



Update



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A Message From The General Manager/CEO

By Dan Laws

“Odds & Ends”

I guess I need to title this article “Odds and Ends”. I have a few areas I need to discuss with you simply because they are items that are often misunderstood, or, in some cases, you just don’t know we are doing them. So, if you can be patient with me, I will opine on a few of these.

Facebook:

I don’t know how many of you out there spend time on Facebook. I know its one of those new fangled computer things, but it’s not bad. You have to judge for yourself whether it is for you or not. I mention Facebook, because Rio Grande is out there in cyberspace trying to find ways to communicate with you in ways that will be convenient for you. Our latest effort is to provide outage updates to keep you informed, so you don’t have to call in for updates. Our rationale is a little selfish, I must admit. Our dispatchers stay very busy communicating with our line crews and first time callers when we are in the throws of a major outage. If we can keep you informed through this public medium resource, then we can free our dispatchers to communicate with our linemen in the field and new callers.

Cooperative Risk Insurance:

The Cooperative is required by Federal regulation to purchase risk insurance to cover a number of potential problems that can arise. And so, we do just that. Among the insurances we purchase is insurance to protect you, the consumer, from our negligence. The key word is “negligence”. In plain language, if you have equipment that is damaged due to negligence on the part of the board of directors, management, or employees, the insurance is intended to make you whole. Don’t forget the key word however; it must be a matter of negligence. If a storm blows through the area and high winds take out three poles and put the lights out for some length of time, that is not negligence. In such cases, you should look to your home owners insurance for any loss. If Cooperative personnel come to your home to replace a transformer and incorrectly reconnect the service, that is negligence. In such a case, you should not have to bear the expense. These are just a couple of examples, but I am sure you catch a sense of what I am saying. I assure you, no one here at the Cooperative wants any member to suffer loss, but when you live in very remote areas, it can happen.

24 Hour Dispatch:

The Cooperative’s phones are answered 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Please accept my assurance that there is never a time when the phones are not answered. If you call and get voice mail (answering machine), that simply means we have a lot of calls coming in at once and the dispatcher can’t get to them all. In such cases, leave a message. If there are enough calls coming in, our voice mail queue can fill, as well. In such cases, you are asked to hold until someone can take your call. Should this happen, odds are you will have to hold for quite a while. Hold if you like, or hang up and call back a little later. If things are so busy the dispatcher can’t get to your call, odds are we are already working on your outage. Our computerized phone system captures every call that has caller ID transmitted. We do our dead level best to get to every call as they come in, but when storms hit and enough members are affected, we can fall behind.

The essence of what I am saying here is these are areas where the Cooperative’s handling of them is often misunderstood. When folks don’t know why they had a particular experience, they fill in the blanks themselves. Often, when filling in the blanks, inaccurate information is passed along. Regrettably, that misinformation becomes reality and gets shared at coffee shops all over Rio Grande’s service area. And yes, sometimes our own personnel fail to provide accurate explanations. Our goal is to provide ever-improving service at as reasonable a price as possible, so that you can continue to enjoy the comforts electric energy can bring.