

## Cooperative Values Benefit Rural Communities

Northern Rio Arriba Electric Cooperative is committed to providing its members with reliable, affordable electricity on a monthly basis. What sets a cooperative, sometimes abbreviated as co-op, apart from a for-profit corporation is its structure as an independent business organized for nonprofit use on behalf of its members.

The very first successful cooperative in America was established by Benjamin Franklin over 250 years ago. Although he is known as the “Father of Electricity,” the cooperative Franklin formed, which still exists today, was actually a fire insurance company.

Cooperatives are unique in that they have a very specific meaning. They are legally bound by the IRS and to the state to seven guiding principles also known as the Rochdale Principles. This set of ideals was originally formed in 1844 by the Rochdale Equitable Pioneers Society in Rochdale England. The Society was a group of English weavers looking to receive a better deal from suppliers by pooling their purchases. They wanted their new organization to be guided by a set of seven principles that are still in use today that truly define the spirit of a cooperative.

### The Seven Rochdale Principles:

- 1. Voluntary and Open Membership:** To those persons willing to accept the responsibility of membership and able to use their services, cooperatives are open without any gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.
- 2. Democratic Member Control:** Co-ops are organized democratically by their members who participate actively in decision making and setting policies. Elected representatives are accountable to the membership. Members have equal voting rights in primary co-ops (one member, one vote), and co-ops at other levels are also organized in a democratic manner.
- 3. Members Economic Participation:** Members democratically control and contribute equitably to the capital of their cooperative. Part of that capital is usually the common property of the co-op. Members receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership.
- 4. Autonomy & Independence:** Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If agreements are made with other organizations, including governments, or capital is raised from external sources, it is done so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their cooperative autonomy.
- 5. Education, Training, and Information:** Co-ops actively provide training and education for their members, elected reps, managers, and employees to help them contribute effectively to the overall development of the co-op. The general public, including young people and opinion leaders, is informed about the nature and benefits of the corporation.
- 6. Cooperation Among Cooperatives:** Co-ops effectively serve their members and strengthen the cooperative movement by working collaboratively through local, national, regional, and international structures.
- 7. Concern For Community:** With focus on member needs, co-ops work for sustainable community development through policies accepted by their members.

# NORA's Relationship with Tri-State G & T

Assisting NORA in its ability to provide affordable and reliable service to a rural community is the Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, or simply "Tri-State" as it is commonly referred to. Tri-State is NORA's wholesale electric power supplier. Founded in 1952, Tri-State is also a cooperative currently owned by forty five members, including 42 electric distribution cooperatives and public power districts in Colorado, Nebraska, Wyoming, and New Mexico. Its service area expands nearly 6000 miles of line across over 200,000 square miles for more than a million consumers.

The G & T was established to provide a reliable, long-term, cost-based supply of electricity to its member systems.

## **Generation**

Tri-State derives its power from a combination of sources. This includes cost effective and dependable coal and natural gas fueled power plants, federal hydroelectricity allocations, purchased power, and an increasing supply of renewable resources including emission free solar and wind power. In the foreseeable future, the G & T Association expects to maintain its comparatively low cost, reliable supply of electricity. It highly values its focus on not only present, but future power requirements of the forty five members that ultimately deliver the electricity to the end-use consumers.

## **Transmission**

The four state area served by Tri-State extends to over 5700 miles of transmission line requiring routine maintenance. The link between substations and end-use consumer delivery points are provided by distribution networks operated by the member cooperatives. Line crews and substation technicians ensure safe and reliable delivery of the electricity.

As demand continues to increase, Tri-State will continue to invest in improvements in infrastructure and in the exploration of renewable resources to ensure the provision of reliable energy that is economically viable.

- **New office hours effective Monday March 7, 2022: Monday-Thursday 7:00am-5:30pm and Closed Fridays through November 11, 2022.**
- Daylight savings time begins at 2:00am Sunday March 13<sup>th</sup>. Be sure to "spring forward" your clocks by one hour and test your smoke alarms.