



Rio Grande Electric Cooperative, Inc.

UP DATE



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A Message From The General Manager/CEO

By Daniel G. Laws

Pencil salesmen, rural electrification, and National Cooperatives Month. . .There is a connection.

Years ago, I saw a skit in which a pencil salesman would attempt to ply his wares. When potential customers drew near, the pencil salesman would shove a fist full of pencils in the customer's face and shout, "Pencils...two for a nickel—three for a dime". The unsuspecting individual would recoil in shock as pencils were waved under his nose. The pencil salesman would then press the sale saying, "What do ya say mister; wanna buy some pencils?" In every case, the potential customer would refuse the salesman's offer while hurriedly continuing down the street. The pencil peddler would then call after them saying, "If you don't, somebody else will!"

"If you don't, somebody else will." That's pretty much how we view the world, isn't it? If you don't have what I need, when I need it, at the price I am willing to pay, then somebody else will. And, in all honesty, in America that is usually the case. There is always another vendor, another shop, another filling station, another...well, you name it. It is a fact of life that, most of the time, somebody else will be able to meet our need. But what if there isn't someone else? What happens when you need a product or service badly, but there is no one able or even interested in meeting your need? Where do you turn in a situation like that?

Seventy years ago, that is exactly the position rural folks found themselves in when it came to their need for electric energy. There was light to the edge of town and darkness beyond. No one was willing to bring power to rural Texas because there was no profit to be made from such an endeavor. It was believed that the investment would be too great and the return too small. In rural Texas, the "if you don't, somebody else will" concept wasn't working.

The darkness in rural Texas was, in a very real sense, like the darkness of a stage just before the opening of a play. As the lights gradually came up, one could see the flurry of activity; it was the build out of rural electrification made possible by Roosevelt's New Deal. No longer would rural folks struggle in the dark or long for the timesaving devices that required electric energy. Now, living in rural Texas would have fewer disadvantages.

So, who brought this vital service? You did! And you continue to! Rural electrification came about when everyday folks grouped together with neighbors to form electric cooperatives. These not-for-profit enterprises were owned by those who needed the service they would bring. In fact, there are more than sixty such enterprises across Texas. Each of them is owned by their consumers.

This month is National Cooperatives Month. It's a time set aside for celebrating the contributions of this very unique business model and its contributions to the American way of life. Rio Grande Electric Co-op is the direct result of this rich heritage, and is owned by you! We have our priorities straight and we understand who we work for, and to whom we owe our loyalty. It is to you, and that is your **"Home Team Advantage"**.

