

## **Union electric workers support rate hike**

**ANTONIO CRUZ**

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Currently Kit Carson Electric Cooperative is seeking a rate increase. Kit Carson currently serves over 22,000 customers with the highest percentage being residential.

With a system with more than 2,600 miles of lines to deliver reliable service, and costs of maintaining those lines in a safe manner increasing, the cooperative has finally reached the obvious conclusion that a rate increase is needed. Kit Carson Electric Cooperative has not sought a rate increase for service in more than 25 years (only passing along the increases from Tri-State). The rate increase of just over 13 percent is warranted as the costs of doing business have increased significantly more than 13 percent over these same 25 years. The cooperative, in order to maintain its safe reliable and efficient service to its members, must have this increase.

The cooperative has been a major employer of the local residents and will continue to do so in the future, however as with every industry in today's harsh economic environment the reality of potential layoffs are there if further cost cutting measures are instituted.

As the representative of the electrical workers at the Cooperative IBEW Local 611 are supportive of a rate increase and can see were the increase is warranted.

As there is never a popular time for a rate increase there has been some opposition to this increase. The opposition would have the state Public Regulation Commission and the public believe that somehow the propane and Internet divisions should or could help offset the increase when the reality is these are stand alone divisions.

It would be improper for these divisions to subsidize the electric division or the electric division to subsidize them.

The opposition would also point to compensation of the management and of the board members. IBEW Local 611 believes that these costs are in line with that of the other cooperatives in the state.

For the reasons stated above, IBEW Local 611 and I stand in support of this reasonable rate increase. If you have further question please feel free to contact me.

*Antonio Cruz is the assistant business manager of IBEW*

