



A Message From The CEO By Roger Andrade

Member Participation & Director Election

As we enter the month of August, we need to direct our member focus to an ever-important matter, director elections. The board of directors is comprised of nine director districts and thirteen board seats. Each board member serves a three-year term, and is eligible to serve a maximum of four terms. Setting term limits allows the Cooperative to have annual elections on a rotating basis, and presents an opportunity to promote member engagement and participation. As a Cooperative, we want to ensure we stay focused on our members' needs, and we want as much exposure to those needs as possible. Member participation comes in many forms here at Rio Grande. It can range from responses to member surveys to voting, from volunteers to serve on the Member Advisory Committees (MAC) meetings to the individuals that attend the annual meetings. Other forms of participation include those who run for a place on the board of directors, and even to those who report issues. All of those member contacts and/or engagements are what helps the Co-op stay abreast of members' needs. There are varying levels of commitment to each of those member participation platforms. Nonetheless, all forms of member participation are important and valuable for management and staff, to strive for and to achieve member satisfaction.

Last year, I provided a small summary of the steps involved in becoming a member of the board of directors; I will not restate all of those steps in this month's piece, but know that member-resources are always available on the Rio Grande website, or by calling any of the area offices. I will, however, reiterate the importance of member participation in RGEC's election process. This process ensures that the Co-op adheres to the Cooperative Principle of "democratic member control". Participation fosters accountability, and we, (directors, management, and staff), need to be accountable to the membership and the Cooperative business. Members can provide the input and guidance on the direction they would like the Cooperative to take. Remember that "democratic member control" is what gives you a voice as a member-owner. "One member, one vote" creates balanced representation on the board.

Lastly, I want to recognize the MAC members for designating the district nominating committees, and also thank the nominating committees for the exceptional job they did in putting together a slate of viable candidates for the upcoming election. Not only did the committees take the time to review each interested member's qualifications, but also were very methodical in evaluating interested members before nominating the candidates. That process resulted in higher interest from the membership, which produced more candidates to choose from, subsequently embodying the democratic process. I encourage everyone to follow the lead from the nominating committees and demonstrate our thanks for their effort by taking the time to vote in the 2018 Director Election. As we embark on changes brought about with leadership succession, member participation is key to guiding us into the future of the Cooperative. We look forward to your participation and a successful election process!

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