

THANKS, TO PAST AND PRESENT COOP OBSERVERS

The Cooperative Weather Observer Program is a nationwide network of 11,000 volunteers who record temperature and precipitation each day. There are roughly 81 COOP observers in Northeast Montana. The John Campanius Holm Award is one of the most prestigious awards presented each year by the National Weather Service to a select group of these observers. Richard Efta was one of 25 COOP observers who received this award nationally in 2002.

Richard Efta began taking weather observations for the National Weather Service at his parent's ranch in Wibaux County near Carlyle in 1962. The station was moved to his own ranch roughly 3 miles away in 1967 where Mr. Efta took weather records for a total of 42 years. Since the Carlyle station is one of only two COOP sites located in the county, the 42 years of records kept by Richard are invaluable to the farming and ranching community in Wibaux and surrounding counties.

Mr Efta's dedication and the accuracy that he put into his weather observations were reflected in the data that was received at WFO Glasgow each month. Richard "retired" from his volunteer work as a COOP observer in November 2004 and passed the very important responsibility of keeping accurate weather records on to Ray Banister, a neighbor about a mile away.

Ray has been taking weather observations now for almost two and a half years and is doing a great job. That is no small accomplishment considering all the other responsibilities that farming and ranching entail, not to mention the additional time Ray gives to other volunteer organizations.

Weather is one of the main factors influencing the daily lives of people associated with agricultural activities. The climate extremes in northeast Montana make the flawless precipitation data collected by Mr. Efta and Mr. Banister, as well as all COOP observers, invaluable to the farming and ranching community. The weather data is shared with others through the local paper and through word of mouth. These official weather records are also used by water and land resource agencies in the area for proving claims for disaster relief and insurance.

To Mr. Efta and all the COOP observers of the past, thank you for the time and dedication you gave, to Mr. Banister and the other current COOP

observers throughout northeast Montana and the Nation, thank you for the time and dedication you continue to give to help you neighbors, the National Weather Service and to the Nations COOP program.