



*Rio Grande Electric Cooperative, Inc.*

# UPDATE

*Special Energy Efficiency Edition*



## A Message From The CEO

By Roger Andrade

It is April and spring is in full swing! With the weather we have experienced recently, it is hard to say what time of the year it is. For a day or two in February, we experienced temperatures warm enough to prompt my son and his friends to take a swim in the renowned Fort Clark Springs pool; and only a few days later we experienced freezing temperatures. That is just a reminder that Mother Nature will do what she wants to do.

As I type this article, Rio Grande is preparing for storm season and we have already experienced some of the worst storms affecting all of our service territory. I am certain we have had worse storms in past years, but the most recent storms demanded attention, as they wreaked havoc from one end of our service territory to the other, which is incredible, given that we span approximately 700 miles from edge to edge. At one point, Rio Grande had over 26 linemen deployed overnight

tending to outages, along with contractors on standby ready to assist, if the need arose. I can proudly say that Rio Grande's linemen are beyond exceptional. To see the hard work and dedication these men bring when they roll out is impressive and energizing. It definitely takes a certain kind of individual to be a line worker and RGE's linemen have all the "grit" to do the work. I am extremely proud of these heroic men!

Changing gears a bit, we are coming up on our Time of Use (TOU) period. For those who need a little reminder, time of use is the period the Cooperative has adopted rates that reflect and provide pricing signals to our members in order to promote conservation and efficiency, which we refer to as "peak" and "off-peak". During the months of May through September, all rate classes are subject to time of use rates and during the hours of 3 p.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday, is considered "peak" period. Weekends and holidays are exempt peak periods and therefore, considered "off-peak". As you may recall, the Cooperative's largest expense is wholesale power and our ability to negotiate good rates with our wholesale provider is directly associated with our consumption during peak demand within the ERCOT market. Our contribution to the peak will also determine our proportion of transmission cost of service (TCOS). The main goal is to promote conservation and efficiency during those periods that the peaks are established; and therefore, reducing the Cooperative's share of those costs and ultimately, reducing our cost of wholesale power.

We have included some information to help you improve efficiency and reduce your usage during peak periods throughout the pages of this magazine. Most of the tips actually improve energy efficiency year-round, which can yield significant savings to your total annual electric bill. You might ask why the Co-op promotes reducing electricity consumption, if our business is to sell power. Rio Grande is in the business of delivering safe, reliable and affordable power to our members. If Rio Grande's members are able to become more efficient in the ways we use electricity, then we can deliver energy to more members with those savings we realize. In other words, if we can reduce the cost of our wholesale power, we can essentially serve more members for the same or less cost; and the more members we serve, the more participation we have to spread our costs amongst all of us. One of the Cooperative's unique and true challenges is the low meter density in terms of meters per mile (currently at 1.38). If we serve more members, we can share those costs among more members, which reduces our individual portion, or at a minimum, helps offset increasing costs we experience, in order to deliver power.

Lastly, I encourage you to sign-up for SmartHub access. We make the SmartHub application available to all members in order to improve their member experience and provide access and control to their information. Through SmartHub, our members can report power outages, check their bill, pay their bill, check their usage and set alerts that can provide you close to real-time data on energy usage at your home or business. This tool puts the member in the driver's seat, in terms of their usage and how they may react to it by being notified. I am an advocate for providing our members all of their information to promote transparency and to advise them on how the information may be utilized to improve their experience with the Cooperative. We exist because of our members and, therefore, we aim to serve you every day. Thank you, and have a blessed Easter Holiday!