



Rio Grande Electric Cooperative, Inc.

UP DATE

Celebrating National Cooperatives Month



October, 2007



A Message From The General Manager/CEO

By Dan Laws

*“Please pay attention to what’s going on here at
the Cooperative. . .”*

If my guess is correct, you are receiving this about two weeks after the close of the Annual Meeting, held in Eagle Pass. I hope you were in attendance and were pleased with all you saw and heard. Texas law requires all electric cooperatives to hold a meeting of the members annually, at a time and place of the board of directors’ choosing. Even if Texas law didn’t require it, our conscience would.

This business belongs to the membership, not the general manager and not the employees. You are the trustees (owners), we are the stewards (caretakers), and so it is important that we regularly report to you how we are taking care of your business. Our employees are frequently reminded that they work for you. It is equally important for you to remember that you own this business, and that carries responsibilities.

You have a duty to be obedient to the bylaws, policies, and tariffs established by your elected representatives, the board of directors. Such matters as paying your bill on time, granting easements in the proper form, not connecting anything to Rio Grande’s system that would cause operational problems or risk to linemen, and the list goes on. All of these provisions are adopted by the board, with the intention of treating every member fairly. Any time you feel you are not treated fairly, you should bring it to someone’s attention.

The cooperative business model is an amazing thing, but it only works well when there is, surprisingly enough, cooperation. Members must cooperate with employees who are only carrying out the policies of the board of directors. Employees must cooperate with members, especially when they have special needs that may not fit the exact letter of the rules, but could be accommodated. And, board members must cooperate with members when they have concerns and try to meet their needs, when it is possible. Needless to say, when it is not possible to meet a particular need, members need to cooperate with board members who are doing the best they can to manage a large business and meet everyone’s needs fairly.

When a cooperative ceases to meet its members’ needs, or when it fails to consider the smallest consumer on the line; if the board of directors is held out as more important than the membership, or the employees are held out as more important than the membership; then it ceases to be a cooperative. You see, a cooperative has its foundation in human relationships rather than stocks and bonds. The death of a cooperative is truly sad. I have recently witnessed such a death, and a large number of those who owned the cooperative would give almost anything to breathe life back into their home-owned business, but it slipped away while they were not paying attention.

Please pay attention to what is going on here at the Cooperative, and be willing to serve on committees, or even the board, when called upon, and ask questions when you are not sure of something. This is National Cooperatives Month, a time to celebrate a business model that brought needed goods and services to a sector of America’s population that had been ignored by stock-held corporations. Hopefully, you can also celebrate your ownership in Rio Grande. I sincerely believe we are **“Your Home Team Advantage”**.

**RGEC’s 62nd Annual Meeting, Saturday, October 13, International Center for Trade,
Eagle Pass, Texas. Please remember to bring your Registration Card!**