

## THE ENERGY FUTURE OF RURAL AMERICA

BY LEANN M. OLIVER  
Senior Advisor, U.S. Department of Energy

Rural America plays varied and key roles in both energy production and consumption. These dynamic and complex relationships are even more intriguing when juxtaposed with regional development implications and global water scarcity, both of which add a myriad of significant opportunities. As a prelude to the variety of papers presented in this issue of *Rural Connections*, it is helpful to consider the "big picture" environment in which all these topics coexist. [Read More.](#)



## 10-YEAR ENERGY VISION Western Governors' Association Energy Initiative

BY GOVERNOR GARY R. HERBERT (UT),  
CHAIR, WESTERN GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION

The West plays an indispensable role in meeting our nation's energy needs. Awash in conventional and renewable resources, it is our country's energy breadbasket. Consider the facts: western coal production accounts for more than half the national total; the region has provided nearly 70 percent of the nation's natural gas and petroleum output in recent years; and the U.S. will become the world leader in petroleum production within the next five years, based on current Western regional growth (International Energy Agency, 2012). The region's energy bounty extends well beyond fossil fuels. Renewable energy resources are distributed throughout the West in far greater abundance than in any other region in the country. [Read more.](#)



## ENERGY IN A GLOBAL WORLD

BY DON E. ALBRECHT

Historically, the primary sources of energy for agriculture, transportation, and other human endeavors were the efforts of humans and their domesticated animals. Wood and other forms of biomass were the major sources of heat for cooking and to keep homes warm. The limitations imposed by these energy forms obviously suppressed productivity and living standards. Transportation was slow, work was tedious, and productivity minimal. Much changed with the emergence of the Industrial Revolution. [Read more.](#)



## THE SOCIOLOGY OF GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS A Brief Overview

BY ANDREW K. JORGENSON and AMANDA BERTANA

As noted recently in the leading scientific journal *Nature Climate Change* (Rosa and Dietz, 2012), sociologists in the past two decades have significantly increased our collective understanding of the anthropogenic drivers of greenhouse gas emissions and thus climate change. Anthropogenic, or human drivers, refers to the range of human actions that lead to the emission of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. In this article we briefly summarize the ways in which sociologists conduct research on the human causes of greenhouse gas emissions, and we provide a modest overview of the findings from this growing area of scientific inquiry. [Read more.](#)



## RENEWABLE ENERGY: Implications for Rural Development and Rural Policy in the Intermountain West

BY PETER G. ROBERTSON and RICHARD S. KRANNICH

Perhaps you've seen them as you drive down the highway or drive across the desert - the 300-foot tall, stark white towers and slowly turning blades of a wind turbine, or the glint of the sun off a field of matte black and slightly iridescent photovoltaic solar panels. If you haven't seen these signs of renewable energy development you will likely notice them soon, as wind and solar energy facilities are expanding at breakneck pace across much of the U.S. [Read more.](#)



## WIND DEVELOPMENT AS 'SUSTAINABLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP'

BY EDWIN STAFFORD AND CATHY HARTMAN

The public discourse about energy in the West often centers on federal government policies and their impact on economic development, land use, and protecting the environment. While federal policies are important issues, make-or-break decisions about energy development are made ultimately at the local community level in the chambers of city councils and town hall meetings. Over a four year period we witnessed firsthand how an idealist entrepreneur and his engineering colleague took on Utah's utility industry to build the state's first commercial wind power plant. [Read more.](#)



## WOODY BIOMASS INDUSTRY IN UTAH The Story of the Utah Biomass Resources Group

BY DARREN MCAVOY

The Utah Biomass Resources Group (UBRG) has a mission to facilitate the development of a woody biomass industry in Utah and to promote public biomass education and outreach. Part of that mission is being accomplished with music. The UBRG hosted Utah's first-ever wood fired concert in September of 2012 under the pavilion on Main Street in Beaver, Utah. The Dragon Wagon, Utah State University's mobile gasification demonstration unit, supplied power for the concert. [Read more.](#)



## IN THE GOOD TIMES AND THE BAD: Shale Gas Development and Local Employment

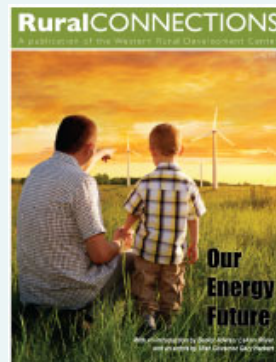
BY JEREMY G. WEBER

Improved drilling technology applied to shale formations has caused production of natural gas in the U.S. to reach historic highs. In a time of high unemployment, policy makers see development of the many shale gas formations in the U.S., mostly in rural areas, as a much-needed source of job creation. The author assessed the local economic effects of natural gas development on counties in Colorado, Texas, and Wyoming. He found that from 1999 to 2007 gas production added 1,780 jobs or about 27 jobs per each billion cubic feet of production to the average county experiencing a boom. [Read more.](#)



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In this issue of *Rural Connections*, hear from a senior advisor with the U.S. Department of Energy, Utah Governor and Chair of the Western Governors' Association, and university researchers on the impacts of energy development in the West. [Download the issue.](#)



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