Rio Grande Electric Cooperative, Inc.

UPDATE

"Owned By Those We Serve"

December, 2004

A Message From The General Manager/CEO

By Daniel G. Laws

The Reason For The Season

With Thanksgiving a fond memory and Christmas just around the bend, it is a good time to take stock of all that we have. If you are like me, you have probably lived this past year at breakneck speed. As you reflect on significant events of 2004, they may appear more like fence posts on the side of the highway—disappearing as quickly as they appear, instead of cherished memories that conjure up images that bring a warm glow or smile.

If I have described how you feel, then join me in a collective effort to slow it all down. Let's take time to enjoy each moment of the holiday season. Make an effort to bring happiness to someone else's life. Reflect on those things that evidence God's blessing and be thankful. The commercialism associated with Christmas can rob us of its real meaning. It will enslave us with required shopping and bind us with guilt over all we did not buy.

This Christmas, don't let commercial hype drown out the birth of Christ, and don't let guilt replace joy. He came into this world in an unassuming way. He comes into our hearts in the same way. He came to bring peace, not shopping frenzies; and joy, not harried trips to the supermarket or mall. Most of all, He came to restore each to our rightful place as children of a king.

The message of peace has greater importance to us today than ever before. The war in Iraq and on terrorism hangs over all our heads like a malevolent cloud. In fact, you may find it hard to find the peace today that He came to bring. But, His peace transcends the immediate and is in no way diminished by how we feel. Longfellow's famous poem, penned more than one hundred years ago, points out that these feelings are not new and neither is Longfellow's conclusion:

And in despair I bowed my head;
"There is no peace on earth," I said;
"For hate is strong, and mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!"

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
"God is not dead; nor doth he sleep!
The Wrong shall fail,
The Right prevail,
With peace on earth, good-will to men!"

As for me, I will look back over my shoulder and consider my steps. As I visit each one, I will find something very familiar there—His gentle guidance and His care. I will recommit to the things I seem to lose sight of, and endeavor to do them better. I will be thankful for the 30 Christmases I have had with my wife, Darlene, and will look forward to many more. And, I will be thankful for my three sons, my daughter-in-law, Linsey, and my Grandson, Jadon. I still can't believe that I get to be their dad and granddad.

From all of us here at Rio Grande, may your holiday season be filled with peace that passes understanding and immeasurable joy. Have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Exploring Surge Protection

Temporary power surges can damage appliances and electronics, even when the weather is clear and no lightning exists. That's because an estimated 80 percent of all temporary power surges are generated from within the home. High-powered equipment requires a lot of energy to switch on and turn off components like compressors and motors. This switching creates sudden, brief demands for power, which upset the steady voltage flow in the electrical system. While these surges are nowhere near as powerful as lightning, they can be strong enough to damage components, immediately or gradually, and they happen regularly in most homes' electrical systems. Some of the common surge producers include appliances such as air conditioners, washing machines, clothes dryers and refrigerators.

Whatever the source, temporary power surges, or spikes, can damage sensitive microprocessors inside computers and peripheral office equipment. They can also cause computer programs to lock up and become corrupted.

How can you protect your home? According to some experts, one way is to install an inexpensive power-strip that incorporates a surge protection feature.

Power strips with surge protection usually have four or more electrical outlets and are easy to operate. Your appliances, computers and other equipment are plugged into the power strip. The power strip is then plugged into a regular electrical outlet. With that, your protection is in place.

Some of the newer power strip surge protectors feature additional outlets for plugging in telephone jacks and cable TV connectors. That's because telephone and cable wiring can also carry damaging power surges to electronic equipment.

More expensive surge protection devices also come with a diagnostic light that indicates if the electrical wiring in the home has a grounding circuit.

Still other surge protectors come as wall receptacles.

When shopping for a surge protector, most authorities advise you to look for a device that displays the current Underwriters Laboratories (UL) mark relating to transient voltage surge suppressors. This means the product meets the manufacturer's safety standards, and certain electrical codes. A typical plug-strip surge protector sells for between $10 and $40, and is available at discount and home improvement stores. But you may want to opt for more protection if you own other electronic equipment, such as a large-screen TV or a state-of-the-art home entertainment center.

To protect your entire house against temporary power surges, consider having a meter socket surge arrestor at your electric meter, and indoor and outdoor panel-mounted devices next to the circuit breaker panel. Arrangements must be made with the Co-op for installation instructions for a meter socket surge arrester. These devices offer the ultimate in protection against all types of power surges in the home.

One of our members recently submitted some questions regarding home surge protection. He asked some of the same questions that others might pose, so we will share the questions and answers with all of you.

Q. We have a vacation home that is unattended part time. If I put a surge protector on the refrigerator or freezer will it shut off the power so that my food spoils? If the voltage from the outlet rises above the accepted level, the surge protector diverts the extra electricity into the grounding wire. As soon as the extra current is diverted, the voltage in the line returns to a normal level. This way, only the surge current is diverted, and the regular current goes on serving the appliances plugged in to the protector's outlets. So, surge protectors do not "shut off" the power. They merely serve as an "equalizer".

What happens if I'm using my computer and the power spikes or there is an outage? You might consider an Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) unit. A UPS has a battery that provides power for a short time during an outage. The length of time a computer will run on a UPS depends on the size of battery it contains. The more battery, the higher the price. Many computer users have UPS units. This way, should there be a power outage, the UPS will keep the computer on long enough for the user to save data. Most also have built-in surge suppression.

If we leave the phone answering machine turned on, what type of surge protector do we need? Any lines carrying signals into your home can carry a power surge due to lightning or a number of other reasons, and this includes TV and telephone lines, too. If your computer is connected to the phone lines using a modem, you should get a surge protector that has a *phone-line input jack.* If you have a coaxial cable line hooked up to expensive equipment, consider a *cable surge protector*. Surges on these lines can do just as much damage as surges over power lines. Make sure that your answering machine is also plugged in to a standard surge suppressor.

If we operate a water well pump that automatically pumps water to a storage tank, what protection do we need or should this be disconnected in our absence? Deciding whether to disconnect your water pump is a matter of personal preference. If the water pump is connected to system with a meter socket surge arrestor, then it would probably not need any additional surge protection. However, if your pump is used for recreational property primarily used in the summer, you may wish to disconnect the pump and drain the system for the winter. This way, you will not have to worry about the motor or frozen pipes this winter.

If we have a satellite dish for TV how do we protect that from surges? Because satellite dishes are placed on top of structures, they are ideal targets for lightning strikes, and the inevitable surges associated with them. Connecting your cable to the surge protectors equipped with telephone jacks and cable TV connectors previously discussed should provide adequate protection.

Continued on following page.

Surge Protection, continued

Do stereo systems that are not connected to cable or satellite need protection? Stereo systems, like other forms of electronics, should be protected from surges. Because of the precise nature of electronics, these systems are particularly volunerable to surges.

Is there a way to protect freezers or refrigerators from the occasional power outage? To a large extent, the level of protection would be determined by the amount of money one is willing to invest. Generations can provide constant power during an outage, but the initial purchase price is often a deterrent. However, for most people, simply leaving the freezer doors closed should keep foods at a safe temperature until power is restored -- especially as we approach the colder winter months. USDA Food Safety Guidelines provide in-depth information on food safety during an outage, and are available at each RGEC area office, or by calling the Co-op at 1-800-749-1509.

Please let us know if you have questions about any aspect of your electric service. We'll be glad to answer you personally, and possibly share your questions and their answers in a future article. Call 1-800-749-1509, or e-mail Cindy Edwards, Communications Coordinator, at cedwards@rgec.coop.

Have An Electrically Safe Holiday Season

From icicle lights hanging down from the roof to elaborate lawn decorations, more and more families are decorating with festive holiday lights. But taking the right precautions can ensure that only the turkey gets cooked this holiday season.

To protect yourself and your family from potential electrical hazards, Rio Grande Electric Cooperative reminds you to plug all outdoor holiday lights into a special receptacle called a Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI). GFCIs provide personal protection from electrical shocks. GFCI receptacles are now required wherever an electrical outlet is within 6 feet of water. That's why they're installed in kitchens, bathrooms, basements, garages, and outdoors. Older homes, even those built just twenty years ago—may not have GFCI receptacles, inside or out. Next time you're outside, check to see if you have the proper kind of outlet. Do they have two buttons on them, marked "test" and "reset?" If they do, you have a GFCI receptacle. If not, you should consider having a GFCI installed before the holiday lighting season.

Another option is to purchase an inexpensive extension cord set that has a built-in GFCI receptacle. First plug the GFCI cord set into the outdoor outlet, and then plug your other extension cords and holiday lights into the GFCI cord set. These GFCI cord sets are available at hardware and discount stores and at home centers, and cost about $25.

It is important to test your GFCI receptacle before plugging holiday lights into it to make sure it is still providing protection. You should check all GFCI receptacles once a month.

Christmas tree lights. Those strands of holiday lights look innocent enough, but when you plug too many into the same outlet, you run the risk of overloading a circuit. Signs of an overloaded circuit are lights that flicker or dim; a TV screen that shrinks in size; an outlet or switch that feels warm to the touch. Another is a tripped circuit breaker or a blown fuse.

Before you begin to decorate, it's a good idea to check out the condition of each light strand. If you find broken or cracked sockets, loose connections, or frayed or cut insulation, it's best to throw away that strand and buy a new one. When shopping for lights or other electrical decorations, make sure they have the UL safety-approved label. And don't purchase outdoor lights for indoor use! They usually burn hotter than indoor lights. Remember to unplug tree lights when you're not home, and when you go to bed. And never ever use electric lights on a metallic tree.

Extension cords can be overloaded just as easily as your house wiring, so don't plug more than three strands of lights into one extension cord. After plugging your decorations into an extension cord, check to see if the cord is warm to the touch. If it is, unplug some of the decorations. Better yet, use an extension cord with thicker wires. Remember that extension cords should never be placed under rugs or carpets.Keep extension cords out of the reach of infants, and don't use indoor extension cords outside. They are not designed to hold up to outdoor conditions. If you need more extension cord to reach an outlet, use one long cord instead of than connecting several short cords together.

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, more than 1,200 people end up at the emergency room every year for injuries caused by holiday lights. Another 6,000 are injured by holiday decorations and Christmas trees. Rio Grande Electric Cooperative wants to make sure that you and your family members aren't among those whose holiday season is marred by an accident.

Member Involvement Survey

Your Member Involvement Survey will be coming to you earlier in 2005 than it has in past years. The new survey will be inserted in your January billing statement. This is being done to insure ample time to review each and compile the information before the area Member Advisory Committees meet in the spring to select new representatives. As an added incentive, one lucky member who returns a completed survey will receive a credit of $100 on their account. This is done by conducting a drawing from among all completed surveys received.

For those who may be unfamiliar with the Member Involvement Survey, it is your chance to tell us at what level you would like to be involved in the management of the Co-op. As a member-owned organization, it is both your right, and your responsibility to participate in the management of the cooperative. The survey serves as a tool to find out which individuals are willing to do so.

Included on the survey are sections for the following: Advisory Committee, Nominating Committee, 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. 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.

Nominating Committees are selected each year by the board of directors. The purpose of the committee is to select qualified candidates to place on the ballot for vacancies or expiring terms on the board of directors. To qualify, you must have an active membership and be a resident in the director district for which nominations are sought. Nominating Committees meet once a year, review the director district membership list, select nominees, obtain an affidavit of eligiblilty from each nominee and report the results to management.

Members of the board of directors are selected by majority vote of the membership and serve 3-year terms. To qualify, you must have a residence in the director district for which you are seeking nomination, and must be free of any conflict of interest. (A complete list of qualifications can be found in the RGEC bylaws.) To serve, a member must be willing to meet on the 3rd Wednesday of each month, alternating between Brackettville and Fort Stockton, Texas. If elected, you must be willing to spend the time needed to review and become familiar with RGEC's operations. This includes bylaws, policies, tariffs, and applicable corporate law, as well as materials sent out periodically by management. In addition to the aforementioned, you, along with fellow directors, would be called upon to make decisions regarding policy and other issues as they relate to the director's fiduciary responsibility.

Look for the Member Involvement Survey In Your JANUARY Billing Statement.

Return The Survey & You Could WIN $100 Credit On Your RGEC Account!

START THE NEW YEAR WITH A HOME SAFETY CHECK

In many cases, problems you think you are having as a result of your service with the Co-op could actually be symptoms of your home's home electrical wiring problems. Some warning signs of electrical wiring problems within your home include:

- Household lights that dim or flicker, or a TV picture that shrinks in size.
- Evidence of arcs, sparks, or flashes of bright light in the electrical system.
- Sizzling or buzzing sounds coming from the electrical system.
- Damaged, cut, broken, or cracked wire insulation.
- Frequent blown fuses, or circuit breakers that trip frequently.

Outlets can pose a safety hazard if they are worn or damaged. Take a moment to check the temperature of the faceplates on your outlets. If a plate is warm or hot to the touch, it could signal a potentially dangerous wiring problem that should be further investigated by a qualified electrician.

Take note of any switchplates that are discolored. Discoloration could indicate that the electrical wiring behind the switchplate is overheating. Inspect all switchplates in the same way, testing to see if they are warm.

WISHING YOU & YOUR LOVED ONES A HAPPY, PROSPEROUS, AND SAFE NEW YEAR!

-- RGEC

Happy Holidays

From Your Friends At Rio Grande Electric Co-op!

Daniel Acosta
Ignacio Aguirre
Catarino Aranda, Jr.
Jennifer Baggett
Daniel Bartow
Clinton F. Brown
Ken Buscher
Susana Castillo
Federico Cervantez

Bill Conoly
Lynda Conrey
Cynthia Cruz
Joe Cruz
Julia Cruz
Santos DeHoyos
Vicki Drummond
Cindy Edwards
Tessie Ellis
Sergio Espinoza
Susie Estrada
Don Flanders
Martin Flores

Alain Gallegos
Erika Garcia
Jose Garcia
Daniel Garza
Martha Gerardo
Rick Gieser
Stephanie Gomez
Mike Gomez
Jim Green
Ralph Gutierrez
Rick Hagler
Russell Hatch
Armando Hernandez
Jose Hernandez
Leonel Hernandez
Robert Herrera
Zoila Herrera
Robert Horton

Rita Irigoyen
Miguel Jimenez
Ricky Juarez
Cathy Kelly
Hudson Kerr
Ben Krauskoph
Dan Laws
Elena Luna
Ismael Madrid
Noe Maldonado
Trini Manzano
Laura Martinez
Severo Martinez
Cesar Martos
Debra Massingill
Ernesto Mata
Ronaldo Mata
David Mendoza
David Meyer
Gary Mitschke
Susan Moore
Jaime Muniz
Ruby Munoz
Lalo Navarrete
Jan Nelson
Gary Nichols
Lori Nuñez
Flo Perez
Michael Portillo

Dona Puckett
R. Harvey Quintana
Jaime Ramirez
Fred Rangel
Angela Reed
Andy Rios
Joe Rivas
Frank Rodriguez
Kyle Rose
Danny Samaniego

Delia Sanchez
Darrell Skeen
Kathy Smith
Javier Solis
Shawn Stanley
Angela Talamantes
Patricia Taylor
Richard Urias
Grady Vasquez
Cynthia Villalba
David Villalobos
Gilbert Villarreal

Jorge Villarreal
MikeWade
Michael Wells
Rick Wise
Beverly Wright
Steve Wright
Part-Time Staff:
Janie Gonzalez
Gary Lawson
Jeannette Page
Ruth Tait

Directors:
W. H. "Bill" Cowden, President
Art Gonzalez, Vice-President
Hugh Childress, Secretary
Lowell Woodward, Treasurer
Frank Archuleta
Jimmy Ballew
Larry W. Jones
Chris Lacy
Margarita Nelson
Jack Skiles
Howard B. Wakefield, Sr.
William White
Cindy Whitehead

Fast & Free Energy Cost Savers

Especially at Christmas time, we all want to save money! Cutting back unnecessary energy use is an easy way to keep your hard earned money in your pocket, or put more goodies under the tree. Here are some suggestions you can do at home, at absolutely no cost.

Turn down your thermostat. For every degree you lower your heat in the 60-degree to 70-degree range, you'll save up to 5% on heating costs. Wear warm clothing and set your thermostat to 68 degrees or lower during the day and evening, health permitting. Set the thermostat back to 55 degrees or off at night or when leaving home for an extended time saving 5-20 percent of your heating costs (heat pumps should only be set back five degrees to prevent unneeded use of backup strip heating). Of course, those with very young or elderly residents may wish to maintain higher temperatures in their homes.

Eliminate wasted energy. Turn off lights in unoccupied rooms. Unplug spare refrigerators if you don't truly need them - this seemingly convenient way to keep extra drinks cold adds 10-25% to your electric bill. Turn off kitchen and bath-ventilating fans after they've done their job - these fans can blow out a house-full of heated air if inadvertently left on. Keep your fireplace damper closed unless a fire is burning to prevent up to 8% of your furnace-heated air from going up the chimney.

Reduce hot water temperature. Set your water heater to the "normal" setting or 120º, unless the owner's manual for your dishwasher requires a higher setting. Savings are 7-11% of water heating costs.

Shorten showers. Simply reducing that lingering time by a few minutes can save hundreds of gallons of hot water per month for a family of four. Showers account for 2/3 of your water heating costs. Cutting your showers in half will reduce your water heating costs by 33 %.

Use appliances efficiently. Do only full loads when using your dishwasher and clothes washer. Use the cold water setting on your clothes washer when you can. Using cold water reduces your washer's energy use by 75%. Be sure to clean your clothes dryer's lint trap after each use. Use the moisture-sensing automatic drying setting on your dryer if you have one.

Put your computer and monitor to sleep. Most computers come with the power management features turned off. On computers using Windows 98/ME/2000 open your power management software and set it so your computer goes to sleep if you're away from your machine for 5 to 15 minutes. Those who use Macintosh computers look for the setting in your Control Panels called "Energy Saver" and set it accordingly. When you're done using your computer, turn it off. Do not leave it in sleep mode overnight, as it is still drawing a small amount of power.

Plug "leaking energy" in electronics. Many new TVs, VCRs, chargers, computer peripherals and other electronics use electricity even when they are switched "off." Although these "standby losses" are only a few watts each, they add up to over 50 watts in a typical home that is consumed all the time. If possible, unplug electronic devices and chargers that have a block-shaped transformer on the plug when they are not in use. For computer scanners, printers and other devices that are plugged into a power strip, simply switch off the power strip after shutting down your computer. When you purchase electronics or appliances, always look for energy efficient Energy Star® products.

LOW COST IDEAS. **Every home is different, but there are probably lots of things you can do to reduce energy usage in your home with a few simple and inexpensive hardware store items.**

Replace or clean furnace filters once a month. Dirty filters restrict airflow and increase energy use. Keep you furnace clean, lubricated and properly adjusted. Approximately 5% of your total heating costs can be saved by cleaning the filters.

Replace light bulbs. Replace incandescent light bulbs with energy efficient compact fluorescent light bulbs, especially in high use light fixtures. Compact fluorescent lights use 75% less energy than incandescent lights.

Plug your home's leaks. Install weather-stripping or caulk leaky doors and windows and install gaskets behind outlet covers. You could save up to 10% on energy costs by weather-stripping and caulking.

Install low flow showerheads. If you do not already have them, low flow showerheads and faucets can drastically cut your hot water expenses. This could save you 10-16% of water heating costs.

Wrap the hot water tank with jacket insulation. This is especially valuable for older water heaters with little internal insulation. Be sure to leave the air intake vent uncovered when insulating a gas water heater. This could save up to 10% on water heating costs.

How To Caulk

How hard can it be? You get a couple of tubes of some gunk and a caulk gun and squeeze it in the cracks, right? Wrong. Many of us find this out the hard way. A few years ago it came time for the annual winterizing of our old and drafty farm house, and the local forecast was calling for a typical Texas Blue Norther. Our resident handyman, my husband, was out of town. "No problem," I thought. "I can run to town and get some caulk." So under the supervision of my then seven-year-old son, we set about our task. I quickly found out that even cutting the tip off the tube calls for a certain knowledge of how the caulk is to be applied. I learned that a cake frosting knife may not be the best way to apply caulk if the caulk gun breaks; I learned to change into old clothes and to tie my hair back before caulking; I learned (as I stood there shivering and covered from head to toe with caulk) that weathermen don't really know what time a cold front will hit, and I learned several other things that day. First, make sure you don't wait until the arrival of the blue norther is imminent; Secondly, make sure you either know what you are doing, and have the right tools for the job, or that you have someone available who does know, (preferably someone over the age of 7); And last, but not least, I learned that all caulks are not created equal. For those like me, who never knew the finer points of caulking, here are some tips from the pros as outlined on consumerenergycenter.org. Maybe these will someday come in handy:

There are caulks made specifically for concrete, for brick, for wood, and even for glass and metal. Caulking can be made of pure latex, siliconized latex, polyurethane and other modern materials. Choosing the proper one for your task from the array of choices can be a daunting task. Ask someone at the hardware store for advice.

Important qualities to look for when choosing caulk are life expectancy, how much it shrinks over time, whether or not it can be painted, and if it cleans up with soap and water or needs a solvent like paint thinner.

For most exterior uses around the house, you can use polyurethane caulk. It sticks to just about everything and doesn't totally harden, but remains flexible. For that reason it tends to last longer, and it doesn't shrink as much as some other types.

Special caulking guns use a racheted plunger to force the caulk out the tube when you pull a trigger. Some caulking guns are made of metal, while others are manufactured from fiberglass and nylon, or even ABS plastic.

To load a caulking gun, pull back on the plunger, and then drop the new tube of caulk in the barrel, rear end first. Pull the trigger or push the plunger until it contacts the rear of the cartridge.

Trim the nozzle of the caulk tube. It's best to cut it on a 45-degree angle. Break the seal on the tube by inserting a nail or small screwdriver into the nozzle's opening.

Now, by squeezing the trigger, you can force caulk out the end of the nozzle while you move the tip of the nozzle along a seam. You can either push or pull the caulk into a seam, but pushing forces the caulk into narrow seams more effectively. By moving the gun slowly and evenly, you'll get a clean, professional job.

To stop caulking at the end of a seam, simply push the nozzle into the corner to cut the strip of caulk. Twist the nozzle and lift it away.

You don't need to smooth caulk after it is applied, except for the sake of appearance. Latex caulk can be smoothed with a finger dipped in water. You can also use the back of a spoon to produce a smooth finish. Smoothing should be done soon after the caulk is applied, however - smoothing caulk as it dries sometimes causes it to crack.

Most caulk works best on cracks that are less than half an inch wide. Wider cracks can be sometimes bridged by two strips of caulk applied side by side. Try filling deep cracks with wadded-up fiberglass insulation or some other backing material.

Always pry out any old caulk before you install new caulk, and be sure the surface on which you're working is clean and dry.

Happy Caulking!

-- Cindy Edwards, RGEC Communications Coordinator

P.S. Do you have an energy-related story to share? Please e-mail cedwards@rgec.coop, or send to P.O. Box 1509, Brackettville, TX 78832.

BOARD ACTION

RIO GRANDE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
Summary of Board Meeting Minutes
October 9, 2004

A Meeting by the Board of Directors of Rio Grande Electric Cooperative, Inc. was called to order at the Headquarters office in Brackettville, Kinney County, Texas at 1:30 PM on Saturday, October 9, 2004. The following Directors were present for the meeting: Frank Archuleta, Jimmy Ballew, Hugh Childress, Bill Cowden, Chris Lacy, Art Gonzalez, Margarita Nelson, Jack Skiles, Howard Wakefield, William White and Lowell Woodward. Also present for the meeting were General Manager/CEO Daniel G. Laws, Executive Assistant to GM/CEO Martha Gerardo, Executive Secretary Susanna Castillo and Cooperative Attorney Jim Lowry, of Langley & Banack, Inc.

Elected	Bill Cowden, President; Art Gonzalez, Vice-President Hugh Childress, Secretary; Lowell Woodward, Treasurer
Approved	September 15, 2004 Minutes As Presented
Discussed	2005 Employee Health Insurance Premiums
Approved	Daniel G. Laws And Clinton Brown As CFC Voting Delegate And Alternate, Respectively
Heard	General Manager/CEO Report
Approved	August New/Revoked Memberships
Adjourned	3:40 p.m.

Note: The summary above is provided in order for members to follow the activities of the Board, and is not intended to be exhaustive. Should you wish to know more detail on a particular item or items please contact the director for your district or the General Manager/CEO's office.

Keep Your Christmas Tree Fresh (And Safe)

A dry, brittle Christmas tree is a fire hazard. To keep yours fresh, try these steps:
1. Select the freshest tree possible. **2.** Cut 1 inch off the base, place the tree in a bucket of water, and stand it in a cool, shady place if you don't plan to set it up right away. **3.** Cut 1/2 inch to 1 inch off the base of the trunk when you bring it inside to set up. **4.** Place in a tree stand that holds at least 1 gallon of water. Add plain water. **5.** Water the tree every day. **6.** Avoid allowing the water level to drop below the cut end of the trunk. If it does, a seal will form and prevent any more water from being absorbed by the tree. **7.** Keep the tree away from the fireplace, vents and other sources of heat. **8.** Spray tree with an *antitranspirant*, which is a clear film that slows water loss from the needles. Spray it on before trimming the tree.

***Tip**: Miniature light sets produce less heat than the standard-size lights, so the tree will dry out less quickly if you use them. --Tips from ehow.com*

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

As Of 10/9/04

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P.O. Box 3006
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*Art Gonzalez, Vice-Pres. — District 9
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Dell City, TX 79837 — 915-964-2814 (H)

*Hugh Childress, Secretary — District 6
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*Lowell Woodward, Treasurer — District 8
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*Howard B. Wakefield, Sr. — District 3A
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* Certified Credentialed Director