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Increasing sage grouse protection ruffles feathers

According to *E&E News*, the U.S. Interior Department is planning new protections on millions of acres of public lands to forestall an Endangered Species Act listing for the sage grouse. That poses concerns for ranchers as well as energy developers.

The Bureau of Land Management faces the task of updating as many as 98 of its Resource Management Plans (RMPs) in the next few years, affecting 68 different areas across the west. In the meantime, the BLM plans to issue an instruction memorandum providing short-term protections for sage grouse applying to all land use authorizations and projects on BLM land within sage grouse habitat.

The memorandum from the BLM outlines steps that can be taken to minimize impacts from activities including oil and gas drilling, geothermal exploration, fence building, grazing, transmission line and renewable energy rights of way, and

vegetative management, among others, according to the *E&E News* report. That draft states that "Emphasis for protecting and managing greater sage grouse habitat incorporates the following principles: 1) protecting intact habitats, 2) minimizing habitat loss, and 3) managing habitats to maintain or restore desired conditions."

The interim protections and eventually the RMP amendments focus on strengthening regulatory protections to prevent the bird from becoming endangered. The Fish and Wildlife Service has until 2015 to issue a final listing decision on the sage grouse after its legal settle-

ment with environmental groups in the summer of 2011. The sage grouse was listed as a "candidate" for federal protection in 2010.

Sen. Dean Heller (R-Nev.) addressed a letter of concern to Secretary Salazar, saying, "It is my hope that as you work towards finalization of the IM, you will take into careful consideration the potential impacts of the proposed changes on the economy. Species and habitat protection is a laudable goal. It is also important to remember that wildlife protection and economic activity are not mutually exclusive."



Inside WIFELINE

WIFE officers for 2012 (above) and Topic and Commodity Chairs (left) gathered at the National Convention in New Mexico in November. For a complete listing of the newly elected WIFE dignitaries, see the election results in this issue of *WIFELINE*.

President's Report



By Deb Dressler
North Dakota

WIFE establishes priority issues for upcoming year

Happy New Year from southwestern North Dakota. At the time of this musing I am in between the holidays. Hope you all had a Merry Christmas and ample time to visit with family and friends. Travel and weather this fall and winter in North Dakota has been mild so far. We had a brown Christmas, a welcome relief from the past three snowy winters.

I encourage every WIFE member to attend the WIFE Legislative Meeting to be held in Washington, D.C., on March 3-6, 2012, at the Holiday Inn Capitol. March 3 is a travel day with an Executive Committee meeting scheduled for that evening. The Board of Directors meeting will convene on Sunday, March 4, at 8 a.m. March 5 will include USDA visits, Senate and House briefings, and will conclude with the annual pizza party for members of Congress and their agricultural aides. Tuesday, March 6, will be spent on the Hill with a reception to salute new WIFE honorary members. Wednesday is a travel day.

The WIFE Legislative Meeting is an opportunity to take 2012 priorities to Capitol Hill and to thank members of Congress for helping to sustain American agriculture. I challenge every state association to send WIFE members to D.C. to "tell your WIFE story." Look for the registration form and hotel reservation in this issue of WIFeline. The hotel reservation is due February 2, 2012, and the registration is due February 10, 2012, to WIFE Treasurer Shana Baisch.

WIFE 2012 priorities are:

- 2012 Farm Bill - Food Security Act
- Economy - trade imbalances
- Private Property Rights - buffalo,

- free grazing, and predator control
- Border Issues - security/biosecurity and immigration
- Equal Access to Justice Act (EAJA)
- Energy

USDA's 2012 Agricultural Outlook Forum will be held February 23-24, 2012, at Crystal Gateway Marriott in Arlington, Virginia. Moving Agriculture Forward is the theme as USDA is "Growing, Innovating, and Celebrating 150 years." A historic gathering of former Secretaries of Agriculture will occur with Secretary Tom Vilsack moderating a plenary panel of former Secretaries of Agriculture invited to speak on "Agriculture Visions of the Future." Secretary Vilsack will deliver the Forum Keynote address at USDA's annual meeting. Twenty-five breakout sessions with more than 80 speakers will focus on a broad range of topical issues related to agriculture and global food security, foreign trade, financial markets, and economic development, conservation, energy, climate change, food safety, food hubs, extension programs, and next generation farmers.

In late December, the Agriculture Department announced that farm income was up 28 percent from 2010. The growth, according to Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, is a reflection of the hard work and innovation of the farmers and ranchers who continue to take risks and embrace new methods and innovations that dramatically improve efficiency. As farm income was rising, total production expenses were up by an estimated \$34.4 billion (120 percent) in 2011.

Now more than ever, WIFE members must tell their stories to the congressional delegations that pass laws and regulations. As farms and ranches are decreasing in numbers, grassroots agricultural organizations have a heavier burden to inform the growing urban population and policy makers. I urge you to attend

the action packed days in early March at the WIFE Legislative Meeting in Washington, D.C.

Lately a lay person coined a phrase "Don't look back," wise words for us all. WIFE will move forward with 2012 priorities and impress on the policy makers - whether it be in Washington, D.C., or locally - that you are involved in agriculture if you eat.

Remember to thank the service men and women who so tirelessly give their time to protect our numerous freedoms in the United States.

Americans spend just 9.5 percent of their income on food, less than any other country. Only 11 percent of funding in the Farm Bill goes to farm policies.

"Our farmers deserve praise, not condemnation; and their efficiency should be cause for gratitude, not something for which they are penalized."

-- President John F. Kennedy

Happy Trails.

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National Convention News

Panel discusses variety of energy issues

By Barbara Broberg

Friday evening, November 11, 2011, at the New Mexico WIFE National Convention. . . we ate! A perk at convention is the good food. Marlene Kouba, National WIFE Energy Chair, introduced a panel of speakers addressing "Americas's Energy Supply-Affordability-Reliability-Independence."

Marita Noon, executive director for Citizens Alliance for Responsible Energy (energymakesamericagreat.org), spoke on "Energy Freedom." Recurring

over and over in her talk was the theme that America runs on energy. Energy is available for us to do our daily work and so we have the critical help to do things we could not do without it.

"When you take away energy, you take away freedom," Noon said. She urged her audience to think what happens when a light is switched on. Does the person who switches it on think about the regulations to the electric supplier? Noon advocates on behalf of energy. She got involved five years ago, and when she analyzed 25 environmental groups, she found "block/deny/kill" was what they hoped to accomplish.

Is transportation a luxury or a necessity? When you think of how our life is impacted by regulation you can begin to react as Marita Noon has. You can again be brought to see how environmentalists have gotten away from their animals and vegetation and have begun to set their sights on regulating YOU. When your work is hindered by regulation, the cost and toil of products increase. Noon has written a book called *Energy Freedom*. It is her twentieth book and her first to address energy. She encouraged people to "Wake up, stand up, show up, and speak up." Send an e-mail or call when issues out there affect you. Let YOUR voice be heard with the others!

Rhonda Mitchell, a senior government analyst with the Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, spoke about "Regulatory Challenges for Utilities." Tri-State supplies electricity in four states. They have 16 percent renewables, which does not include the hydroelectric portion (hydro keeps it from being allowed to claim "renewable"). Tri-State models itself on co-op principles while maintaining "reliable cost based electricity" to their 44 co-ops. The association must keep pace with rules and regulations. The rules for 2014 were completed recently for their industry, taking in 28 states.

As an example, Mitchell used con-

crete, which uses a lot of energy when it is made. Coal ash is a bi-product of coal burning and can be used in the manufacture of concrete. There is a win-win when the two industries can collaborate. Coal ash was directed to be dealt with as a non-hazardous waste. Mitchell said there is a goal of regulation mitigation, which is balanced with best available technologies ("BATS" - a new phrase to me). Keeping electricity affordable is the work of Rhonda Mitchell at Tri-State.

Randy Klein, director of membership for the Renewable Fuels Association (www.ethanolrfa.org), had a talk entitled "The Evolving Ethanol Industry and Policy." Klein used another new phrase, "carbon intensity." It takes energy to make energy. Ethanol is cost effective when oil costs \$90-100/bbl. High oil/barrel prices cause innovation in oil exploration.

Klein gave some informative statistics concerning what ethanol has accomplished. These statistics are particularly refreshing to WIFE members who have advocated for ethanol. He praised the farm sector for adapting and evolving with the ethanol industry. Feed, as a bi-product of ethanol, has been another element in the sheer change that has been attained in the growth of ethanol. Ethanol has been exported to Canada and Brazil.

Klein mentioned the improvement of octane in fuels. He said the 45 mpg cars of the future will run on higher octane, and E-15 is coming in 2013. The oil industry has tax payer subsidizes written into the tax code.

WIFE Conventions are a wealth of information in wonderful settings. The Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association sponsored the dinner. The American Petroleum Institute, unable to attend, sponsored the Hospitality Room. The panel certainly brought out the effort made in providing affordable, reliable, energy using methods that are independent and even exportable to those wanting US fuels and products.

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**By Pat Torgerson
Montana**

Transportation Report

U.S. automakers adopt technology to improve efficiency of vehicles

It is interesting to see that U.S. automakers are on the right path at last and are making the most of new technology. Automaker innovation as well as sweat and hard work is paying off for the U.S. consumer. Automakers are releasing new products and hiring more workers. This year in the U.S. about 66 new dealerships

opened, which is good for those communities.

Consumers have demanded that automakers come up with innovations and advancements for better, smarter, and ever more fuel-efficient vehicles. Cars are slimming down. Every ounce of excess weight is scrutinized by automakers. Consumers want cleaner air technology, energy efficiency, new body design aimed at maximum performance. What has brought this concern about? Two new fuel-efficiency mandated standards have helped.

First is the 2009 mandate for a Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) of 35.5 mpg by 2016. The second mandate

came in 2011 with new standards for vehicle fleets of 54.5 mpg by 2025.

Automakers see the need for the use of lighter materials and sleeker aerodynamics in addition to the development of hybrids, cleaner diesel, plug-hybrid electrics, and battery electric hybrids.

Most automakers are listening to the demands of consumers about the cost of purchasing price for vehicles and the expense of fuel or cost to recharge the vehicle. Consumers also have a fear of higher repair bills. All these things affect whether or not consumers buy the new models. Auto efficiency has been a long time in coming. There is an old saying: "Better late than never."



**By Dianna Reed
Kansas**

Dairy Report

U.S. looks to expand Japanese exports

In Japan, a major bakery worker has put a new twist on sandwiches – no meat, just cheese and tomato. Yasuhiro Nakajima said that he finds Colby Jack cheese interesting because of its marbled look. In addition, it does not have a strong flavor that overrides the other ingredients. Another cheese he likes to use, Pepper Jack, does have a unique accent or taste which, in combination with cream cheese and Parmesan, offers a flavor package that is earning acclaim.

Until recently, many U.S. dairy producers looked at exports as a means to get rid of surplus product. But, increas-

ingly, they are learning that it can be a very lucrative value-added market if they are willing to make the commitment to satisfy the needs of customers like Nakajima. A huge success story is unfolding with regard to U.S. cheese exports to Japan.

Between 1995 and 2010, there was more than a five-fold increase in the amount of U.S. cheese exported to Japan. This year, U.S. cheese exports to Japan could amount to more than 20,000 metric tons, which would make the U.S. the third largest supplier of cheese to Japan, with about a 10 percent market share. Australia and New Zealand still remain the largest suppliers. In order to avoid heavy reliance on New Zealand and Australia, Japan has decided to diversify its purchasing to include more suppliers such as the U.S.

Japan has a robust dairy industry of its own but still must import quite a bit

of cheese, whey and other ingredients to meet the needs of its people.

There are becoming fewer and fewer dairy farms in Japan; there are only half as many dairy farms in Japan today as there were in 1995, with total milk production declining by 9 percent. One explanation for the decline is the age of Japan's farmers. Twenty-five percent of all farmers in Japan are over 60 years of age and are just simply deciding to retire.

In early November, a group of U.S. dairy producers and export officials traveled to Japan to learn more about that market. They learned there is a high degree of trust in the quality of American products and that American products are also cost-competitive. The biggest question on the minds of Japanese importers and end-users is whether the U.S. will be a long-term, consistent supplier.

Our industry needs to know our customers and how we can meet their needs.



By Pam Potthoff
Nebraska

Trade Report

Buying American can have a significant impact on economy

Trade is a many-faceted topic. It involves more than just imports and exports. It involves the reasons behind trade. It involves trade between individuals, companies, states and nations.

Webster defines trade as "an Act or business of exchanging commodities by barter or sale; commerce; traffic," among other definitions. Therefore, as I begin my term as WIFE Trade Chairman, I wanted to explain my philosophy about the scope of my writings. I will not limit this column to international trade but will try to highlight trade issues at all levels.

WIFE POLICY: The slogan of the 2011 WIFE Convention was "Help America Grow - Buy American." WIFE members can make a difference!

BUY AMERICAN: Our attitude toward trade is influenced by both patriotism and protectionism. Sometimes it is difficult to tell the difference. At a time when thousands of Americans are out of work, those of us who love the USA compassionately want to see more jobs for our neighbors and fellow citizens. This has led to a "Buy American" movement that continues to pick up speed.

WORLD NEWS PROGRAM: Did you see that Diane Sawyer had a special report on World News concerning Made in America? In the report, Sawyer said that if every American spent just \$64 more than normal on USA made items, it would create something like 200,000 new jobs! She also pointed out that if 200 million Americans refused to buy just \$20 each of Chinese goods, that solves a billion dollar trade imbalance in our favor. The World News program was aired before Christmas. It stated the

average American would spend \$700 on holiday gifts and goodies.

The National Retail Federation estimated that would total more than \$465 billion and, if that money was spent entirely on US made products, it would create 4.6 million jobs. These figures are good examples of the part imports have played in the current financial problems of our country. They also show the part individual patriotism could play in correcting the economic woes in America. And it would not require legislation from a bickering Congress.

COURT DECISIONS: On Dec. 19, the Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit ruled that because China is a "non-market economy," so-called "countervailing duties" imposed by the U.S. Commerce Department on Chinese imports are illegal. It said Chinese government industry subsidies are not an adequate basis to impose duties. U.S. trade officials have calculated that the subsidies run into the billions of dollars and make products imported into the U.S. so cheap that domestic competition isn't feasible. A U.S. Commerce Department spokesman told the Dayton Daily News (Ohio) the administration is considering judicial and legislative options. This is an area WIFE needs to watch.

THE WTO COTTON DECISION: The so-called "Brazil cotton case" is a long-running World Trade Organization (WTO) dispute settlement case (DS267) initiated by Brazil—a major cotton export competitor—in 2002 against specific provisions of the U.S. cotton program. In September 2004, a WTO dispute settlement panel found that certain U.S. agricultural support payments and guarantees—including (1) payments to cotton producers under the marketing loan and counter-cyclical programs, and (2) export credit guarantees under the GSM-102 program—were inconsistent

with WTO commitments.

Litigation and negotiations have continued with an agreement reached that included (among other requirements) payment by the U.S. of a \$147.3 million annual fund to a newly created "Brazilian Cotton Institute" to provide technical assistance and capacity building for Brazil's cotton sector. The U.S. commitments are intended to delay any trade retaliation until after the 2012 Farm Bill, when potential changes to U.S. domestic cotton subsidies will be evaluated.

RESHORING MOVEMENT: There is a movement underway to bring jobs that have been offshored back to the states. You will be hearing more about this.

GLOBAL TRADE REGULATIONS: The WTO biennial ministerial conference in Geneva ended in December without making any headway on the Doha Round of talks. The WTO pits "developed nations" (like the United States) against "developing nations" (which includes China and India). One major issue in the Doha talks since 2009 has been the U.S. demand that emerging economies such as India, China, and Brazil, cut tariffs in industries such as chemicals and electric and electronic goods.

U.S. TRADE DEFICIT: The U.S. reported a trade deficit equivalent to 43.5 Billion USD in October of 2011 (the last month for which data is available).

TRADE TICKER: At AmericanEconomicAlert.org is a Trade Ticker that represents the U.S. trade deficit on an up-to-the-second basis. I checked it on December 27 and it was over \$537 Billion for 2011 and still ticking away.

MAJOR U.S. TRADING PARTNERS: The main trading partners of the

Continued on Page 7



By Alice Parker
Washington

Water, Private Property, Natural Resources, and Endangered Species Report

Endangered Species Act hearings held

Several hearings are being scheduled over the next year to review and make changes to the Endangered Species Act. The first hearing, "The Endangered Species Act: How Litigation is Costing Jobs and Impeding True Recovery Efforts," was heard by the full committee on December 6.

Congressman Doc Hastings, chairman of the House Natural Resource Committee, said, "The intent of the hearing and those to follow is to have an honest conversation about both the strengths and weaknesses of the ESA and consider if there are ways to update the law to make it work better for both species and people."

The ESA was enacted in 1973 and was reauthorized in 1988. It has been 23

years since the legislation has been reviewed or any changes made to the Act. The goal of the Act was to preserve, protect, and recover key domestic species. Lead agencies for implementing ESA are the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries Service.

Special interest groups are not focusing on recovering endangered species but are using the act to bring lawsuits. Unfortunately, the Act has become a tool for excessive litigation. This litigation is blocking job-creating projects. These special interest groups continue to file lawsuits against the Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service as well as others.

The Department of Interior in July agreed to settlements that covered 779 species in 85 lawsuits and legal actions. Currently there are 180 pending ESA related lawsuits. If these valuable resources were put to resolving problems for ESA listed species instead of being spent on litigation, recovery would be expedited. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Director Dan

Ashe remarked in the hearing, "We fully agree with the concern that our resources are better spent on implementing the ESA than on litigation."

Chairman Hastings stated in a recent press release that he hoped to hear more from witnesses and others about how litigations are impacting species protection, job creation, and economic development across the country.

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**By Klodette Stroh
Wyoming**

Sugar Report

Input costs offset better prices

a global commodity research firm based in Oxford, England. U.S. sugar policy operates at no cost to the taxpayers and it will continue that way for the next decade.

Growers are facing a tremendous increase in cost of petroleum products that are used in agriculture such as fertilizer, fuel, and tires. Equipment cost and good quality seed for crop production are on the rise as well. There is one issue the United State public has to keep in mind. Our growers have not been paid according to parity prices. In commodities, you can think of parity price as the purchasing power of a particular commodity relative to a farmer's expenses such as wages, interest on debt, equipment, taxes, and so forth.

The Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938 states that the parity price formula must adjust commodities' prices according to the cost of production. Parity price for commodities should be sufficient enough for a farm operator to support his or her family and operate their business. Commodities investors buy and sell growers' crops; they are not involved in production agriculture. The bottom line is that growers buy retail, sell their crops wholesale, and pay the freight both ways.

American growers have proven their efficiency in providing food and fiber for our country. The farm family was the basic unit shaping life in America and for over 200 years agriculture has changed the countryside while providing rural strength. Growers are the backbone of this country, and as American taxpayers, we have to protect our farming industry. There is worldwide economic commotion. We should support American growers, as they are

founders of our nation. This nation's record high deficit weighs heavily, but I truly believe, as the story told by the history of the Great Depression, American growers will be the strong wheel to pull our economy out of this sinkhole.

President Obama has called for cuts of \$33 billion in agriculture; it is clearly more than agriculture can withstand.

I wish everyone a blessed and prosperous New Year. The 2011 farming year was a year to remember. Many American farmers lost their crops because of unexpected river floods in the early spring and persistent drought conditions. I pray for a good 2012 crop year for all growers.

The future of agriculture is facing many challenges. World population is expected to reach over 7.5 billion people in the year of 2020. Today's world population is at 6.2 billion. The United State is blessed with fertile land and a knowledgeable generation of farmers to feed millions of new mouths relying on our country's food production. Keep in mind farming has progressed from a team of horses in the early 1900s to tractors with the power of 40 to 600 horses today. Today's farmers operate nearly 3 1/2 times more land than their predecessors from 1900. On a large scale, operators have to invest in more efficient and larger equipment for their farms despite today's tough economic times.

U.S. sugar producers are a good example. Of the 95 sugar-producing countries or regions examined, the United States is more efficient than 75 of them. This report was released during the International Sweetener Symposium by LMC International Ltd.,

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Buying American can offset trade imbalance

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U.S. are Canada, European Union, Mexico, China and Japan.

MAJOR EXPORTS: The main exports of the U.S. are machinery and equipment, industrial supplies, non-auto consumer goods, motor vehicles and parts, aircraft and parts, food, feed and beverages.

MAJOR IMPORTS: U.S. imports non-auto consumer goods, fuels, production machinery and equipment, non-fuel industrial supplies, motor vehicles and parts, food, feed and beverages.

Next month I will put together a list of some sources for USA products. When each American does his/her part to stimulate our economy, WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!



**By Marlene Kouba
North Dakota**

Energy Report

Special interest groups target coal

America has more than an 800-year supply of coal that is currently accessible and economically feasible to recover. There are many types of coal, including anthracite, bituminous, subbituminous, and lignite. Anthracite is the hardest and has the highest carbon content while lignite has the lowest. Bituminous coal is the most plentiful type of coal and is primarily used to generate electricity and to make coke for the steel industry.

The coal industry provides nearly half of the electricity used by Americans, along with 30 percent of the U.S. carbon emissions and some air pollution. It is being attacked by environmentalists, regulators and health advocates—it is all about the Clean Air Act. The cap-and-trade legislation regarding global warming didn't pass last year, so now they are tackling the industry through the public health issue.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is working on a series of long-delayed regulations which could make it very difficult for Big Coal. In July they issued final rules on air pollution that crosses state borders, forcing power plants to reduce emissions over next two years or close. The National Economic Research Associates estimates that this rule could cost the industry \$18 billion by 2020, and American electricity bills will increase 11.5 percent. Thousands of jobs will also be lost. Coal executives say they have been cleaning up the air and it is much cleaner than it was in the 1960s and 70s.

The Sierra Club is one of the nation's oldest and largest green groups with 1.4 million members. The Sierra Club has already had success in fighting the growth of coal usage by blocking more than 150 proposed coal plants in the country through legal action and by pushing local opinion. This summer, Michael Bloomberg of New York gave a \$50 million gift to the Sierra Club's Beyond Coal campaign through his

charitable foundation. He wants to turn coal into the "new tobacco" to make it unacceptable in regards to health. With this donation they plan to increase their strategy and activity.

The world is becoming more coal-intensive. Global consumption grew 7.6 percent last year, and coal produces 30 percent of the world's energy. China is the biggest coal consumer in the world, and they have tripled their use in past 10 years. The United States is the world's biggest coal producer and consumer, but exports to Asian countries more than tripled last year.

U.S. coal generation hit a 30-year low early this year, but coal is still the biggest source of electricity. Pilot projects to build "clean coal" plants have been stalled because Congress enacted a limit on carbon emissions. Other countries are expanding their production. China has already burned more than 2.5 million tons this year, up 10.3 percent from last year.

The top eight states whose electricity is supplied by coal are West Virginia with 97 percent, Kentucky at 92 percent, Indiana at 91 percent, Ohio at 85 percent, Missouri at 82 percent, Pennsylvania at 49 percent, Illinois at 46 percent, and Alabama at 43 percent.

Wyoming is the nation's largest coal producer, with over 400 million tons of coal produced in the state each year. In 2006, Wyoming's coal production accounted for almost 40 percent of the nation's total coal production. Currently Wyoming's subbituminous coal comes from four of the state's

10 major coal fields. The Sierra Club and WildEarth Guardians have been attacking their industry.

North Dakota's Antelope Valley Station has more than \$319 million invested in environmental controls with scrubbers removing up to 90 percent of sulfur dioxide emissions and filter bags capturing about 99 percent of particle matter. The state has one of the 12 largest mines in the nation and the largest lignite mine in the country, supplying more than 16 million tons annually. North Dakota "soft" coal is burned for the sole purpose of turning water into steam. The plant uses 350 tons of lignite per hour in each boiler to create 3.1 million pounds of steam. The steam hits a series of turbines that rotate 3,600 revolutions a minute to produce electricity. Each day their coal gasification plant converts approximately 18,000 tons of lignite coal into an average of 145 million cubic feet of synthetic natural gas for home heating and electricity generation.

On September 30, 2011, a federal judge approved a deal requiring the EPA to finalize plans to reduce haze-causing pollution from coal-fired power plants and other sources in four Western states by 2012. The Environmental Defense Fund, WildEarth Guardians, and National Parks and Conservation Association sued the EPA for failing to address haze-causing emissions, which are required under the Clean Air Act in Montana, Wyoming, Colorado and North Dakota.

The war on coal will intensify.

In the News

**By Diane McDonald
National WIFE Secretary
North Dakota**

Editor's Note: The following letter by Diane McDonald appeared in the December 2011 issue of Successful Farming Magazine.

I'd like to add to the discussion about government subsidies for farmers ["Your View," August, page 8.]

According to the website Farm Policy Facts (farmpolicyfacts.org), commodity policies in the 2008 Farm Bill cost less than

¼ of 1% of the federal budget – about 25 cents of every \$100 paid in taxes.

We may have better market prices now and the equity in our land may be higher, but these things can change very quickly. Someone else sets the price of what we provide, and we also have to contend with whatever Mother Nature hands us.

President John F. Kennedy once said, "The farmer is the only man in our economy who buys everything retail, sells everything wholesale, and pays the freight both ways."

Rural Health, Farm Finance, and Communications **Report**



**By Donna Bolz
Nebraska**

Rural areas of U.S. lack lawyers

area. Rapid City, with a population of about 68,000, is as small a community as his wife will agree to live in.

Riggins' decision is not unusual. Census data shows that America's population is shifting from rural to urban. In 1910, 72 percent of Americans lived in rural areas. A century later, it was at an all-time low of 16 percent. The drive can be taxing in rural areas, but Riggins says he doesn't mind.

Money also plays a role. While the cost of living in small towns is often less than in cities, so, too, is the salary. For example, a lawyer in rural southeastern Oklahoma earns an average of \$72,000 annually, while a San Francisco lawyer earns \$172,000 on average, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. With many young lawyers graduating with \$100,000 or more in student loans, the bigger paycheck can be the deciding factor in taking a job.

The South Dakota State Bar Association is hoping to change that by creating a rural practice task force to help bring more lawyers to small towns. A similar effort is underway in Iowa.

"The numbers speak volumes about who we have in the rural communities," said Patrick Goetzinger, president of the South Dakota State Bar Association.

"We're going to have some problems in delivering justice in these rural communities if we don't do anything proactively."

One idea is to create a loan forgiveness program for lawyers who commit to serv-

ing a small community for a certain period of time, similar to programs for health care professionals in rural areas. Another goal is to improve job placement for lawyers' spouses, who sometimes have a difficult time finding work in rural areas, said Phil Garland, co-chair of the Iowa State Bar Association's rural practice committee. The programs aim to improve access to legal services and help preserve community life.

People can say what they want about lawyers, Garland said, but there's no one more involved in a small town than an attorney performing pro-bono work or sitting on a local board.

Rural firms also need to offer opportunities for students to test the waters through summer associate programs. Everyone agreed mentoring will play a key role in bringing more young lawyers to less-populated parts of the country.

"You need someone to help you. If there are attorneys in these small towns, they need to actively reach out," said Jennifer Knapp, 32. She left her job in Minneapolis a few years ago to take over Libera Knapp Law Office in Winona, Minn., which has about 27,500 residents. Her old job offered a great salary, regular hours and friendly co-workers, Knapp said, but she disliked having little direct contact with clients. Browsing Craigslist one day, she stumbled upon a post listing a 100-year-old, third-generation law firm for sale.

"I could not get it out of my head, so I responded," Knapp said. She met with the outgoing lawyer who said he would stay on for a year to ease the transition, but there was one thing that kept worrying Knapp about moving to Winona: finding a life partner in a small town.

"It was a huge concern for me. It was probably the biggest thing holding me back," she said. Despite her personal misgiving, she purchased the firm and took it over in 2009. She has hired two attorneys to help with the workload, and she recently married a man she met in Winona.

Knapp wanted to try something new and it has worked out well for her. She believes that no amount of mentoring or appealing to unemployed graduates will make someone happy in a small town if they don't already have that dream.

Many rural areas are having a shortage of lawyers, which can cause many problems. An example of this is Fred Cozad, the only lawyer left in Martin, South Dakota, a community of about 1,000 people 150 miles southeast of Rapid City. When the 85-year-old closes his firm, there will be none.

It's a problem seen more and more in rural communities. Fewer lawyers mean people must travel farther for legal advice, slowing down the process and bogging down the court system. Communities are spending more money to bring in lawyers from nearby towns for board and commission meetings, while businesses that used to turn to one person for legal guidance are now forced to use firms with multiple specialists.

In South Dakota, 65 percent of the state's 1,861 attorneys are in four cities: Sioux Falls, Rapid City, Aberdeen and Pierre. A South Dakota lawyer, Quentin Riggins, 32, said he enjoys working with rural clients but he would rather travel to see them than base his office in a rural

WIFE Dues

**By Mary Ann Sheppard
National Membership Chair**

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March 3-6, 2012
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Feb. 10, 2012

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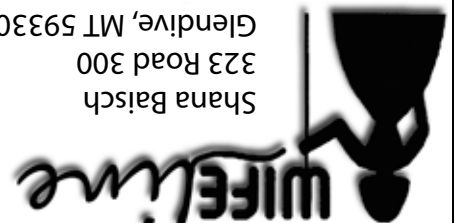
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