



"Owned By Those We Serve"

Rio Grande Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Happy Halloween!

UP DATE



October, 2003



A Message From The General Manager/CEO

By Daniel G. Laws

"We have our priorities straight. . ."

As I write these words I am traveling with other employees to Fort Stockton where we will be conducting a member advisory committee meeting. The committees were formed in 1982, as a means of expanding communication with the membership. In addition, it provides members with a platform from which they can advance ideas.

Some 260 advisory committee meetings have been held during my tenure as general manager/CEO, and of that number, I have missed less than 15. We provide current information about what is going on throughout the Cooperative and listen to concerns raised by those in attendance.

Communication with the membership, as I am sure you would guess, is extremely important. Advisory committees are just one way of accomplishing the monumental task of keeping our membership connected and involved. The magazine you are reading is another tool we employ. I am happy to report the vast majority of our members enjoy the magazine and find that it is a valuable service.

But, we don't stop there! We conduct six town hall meetings each year in areas of the cooperative where folks may not have the opportunity to participate in other Cooperative functions. In fact, the next town hall meeting will be held in Coyoona, which is near Fort Stockton.

Wait a minute, there's more! We've got the Annual Meeting, which is moved to a different town each year so that everyone will have the opportunity to attend if they desire to do so, without coming all the way to Brackettville. This decision was made by the Board of Directors in 1990, and I am glad they had the foresight to make such a decision. The towns in which the meeting is held are, in no particular order, Dell City, Marfa, Carrizo Springs, Brackettville, and Fort Stockton. On October 11, 2003, the Annual Meeting will be held in Fort Stockton at the Civic Center. I hope you will come join us for the festivities.

You may wonder why I am taking the time to tell you all of this; well—it's because you own the business. And the fact that we are owned by you, our consumers, mandates that we meet a higher standard of performance than others, when it comes to communicating with our members. Dare I mention that member ownership also requires more from you? Now that you know, you can't simply take the back seat as mere customers do—you must be involved. Attend meetings, vote in elections, read material that is sent to you, and be concerned.

This is National Cooperative Month. It is a time set aside by Executive Order to commemorate a truly unique business model. Cooperatives are business models that at their core have only one goal—to provide low cost products to their owners. Does it work? Well, in addition to the nation's electric and telephone cooperatives, there are credit unions, cotton gins, Land-O-Lakes Butter, Ace Hardware and True Value, to name but a few; I'd say it works very well.

We have our priorities straight and that makes Rio Grande ECI your "**Smart Choice**". The next time a company tells you they have your best interest at heart, ask them where the profits go; if they go to any one other than the customer—then the customer is not their priority.