



Update



May 2011



A Message From The General Manager/CEO

By Dan Laws

“Commitment is not something I can order them to have, but rather it is an outflow of their character.”

Wildfire! While I write this month's comments, wildfires are still plaguing Brewster and Jeff Davis Counties. By the grace of God, the fires have skirted Rio Grande's lines, doing very little in the way of damage. We have lost some thirty poles and roughly 80 meters, and were without power for about 48 hours. At times, restoration of power was delayed because we were not allowed access by the Forest Service or volunteer fire departments engaged in putting out the fires. On at least one other occasion, we could not affect repairs until AEP made repairs to their transmission line in the area. I want to say thank you to all who have been affected, for your patience.

It was so gratifying to watch everyone pull together and work as one unit to prevent as much damage as possible. Fred Lara, Equipment Operator for Rio Grande in Alpine, hauled bulldozers, owned by ranchers in the area, to the Forest Service so that they could cut fire breaks. In addition, Fred cut fire breaks around Rio Grande's equipment in order to prevent damage should the fire come near. First Class Lineman Robert Holloway of Alpine patrolled AEP's transmission line putting out their burning poles. The whole purpose in doing so was to slow down the rate at which the poles were shrinking due to burning internally. The poles would have to be replaced, but until crews could get to them Robert helped make them last so the lights would stay on.

Hopefully, you understand that the Texas electric energy grid is a network of wire that is interdependent at varying levels. If your lights blink or your voltage fluctuates, it doesn't automatically mean that Rio Grande has a problem. Sometimes it means there is a problem in another part of the network, owned by another company. Any time you experience an anomaly that repeats itself, you should call and let us know. It is always our intention that you have an uninterrupted flow of energy. We ask you to understand that there are many forces that work against that goal. The farther you are located from a substation (source of power) and the more rural the lines, the greater the forces.

Whether it's the Arctic Storm I wrote about last month or the Fire Storm this month, the one thing you can count on is the quality of commitment our linemen have for the job they do on your behalf. Commitment is not something I can order them to have, but rather it is an outflow of their character. It's something their parents taught them and is engrained in their core beliefs. It's just another reason why I am proud of them. I have heard it said that the best measure of a person's character is what they do when no one is watching. Well, in the middle of the night with storms raging, no one is watching, but they do what's right anyway. Now, that is quality of character!

Again, thank you for your patience; we are working hard to keep the lights on.

May is National Electrical Safety Month! Visit riogrande.coop for safety tips.