



Rio Grande Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Update



June 2013



A Message From The General Manager/CEO

By Dan Laws

“...Rio Grande poles look like a pretty juicy morsel for lightning...”

I know it's hard to imagine right now, but some day it's going to rain. And when it does, there will be lightning. With lightning will come outages. The Rio Grande service area doesn't have a lot of tall trees or other structures to attract lightning, so Rio Grande poles look like a pretty juicy morsel for lightning looking for a place to land. Sometimes lightning causes an immediate outage, but more often than not, it causes damage to the system, that is not readily apparent.

The result of such damage is the nuisance blinks and voltage anomalies you see for a period of time after a storm. To you, I'm sure you feel we are doing nothing to cure the problem, but the truth of the matter is we are out there looking for the damage. Such damage, however, can be tantamount to looking for a needle in a haystack.

You can assist us in our search. Anytime you notice anything unusual on the Cooperative's lines, you should call it in. What you report may not be the specific problem plaguing us at the time, but it may become a future problem. Rio Grande maintains more than 9,000 miles of line. It would be impossible for us to see all of it in one year, but collectively, you, as members, do. So, please feel free to report anything that appears to be wrong. Also, understand that when we look at what you report we may determine it is not a problem. Please don't assume we never acted on your report.

Rest assured when it does rain again there will likely be outages. I don't like it, but it is an inevitability. We serve very large and wide open spaces. The upshot is that there is a lot of exposure to things that can go wrong. The problem is not that we don't maintain our system or that we use inferior materials, and it's not that the design is poor. The problem really is simply exposure. We work to limit the impact of that exposure, but we will never completely eliminate it.

I want you to know that when the power goes out, there is a very dedicated group who are out there in the worst of it, doing their best to restore your power. When you call and can't get a live voice it's because there is a big outage and personnel are inundated with calls and can't respond to yours. When that happens, leave a message. We do listen to them, and we will get back in touch. Although some have accused us of taking the phone off the hook, such a notion is totally ridiculous.

You can take comfort in knowing there are people completely dedicated to insuring you have safe, reliable energy 24/7, at a price that is affordable and consistent with sound business practices. As I write this article, I am being driven to Fort Stockton for our monthly board meeting. You, our member/consumers, and this business you depend on, will be the only topic of discussion. Until next month, enjoy the comforts that safe, clean electric energy brings to your life. Take pride in the fact that you own the business that brings this vital commodity to your home and business.

June is Lightning Awareness Month