



Up Date

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General Manager/CEO Annual Report Dan Laws

Bridging the gap is the theme for this year's Annual Report, but what does it mean to you? And, more importantly, how does it improve your experience with your electric energy provider, Rio Grande Electric Cooperative? We exist to meet your needs when it comes to this very important commodity, and that is our focus every day. No matter how strong our desire in this endeavor, there are impediments—gaps, if you will, in getting from where we are to where you need us. Let's take a look at some of these gaps.

The first one I want to mention is also the most obvious: the enormous distances that exist in our service territory. We cover 27,000 square miles of Texas' rugged and majestic landscape. There are terrain issues, both above ground and below. Above ground there are mountains, canyons, creeks, trees, and the list goes on. Below ground there is rock structure, making digging almost impossible at times. There is sandy soil, river rock and caliche. We bridge this particular gap with state-of-the-art construction methods, a few old tricks, and a dedicated group of linemen who are second to none. These very dedicated men work tirelessly to make sure the gap is as near nonexistent as possible.

There is a communications void that exists for largely the same reason—long distances. In order to meet your needs better and smarter, we need real time data from our substations, your meter, and our employees in the field. We have bridged this gap with satellite communications. Our substation meters communicate directly with any computer that can access the internet anywhere in the world. When voltage anomalies occur on feeders an email is sent directly to key employees' cell phones in real time. This speeds up the process of conducting repairs. Our linemen communicate with each other and the offices using satellite technology, as well. We recently had linemen in Fort Riley, Kansas, to assist with ice damage and were able to communicate directly with them through our radio system. Technology is the best solution in bridging this gap and is something we aggressively employ.

Another communications gap with which we must grapple is the flow of information from the board of directors and employees of the Cooperative to you. Each member is both a consumer and an owner of Rio Grande Electric Cooperative, Inc. As such, you need to know how this business is being managed on your behalf. You need timely information about consumption, safety, and business matters so that you can make informed decisions. We bridge this gap with *Ranch & Rural Living Magazine* and an excellent staff. We have a team of communicators that are second to none. They believe in what they do, and their focus is putting useful information in your hands each and every month.

In the pages that follow, you will hear directly from our key staff members. They will provide you with greater detail about how we are building bridges to close the gaps. Each success improves your experience. I hope as you read their words, you can feel the same sense of pride I feel. We have 110 dedicated and committed employees who understand their role and their responsibility. We are not perfect, so sometimes you need to remind us when we have fallen short. However, in the end, I hope you can conclude that we continue to be **"Your Home Team Advantage."**

