



Rio Grande Electric Cooperative, Inc.

UPDATE



March 2020



A Message From The COO

By Theresa Quiroz

Working Together, Cooperatively

They say if you don't like the weather in Texas, just wait 5 minutes and it will change. The same can be said of New Mexico, from what I can tell. Rio Grande's territory is probably the only area in the nation where you run the air conditioner for part of the day, and the heater for the rest of it.

We were able to get through the first few months of the year without a winter storm of any major consequence, but they caught up with us shortly before Valentine's Day. A series of winter storms struck some areas particularly hard. Among these were the areas near Queen, NM, and around Van Horn and Fort Stockton.

Ironically, the Fort Stockton area had been scheduled for a planned power interruption to connect a new substation serving the area, but the weather necessitated postponing it a few days. I'm happy to report that it is now up and running and should provide better reliability for consumers in that area.

We are not completely in the clear regarding winter storms, and though I hesitate to mention it for fear of jinxing us, there's always the possibility of a winter storm as late as April. Depending on the year and the weather patterns that develop, we could even have (heaven forbid) winter and spring storms in the same month.

Though we all dread the storms for what they sometimes do to Rio Grande's system, they are inevitable, and are something every utility has to deal with at one time or another. I want you to know that we are always as prepared as we can be for the eventuality of things like major ice storms and tornadoes that take out multiple spans of poles and line at a time. Part of our strategic planning includes scenarios for just this kind of weather. We have materials readily available, at locations throughout the service territory, and have contractors on standby, in the event that we need to quickly conduct major repairs in multiple areas, simultaneously. As you can imagine, we cannot prepare for every circumstance, but rest assured, we strive to palm as best as possible.

We realize that when your power is out, it may seem like nobody cares and nobody is coming, but I assure you that we take your situation very seriously. We try to post updates on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram so you will know the status. If we don't post updates often, it is only because the line crews are busy working on your outage, and may not be able to call in. Remember that cell phones do not work in many of our areas, and the only means of communication is the satellite radio. We do see the words of appreciation many of you post to the crews, and always try to make sure they know you are praying for their safety, as they work to restore your power.

Member Advisory Committees are meeting this month, and always are such a good source of information from other members in their communities. We really appreciate the work they do representing you. They will be looking at the results of the Member Involvement Surveys you submitted, and it is this list they will consider when selecting District Nominating Committees. I can't stress enough the importance of serving your fellow Co-op members in some capacity, if asked to do so.

By working together -- *cooperatively* -- you all help to make Rio Grande Electric Cooperative better and stronger. This will help provide not only for the current stability of the Co-op, but will ensure fresh leadership, innovation, and the diversity necessary to see us through this decade and far into the future.