

BIG BEND ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.



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Manager's Message

Climate Change Plan Must Consider Consumer Impact

It seems like every time America discovers it has a crisis on its hands, our government wakes up and proposes a crash program to fix it.

Sometimes, a crash program pushes us to great heights, such as President Kennedy's program to put a man on the moon.

The goal of addressing greenhouse gas emissions may pose a more difficult challenge than reaching the moon.

True leadership on climate change will require balancing all competing goals to serve the public interest. Keeping electricity affordable and reliable is just as much in the public interest as mitigating climate change.

As we race to put a crash program in place by enacting legislation and developing technology to limit carbon dioxide, we also must ensure Americans have the energy they



*Jim Johnson
Manager*

need—not just in their homes, but also to grow the economy.

State legislation already passed, and some federal legislative proposals under consideration, put at risk the current system that gives those of us in Washington and all other states access to dependable electricity at a reasonable cost.

What responsible leadership should NOT do on energy and climate change is put in place arbitrary, unrealistic emissions targets set far in the future—when many of these leaders will be retired from office.

What responsible leaders should do is first answer hard questions about the economic impact on all of us.

In coming years, utilities will need to increase generating capacity to keep up with demand. While I'm

proud to say that your Co-op has been engaged in a robust energy conservation program, it is unlikely that energy efficiency and renewable energy alone will meet growing demand.

Billions of dollars in research will be needed to meet the technology levels necessary to capture carbon from fossil fuel generation.

I encourage you to engage in discussion with your elected leaders and ask a few basic questions:

- What is your plan to make sure we have the electricity we will need in the future?
- What are you doing to fund the research needed to make emissions-free electric plants an affordable reality?
- How much is mitigating the effects of climate change going to increase my electric bill, and what will you do to make it affordable?

The impact on you, the consumer, must be considered in legislators' crash programs. ■

Big Bend Electric
Cooperative will be
closed May 26
to observe
Memorial Day

WA-25