A Message From The COO
Theresa Quiroz

“I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”

I cannot believe it’s already July! Record heat is definitely upon us and still many continue to deal with the concerns for health and justice in our world today. Admittedly, the process of change we must endure to deal with these issues seems daunting, but I am an optimist, and I choose to respect our new way of life and help build resilience. Ironically, I am writing this message to you on Flag Day. It is Sunday, and we are freely allowed to trust in the principles for which we pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America. I am convinced that there will never be a better time for America to face such challenges.

By the time you read this, we will have just celebrated our nation’s independence and I am pretty sure it was a little different this year; but even so, we participate by remembering the struggles of the American people. We participate by continuing to honor and celebrate that Star-Spangled Banner, as it waves in the sky because of those brave men and women who served in sacrifice long ago and because of those who continue to serve to protect our liberties and our way of life today. We participate by exercising our freedoms, while not infringing on those of others. We are a proud nation built to be resilient against all evil threats. I hope your Fourth of July celebration was a happy, healthy, and memorable one.

Likewise, with the echo of pomp and circumstance playing at modified graduation ceremonies streamed live across the Nation, graduates, family, and friends have celebrated these milestone achievements differently this year; and even so, we remain hopeful in their future endeavors and their passion to be the change needed in this world. Congratulations, Class of 2020!

Many of you have seen the heat advisories and conservation alerts we have shared on social media, which stem from the high temperatures and high power demand experienced this past month across Co-op Country. Texas set a new peak power record of 67,839 megawatts on June 8, 2020, and I am afraid there is more threat projected. With Time of Use (TOU) rates in effect through the summer months, you have the opportunity to help by voluntarily reducing your energy usage during peak periods. If you have not already signed up to receive free power usage alerts, you can still subscribe online through your SmartHub account. These alerts will help you continue to monitor your energy usage and help prevent possible rolling blackouts this summer. Please practice heat safety, wherever you are...job sites, indoors, vehicles, or outdoors. Find shade, stay hydrated; check up on each other, especially the elderly, and look around inside before you lock your car.

For many reasons, I, honestly, have a hard time understanding the magnitude of concern for justice in the world today - not to dismiss it; but mostly because I live and breathe the Cooperative, where we operate by a set of principles and values to help reduce conflict, build community cohesion, build skills, expertise, and develop potential - in effect, Rio Grande Electric has helped build resilient communities now for seventy-five years. The co-op business model is effective. So again, celebrate this liberty and participate in remembering the struggles of rural America. Participate in your democratic member control by serving as member advisors, directors; or by voting in this year’s director election. Literally, stay connected with us...from home, on social media, and SmartHub. Congratulations to RGEC and its members for seventy-five years of service!
NRECA Wins $1.9 Million Defense Dept. Contract to Develop Microgrid Planning Tool

Cathy Cash

National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), the prime winner of a $1.9 million Department of Defense contract, will work with three co-ops to develop a microgrid planning tool.

When scoping out how military bases can receive the most resilient electric service with cost in mind, the Department of Defense turned to NRECA to develop a scalable planning tool for developing microgrids.

NRECA, the prime winner of the $1.9 million DOD contract, will lead three diverse electric cooperatives in creating and testing a standardized microgrid design framework. The tool is expected to reduce “soft costs” like data analysis, mapping, software and design work.

Continued
"America’s electric co-ops and the more than 90 military facilities that they serve are evolving together," said NRECA CEO Jim Matheson. “By developing and field-testing software that can reduce the cost of microgrids, this project marks a significant step toward improved resilience at military installations across the nation.”

The three-year project is expected to launch later this year. NRECA will partner with Chelco, headquartered in DeFuniak Springs, Florida, Rio Grande Electric Cooperative in Brackettville, Texas, and Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative in Sussex, New Jersey, which already have contracts to own and operate a distribution grid on a military installation.

The bases’ energy demand and resources are as diverse as their geography. Some have renewable energy and microgrids; some have no generation or microgrid components at all.

That’s where the value of co-ops and their history of reliable service to military bases comes in, said Lauren Khair, NRECA senior analyst for economics and industry. “We have access to numerous cooperatives that serve military bases and can build on shared lessons learned,” she said. “NRECA and member co-ops also have made investments into cutting-edge data analytic technology that can be used to meet these goals and be scaled.”

The microgrid tool ultimately will help automate the modeling process and standardize planning so they can be used at any installation or campus-type settings, such as hospitals, industrial parks and universities, Khair said.

*Cathy Cash is a staff writer at NRECA.*

**Rio Grande Electric Co-op Reps On Microgrid Planning Tool Team**

Abraham Velasquez, Project Manager, El Paso, Amber Conrad, Project Manager, Brackettville, and their respective teams are spearheading RGEC’s efforts on the National Rural Electric Cooperative (NRECA) microgrid planning tool design team.

“Since utility privatization contract award for Laughlin Air Force Base (LAFB) and Fort Bliss (FB), electrical reliability has been RGEC’s topmost priority in support of the military mission. The U.S. Department of Defense Environmental Security Technology Certification Program (ESTCP) has provided RGEC the opportunity to excel in providing our military privatization installations with increased electrical reliability and resiliency by participating in project "MICROGRIDUP". RGEC had been working closely with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) and is excited to begin the microgrid design initiative!” -- Julisa Wilmot-Luna, Project Coordinator.

*Abraham Velasquez  Amber Conrad*
You’ve probably heard people say, “It’s not the heat, it’s the humidity”. No, buddy, it is the heat... AND it is the humidity. The combination of the two is what is called the Heat Index, and it’s likely to be a killer this summer.

One look at the National Weather Service’s Heat Safety page will tell you most places are not like Co-op Country. The featured Heat Index only goes up to 110 degrees. The “High Heat” Heat Index you see here was provided by the NWS, because, as we all know, Co-op Country is special!

We asked Paul Yura of the National Weather Ser-
vice for some advice to share with you, since he is familiar with Co-op Country.

“Be cautious this time of year when the combination of heat and humidity can increase the chances of heat stroke and heat related illnesses. Air temperature is taken in the shade, so if you are working outside under full sun exposure, the air temperature and Heat Index can be 15 degrees higher. Take frequent breaks in the shade and drink plenty of water to stay hydrated. If you’re thirsty, you are already dehydrated,” he advised.

Yura continued to explain that in RGEC’s service territory, low humidity and some breeze usually helps cool our bodies more efficiently than at the coast, for example. He explained, “Dry air and low humidity allow the sweat to evaporate, creating a cooling effect, much like how we get cold after we get out of the pool or shower. That water is evaporating off our body...cooling it. A breeze will do that also.”

“The most dangerous days are full sun, no shade, no wind, and high humidity. Humidity will be highest in the morning...usually wind is the lowest, as well,” said Mr. Yura. “So interestingly enough, your late morning and early afternoon may be the most dangerous just because humidities are higher, and the stronger winds haven’t kicked in yet. Also the sun is directly overhead, bringing the most intense radiation (threat for sunburn),” he elaborated.

“Sometimes out in your region...it can be so dry (low humidity) and breezy that staying hydrated is even more difficult because that moisture you have in the body literally evaporates quicker than you can replace it with fluids,” said Mr. Yura. Those who live and work in extremely dry areas can certainly relate.

“Listen to your body,” said Yura. “Just like me when I have been working outside too long...I get a heat headache. Listen to your body...it’s telling you that for a reason. Time to stop, hydrate, get in the shade.” He explained that dehydration is common in Police and Fire training academies. “And not to get too gross on you, but I see this in many training academies like Police and Fire. You need to pay attention to the color of your urine. It’s a clue that tells us our hydration state.” The urine of a dehydrated person is darker, because dehydration is caused when the volume of water in the body is depleted. So, when we’re dehydrated, our kidneys, which filter waste, tell the body to retain water. Therefore, we have less water in our urine, which causes it to become more concentrated and darker.

By making sure to drink enough water, and drinks containing electrolytes such as non-caffeinated sports drinks or pedialyte, BEFORE becoming dehydrated, you will stay healthy and more comfortable this summer. Be sure to stay away from alcoholic and caffeinated beverages, as both are diuretics, which means they draw water out of your body, contributing to dehydration.

Warning Coordination Meterologist Paul Yura has been a great supporter of Rio Grande and our members for years. We first became acquainted with him in 2004, when preparing the grant request for the Carrizo Springs All Hazards Warning System, which was placed at the RGEC Carrizo Springs communications tower. He has conducted SkyWarn Spotter Training for the Brackettville and Carrizo Springs communities, which were held at RGEC’s offices, and attended by many RGEC employees. You also have his office to thank for many of the warnings we provide via social media when severe weather is threatening Co-op Country.

Rio Grande Electric Cooperative

Will Be Closed Friday, July 3
In Observance Of The

4TH OF JULY

Independence Day Celebration

To report outages 24/7, call 800-749-1509
Director elections are right around the corner, and nominating committees have been busy. The committees review a list of those interested in running for the board, based on results of the Member Involvement Survey, distributed in February. They may choose to approach other Co-op members, who they feel would be an asset to the board. They use every means at their disposal to come up with the best slate of candidates.

Nominating committees include: Director District 5 (Seat held by Billy Foster) Lee Moynahan, Chairman; Bill Taylor and Dave Goodson. Director District 6 (Seat held by Rowdy Holmsley) Lane Porter, Chairman; Carlon Stapper, and Scott Mitchell. District 8 (Seat held by Warren Cude) Sandra Braden, Chairman; Arna McCorkle, and Karan Hefelfinger. Director District 9 (Seat held by Sandra “Sandi” Archuleta) Johnny Sheets, Chairman; Connie Renee Shofield and William Riley. Each person recommended by the nominating committees, running by petition, or as a write-in candidate, must meet the same eligibility requirements listed in the RGEC Bylaws, which can be found online at www.riogrande.coop.

Running By Petition. There is another way to become a candidate, and that is to file by petition. To do so, a member must meet the same eligibility criteria as those candidates selected by the nominating committees. Fifteen (15) or more members from the district in which a petitioner is seeking a seat must sign the petition. The affidavit of eligibility and signatures must be submitted to RGEC by August 10, 2020. A Petition Package can be found under the “Forms” tab at www.riogrande.coop. Those who meet the deadline, are certified as candidates, and who provide a bio and photos, will be included in the Candidate Profiles, which accompany both the online and mailed ballots. Profiles may also be featured in the September edition of Ranch and Rural Living Magazine.

Write-In Candidacy. There has been at least one successful write-in campaign, which resulted in election to the board. In order to become a director in this way, a member must meet the qualifications in the RGEC Bylaws, and complete an affidavit of eligibility upon being elected.

Remember, you have the option of casting your ballot by mail or online, but one membership still equals one vote! Voting begins September 8, and closes October 7, at 10 A.M. (Central). Election results will be announced during the 75th Annual Meeting, Saturday, October 10.
Electrical Safety Poster Contest Winners

Amid all the pandemic chaos, RGEC had to make some last minute modifications to the contest, with students completing school assignments from home. That didn’t keep them from submitting some awesome art!

This year’s winners are:

1st - 3rd Grade Division
Bridgett Buitron
2nd grade
Jones Elementary, Brackett ISD
Bracketville, Texas

4th - 6th Grade Division
Bella Sanchez
4th grade
Terrell County ISD
Sanderson, Texas

Each winner received a $50 gift card, and will have their winning poster designs incorporated into the design of the book covers RGEC provides to schools through the 18 Texas and 2 New Mexico counties the Cooperative serves. Every student who submitted a poster received a certificate of participation, because every student who learned about electrical safety is a winner!

Our special thanks to the teachers and parents who helped make this year’s contest a success.
A meeting of the Rio Grande Electric Cooperative, Inc. Board of Directors was held at 8:03 a.m., May 20, 2020, through video conferencing pursuant to RGEC Bylaws Article 5, Section 4, the Board President having determined that emergency circumstances exist as provided by the Proclamation Declaration of May 12, 2020, by Governor of the State of Texas Greg Abbott, thereby permitting telephonic or electronic attendance at a regular meeting. The following directors were present for the meeting: Sandra Archuleta, Ellery Aufdengarten, Jamie Ballew, Warren Cude, Tim Edwards, William Foster, Rowdy Holmsley, Jan Metcalf, Margarita Nelson, Priscilla Parsons, Keith Richardson, Edward Walker, and Cody Whitehead-Burns. Also present for the meeting were Chief Executive Officer Rogelio Andrade, Chief Operating Officer Theresa Quiroz, Chief Financial Officer Shawn Stanley, and Department Specialist Brandi Riojas.

Approved
April 15, 2020 Board Minutes, As Presented
Heard
Financial Reports
Approved
Risk Insurance Renewal With Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange For The Period June 1, 2020-2021, And Total Premium Of $575,044
Approved
Revisions To The 2020 Budget In Response To The COVID-19 Crisis
Approved
Contract Award To Urban Electrical Services For The WhiteWater Midstream, LLC Del Rio Compressor Station Project, In The Amount Of $183,006.34
Reviewed
Board Policy 1.3.1 Audit Committee Duties
Reviewed
Funding Mechanisms For A Residential Credit Relief Plan In Response To The COVID-19 Crisis
Reviewed
Safety & Health Program And Safety Trends
Heard
Executive Report
Heard
Audit Committee Report
Approved
CEO and Director Expenses
Approved
April New/Revoked Memberships
Reviewed
Check Register And Arrears Report
Adjourned
1:08 PM

Note: The summary above is provided so that members can 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 CEO’s office.

Rio Grande Electric Cooperative, Inc. is an equal opportunity provider and employer.
Rio Grande Electric Cooperative, Inc. es un proveedor y empleado que ofrece igualdad de oportunidades.

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