

Week #11 CEO's State of the Co-op Address, By Roger Andrade

Rio Grande Electric Co-op's lobbies have reopened, as of 6/1/2020! If you come in for face-to-face business, please remember to wear a mask/facial covering, and observe social distancing markers. I am happy to report that for the 11th straight week, all employees remain free of the COVID-19 virus. This has been accomplished by adhering to a strict social distancing policy, so employees will also be wearing masks, when in the lobby and other common areas.

Business is getting back to normal, and that's a good thing for everyone. I urge you to continue supporting small businesses/restaurants, etc., whenever possible. Many of them are having a rough time financially, due to lost revenue during the pandemic. If you are a residential member of the Co-op and have lost wages due to the COVID-19 virus, let us know, as we are temporarily continuing to allow eligible accounts to defer their electric bill. During the pandemic, Rio Grande was not conducting disconnections due to non-payment, and late fees were waived. Effective June 21, we will resume regular bill collection efforts of those accounts which are in arrears, and for which there is no deferred billing agreement in place.

The board of directors met virtually for a couple of months, during the height of the pandemic. They will meet in person this month, but with strict social distancing protocols being observed. They too have been eager to get back to some semblance of normalcy and redirect efforts back to what is important, which is to keeping the lights on, and doing it safely!

The director election is still on track, and the District Nominating Committees have until July 2 to submit their list of qualified candidates. If you have an interest in running for a seat on the board and are not approached by the committee for your area, you have until August 10 to file by petition. There is a current director who once petitioned to get her name on the ballot. In order to do this, you must meet the same eligibility criteria as other candidates, being free of any conflicts of interest, and meeting residency, and other specific requirements, as outlined under Director Qualifications on page 10 of the RGEC Bylaws, <https://www.riogrande.coop/Bylaws.pdf>. The Affidavit of Eligibility and Nomination by Petition are available under "Petition Package" on the Forms menu tab at www.riogrande.coop.

Either COO Theresa Quiroz or I have been trying to message you weekly, with all that has been going on, but since things are getting back to normal, I will probably just be communicating with you through my monthly article in our edition of Ranch & Rural Living Magazine, and less frequently on social media, unless there is something urgent we need to communicate.

Thanks to all of you who have been so supportive during these trying times. Rio Grande's members continue to make me proud, and all of us who work for you are grateful that we get to serve such an amazing group of people. Your words of encouragement are truly appreciated, whether it's during a storm, or a pandemic. May God continue to bless you and keep you safe, happy, and healthy.

Sincerely,

Roger Andrade, CEO