I hope you had enough spring showers to bring out the May flowers. Here in Brackettville it has been a beautiful spring season. Although system-wide rain has been sparse, there have been a few storms. One part of RGEC’s service territory that has been especially problematic in terms of storm impact is South Brewster County. I receive a report electronically every morning at 8:00 a.m. regarding power reliability and storm impacts for this area. Things held up very well throughout 2011, but there was little to no rain. So far in 2012, things have held up well and parts of South Brewster County have recently seen roughly five (5) inches of rain, and probably twenty (20) inches of lightning. There were minor voltage anomalies, but nothing that would damage appliances.

The simple truth is we will never completely eliminate damage from stormy weather. That does not, however, mean we can’t improve your experience. In fact, the only goal we have as a work force is to improve your experience with the service we provide. We are committed to making timely repairs, using the very best technologies, and providing the best training to our lineman so that goal is met. With almost 10,000 miles of line in service, the task is a big one. Right now as sit here writing this article, some folks south and west of Marfa have experiencing problems as a result of equipment failure.

I know you have read about the substation upgrades we have been working on since the end of last year. Much of that work is completed; only the Cienega Substation remains to be upgraded. Cienega is located on the far western side of our system, south of Marfa. It serves a very sparse member/consumer base located in a very remote part of the state. Its lines run all the way to the Rio Grande.

In order to upgrade the station, it was necessary to switch the load it served to another source so that crews could work safely. There were essentially two alternatives -- shift load to our portable substation, or shift it to our Van Horn Substation. The decision was made to shift load to Van Horn. It was the most cost-effective alternative and it was the least involved transition. A good plan, but once the load was transferred, the problems began. The feeder Cienega load was connected to has never carried as much load before. The total ampacity of the line is 105 amps; we had loaded it with 30 amps. The first failure occurred seven hours after the load was switched. An old technology splice had failed, and down came the conductor and out went the lights.

In total, there were 44 of this type of connectors and there were five outages of varying durations as a result of these faulty devices. They held up fine when the line was operating 3 amps and should have worked fine up to the total ampacity of the line. Our crews worked proactively to eliminate these connectors so that there would be no more problems. Unfortunately, as we progress and begin to test the system in new ways, problems like the one I have described here are going to happen. We appreciate your patience as we work through the difficulties. I know there is a temptation to think we are purposely neglecting our duty, but I can assure you we are not. The improvements to the Cienega Substation are going to greatly enhance the service we provide in the area. Hopefully, that will make this experience a little more palatable.
If you think your electric bill was a little higher than usual, it may be because the dates included on the bill dated April 4 included Spring Break. If you have children, this means you probably had lots more activity at home during the week than usual. Refrigerators were opened more often, there may have been extra loads of laundry, and your home’s doors were opened more frequently, giving your AC system a workout. There was probably additional TV and/or game system time. All these things contribute to a higher than usual electric bill.

To determine if a higher than usual bill is the result of some activity within your household, or the result of the increased PCA, look at the kWh usage -- not the dollar amount of your bill, and compare it with the previous year’s usage.

In order to save money this summer, it is important to conduct those routine maintenance tasks around your home now. Check/repair duct work; seal air leaks; have AC units serviced/charged, and install window shades/awnings/films. A little bit of effort now can save lots of expense when it gets really hot later this summer.

For more valuable energy saving ideas, check out the great resources and complete the online home energy audit on our web site, www.riogrande.coop.

Newly-elected Dell City Member Advisory Chairperson Laura Lynch is the oldest original and founding member of the Dixie Chicks band. In fact, Laura is responsible for naming the group. In 1988, the girls began a voyage that took them to stadiums and state capitals, coliseums, and the White House many times. (Laura was not with the band when the disparaging remarks were made about President Bush.)

The only native Texan ever in the band, Laura calls West Texas home. After years of performing, she returned to family and the community where her heart is, beautiful Dell Valley. Presently, she is the Manager of Community Affairs for an exploration company in the Sierra Blanca area.

Stunning in a western pearl snapped shirt, jeans, and boots, Lynch told Area Operations Manager Gregg Gardner, “I am honored to serve my fellow Rio Grande members as Chair of the Dell City Member Advisory Committee. I believe member participation in the Co-op is very important. It is a part of what makes Rio Grande so community-oriented and gives those of us who receive our power from, and own it the chance to have a voice in how the business is operated. That’s a very rare thing in today’s business world, and it would be a shame not to take full advantage of the benefits. I encourage those I represent to come to me with any questions or concerns they may have about RGEC.”

More About Advisory Committees

Advisory committees meet twice per year, with chairmen elected annually during the spring meeting. They serve one-year terms, as per board policy. Committees were organized to serve as liaisons between the members, management, and directors.

To do their jobs effectively, committee members want and need feedback from you. Complete contact information for committee members in all of RGEC’s operations areas is listed on the RGEC web site, (www.riogrande.coop/rgecmembers/advisory.asp). Just click on the appropriate area office name at the bottom of the page.

Other newly elected Member Advisory Committee Chairs include: Alpine - Chris Lacy; Brackettville - Stan Metcalf; Carrizo Springs - Bay Laxon, and Fort Stockton - Ann and Carlon Stapper.

Special thanks to outgoing chairmen for their year of hard work on behalf of members in their respective areas!
Your Rights As A Customer

There are many benefits to being a Cooperative member. Chief among them, is the fact that you are an owner in the business. There are rights and responsibilities which come with being a member. They are outlined on the following pages.

You may view the RGEC Bylaws and Tariff online at www.riogrande.coop. These are our governing documents, and contain the rates, policies and procedures explained within these pages.

Any time you have a question or concern about your membership in Rio Grande Electric Cooperative, please call your local RGEC office, or the Corporate office. We will be glad to help you.

I. Rate and Service Information. Members may request copies of any portion of the RGEC rate and service rules either by telephone or by a personal visit to Rio Grande Electric Cooperative (RGEC), offices located in Brackettville, Carrizo Springs, Alpine, Fort Stockton, Dell City, and El Paso.

II. Meter Testing. Members may request testing of their electric meter if they believe the meter is not accurately reflecting electric consumption. There is no charge for one requested meter test per 24-month period. Additional tests at the member’s request within the 24-month period will incur $40 for a meter test; if the meter is found to be within accuracy standards of the American National Standards Inst., Inc., RGEC may charge a fee to cover the independent testing. This charge will not exceed $100 plus a trip fee.

III. Outstanding Bills. Under RGEC rules, bills are due sixteen (16) days from issuance in Texas and 21 days from issuance in New Mexico, adjusted for weekends and holidays. If the bill is not paid by its due date, the electric service is subject to disconnection, after proper customer notice. The disconnection notice will not be mailed earlier than the day after the billing due date and will provide the customer with at least a ten (10) day warning period. Unless a dangerous condition exists, the disconnect date will not fall on a holiday, weekend, or day of or before Cooperative personnel are unavailable for receiving payment and reconnecting service.

IV. Termination of Service-After Proper Notice. Electric service may be disconnected after proper notice for the following reasons:

A. Failure to pay an outstanding bill by due date. If due date falls on a holiday or weekend, the cut-off shall fall on the next working day. Disconnection will only occur on those days when Co-op personnel are available to receive payment to prevent disconnection. RGEC will either mail or personally deliver a written notice of termination at least ten (10) days prior to the date of disconnection.

B. Failure to pay a delinquent account or meet the terms of a deferred payment plan.

C. Violation of RGEC rules for the use of service in such a manner that it interferes with the service of others, or the operation of non-standard equipment, though RGEC will make every effort to notify you of the problem and allow you a reasonable opportunity to remedy the situation.

D. Failure to comply with RGEC deposit and guarantee requirements.

V. Termination of Service - Without Prior Notice.

A. When a dangerous condition exists, disconnection of service may be made at once, without prior notice, and such disconnection shall remain in effect so long as the condition exists.

B. When service is connected without authority by a person who has not made application for service, or who has reconnected service without authority following termination of service for non-payment, service may be disconnected immediately without prior notice.

C. Tampering with the Cooperative’s meter or equipment, bypassing same, or in other instances of diversion, service may be terminated immediately without prior notice.

VI. To Prevent Termination of Service Because of Illness.
RGEC requires members who have medical conditions making them dependent on electrically powered equipment to maintain a Critical Care Medical Form on file with the Cooperative. These forms require a doctor’s statement describing the type of illness/condition and the electrically powered equipment required. If a member is seriously ill, or would become more seriously ill as
Your Rights As A Customer, cont.

a result of termination of service, the physician of record, or any licensed physician actively treating the member for the specified condition(s), must, at the member’s request, contact RGEC before the due date of the bill. The physician must provide a confirmation letter within twenty-six (26) days of the issuance of the bill and RGEC will refrain from termination of service for sixty-three (63) days from the issuance of the bill, unless a lesser period is agreed upon. If a request to avoid termination is made under this provision, payment arrangement and make timely payments as specified. If the member defaults on the terms of the arrangement, RGEC may elect to terminate service. A deferred payment arrangement does not exempt the member from making payments for electrical usage incurred during the

VII. Alternate Payment Plans.

A. Deferred payment plan. If not delinquent in paying more than two bills in the past twelve (12) months and unable to pay any or all of a bill, a member may qualify for a deferred payment plan. Such plan requires that all subsequent bills be maintained current and that monthly payments are made in an amount not to exceed one third of the outstanding balance. RGEC requires that a written form be signed and a copy given to the member to eliminate all doubt as to amount of payment and date due. Service will not be disconnected if above terms are met in accordance with the deferred payment plan. The deferred payment plan may include a 5% penalty for late payment.

B. Members desiring alternate payment plans must call or come to a Co-op office to discuss/request an alternate payment plan.

VIII. Service Reconnection. If service is interrupted for any of the reasons listed under Section IV of “Your Rights as a Customer”, service will be reconnected when all outstanding and delinquent bills are paid, and when a deposit is provided to RGEC. If a deferred payment is agreed upon and executed, service will then be reconnected.

IX. RGEC Offices and Business Hours. The Co-op has six offices at which bills may be paid and information obtained. These offices are open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Central Time), Monday through Friday each week, except holidays. The offices, addresses and telephone numbers are listed below, as is information on one additional pay station.

X. Deposit Policy.

Initial Deposit. All residential applicants (new consumers) shall be required to make a deposit, unless exempted under the following circumstances:

A. If the residential applicant demonstrates a satisfactory credit rating by appropriate means.

B. If the residential applicant is 65 years of age or older and does not have an outstanding account balance with the utility or another utility for the same utility service which accrued in the last two years.

An applicant for commercial or industrial service shall be required to make a deposit if the credit of the applicant has not been established satisfactorily.

A residential consumer (existing service - no deposit on account) shall be required to pay a deposit if the consumer has, within the past twelve (consecutive months), had two or more delinquent bill payments for utility service, or if the consumer’s service was disconnected for nonpayment.

The required deposit shall not exceed an amount equivalent to two months average annual billing as evidenced by the consumer’s billing history or an estimate made by the Cooperative’s personnel.

Additional Deposit. During the term that service is provided, an additional deposit may be requested, if the consumer’s actual billing amount exceeds the amount of deposit being held on the account.

Refund. If service is not connected or after disconnection of service, the utility shall promptly and automatically refund the consumer’s deposit plus accrued interest or the balance, if any, in excess of the unpaid bills for service furnished. When the consumer has paid bills for service for twelve (12) consecutive residential billings or for twenty-four (24) consecutive commercial or industrial billings without more than two occasions on which a bill was delinquent, and when the consumer is not delinquent in the payment of the current bills, the utility shall promptly and automatically refund the deposit plus accrued interest to the consumer in the form of cash or credit to a consumer’s bill. If a refund of deposit is made within thirty (30) days of receipt of deposit, no interest payment is required. If the utility retains the deposit more than thirty (30) days, payment of interest shall be made retroactive to the date of deposit.
XI. Financial Assistance. Call the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs energy assistance section Monday through Friday between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. (Central Time), toll free at (877) 399-8939. Calls will be routed to the appropriate community service agency serving your county.

You must call from a land line telephone, not a cell phone. New Mexico members can call the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) number at (800) 283-4465.

XII. Repair Service. If you are out of power, please check your fuses or breaker box. If possible, please check to see if neighbors have power. After that, please call the area office nearest you. RGEC’s system-wide toll-free number is 1-800-749-1509.

XIII. Physical Disabilities. If a consumer has a physical disability, the consumer with the physical disability, and those who care for such consumers should identify themselves to RGEC so special action can be taken when necessary. The implementation of the Federal Trade Commission’s Red Flag Rules pertaining to the protection of consumers from identity theft and fraud prevent RGEC from disclosing account information to those who are not joint account holders or otherwise authorized representatives of RGEC accounts.

If a member, because of illness, or disability, relies upon assistance from a nonauthorized person, it is incumbent upon the member to structure their RGEC account in such a way as to grant authorization to the caretaker.

XIV. Nondiscrimination. “Rio Grande Electric Cooperative, Inc.” is the recipient of Federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The USDA prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual’s income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA’s TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call toll free (866) 632-9992 (voice) or (800) 877-8339 (TDD) or (866)377-8642 (relay voice users). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Call RGEC 24/7, 365.
1-800-749-1509
NEW Satellite Internet Packages

FASTER SPEEDS

MORE BANDWIDTH

No Phone Lines Required

1-800-749-1509

Requires equipment and 2-year contract. Equipment is $350*, payable in 5 monthly instalments.

Because the following plans operate from different satellites, there are differences in what is available in each area. Please call to find out which are available in your part of Co-op Country. We regret that certain levels of new service are not currently available in all RGEC areas. We expect more areas to have access within the coming months.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Package</th>
<th>Down Speed</th>
<th>Up Speed</th>
<th>Monthly Bandwidth</th>
<th>Price*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rio Basis10</td>
<td>12 Mbps</td>
<td>3 Mbps</td>
<td>10 GB</td>
<td>$54.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rio Bold</td>
<td>12 Mbps</td>
<td>3 Mbps</td>
<td>15 GB</td>
<td>$79.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rio Beyond</td>
<td>12 Mbps</td>
<td>3 Mbps</td>
<td>25 GB</td>
<td>$129.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basis10</td>
<td>5 Mbps</td>
<td>1 Mbps</td>
<td>10 GB</td>
<td>$54.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bold</td>
<td>5 Mbps</td>
<td>1 Mbps</td>
<td>15 GB</td>
<td>$79.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beyond</td>
<td>5 Mbps</td>
<td>1 Mbps</td>
<td>25 GB</td>
<td>$129.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buy More</td>
<td>1 GB</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$10.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rolling 30-day usage:
Pro Plus 1.5 Mbps 256 K 17,000 MB down/ 5,000 MB up $49.95

Pro Plus does not support VOIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol), and is not recommended for Internet gaming, due to latency issues (the amount of time it takes for the signal to bounce off the satellite).* Prices listed do not include tax.

RioNet does not make telemarketing calls about new ViaSat products, nor do we disclose your personal information to telemarketers. If you receive such a call from a ViaSat telemarketer, please let us know by calling 1-800-749-1509. If possible, please provide the representative’s name and company when reporting such calls. Thank you.

* Because most dryers use similar amounts of energy, ENERGY STAR does not label clothes dryers.

** ENERGY STAR specification of programmable thermostats was suspended on December 31, 2009; however, any existing stock of ENERGY STAR labeled programmable thermostats offered for sale by retailers is still eligible for the exemption.

Qualifying products will display the ENERGY STAR logo, which may appear on the appliance, the packaging or the Energy Guide label. ENERGY STAR is a joint program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy. Earning the ENERGY STAR means a product meets strict energy efficiency guidelines set by these two federal agencies. There is no limit on the number of qualifying items one can purchase during this sales tax holiday, and an exemption certificate is not required.

The holiday also applies to Internet and catalog sales of eligible products, provided that (1) the item is paid for and delivered to the purchaser during the exemption period; or (2) the purchaser orders and pays for the item and the retailer accepts the order during the exemption period for immediate shipment, even if delivery is made after the exemption period.

Merchandise purchased on layaway plans is eligible when either the final payment on a layaway order is made and the merchandise is given to the customer during the exemption period, or the item is selected by the customer and the order is accepted into layaway during the period for delivery upon full payment, even if delivery is made after the exemption period. Delivery, shipping, handling or transportation charges connected to the sale of a qualifying item purchased tax free during the sales tax holiday also qualify for the exemption. Charges for installation of qualifying items purchased during the sales tax holiday may qualify for exemption depending on whether the items are permanently attached to or installed in real property and whether the realty is residential. Labor charges are not taxable on new construction and residential repair and remodeling jobsites.

For complete terms and conditions, visit www.window.state.tx.us/taxinfo/taxpubs/tx96_1331/
Redecorate (*Inexpensively*) To Save Energy

Who would imagine that redecorating your home could help you save energy? The Internet is buzzing about some pretty innovative ideas that could help you keep cool and save energy this summer.

This part is not new information, but it bears repeating before we get to the “new” ideas. The first thing to do when rearranging furniture, is to make sure air conditioning vents and return air intakes are not blocked. This will allow your air conditioning -- whether central or room -- to work at peak efficiency. Remember, too, that those return intakes and filters need frequent cleaning.

Then, when considering window treatments, think outside the box. There are traditional energy-efficient window coverings available, which will help block heat from entering your home. Or, for only a few dollars per window, you can try the new “emergency blanket” window treatments. We’re not saying they are 100% effective, but the theory certainly seems logical. Here’s how they work: Purchase enough of the emergency blankets intended for camping, and attach to the back of existing draperies. One blogger, concerned with what the neighbors would think, made an emergency blanket “sandwich”, by placing a white sheet as the layer the neighbors would see. The layers can be sewn together, or assembled using Velcro “dots”, or packing tape. (The dots and tape won’t show.)

Is the west wall of your home light on insulation and catches too much afternoon sun? As a quick fix, consider hanging a tapestry, quilt, or even a decorative rug on the wall. It will help insulate the wall and prevent at least part of, the heat from entering your home, until you can add the much-needed insulation.

It can not be stressed enough that CFL bulbs save energy, and thereby, money. They more than recoup the initial purchase price over the life of the bulb, because they use 75% less energy and last up to 10 years. If you don’t redecorate any other part of your home this spring, at least update your light bulbs -- they are the brightest energy efficient decorating tool around!

Remember that window films and awnings also help prevent heat gain through windows. Window films are relatively inexpensive, and are available at most home improvement stores.

Awnings don’t have to be fancy or expensive prefab items, either. Those you make yourself can be fun projects, and can be as simple or as elaborate as you would like. Remember to pick a style that compliments the style of your home. You wouldn’t want an ultra-modern awning on a Victorian house or a fancy gingerbread trim awning on a Southwestern ranch-style home.

Homeowners are using their ingenuity to recycle wood from shipping pallets and previous building projects for use in building their own window awnings. This has the potential to save money on building materials, and save energy by reducing heat gain in the home.

When redecorating, don’t overlook the value of redecorating the outside of your home for energy savings, too. A well placed tree, pergola or shade arbor can prevent the sun’s scorching rays from pounding your home. Many prefer the pergola or a shade arbor as a fast fix for hot spots. The structure itself, depending on construction, will likely provide some shade, and maximum shade will be provided when the vines grow to maturity. Avoid obstructing the flow of air around AC units. The shade will help them work more efficiently, but only if they are able to draw/expel air properly.

Post it! Share your own energy saving ideas with fellow members, and include photos on the Rio Grande Electric Cooperative Facebook page, so your friends and neighbors can benefit from your ingenuity. If you aren’t into Facebook posting, e-mail your design or plan and corresponding photos to cedwards@rgec.coop. We’ll post on your behalf, giving you credit for sharing.
RIO GRANDE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
Summary of Board Meeting Minutes
February 15, 2012

A meeting of the Rio Grande Electric Cooperative, Inc. Board of Directors was held at the Headquarters office in Brackettville, Kinney County, Texas at 8:00 a.m., February 15, 2012. The following directors were present for the meeting: Frank Archuleta, Jimmy Ballew, Mark Daugherty, James Evrage, Stephen Haynes, Rowdy Holmsley, Kimball Miller, Henry Mills, Margarita Nelson, Priscilla Parsons, Bill White, Cindy Whitehead and Lowell Woodward. Also present for the meeting were General Manager/CEO Daniel G. Laws and Executive Assistant to the GM/CEO Sonya Cruz.

Approved January 18, 2012 Board Minutes, As Presented

Heard Financial Reports

Approved GM/CEO Evaluation & Salary Review Results

Reviewed Board Policy 1.4.4 Audit Committee Duties, By Lowell Woodward

Approved Separation From Boeing As A Partner For Renewable Energy Development

Discussed Wholesale Power Supply Status/Negotiations

Approved RUS Form 790 Non-Site Specific Construction Contract Award To Urban Electrical Service, Inc.

Approved Bid Award For Landscaping Services Of The Brackettville Headquarters Lawn To Specialty Landscaping

Approved Extending The Term Of The CFC Power Vision Loan For Five Years

Heard General Manager/CEO Report

Heard Committee Reports

Approved Director Expenses

Approved December New/Revoked Memberships

Reviewed Check Register And Arrears Report

Adjourned 2:11 P.M.

March 21, 2012

A meeting of the Rio Grande Electric Cooperative, Inc. Board of Directors was held at the area office in Fort Stockton, Pecos County, Texas at 8:00 a.m. March 21, 2012. The following directors were present for the meeting: Frank Archuleta, Jimmy Ballew, Mark Daugherty, James Evrage, Stephen Haynes, Rowdy Holmsley, Kimball Miller, Henry Mills, Margarita Nelson, Priscilla Parsons, Bill White, Cindy Whitehead, and Lowell Woodward. Also present for the meeting were General Manager/CEO Daniel G. Laws and Executive Assistant to the GM/CEO Sonya Cruz.

Approved February 18, 2012 Board Minutes, As Corrected

Heard Financial Reports

Accepted 2011 Audit Report Presented by EideBailly, LLP via Video Conference

Heard Advisory Committee Chairmen Reports

Approved Resolution Authorizing Survey and Ballot Systems To Conduct 2012 Director Election

Reviewed Board Policy 1.21 Allowances and Expenses for Directors By Frank Archuleta

Discussed Wholesale Power Supply Status/Negotiations

Heard General Manager/CEO Report

Heard Committee Reports

Approved Director Expenses

Approved January New/Revoked Memberships

Reviewed Check Register And Arrears Report

Adjourned 2:14 P.M.

Note: The summaries above are provided so that members can follow the activities of the board, and are 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.