



John Villyard, CEO

San Luis Valley Rural Electric Cooperative November's elections have come and gone; however, that doesn't mean politics have taken a back seat at San Luis Valley REC. We have been busy meeting newly elected Congressmen and keeping a close eye on proposed legislation.

Recently, I had the opportunity to talk with Representative Scott Tipton at a Colorado Rural Electric Association meeting. I found him to be very approachable and interested in our issues.

I was encouraged by this because cooperatives in Congressional District 3 had found John Salazar to be a true ally. We didn't always agree with

every decision Salazar made; but, we found we could count on him to represent the interests of rural electric cooperatives. We are hopeful that Congressman Tipton will continue to keep our interests in mind.

I also talked with Representative Cory Gardner, Congressional District 4. Representative Gardner served in the Colorado House prior to this election. In that role, he proved to be a staunch supporter of rural electric cooperatives. I describe him as a "rural" guy—someone that anyone from a rural area would feel at home talking with.

There are a number of legislative issues we are keeping an eye on at both federal and state levels. Many of these have the potential to adversely affect rural communities and cooperatives. We try to remain neutral on political issues; but, when we believe a proposal will hurt our members or the Valley, we speak out.

Lately, we have been doing

a lot of that. It's been very difficult to sit on the sidelines as utilities are forced to comply with more and more regulations. Often laws conflict.

Recently, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association CEO Glen English termed the situation we face a "glorious mess." This mess affects more than electric cooperatives. It affects all utilities. That, in turn, affects you.

Let me explain. Our power provider, Tri-State Generation & Transmission Association recently added a new regulatory compliance department charged with the task of ensuring that Tri-State follows all state and federal regulations. They work to select wise choices when requirements conflict. Other power providers have done the same.

Obviously, adding staff increases costs—as does each new legislated requirement, no matter how small. When overhead costs increase, electric

rates increase.

Not only will power providers be forced to raise rates, businesses who rely on electricity to produce their products will see their overhead costs increase. It's a difficult situation, especially when our economy has been suffering.

We understand regulation is needed. However, regulation must make sense. It can't be prescribed willy-nilly. New laws must fit within the framework of existing laws and requirements. New laws must be technologically sound. Finally, legislators need to respect the will of the people they were elected to serve. I encourage you to join me in asking elected officials to resolve this "glorious mess." Ask them to pass sensible legislation that serves us all!

**SAN LUIS VALLEY
RURAL ELECTRIC CO-OP**

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