



## Rio Grande Electric Cooperative, Inc.

# UP DATE



July, 2005



### A Message From The General Manager/CEO

By Daniel G. Laws

There are things I never get too much of, like the smell of freshly cut grass, for example. Every time I catch wind of that smell, I am immediately transported back in time to elementary school on a spring afternoon. As the grounds personnel would mow, I would sit looking out the window and wish I was outside helping mow or doing anything except being in school.

Something else I never get too much of is the playing or singing of the national anthem; it almost always brings tears to my eyes. Hearing it reminds me of many a Fourth of July celebration and the stories of sacrifice that made my celebration possible. I am very aware that freedom comes at a terrible price. Those who paid that terrible price gave so much for me, but required little from me. I never forget to be thankful.

“Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” are words that evoke strong emotion in Americans. I am sure you would agree there is little more American than these words, which are more akin to holy writ than a national ideal. These are words that define who we are as Americans and what matters most to us. Ironically, they are also words that represent a strange sort of dichotomy. On the one hand, they are words which represent life — on the other, they are words of death.

This triad, which serves as the underpinning of our American way of life, is also the central theme of every July 4<sup>th</sup> celebration. By the time you read this, Independence Day 2005 will be a fond memory and as joyous as our celebration was, it was made all the more joyous by the fact that our independence is intact. In fact, it is more than intact, it is flourishing!

Independence is the natural outflow of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. In some ways, I suppose you could liken it to seasoning, forever flavoring our lives, enriching and deepening our American experience. Independence permits us to go where we like without fear of reprisal, worship as we please, work where we want, and pursue any endeavor that does not infringe on the right of another American’s independence.

It is no surprise that electric cooperatives were born as a result of that independence. There was a time, in the not so distant past, when those who sold electric energy for profit did not see rural America as profitable enough to extend electric service outside the city limits. So, you had lights to the edges of towns and darkness beyond. Children growing up in rural Texas continued to do their homework by the light of coal oil lamps, while classmates in town had electricity. Chores could only be characterized as drudgery without the benefit of electric energy.

Fierce independence forged electric cooperatives, and that same independence keeps them strong. Let me encourage you to take part in your electric cooperative. Be willing to serve on nominating committees, advisory committees, and even on the board of directors. Rio Grande Electric Cooperative, Inc. exists to bring you the best service possible at the lowest possible price — that’s your **“Home Team Advantage”**.