



Rio Grande Electric Cooperative, Inc.

# Update



October, 2009



## A Message From The General Manager/CEO

By Dan Laws

*“Cooperatives are truly ‘Of the People and By the People’,  
in the way they are created and operated.”*

As I mentioned last month, October is National Cooperative Month. The President of the United States has, for a number of years, set this month aside to celebrate a business model that has contributed so much to the growth of this nation. In fact, we even hear discussions about using the cooperative business model as a solution to the current health care debate currently going on in our nation's capitol.

Cooperatives are truly “Of the People and By the People”, in the way they are created and operated. We have just completed our fall round of Member Advisory Committee meetings. We meet with sixty couples in five different area meetings, in both the spring and fall. I will admit to you I begin the trek somewhat reluctantly each time the schedule says it is time. It takes a fair amount of time and driving (approximately 1,500 miles), and it always seems that while I am going from meeting to meeting, the wheels fall off some aspect of the business, which requires me to deal with a problem long distance. However, by the end, I am encouraged and energized. It is refreshing to hear from this representation of our membership. I always learn something new and come away with ideas for improvements.

For those of you not familiar with the Member Advisory Committee process, here is a thumbnail sketch. These committees were formed in 1982, one for each operating area office. Twelve couples were originally selected by management to three year terms. The original group, as their terms came to an end, selected replacements. So, for twenty years, the committees have been self perpetuating. The committee chooses its members and staff contacts them to make sure they are willing to serve. This process makes the committee a truly independent group. The meetings are held each March and September, and as a result of recent board action, committee members are now reimbursed for mileage to and from the meeting. In addition, we serve an excellent meal and update members on recent happenings at the Cooperative.

There, of course, is time set aside for the committee to discuss matters of concern in a private session where board members and employees are not present. This allows members of the committee to speak more freely about what troubles them about some aspect of the Cooperative's operation. The chairman of the committee then presents the issues raised to board members and staff later on in the meeting without mentioning names, if that is the desire of the committee. I was not involved in its creation, but I am extremely proud of the fact we have these committees and of the way they function. You can visit our web site and see who serves on each advisory committee.

It is one thing to pay lip service to member involvement, it is quite another to actually put feet to those words. Such has been the tradition here at Rio Grande, and it started long before this board of directors and this manager began their service to the members. If you haven't voted in the current director election yet, please take advantage of this wonderful opportunity to participate in the management of Rio Grande. And, if you have gotten this edition of Ranch and Rural Living before October 10, it's not too late to make plans to attend our Annual Meeting. I look forward to seeing you there.

**64th Annual Meeting, Saturday, October 10,  
Kinney County Civic Center, Brackettville, TX**