



Rio Grande Electric Cooperative, Inc.

# Update



August 2012



## A Message From The General Manager/CEO

By Dan Laws

### *Using Energy Wisely*

Summer is most certainly here! It's not as hot as last summer yet, but hot enough. With higher summer temperatures comes higher electric bills. It is worth the time and effort to evaluate your use of electric energy and make adjustments where possible. Raising the setting on your thermostat, not running your dryer at the same time you are using your oven, or turning off lights and other electric devices when not in use, are all ways to save money on your electric bill. As a consumer-owned electric utility, we encourage our members to conserve where they can.

Just as with anything else in our lives, it is important to manage our use of electric energy, not only to save money on current bills, but to ensure adequacy of this valuable resource for the future. You have no doubt read the plethora of articles that are being circulated regarding the supply of electric energy in Texas and the uncertainty about adequate supply. As your manager, I can assure you those concerns are real. I don't think you are going to experience any blackouts this year, but I can't promise what the future holds.

It is my opinion that the source of our problem is the decision by our legislature to deregulate the retail market. Deregulation began in 2002, and both the retail and wholesale markets have been unstable ever since. It is a fact that all Texans are paying more for electric energy today than they were under a regulated market. With the onset of deregulation, the Public Utility Commission of Texas was stripped of its power to regulate the adequacy of supply. The deregulation pontiffs convinced the legislature that the market would automatically take care of supply. Obviously, that hasn't happened and it's not likely to.

There is so much attention focused on the use of coal (our most plentiful energy resource) for electric generation and other clean air initiatives that investors are reluctant to invest in power plants. Please don't misunderstand me; I feel very strongly about our need to protect the environment and our air supply. Unfortunately, there must be reasonable compromise so that we don't throw the baby out with the bath water. We can't continue to run power plants unfettered without regard for the environment. Likewise, we can't ignore our need for electric energy, and its benefits to our health and commerce. Is global warming real? I don't know. I don't think anyone does for sure.

Despite all the hoopla, electricity is still the best value out there. There is not a single item in your household budget that hasn't increased in price significantly more than what you pay for electric energy. And more importantly, no other item provides more value for each dollar you spend. We want you to know that we fully understand the value of this commodity to your everyday life and we work diligently every day to make sure it is there when you need it. Nothing is perfect; there are many challenges when delivering safe, reliable energy in rural Texas, but no one is better qualified to do so than the employees who work for you each day.

***For energy-saving ideas, visit RGEC online at [www.riogrande.coop](http://www.riogrande.coop).***