

## Week #6 STATE OF THE CO-OP ADDRESS – COO Theresa Quiroz

Dear Co-op Members,

This marks the 6th week since our lobbies closed to the public amid COVID-19 pandemic safety protocols. CEO Roger Andrade has been reporting weekly, to keep you abreast of all that is going on here at Rio Grande, and how business is continuing to function, albeit a bit differently than before. I wanted to take this opportunity to tell you about a few other things we have been doing, and will be doing in the future, as we continue with what seems to be the “new normal” way of doing business, at least for a while.

We are continuing to monitor all local, state and federal guidance, with regard to the COVID-19 pandemic. Social distancing appears to be working, and we are pleased to report that, to date, none of the Cooperative’s employees have contracted the virus. In preparation for lobbies re-opening, we have begun the process of transitioning employees back from remote working scenarios. We are continuing to practice safe social distancing, so our full workforce can remain healthy, on the job, and working to serve you.

The pandemic has had an effect on nearly every aspect of life, as we knew it, but we have been doing what we can to lessen the impact on Rio Grande’s members, including making deferred payment agreements available for qualified residential accounts affected by employment layoffs and slow-downs. The Board of Directors approved a measure for Residential Member COVID-19 Relief, and we are currently working on a proposal and funding mechanisms. There are some funds available through the federal government, and we will be looking into how to best leverage these funds to provide assistance to you.

Rio Grande’s commercial and industrial consumers have been severely impacted by plummeting oil prices, and there has been a major reduction in their electric loads. There will, no doubt, be substantial impacts on RGEC. We are in the process of evaluating the financial implications, as we expect an extended period of reduced or completely curtailed loads from a large percentage of our previously high-use consumers in the oil and gas industries.

The RGEC Board of Directors held its first ever video board meeting. Kudos to the Information Technology Department and board members for making it such a success. Speaking of meetings, as Mr. Andrade reported to you previously, the District Nominating Committees have been meeting via conference calls, so the election process is moving along on schedule, with a few modifications to provide for social distancing. The Committees for Director Districts 5, 6, 8, and 9 have started the selection process of certifying potential nominees for this year’s director election. They have been calling members who have expressed an interest and are willing to run; along with any other members, they know of who might have an interest, or, who would make good candidates. If you receive a call from them, I sincerely hope you will consider running for a place on the board. July 2 is the deadline for certification of a list of nominees for each director seat to be filled in the election. We hope to have multiple qualified candidates from each of the director districts in which a seat is up for election this year.

A word of caution regarding scammers – they are already perpetrating scams on residents of Co-op Country. Be especially wary of offers of utility assistance programs. This applies to consumers of

multiple utility types, whether it be a cooperative, an investor-owned utility like (AEP/CPL, Green Mountain, Reliant, etc.). Even water and gas utilities have seen an uptick in the number of scams targeting their customers. You must remain vigilant regarding sensitive personal and financial information and help protect the vulnerable, especially the elderly, when possible. The Public Utility Commission of Texas warns customers eligible for enrollment in the COVID-19 Electricity Relief Program (ERP) that third-party organizations cannot legally enroll them in the program. Further, the PUC is warning customers that solicitations for information relating to enrolling in the ERP may be fraudulent attempts to steal personal financial data. If you suspect fraud, contact your local law enforcement agency and the Texas Public Utility Commission's Customer Protection Division at [customer@puc.texas.gov](mailto:customer@puc.texas.gov) or by calling 888-782-8477. In New Mexico, NM Public Regulation Commission Consumer Relations Division at [crd.complaints@state.nm.us](mailto:crd.complaints@state.nm.us) , or phone 1-888-4ASK-PRC (1-888-427-5772). Please contact RGEC immediately at 800-749-1509, if the suspected scammer claims to represent Rio Grande, or if you EVER have ANY doubt as to the validity of a call pertaining to your Co-op service or account.

We continue working to provide the service you need in these tenuous and trying times, and sincerely appreciate your willingness to embrace the new business procedures we've needed to implement. The spirit of cooperation is what will help us all get through this together!

Sincerely,

Theresa Quiroz

COO