



## Rio Grande Electric Cooperative, Inc.

# UP DATE



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### A Message From The General Manager/CEO

By Daniel G. Laws

*Legislative Issues-*

## *Looking Out For Your Interests*

By time you read this article, the Texas Legislature will have closed its 79<sup>th</sup> Session. It is possible that a special session will be called by the Governor late this summer for specific purposes, but for the most part, the Legislature will not meet again until 2007. I had the opportunity to visit with our elected officials and discuss important issues with them. In addition, I went to Washington D.C. to attend our national association's (National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, also known as "NRECA") legislative conference.

Much is done during each session of both the state legislature and Congress. Laws are contemplated, and some even get passed that have an affect on our lives. It is important that the Cooperative be engaged in these matters to ensure that nothing becomes law or policy that will adversely affect you, as a member of Rio Grande. To that end, the Cooperative employs a lobbyist who monitors legislative and regulatory issues at the state level. Nationally, Rio Grande depends on NRECA to be our watchdog.

Whether at the state level or the federal level, our goals are simple; try to educate elected officials about rural electrification in general and let them know the job is not finished; educate them about Rio Grande, with its unique set of circumstances and fend off, to the extent possible, anything that would have a negative impact. While in Washington, our national association provided electric cooperative leaders with literature about issues currently pending that could have an adverse impact. Armed with this information, hundreds of electric cooperative managers and directors stormed Capitol Hill.

Electric cooperatives were born on the political battlefield during the New Deal Era and, therefore, are not strangers to the political arena. Over the years, electric cooperatives have enjoyed a good amount of success. That success has everything to do with the electrification of rural Texas. Were it not for the success of those in the past, funding would never have been made available to bring central station power to places like Coyanosa, Dryden, Carta Valley, Dell City, Langtry, Ruidosa, Cornudas — and the list goes on.

We can not rest on our laurels, however; past success does not guarantee us anything in the future. We must continue to work hard at the goals outlined above and be willing to work within the legislative process to bring about change where change is needed, and create new opportunities where possible.

The reason I have provided this information is to let you know there is much that happens behind the scenes to bring reliable central station power to your home, day-in and day-out. Legislative matters are a part of protecting your interest in this member-owned electric utility you know as Rio Grande Electric Cooperative, and is just one of the tasks that must be performed. For our board, our lobbyist and me, it's business as usual. For you, it is another reason Rio Grande is your **"Home Team Advantage"**.