



Rio Grande Electric Cooperative, Inc.

# Up Date

May 2008



## A Message From The General Manager/CEO

By Dan Laws

### *Taking The Bitter With The Sweet*

Spring paints the landscape with beautiful wild flowers and foliage. It also brings spring thunderstorms. Spring thunderstorms bring outages and damage to distribution facilities. It is the proverbial “bitter with the sweet” thing we always hear about. The rain is needed, and the lightning is a byproduct we must accept.

I am asked from time to time why our system is so susceptible to damage when there are thunderstorms. Covertly hidden between the words that form this question are additional questions like: “*Is the Cooperative properly maintaining the system?*”; “*Are RGEC linemen skilled enough to handle the job of maintaining the system?*”; “*Does the Cooperative care about the effect outages have on members?*”; and a few others.

There is also the nagging issue of other providers with whom members have had experience. We hear things like, “I was with this company or that company and I never had as many blinks, outages or voltage anomalies as I do with Rio Grande”. Exposure is the underlying issue when it comes to our members’ experience with Rio Grande. The simple truth is there is as little basis for comparing Rio Grande to another utility as there is for comparing one person to another. Rio Grande is an electric utility provider, but with a very unique set of circumstances. Most notable among those differences is what I mentioned previously—exposure. In urban settings, it is indeed unusual if a customer is located more than five miles from the substation (source of supply). In Rio Grande’s system the opposite is the reality.

The farther a consumer is located from the source of power, the more exposure there will be to things that “go bump” in the night, or perhaps more precisely, things that “go boom” in the night. That exposure, (distance from the source of power), is also the largest contributing factor to why it may, at times, take a long time to restore power once it fails.

Our linemen are among the very best and they work very hard during storms to restore power. You can have confidence when they are on the job. And, of course, we do maintain our system, but needless to say, some facilities are in worse condition than others because of where they fall in the maintenance cycle. Our commitment to our stewardship responsibilities is unwavering, and we care when you are adversely effected by an outage.

When you consider the exposure issue, I hope you can agree that there are truly some differences that must be taken into consideration. Should your lights go out this spring, I hope you will take time to pray for those who will be trying to restore power. They will be doing so under the most difficult of situations. More importantly, they will be doing so because of their commitment to you. Their commitment is your “**Home Team Advantage**”.

**National Electrical Safety Month -- May 2008**