



Rio Grande Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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A Message From The General Manager/CEO

By Daniel G. Laws

“When circumstances are at their worst, Americans are at their best.”

Regrettably, I am writing this in the wake of America's most horrific tragedy. All across this world's greatest example of freedom, the free are held—for a moment—in bondage, by a cowardly act. We are glued to our televisions and radios, hoping against hope that somehow—miraculously—the thousands thought dead beneath the World Trade Center would be found alive. It is my earnest prayer that will be so. It is also my prayer that God will grant our President the Wisdom of Solomon as he prepares to take action against the vicious perpetrators of so heinous an act.

I am encouraged by what I see happening around the country. When circumstances are seemingly at their worst, Americans are at their best. As I walked out of Wal-Mart last night, one of their associates was handing out ribbons to be worn as a symbol of both our suffering and our solidarity. I drove through Sonora and heard the local radio announcer ask residents to meet at the football stadium to pray for the victims and their families. I picked up the San Angelo Standard Times to see a picture of fire fighters raising an American flag on a flagpole that once was the pinnacle of New York City's skyline. Injured? Yes. Defeated? Absolutely not!

Americans are incredibly resourceful; that has always been true, and I am sure it always will be true. In fact, that resourcefulness gave birth to cooperatives more

than 150 years ago. Individuals coming together to provide for themselves goods and services that otherwise would not be available, are a part of this country's rich history. In fact, it is so significant a part of our history that Congress has designated October as “National Cooperative Month”.

Farm cooperatives, cotton gins, independent grocers, credit unions, telephone cooperatives, produce cooperatives, and electric cooperatives are all examples of businesses that fill voids in America's economic fabric. Each day these institutions provide top-notch services and products to portions of our society who, for a variety of reasons, were overlooked by institutions that serve mainstream America. What is even more striking about cooperatives, is that they are non-profit organizations. Profit is left out of the equation, because cooperative consumers and investors are one and the same.

Rio Grande is proud to be counted among the nation's cooperatives and Rio Grande will always proudly use the word “*cooperative*” in its name. Our history is a marvelous story, replete with examples of what is best about American people. Our story is one of commitment, sacrifice and tenacity in the face of insurmountable odds. Some would have you think that the word “*cooperative*” is synonymous with small, low-tech, or even inept, but it is not true. In fact, because cooperatives are owned by those they serve, they must work smarter and more efficiently than other business models. The word “*cooperative*” speaks volumes about the quality of an organization and it is the underpinning of what you can call “**Your Home Team Advantage**”.