



Rio Grande Electric Cooperative, Inc.

UPDATE



FEBRUARY 2021



A Message From The CEO Roger Andrade

Planning Ahead: Construction Work Plan addresses system upgrades

I hope that as you read this small communique relating to your cooperative, you find yourself in good health, spirits and re-energized with the prospect of the New Year. As we hype ourselves up to tackle new goals, and create new beginnings, I am quickly reminded of the many different sayings that recommend we “never look back”, in some form or fashion. Although I can appreciate the sentiment from which such advice stems, I would argue that sometimes it is quite alright to look back, as it serves as a reminder of how far you’ve come or what adversity you have overcome. By no means are we “out of the woods”, in terms of the pandemic, but we can be proud of the decisions made that assisted us in navigating such uncharted territory.

As we move into the month of February, and it has already been quite an eventful beginning of the year. Speaking of looking back, I am still trying to shake off the 2020 vibes coming into this year, but that will not be a deterrent to our positive outlook on things this year. Needless to say, we have our work cut out for us throughout 2021. As you may have read in our previous publication, we noted several board approved projects budgeted to undertake this year. If you did not have a chance to catch it, you are always welcome to access the Cooperative’s magazine pages on our website at www.riogrande.coop. As we develop projects for the upcoming years, we definitely take into account areas of concern related to outages, growth, and the overall health of the distribution system. In order to make it easy for you, our member-owners, we split those by area office, which can assist in cross-referencing projects related to the area in which you reside. Another noteworthy topic, is that we are in the process of finalizing the Construction Work Plan (CWP). This is a comprehensive engineering study that assists in determining all of the new construction required to provide adequate and reliable electric service during a planning period. This document is also vetted by the Rural Utilities Service, an operating unit of Rural Development, under the umbrella of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). This is important, as it lays out the foundation for construction over the next four years, which focuses on maintaining, upgrading, and modernizing the infrastructure that delivers energy to your home or business.

I mention all of the above only to assure you that careful planning and methodical approach takes place when it comes to the system. The winter storm that hit us at the very end of the year was a stark reminder that extreme weather can wreak havoc on the distribution system. The storm heavily impacted the areas of Fort Stockton, Alpine and Carrizo Springs (Eagle Pass). Fort Stockton and Alpine saw road closures that made it almost impossible to access the poles and lines, in order to effect repairs. The Eagle Pass area saw a different phenomenon. In addition to damages incurred by a lightning stroke on our lines, the effects of the outage were compounded by issues relating to “cold load” pickup. We have included a quick synopsis of what that is in the following pages. At any rate, we are assessing the effects of those storms and developing strategies to mitigate future occurrences of similar magnitude. I wish I could promise that extended outages will never happen again, but I can promise you we are making dedicated efforts to minimize them.

On a lighter note, we are very pleased that members are quite active on our social media pages and fully utilizing those and other means to communicate with us. I encourage you to take the next step, and respond to the Member

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2021 Member Involvement Survey

The Member Involvement Survey will be included in this month's billing statement. Consider putting your leadership skills to use serving in a leadership position for Rio Grande. There are several levels listed on the survey form, and a brief explanation of each. Just indicate in what capacity you are willing to be involved in the management of the Co-op.

As a member-owned organization, it is your right and your responsibility to participate in the governance of RGEC. The survey serves as a tool to find out who is willing to do so.

As an added incentive, one member who returns a completed survey by the March 1 deadline will receive a credit of \$200 on their account. This is done by conducting a drawing from among all completed surveys received by the deadline. You do not have to agree to serve on a committee or the board in order to be eligible for the drawing.

Those who receive their bill via E-bill, will receive a separate email containing the survey. There is also a fillable version of the survey under the Forms menu tab on riogrande.coop. Only one survey form per membership will be entered in the drawing.

Opportunities To Serve: Advisory Committees, Nominating Committees and Board of Directors.

To serve on the advisory committee for your area, one of your fellow members, whose term is expiring (3 years), must select you as their replacement. To qualify, you need only have an active membership and be willing to give up a few hours of your time twice a year for regular meetings, or as required by RGEC bylaws. Meetings may be in person, or conducted remotely. The purpose of the advisory committee is to create a forum in which the directors, management, and members may discuss problems and concerns that affect the membership at large. For face-to-face meetings, committee members are treated to a meal and receive mileage to attend meetings, if they so desire.

Nominating committees are tasked with selecting qualified candidates for the director election. The importance of these committees to the health and well-being of the Co-op can't be overstated. Committee members are selected by the advisory committees, based, in part, on response to the Member Involvement Survey. So, if you have an interest in helping select board candidates, be sure to indicate your willingness to serve on the nominating committee for your area. Nominating committee meetings may be face -to-face, or held remotely.

Members of the board of directors are selected by majority vote of the membership and serve 3-year terms. To qualify, candidates must be a bona fide resident within the director district for which a nomination is sought, and must be free of any conflict of interest. (A

**You could win a
\$200 RGEC
Credit On Account**

**Must return completed survey by
March 1**

complete list of qualifications can be found in the RGEC Bylaws, available at www.riogrande.coop) To serve, a member must be willing to meet on the 3rd Wednesday of each month, alternating between Brackettville and Fort Stockton, Texas. As with all meetings during these tenuous times, board meetings may be face-to-face, or may be held remotely, depending on the current state of the pandemic.

CEO Message, continued from pg. 1

Involvement Survey included with this month's billing statement. We'd love for you to participate and help shape the future of the Cooperative. There are different capacities in which you can serve the Cooperative, and all are important to the organization. I look forward to seeing some of those surveys and being able to add more new faces to the list of devoted members who have served throughout the years.

Stay tuned in with us, as we have some exciting news of undertakings that we will be sharing throughout the year. Stay safe and God bless!

The advertisement features a green background with a blurred image of a power line tower. On the left is the SmartHub logo, which consists of a central circle with radiating lines and the text "smart hub". To the right, the text "OUTAGE TWO-WAY TEXTING" is displayed in large, bold, white letters. Below this, it says "Registered SmartHub users text OUT or STATUS to 768482". On the right side, there is a screenshot of a smartphone text message conversation. The messages are from SmartHub (768482) and contain outage information for Golden Forest Dr 2459. The first message says "You've reported an outage at GOLDEN FOREST DR 2459. We'll give you info once available. Text STOP to unsubscribe." and has a blue "OUT" button. The second message says "A service outage has been reported in your area. We're estimating restoration at GOLDEN FOREST DR 2459 by 6:15 PM 04/09. Text STOP to unsubscribe." and has a blue "STATUS" button. At the bottom of the advertisement, the text "SMART MANAGEMENT. SMART LIFE. SMARTHUB." is written in white on a dark green background.