

NEWS



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**NATION'S ELECTRIC CO-OPS
POSTHUMOUSLY HONOR U.S. SENATOR
CRAIG THOMAS FOR DISTINGUISHED
SERVICE**

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

**Tracy Warren
NRECA Newsroom
February 24 (Noon to 8:00 P.M.)
February 25-26 (8:00 A.M – 5:00 P.M.)
February 27 (8:00 A.M. -12:00 Noon)
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ANAHEIM, CALIF., February 25 – The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) today honored the late Senator Craig Thomas with a Distinguished Service Award, presented to his wife, Susan.

When Senator Craig Thomas died last year, electric cooperatives lost more than a stalwart supporter in Congress, they lost one of their own. Raised on a ranch near Cody, Wyo., Senator Thomas served as general manager for the Wyoming Rural Electric Association before entering politics in the state legislature.

Wyoming statewide association executive director Shawn Taylor said Thomas always remembered where he came from. “He had his rural roots and he had his co-op roots,” Taylor said. “From being statewide director he knew what we were asking for even before we asked for it sometimes.”

In 2005, to cite one of many examples, Senator Thomas was responsible for ensuring that the final version of the Energy Policy Act recognized and accommodated the unique situation of rural electric cooperatives in the energy industry.

As a member of the Senate Finance Committee, Thomas helped create the Clean Renewable Energy Bond program. This year, the National Rural Utility Cooperative Finance Corporation (NRUCFC) issued \$31 million in CREB bonds for six cooperatives in five states.

Thomas co-chaired the Senate's Rural Health Care Caucus. He worked to ensure that rural hospitals received Medicare payments on par with urban hospitals, which has helped keep down health care costs for cooperatives by allowing rural hospitals to stay open, physicians to remain in rural areas and ambulance service to continue.

"Senator Thomas was a great friend and advocate for electric cooperatives," said Jack Wolfe, President of the NRECA. "His knowledge and leadership as a statewide manager, congressman and senator regarding the needs of Wyoming and rural people everywhere made this a better country. As we honor his lifetime of commitment our hearts and prayers are with his family and colleagues."

More than 10,000 representatives from cooperative electric utilities across the nation are attending the NRECA Annual Meeting, February 24-27, at the Anaheim Convention Center, during which they will set NRECA's legislative and organizational agenda for 2008. In addition to considering and acting upon policy resolutions, delegates receive reports from NRECA officials, hear addresses by key public figures and business experts, and attend panel sessions on major issues affecting electric cooperatives and their consumer owners.

NRECA is the national service organization that represents the nation's more than 900 private, not-for-profit, consumer-owned electric cooperatives, which provide service to 40 million people in 47 states.