As an electric cooperative, our top priority is always to provide reliable, affordable energy to you, the consumer-members we serve. Because we are a co-op, our mission is to enrich the lives of our members and serve the long-term interests of our local communities—and this mission has never been more critical than in recent months. One of the seven principles that guides all co-ops is “concern for community.” To me, this principle is the essential DNA of Rio Grande Electric Co-op, and it sets us apart from other electric utilities.

October is National Co-op Month, and electric cooperatives across the country are highlighting the many ways we “Power On.”

Who would have fathomed in March, that the COVID-19 virus would amount to a test of our communities and our nation? The changing circumstances due to the pandemic have created both challenges and opportunities. Over the past several months, we’ve all been challenged to operate differently, and Rio Grande has stepped up to help our members and strengthen the safety net for our more vulnerable neighbors.

I tell you about these efforts not to boast, but to explain how much we care about our members and our communities—because we live here too. In fact, we believe so much in this tenet, that we incorporated it into the logo of our 75th Annual Meeting—“Empowering Communities · Enhancing Lives”.

We’ve seen other local businesses rising to meet similar challenges during this time, because that’s what communities do. While the challenges caused by COVID-19 have been daunting, I’m heartened to see how everyone in Co-op Country is pulling together. In 1945, Rio Grande Electric Cooperative was built by the community to serve the community, and that’s what we’ll continue to do—Power On.

You can learn more about our community initiatives, by attending the virtual emPOWER Summit, RGEC’s 75th Annual Meeting, to be held Saturday, October 10, 10 a.m. (Central), at www.riogrande.coop/empower.
This year’s annual meeting, will be held virtually! Rio Grande is still providing all the fun and prizes which have become synonymous with the annual meetings, but with a few new twists!

Director reports, and a live Q & A session will fill you in on all the important happenings with your Co-op. The announcement of the director election results will also air live.

To be eligible for prizes, you must pre-register at www.riogrande.coop/empower. Pre-registration opens at 8:00 a.m. (Central) Monday, October 5, and Closes at 9:00 a.m. (Central), Saturday, October 10, which is 1 hour prior to the meeting. You must be virtually present -- logged in to the meeting at 10:00 A.M. -- to win prizes.

As an added incentive, the first 75 members who register will be awarded a $75 RGEC Credit On Account. One hundred (100) $150 RGEC Credit On Account prizes will be awarded during the meeting. We’re doubling your chances of winning the Grand Prize this year. That’s right, we’re awarding two (2) Grand Prize Ford F150s!

Don’t Miss The 75th Annual Meeting
Saturday, October 10!
Go To
www.riogrande.coop/empower

SECURE PAY SYSTEM:
MORE THAN PHONE PAYMENTS

Call us at 888-259-9084

Press 1 To check your account status or make a one-time payment
Press 2 To update your phone number
Press 3 To create or update your PIN
Press 4 To update bank draft or credit card information
Press 8 To repeat the menu
Many electronics continue to draw power -- even when they are switched off. This is known as a Vampire Load, and they can add $200 or more to the annual electric bill of an average home.

Using advanced power strips can help curtail Vampire Loads, because paying for energy you’re not getting to use is very scary. The National Renewable Energy Laboratory, part of the US Department of Energy, Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, says, “Advanced Power Strips look just like ordinary power strips, except that they have built-in features that are designed to reduce the amount of energy used by many consumer electronics. There are several different types of APSs on the market, but they all operate on the same basic principle of shutting off the power supply to devices that are not in use. By replacing your standard power strip with an APS, you can significantly cut the amount of electricity used by your home office and entertainment center devices, and save money on your electric bill”.

Some types of Advanced Power Strips are:
1. Timer Power Strip -- Turns the outlets off based on a pre-set schedule.

2. Activity Monitor Power Strip -- Looks for signs of activity in the room, and turns off outlets if none is detected.

3. Remote Switch Power Strip -- This strip can be turned off by the user with a remote switch.

4. Master-Controlled Power Strip -- When a primary device (such as a computer or TV) is turned off by the user, the power strip automatically turns off the controlled outlets where the peripheral devices such as the printer or game console, are plugged in.

5. Masterless Power Strip -- When all of the controlled devices are turned off, the power strip turns off power to those outlets completely, eliminating all of the vampire loads.

There is an absolutely free alternative to purchasing APSs. You can unplug devices not in use. Items with a transformer box at the cord end are the major vampires. These include such items as phone chargers, game consoles, and TVs.

Note: Most power strips do not provide surge protection capabilities, though they look similar. See “Surge Suppression”, pg. 6.
ELLERY AUFDENGARTEN

Sitting RGEC director Ellery Aufdengarten of Fort Davis, passed away July 17, at the age of 62.

Mr. Aufdengarten was elected to the board in 2018, and represented Director District 7. In addition to his board service to the members of Rio Grande Electric Cooperative, Mr. Aufdengarten served on the Highland Soil Conservation Board, and as a representative for the Cattlemen’s Round Up for Crippled Children, among others. Within the parameters of his RGEC directorship, he served on the RGEC Policy, Redistricting, and CEO/Board review committees.

He was a graduate of Sul Ross State University, where he earned a degree in Ag Business. The Aufdengarten’s ranch in Jeff Davis, Presidio, and Brewster Counties. He related that his family has depended on RGEC for generations. His deep and abiding appreciation for the land he loved and its people was evident.

Ellery was widely known and respected as a cattleman, Christian, and oftentimes spokesman for the cowboy culture, as evidenced by his many interviews with writers seeking to tap into the romance of the cowboy way of life, including Morley Safer of CBS News. Without exception, nearly every interview made mention of his graciousness and sincerity. He was the quintessential gentleman, and will be truly missed.

JACK SKILES

Jack Skiles, of Langtry, served on the RGEC Board of Directors from 1996 - 2005, including a term as President.

He was an extremely accomplished individual, with extensive knowledge of and appreciation for the archeology of the Trans-Pecos region. He was an educator, author, stockman, and museum curator, to name but a few. In addition to serving on the RGEC Board, he also served on the boards of the Region 15 Education Service Center and Big Bend Natural History Association. He will be fondly remembered for his many and varied contributions to Co-op Country.
Virtual Member Involvement Committee Meetings Held

Everyone’s jumping on the virtual bandwagon these days. The Member Involvement Committees met during September, and the meetings were a mix of virtual and socially distanced attendees.

Alpine Area Operations Manager Shane Trussell looks on, as virtual attendees discuss recent local happenings.

Then. Now. Always. We’re proud to power your life.
October is National Co-op Month.

#PowerOn

Dell City (Upper left) andBracketville (Lower left) Member Advisory Committees were attended by both virtual and socially distanced participants.

Whether virtually or in person, the Member Involvement Committees are committed to representing members.
Once again, election time finds an abbreviated slate of candidates willing to take on the responsibilities of being a director. There were several qualified candidates who were willing to serve, but who, because of various circumstances, withdrew their candidacy at the last minute.

Each year, the Director District Nominating Committees expend great time and effort in selecting highly qualified potential candidates. They put in countless hours reviewing the results of the Member Involvement Survey, which indicates who is interested in the possibility of becoming a board member. They may also recruit other members, who they believe, through their own experiences or the recommendation of others, possess the qualities necessary to represent the membership of the Cooperative. Potential candidates are interviewed, and are provided an overview of the scope of what being a director encompasses.

In addition to being selected by Nominating Committees, individual members who wish to run for a seat on the board have the ability to do so by "Running By Petition". This year, there were no members who ran by petition.

RGEC needs a diverse, qualified candidate base from which members can elect directors, in order to sustain it now and into the future. When Member Involvement Surveys are distributed in February, please consider service to your fellow members as a board member. Directorship is both a challenging and rewarding position.

Surges can be light -- like your home’s internal grid re-adjusting to the plugging in of a hair dryer -- or heavy, like when your satellite dish takes a direct lightning strike. If lightning strikes near your home, the current can even enter your home through plumbing and phone lines.

When RGEC’s lines are struck by lightning, or if a transient surge incident occurs, the surge suppressor in your meter can protect the system. These are GE Tranquil Surge Arrestors, which are installed at no charge to those who purchase a meter loop from RGEC. They take the surge and discharge it to the ground. Those who purchased their meter loops from another source, or whose meter loop pre-dates the standard installation of surge arrestors (2004-2005), can call their local RGEC office and request one. It will be provided and installed free of charge; however, a $40 trip fee will apply.

Now that we’ve looked at suppression on the Co-op’s side of the meter, let’s look at what’s needed on your side. Because of the sensitive nature of today’s electronics, it is recommended that owners invest in electronics-specific surge protection. These may look like multiple outlet power strips, but they are much more. Reputable surge protectors will also offer warranties, promising to replace any electronics connected if a surge occurs and they become damaged. Look for this when purchasing a surge protector. Surge protection/suppression devices are rated by joules, and the higher the number, the better. They will usually have an LED indicator light, which shows the safety ground is still working.

Computer users may also benefit from the addition of an Uninterrupted Power Supply, or UPS, unit. Some may have surge suppression features, but their primary purpose is to keep the power on to your computer in the event of an outage or blink, so you will have time to save your work. The length of time it will keep the power on will depend on the model you select.
**Director Election 2020**

**Voting Ends**

**10.7.20**

**10 AM (CDT)**

---

**Annual Meeting Registraton: Prize Eligibility**

Remember when pre-registering for the Virtual emPOWER Summit, RGEC’s 75th Annual Meeting, for prize eligibility purposes, use your **ACCOUNT NUMBER**. To find your account number, look at a copy of your bill. The account number will be the 2nd line from the top, as indicated by the red box in the sample below. *(You must be logged in to the meeting Saturday, October 10, to win prizes.)*

---

**Secure Pay System:**

888-259-9084

1. Check account/make payment
2. Update your phone number
3. Create/Update your PIN
4. Update bank draft/Credit Card info.
8. Repeat Menu

**Email Customer Service Representatives:**

Alpine: Area3CSRs@rgec.coop
Brackettville: Area1CSRs@rgec.coop
Carrizo Springs: Area2CSRs@rgec.coop
Dell City: Area5CSRs@rgec.coop
Ft. Stockton: Area4CSRs@rgec.coop

**SmartHub App & SmartHub Voice Assistant**

For instructions, go to www.riogrande.coop/smarthub

Webmaster@rgec.coop
(Not for outage reporting)

**Social Media**

Facebook: www.facebook.com/rgec.coop
(Outages may be reported via Facebook Messenger)

Instagram - @riograndecoop
Twitter - @riograndecoop

**Business Hrs.**

8 a.m. - 5 p.m. (Central)
Monday–Friday

---

**Voting Ends 10.7.20 10 AM (CDT)**

**Phone: 800-749-1509 (24/7)**

**Prize Eligibility**

- Pre-Registration For Prize Eligibility - OCT. 5 @ 8 AM (CDT) - OCT. 10 @ 9 AM (CDT)

(Must be virtually present @ meeting to win)
A meeting of the Rio Grande Electric Cooperative, Inc. Board of Directors was held at 8:00 a.m., August 19, 2020, at the Headquarters office in Brackettville, Kinney County, Texas and through video conferencing, pursuant to RGEC Bylaws Article V, Section 4, the Board President having determined that emergency circumstances exist, as provided by the Proclamation of August 08, 2020, by the Governor of the State of Texas Greg Abbott renewing the disaster proclamation of March 13, 2020, thereby permitting telephonic or electronic attendance at a regular meeting. The following directors were present for the meeting: Sandra Archuleta, 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. Presentation attendees included Chief Technical Officer Conrad Dalton and Chief Specialized Project Development Officer Larry Powell.

Approved      July 15, 2020 Board Minutes, As Amended
Heard          Financial Reports
Heard          Technology Department Update By Chief Technical Officer Conrad Dalton
Heard          Specialized Project Development Department Update By Chief Specialized Project Development Officer Larry Powell
Approved      The Director District 7 Seat Held By The Late Ellery Aufdengarten Remain Vacant Until The Next Election Cycle In 2021
Reviewed      Director Nominations For Director Districts 5, 6, 8, And 9
Approved      The 2020 Official Notice of the 75th Annual Membership Meeting
Approved      Board Policy 1.4.2 Member Advisory Committee, As Amended
Reviewed      Board Policy 1.4.3 Member Attendance At Board Meetings
Reviewed      Safety & Health Program And Safety Trends
Heard          Executive Report
Heard          Committee Reports
Approved      CEO And Director Expenses
Approved      July New/Revoked Memberships
Reviewed      Check Register And Arrears Report
Adjourned      2:25 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 empleador que ofrece igualdad de oportunidades.