat conservation. Go online and look, you will be impressed with the commitment to be good stewards of our lands (*Freedom Coal Mine reclamation techniques*). Conservation is important to all of us, not just the more vocal extremists.

Other discussions on energy revolve around the removal of hydroelectric dams on the Lower Snake River system. This issue has many tenacles attached to it. The most important to our industry is the potential effect of baseload electric generation. This system is already being called on to run less when the wind and solar projects are producing so that those sources can be added to the grid at the expense of hydro generation.

A second issue is the placement of the salmon fish importance at a higher level of importance than human needs. One third of the hydro-generation cost already is directed toward the various fish-recovery projects.


The most recent Columbia River Treaty requires that Bonneville Power Administration inject an additional \$300 million per year into the fish-migration issue. Electric generation is just one of the impediments of salmon migration, along with over-harvesting by the fishing industry, sea lion predation and tribal fishing seasons.

The economic importance of these facilities needs to remain at the top of the discussion list. Production output of the soils because of the irrigation systems,

the movement of commodities through the river barge system, hydro generation, recreation benefits, and snowpack runoff flood control are all important considerations. Tribal concerns with the treaties of many years ago may need to be points of discussion, but let's not think that giving way to primitive ways of the past is our solution for going forward. Fish ladders, controlled water discharges, hatcheries and reduced harvest seasons have all had positive success stories related to the salmon runs. Let's continue to discuss positive solutions to these problems that do not require the removal of these important facilities.

I bring these points up because we do not have to go through the misery of power shortages and inconvenience if we continue to use the "all-of-the-above" generation mix that we currently have. The addition of electric transportation, data centers, AI computing requirements and natural electric growth requirements, all lead us to the need to have all of our current generation sources as well as the new intermittent sources. As we develop new sources, let's continue to use technology to help in purifying our discharges from the generation plants that need to do better. We can do that by using financial support for these improvements, just as we use financial commitments to promote renewable sources and the promising small nuclear reactor generation sources.

Our political leaders need to hear from you regarding our energy choices. Be willing to ask the tough questions, and offer your viewpoints, as we get ready to select our countries' leaders in our November elections. And while you are at it, please join us in our grassroots coalition (www.mtco-ops.com) to help these elected officials know how you are feeling about our energy resources.

And lastly, please take the time to get out and vote; it is a privilege that we have been granted, and a healthy democracy requires that the citizens participate. 

LOW-INCOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS AVAILABLE

LIHEAP PROGRAMS RUN OCTOBER THROUGH APRIL

THE state of Montana, through the Department of Public Health & Human Services, offers two programs aimed at helping low-income individuals reduce their heating costs. The programs run from October 1st through April 30th of each year. **LIHEAP** (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program) helps with payment of the primary source of heat in the home. Both renters and homeowners may apply. To the right are the income limits, according to family size.

Apply at the LIHEAP office for your county:

Weatherization program

The **WEATHERIZATION PROGRAM** through LIHEAP helps participants improve the heating efficiency of their homes, thus reducing their energy consumption. Applications are ranked according to the degree of need and placed in “priority groups.” Special priority is given to older adults and disabled individuals. Once approved, an energy auditor will set a time to visit with you about the most cost-effective weatherization measures for your home within the dollar limits allowed.

Energy Share

Another organization, **ENERGY SHARE OF MONTANA**, is aimed at helping Montanans faced with emergencies meet their energy needs and

LIHEAP INCOME GUIDELINES

FAMILY SIZE	INCOME LIMITS
1	\$32,102
2	\$41,979
3	\$51,857
4	\$61,735
5	\$71,612
6	\$81,490
7	\$83,342
8	\$85,194
9	\$87,150
10	\$95,220
11	\$103,290
12	\$111,360
13	\$119,430
14	\$127,500
15	\$135,570

move toward self-reliance. It is to be used only after an applicant has been considered for LIHEAP. There are no specific income limits; however, if a household has sufficient resources available to meet the needs, it will be ineligible for assistance. Energy Share is a grant program. Applicants must fill out an application available at Opportunities Inc; 905 1st Ave. N.; Great Falls, or receive one by mail by calling either

LIHEAP OFFICES

Opportunities, Inc

Serves: Cascade, Chouteau, Glacier, Toole, Pondera and Teton counties
 905 1st Ave N
 PO Box 2289, Great Falls MT 59403
 (406) 761-0310
 (800) 326-0955


Rocky Mountain Development Council

Serves: Broadwater, Jefferson and Lewis & Clark counties
 648 N Jackson
 PO Box 1717, Helena MT 59624
 (406) 447-1625
 (800) 356-6544

Blackfeet Reservation

Tribal Energy Assistance
 PO Box 850
 Browning MT 59417
 (406) 338-7977

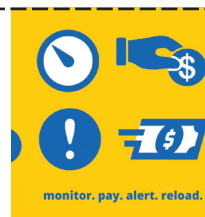
761-0310, or toll free 1-800-326-0955. Applications may also be available at your LIHEAP office, or through your energy provider.

For more information about saving energy in your home, visit <https://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/energyassistance> and select “What Can I Do to Save Energy in My Home?” 

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- GETTYSBURG NATIONAL PARK
- SMITHSONIAN MUSEUMS
- NATIONALS BASEBALL GAME
- SPY MUSEUM
- HOLOCAUST MUSEUM



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SOPHOMORES &
JUNIORS**



IF YOU ARE A SOPHOMORE OR JUNIOR IN
HIGH SCHOOL AND ARE A SREC MEMBER
CHECK OUT THE WEBSITE BELOW OR
ASK YOUR ENGLISH AND HISTORY TEACHER
FOR CONTEST/ESSAY DETAILS

SUN RIVER ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
WWW.SUNRIVERELECTRIC.COOP OR CONTACT LEANNE AT 406-467-2526