



Shane L. Larson,
Chief Executive Officer

More Power to You

CO-OP CELEBRATING 80 YEARS OF EMPOWERING MEMBERS



Can you imagine life without electricity? I bet you can't, and neither can I. But rural folks in the early 1930s not only imagined it, they lived it.

They used kerosene lanterns to light up their homes and barns when the sun set. A block of ice in a wooden box kept perishable food cold. Farmers relied on hand- or animal-powered equipment, which made their work tedious and time-consuming. Meals were cooked on a wood-burning stove, dirty clothes were scrubbed against a washboard, and clothes were pressed with a piece of iron heated on the stove.

Throughout the countryside, farmers knew that electricity was a necessity for progressive farming and improving the lives of rural folks, but local utility companies didn't believe it would be economically feasible to extend power lines to rural areas. Rural America was left in the dark because investor-owned utilities were focused on making a profit.

In 1936 a group of Rock County farmers decided that if they wanted to get electricity anytime soon they would have to do it themselves. These forward-thinking men banded together to accomplish what individuals alone couldn't do.

Line workers in the 1930s raised utility poles by hand and did all their work without any modern conveniences.



They founded Rock County Electric Cooperative Association, signed up members, borrowed money, hired employees, put poles in the ground, strung wire, and provided electricity at cost and without profit.

The co-op business model empowered them to improve the quality of their lives. Today, 80 years later, Rock Energy Cooperative continues to power communities and empower members.

When the co-op was formed, the biggest concern was a lack of power. Electricity now is taken for granted and influences almost every aspect of our lives. But the role of the co-op has remained consistent through the years—providing safe, reliable power at an affordable cost and empowering members to improve the quality of their lives.

In celebration of our 80th anniversary this year, we have added the slogan “Empowering Members Since 1936” to our logo, which you can see at the top of this page.

As we enter 2016, Rock Energy is planning its 80th anniversary celebration, which will begin with our 80th Annual Meeting on Monday, March 28, at the Eclipse Center in Beloit. Please mark your calendar so you can join the celebration, and watch this magazine for further details.

The mission of electric co-ops in the early years was to empower members to improve the quality of their lives by providing power to rural America. “Concern for Community,” the Seventh Cooperative Principle, is what brought neighbors together to achieve that common goal.

But that was just the beginning. The promise of the Seven Cooperative Principles assures that you, the member, is always the co-op's No. 1 priority. Whether it's providing effective ways that empower you to reduce your energy costs or awarding scholarships that empower deserving high school students to pursue their dreams, Rock Energy exists to use the power of cooperation to make life better for all of us.

We consider it a privilege to serve your energy needs, and I encourage you to let us know if we can do anything to improve our service. Together, we can make our 80th year the best one ever.

MY CO-OP





Trip to Washington teaches teens about co-ops, politics

Amazing, wonderful, incredible, surreal. These are the adjectives three area students used when describing their trip to the nation's capital last summer.

Emma Hahn, Collin O'Sullivan, and Jessica Pozzani represented Rock Energy Cooperative on the Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., in June. They visited national landmarks with more than 1,660 young leaders from across the country, returning with a greater appreciation of the political process and a better understanding of cooperative business principles.



While in Washington, students met with congressional representatives. Pictured, from left, are Emma Hahn, Jessica Pozzani, Illinois Congressman Adam Kinzinger, and Collin O'Sullivan.

"We hear about it so much in history class, and being there just made the whole experience realistic."

Jessica Pozzani, Youth Tour participant

The three students said they now have an increased awareness of cooperatives, learning that co-ops exist in many different industries.

"Cooperatives are all across the country and in every state," said Pozzani, a senior at South Beloit High School.

O'Sullivan, a senior at Hononegah High School in Rockton, said he wasn't aware of all the benefits co-op members receive. Students on the trip also learned about teamwork by establishing their own chip and soda cooperative, he said.

"Cooperatives truly do give back to their members," said Hahn, a senior at Clinton High School.

All three said the experience increased their interest in government and politics. In fact, O'Sullivan hopes to get

an internship working in the nation's capital next summer.

One of O'Sullivan's favorite parts of the trip was visiting the Supreme Court. "This was not only a surreal moment sitting in the courtroom of numerous historic cases, but also a great time to actually learn the history behind our nation's highest court," he said.

The Holocaust Museum was the most interesting part of the trip for Pozzani. "We hear about it so much in history class, and being there just made the whole experience realistic," she said.

Hahn said her favorite part was meeting people from all over the country.

All three students encouraged current high school juniors to consider applying for the 2016 trip.

"The bonds and connections I had with the 60 other kids traveling from Illinois will last a lifetime," O'Sullivan said. "It is a great chance to be with kids your age for an entire week and to learn more about our nation's capital."

"It is an amazing opportunity to learn new things, visit many important memorials, and get to meet and make new friends," Hahn said.

"The friendships and knowledge will stay with you forever," Pozzani said.

HOW TO APPLY FOR 2016 TRIP

Rock Energy Cooperative will fully sponsor two high school juniors to participate in the 2016 Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., which will take place June 10-17.

Applicants must be children of Rock Energy members and reside in the co-op's service territory. The all-expense-paid trip includes transportation, lodging, meals, and admissions to events. Round-trip travel is by motor coach from Springfield, Ill. Travel to Springfield is not included.

Current high school juniors who would like to be considered can get an application form at either our Janesville or South Beloit offices or online at www.rock.coop. Just click on Your Benefits and scroll down to Youth Programs.

Applications must be submitted to the co-op by Feb. 19. If you have questions, please call Barbara Uebelacker, communications specialist, at (608) 752-4550 or (866) 752-4550. You can also email her at BarbU@rock.coop.



Rock Energy participates in Rockton Christmas Parade

1. Rock Energy Cooperative employees and their families joined Rockton's annual Christmas Walk parade on Saturday, Dec. 5.
 2. Participating were, from left, Matt and Amanda Mortimer and their kids, Marissa and Zachary; Bill and Lynn Wright and their sons, Owen and Jack; Megan and Mike Salmons and their daughters, Mia and Maci; and Jessica Pozzani. 3. Amanda, Marissa, and Zachary Mortimer walk alongside the truck driven by Journeyman Lineman Matt Mortimer.



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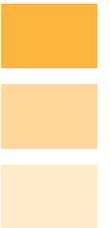
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4. Energy Services Manager Mike Salmons hands out candy, while his wife, Megan, pushes the girls in the stroller. 5. Owen and Jack Wright wave from the truck with Journeyman Lineman Bill Wright and his wife, Lynn, in the background. 6. Jessica Pozzani, one of the co-op's 2015 Youth Tour representatives, greets parade-goers from the bucket truck.

MY CO-OP



Get Connected

Check out these great deals offered with your Co-op Connections Card.



Marcella's Ceramics, 1150 E. Inman Parkway, Beloit – (608) 362-5056

Distributing hobby ceramic supplies and equipment since 1958. Our comprehensive inventory for hobby ceramics includes



Greenware, Bisqueware, paint, brushes, tools, kilns, pottery wheels, and modeling clay. Don't miss the Blue Violet Studio at Marcella's. Our Blue Violet Studio is open pottery studios for all ages. Join us for birthday parties, bridal and baby showers, bachelorette parties, corporate parties, or even scouting.

20% Off Retail Products (excluding equipment)

Perfectly Plus Women's Consignment, 32 E. Racine St., Janesville – (608) 563-2626 – www.perfectlyplus.net

Plus-size women's clothing 14 (XL) and up. Shoes, jewelry, handbags, and accessories. Personalized service, weekly sales, and continuous markdowns.



Providing a wide variety of new and gently used, plus-size clothing at affordable prices in a comfortable and friendly atmosphere. Our consignors always receive the greatest monetary return on their gently used items. Dedicated to plus-size women who want to feel beautiful in what they wear as well as comfortable where they shop.

15% off entire purchase

For a complete listing of current deals, visit www.rock.coop and click on the Co-op Connections Card. You also can use the card for discounts on prescriptions as well as dental, vision, hearing, chiropractic, lab, and imaging services. To locate providers, call 800-800-7616.



Add Up Your Savings!

Tell us how much you have saved by using your Co-op Connections Card. If you have a story you'd like to share, e-mail Barbara Uebelacker at BarbU@rock.coop or call her at (866) 752-4550.

FISCHER ELECTED TO TWO BOARDS

Bill Fischer, a Rock Energy Cooperative director, has been elected to the Cooperative Network Board of Directors, representing Wisconsin distribution utilities.



Cooperative Network is the trade association that represents more than 400 cooperative businesses in Wisconsin and Minnesota.

Fischer also was elected to represent District 1 on the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association Board of Directors.

WECA serves its electric cooperative members by providing leadership on key legislative and regulatory issues, fostering a positive image of electric cooperatives, and supporting quality of life in communities through education and training services.

Last Chance...

Jan. 11 is the deadline to apply for Rock Energy Cooperative scholarships for 2016. Go to www.rock.coop for details or call (866) 752-4550.



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



If you only want to heat or supplement inadequate heating in one room, small space heaters can be less expensive to use than your central heating system.

Source: energy.gov

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