



Message From The CEO In Training By Roger Andrade

“We are off to a good start in 2018!”

We are off to a good start in 2018! Although we have experienced recent cold snaps, we have enjoyed relatively mild winter weather across Co-op Country. Even with the slight wintry weather cool fronts, the Cooperative needs to stay vigilant and ready to restore power in a timely manner, should weather conditions change.

As you may recall, our service territory was impacted by back-to-back ice storms in 2014 and 2015. Rio Grande has been preparing for ice storms and extreme weather situations by closely monitoring weather forecasts, as well as strategic planning of material staging, and ensuring availability of contractors for immediate response to severe weather events. In discussing with Javier Solis, RGEC Director of Operations, this year’s preparedness came by way of slightly increasing our inventory of on-hand poles, conductor, other various overhead materials, and maintaining contractors working on RGEC projects for immediate re-assignment. Prior years, weather events such as El Niño warranted our storm preparedness to be more extensive. El Niño is a weather pattern in which warmer than normal ocean surface temperatures in the Pacific tend to bring wetter, cooler, and more unsettled weather to central Texas. The excess moisture in the atmosphere when cold weather hits, makes that moisture accumulate and become ice on the overhead electric lines. The ice forming on the lines adds a significant amount of weight to an already stressed conductor carrying power across long distances, which in turn cause lines to break as well as poles to snap and collapse.

The 2017 winter forecast projected a dry winter, which is good news when speaking in terms of powerlines, poles, and electric power system resiliency. Mr. Solis utilized NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) data amongst other resources to plan for this winter’s readiness. With the list of projects scheduled throughout our service territory for this year (referenced in last month’s magazine publication “Looking Ahead 2018” section), and the slight increase in inventory, it provided us with ample materials on hand to address severe weather events, should they occur. The aforementioned projects are paramount in ensuring we maintain a healthy grid for the safe delivery of reliable electric service, as well as account for load growth in our area.

Although we do not anticipate any major weather events to occur this winter season, I would like to remind all of our members to make sure the necessary precautions are taken while undergoing such service interruptions, when they occur. One aspect of this preparation is to make sure that members who rely on any medical or critical care equipment are registered with us, to ensure our linemen are aware of needs in emergency situations. Everyone’s power is important, but when faced with a catastrophic situation affecting the delivery of electricity, we want to prioritize and tend to the needs of those in critical situations. Our Emergency Restoration Plan is geared to prioritize response for restoration and communicate with those with critical care needs, if possible.

Rest assured that the Cooperative takes its electrical system and resiliency responsibilities very seriously, rain or shine, in one hundred degree heat, or in the icy conditions we experience from time to time. At the end of the day, we strive for electrical reliability and work diligently to achieve such. On that note, I hope you all had a great beginning to 2018. Stay warm!