

To Kit Carson CEO: 'Rate hike is unacceptable'

LORNA GREEN

Everyone I talk to says: This rate hike is not right, and so, here's why.

1. First, it is totally unfair.

It penalizes people for going green. It places the burden on those who can least afford it: the poor, the elderly, those on fixed incomes, the unemployed, at a time when the country is in recession, when many are in a life-and-death struggle to make ends meet, when we are being squeezed on all sides by rising costs.

You say Kit Carson has not raised its basic rate for 25 years? Don't fool yourself.

During that time, all of the costs — for energy, maintenance, and salaries — have gone up, and we “consumers” have been paying the bills, through increased hourly rates.

2. No alternatives were even considered. An “expert” came to the board meeting, recommended the rate hike, and it was passed, with no discussion whatsoever.

Only Virgil Martinez and Luisa Mylet opposed the rate hike, because “it is not in the consumer's best interest.” And they tried to get the board to look at alter natives — cut director's salaries and all of their perks, cut company salaries, cut internal costs, operating expenses, advertising, and cut out the many money-losing ventures.

But they were ignored, and the measure was rammed through. And you then tried to impose it on us, without consultation until public outcry forced you to call these meetings, to explain it to us.

You call this a democratic process? We call it corporate bullying. This rate hike is not in our best interest. It is not acceptable to us. Go back and look at other alternatives.

3. What does it really mean to be a co-op?

You talk about the services you provide to us. You never speak about the services we provide to you. We pay all of the salaries, benefits, perks and privileges. We pay operating costs. We are the source of all of the co-op's revenues.

We are the true owners of the co-op.

You cannot ask us to tighten our belts, without also tightening yours. You cannot ask us to, essentially, take a cut in our salaries without also taking a cut in yours.

But what do we find? You are not going to cut your own large salary of \$161,000, more than most of us make.

Many among us are poor, or unemployed. We nickel and dime ourselves to pay Kit Carson's salaries, benefits, endless costs, waste of funds.

All of you need to remember where your bread is buttered. The board of directors is elected by the people. We want responsibility. We want accountability. And we want integrity.

Kit Carson wastes our hard-earned money at every level.

It needs to clean up its own financial act.

Take a good look at your internal costs. Take a look at your operating expenses. Look at all of the ways in which you can save. You first tighten your own belts, and then we'll think about tightening ours. You are there to represent us and our best interests.

Remember who you serve, who your real employers are.

This rate hike is unacceptable. Go back to the drawing board and come up with fairer alternatives that involves all of you.

Lorna Green is a member of the Kit Carson Electric Cooperative.