

Doug Rye Says  
May 2009

### **Take it slow on changing energy policies**

Happy springtime! It will soon change, though. It will soon be summer and that means it will be hot. And I've got some good tips in the next few months to help you get through the summer, but first things first.

I have been writing this column for six years. I must tell you that I love to do it. Based on the hundreds of calls that I receive from you folks about the column, it appears that we are helping you. I love it when you call and tell me that the information has helped make your energy situation better. I really love it when you tell me to keep up the good work and how important that it is to have someone who really cares about the average Joe. Let me remind you that this is made possible by your electric co-op, which also cares about you. Please don't hesitate to tell them and say thank you.

I have decided not to give you an energy tip in this column. Instead, I would rather share with you a great concern that I have about some issues that could affect every one of us. We live in a great country that seems to be changing at an extremely rapid pace. As I have written before, while we many all be reluctant to change, change is often good. However, changes that result from actions that are not well thought out can be disastrous. The leaders of our nation are now considering several proposals related to the generation of electricity. These proposals are related to renewable energy, carbon emissions, and climate change, etc. Some of the proposals call for placing caps on emissions of carbon dioxide from power plants (and other industries, as well as cars, trucks, etc.) and charging utilities to pay at an auction for the right (allowances) to emit CO<sub>2</sub>. This system will no doubt raise electricity rates for Americans, perhaps significantly, at a time when the nation is in the midst of the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression. Other proposals would require utilities to generate a certain amount of electricity from renewable energy. While I support using renewable energy whenever possible, it isn't wise to set unrealistic targets for the use of such energy. Doing so will only raise electricity costs and could even threaten the reliability of the electric grid.

Simply stated, these are very serious proposals and must be thoroughly considered. I think that rapid decisions on these issues could lead to a gigantic new tax or taxes on the average Joe. Folks, I am not a politician nor am I an expert on climate change. I am an energy efficiency consultant. But I know that this is a very serious matter. I think we must let our voices be heard. If you have a computer and Internet access, please visit the "Our Energy, Our Future" Web site sponsored by the nation's electric cooperatives at [www.ourenergy.coop](http://www.ourenergy.coop). You can communicate with your congressional delegation through this site about the critical energy issues now under consideration. If you don't have access to a computer, please write your representatives and senators and ask them to listen to the electric cooperatives as they consider the major energy policies before them. The cooperatives are acting on behalf of their members with regard to these issues, as

they always do. Their mission, as it has been for more than 70s years, is to provide affordable and reliable electricity to their members. They now need you to help them continue their mission. If you will do this, I promise to return to my normal self next month and help you get ready for summer!

*Doug Rye, a licensed architect living in Saline County and the popular host of the “Home Remedies” radio show, works as a consultant for the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas to promote energy efficiency to cooperative members statewide. To order Doug’s video or ask energy efficiency-related questions,, call Doug at 1-501-653-7931. More energy-efficiency tips, as well as Doug’s columns, can also be found at [www.ecark.org](http://www.ecark.org)*