

My Turn

Kit Carson Electric Coop is us, folks

BILL SANDS

No one really likes rate increases, but we love great uninterrupted service.

I am one who objected to the structure of the original proposed rate increase and attended the meeting with the Public Regulation Commission in Santa Fe. However I realize the need for a rate increase so that Kit Carson can continue to provide good service to its members in the future.

During the New Mexico Gas outage, Kit Carson management did an outstanding job in providing uninterrupted service during this period of high demand for electricity and lent a helping hand to the community. I commend them for a job well done. I recently compared Kit Carson Electric with United Power Coop who also gets its power from Tri State. When I looked at the service areas and the total charge per kilowatt hour, including energy, system, fuel adjustment, DSA and tax for each coop, this is what I found :

- Kit Carson services a large sparsely populated county, whereas United Power services a small densely populated county located along the Front Range north of Denver. Kit Carson has far fewer customers per mile, yet charges less per kwh than United Power.
- Kit Carson charges 0.1199 cents per kilowatt-hour verses 0.1339 cents charged by United Power. Kit Carson services 24,000 residential customers to United Power's 57,000; Kit Carson services 4,000 businesses to United Power's 9,000.
- Both coops are asking for a rate increase.
- Kit Carson has 11 board members for 28,000 customers compared to United Power with 12 board members for 66,000 customers.

It is obvious that Kit Carson management and board are doing a very good job in providing reliable service that we take for granted. In the late '70s and into the '80s the co-op had many problems and service was terrible. The current board and management have overcome the problems and greatly improved the quality of service. The place to voice concerns and opinions is at the annual meeting and at the ballot box, not through a recall. As members, we have a responsibility to show up at the annual meeting, not to eat and get prizes, but to conduct the business of the coop.

I want to point out that it was the membership that voted to approve the telecommunications and the propane services at the annual meeting on June 12, 2000. Additionally, it is the membership that voted on having 11 board members, which increases operations costs.

There were members who may not have approved of these new services or the increase in board members, but all had an opportunity to attend the annual meetings and to vote. Management and the board have the obligation to implement the desires of the majority, which is exactly what the Kit Carson management and board did. Those who do not agree need to get over it.

My suggestion for the annual meeting is that the business is conducted before prizes, discounts, and food is provided.

We did not have a quorum at the 2010 annual meeting.

Perhaps some of these issues could have been discussed and possibly resolved at that time.

Kit Carson Electric Cooperative is our co-op and we need to support the board by voicing our concerns and providing good discussion on all issues. They are not our enemies and should not be criticized for doing what we elect them to do .

Bill Sands is a resident of El Prado and worked with rural electric and farm co-ops for 20 years.