



Rio Grande Electric Cooperative, Inc.

UP DATE



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A Message From The General Manager/CEO

By Daniel G. Laws

“ . . .storm season is just around the corner.”

If things go as they have been, storm season is just around the corner. In fact, it is so close that you could be experiencing it as you read this article. With the storms come electric reliability concerns. Severe storms account for most of our outages each year and it is therefore not surprising that, by default, they account for most of the complaints we receive each year.

Year in and year out, system improvements are aimed at strengthening our energy distribution system so that it will survive storms of all types. Although we have improved reliability significantly, it will never be perfect. I would like to remind you of a couple of reasons for this.

Rio Grande Electric Cooperative covers roughly 27,000 square miles of Texas' dramatic landscape, or approximately 10% of its land mass. We build and maintain facilities in the dry Chihuahuan Desert areas found west of the Pecos River, in the rugged mountains of far West Texas and the fertile Winter Garden of South Texas. Our service territory ambles along the Rio Grande River for some 750 miles.

With that much real-estate, if a storm front hits Texas anywhere, it is likely to hit our facilities somewhere. In reality, the issue is one of exposure, and we have lots of it. Our 9,000 miles of line crisscrosses all or parts of 18 counties in Texas and two counties in New Mexico. High winds and lightning that accompany spring storms produce most of the damage that results in power failures.

Working hand in hand with exposure, is the severity of the storms we experience. Folks who only travel through West Texas occasionally may be surprised to learn that severe flooding can take place; it is a fact that is not readily discernible on most days of the year. If you doubt it can flood in West Texas, just stop one of our seasoned lineman and ask him to tell you a story — I promise what you hear will be surprising.

Even though storms are going to happen, and even though they will cause interruptions in electric service, I want to assure you that there is a very able group of lineman out there taking care of business. When the lights go out—they go out—and they don't come back until the lights are back on. It's not just their job, it's their calling, but if you ask them—they will simply say, “just doing my job”. Their commitment and dedication are part of the reason Rio Grande ECI is your “**Smart Choice**”.

On a personal note, for those who are aware my wife Darlene has been battling breast cancer, let me simply say that God has been incredibly merciful to us. Darlene made it through her Chemotherapy with minimal side effects, by the grace of God. The pathology report that followed her Mastectomy revealed that the tumor was gone without a trace, the lymph nodes were clear, and there were no malignant cells in any of the tissue. I know a number of you were praying for her; please accept my sincere thanks. We received excellent medical attention, but prayer is what produced the results.