



More Power to You

Bitter Cold Doesn't Stop Linemen

Shane L. Larson,
Chief Executive Officer

Imagine waking up on the coldest day in decades to discover that your home was without power. Then imagine spending more than four hours in the bitter cold to fix what was broken.

Well, about 1,300 Rock Energy Cooperative members who live in Rockton and five co-op linemen don't have to use their imagination because they actually experienced it.

At 4:40 a.m. on Monday, Jan. 6, a power line along East Rockton Road near Dorr Road broke. The extreme cold weather had caused the line to contract, eliminating the usual slack in the wires. Then the accompanying winds pulled the wire out of its connection, cutting power to many Rockton members.

While all of our linemen are willing and certainly do serve our membership in any type of weather, that particular morning five linemen—Matt Mortimer, Bob Dahl, Tim Gillitzer, Jack Slaback, and Brent LaBuy—bundled

up and headed out into the deep freeze. The temperature was minus 17 degrees with a wind chill that made it feel like 45 degrees below zero. In about four hours they had strung new wire and made all the connections so furnaces could again start blowing warm air.

To say that our members were grateful that the outage didn't last longer is certainly an understatement. I think Gail Gallagher summed it up best in her email: "We live in Rockton and woke on Monday, January 6th, to find our power out. On the coldest day in 20 years, we were really in a panic. Your crews had our power back on in about four hours. For those guys to go out in the dark at 17 below zero is absolutely heroic! We want to thank them for doing such a great job and saving us from frozen pipes or worse. Good job!!!"

I'm always amazed and humbled that members take the time to call or write to thank us for getting their power restored. After the Jan. 6 outage, we received more than a dozen phone calls and emails from members express-

(Continued on page 16d ▶)



Repair crews work along East Rockton Road near Dorr Road in Rockton on Jan. 6 to restore power after the frigid cold weather caused an electric line to break.



Trip to Washington teaches teens about co-ops, politics

Educational, amazing, life-changing, eye-opening, priceless, and unforgettable are just some of the adjectives three area students used to describe their trip to the nation's capital last summer.

Claire Hahn, Ashleigh Balsley, and Kyle Wright represented Rock Energy Cooperative on the Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., in June. They toured national land-



Three students represented Rock Energy Cooperative on the 2013 Youth Tour and met Illinois Congressman Adam Kinzinger. Pictured at the Capitol are, from left, Claire Hahn, Rep. Kinzinger, Ashleigh Balsley, and Kyle Wright.

marks with more than 1,500 young leaders from across the country and returned with a greater appreciation of the political process and a better understanding of cooperative business principles.

"I learned that cooperatives are vital to our nation's rural population because they provide affordable energy to people who aren't able to purchase energy from large corporations," said Wright, a senior at Hononegah High School in Rockton. "Cooperatives also give the customers a better voice when making decisions."

Balsley, also a senior at Hononegah, said she learned how co-ops operate. "We even had a mini chip and pop co-op of our own that we were able to take part in and receive money back at the end," she said.

Hahn, a senior at Clinton High School, said the trip taught her about the history of cooperatives. "There was a really interesting presentation that gave me a lot of insight into the original formation of cooperatives," she said.

After arriving in Washington, the students spent a day on Capitol Hill meeting with their congressional representatives and getting a first-hand look at how government operates.

"The Youth Tour most definitely increased my interest in government because it showed how important it is to protect the rural voice in Washington, D.C.," Wright said. "Immediately after returning from this trip, I made the decision to pursue a political science degree and an internship at the White House because I want to continue the voice of cooperatives in our nation's government."

Balsley and Hahn also said the trip sparked their interest in government and politics.

"I learned about special internships in D.C. that many college students take part in for a summer, and I hope to do that next year," Balsley said.

Hahn added: "Just being in D.C. really increased my political awareness. It made me want to become more

(Continued on page 16d ▶)

How to Apply for 2014 Trip

Rock Energy Cooperative will fully sponsor two high school juniors to participate in the 2014 Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., which will take place June 13–20.

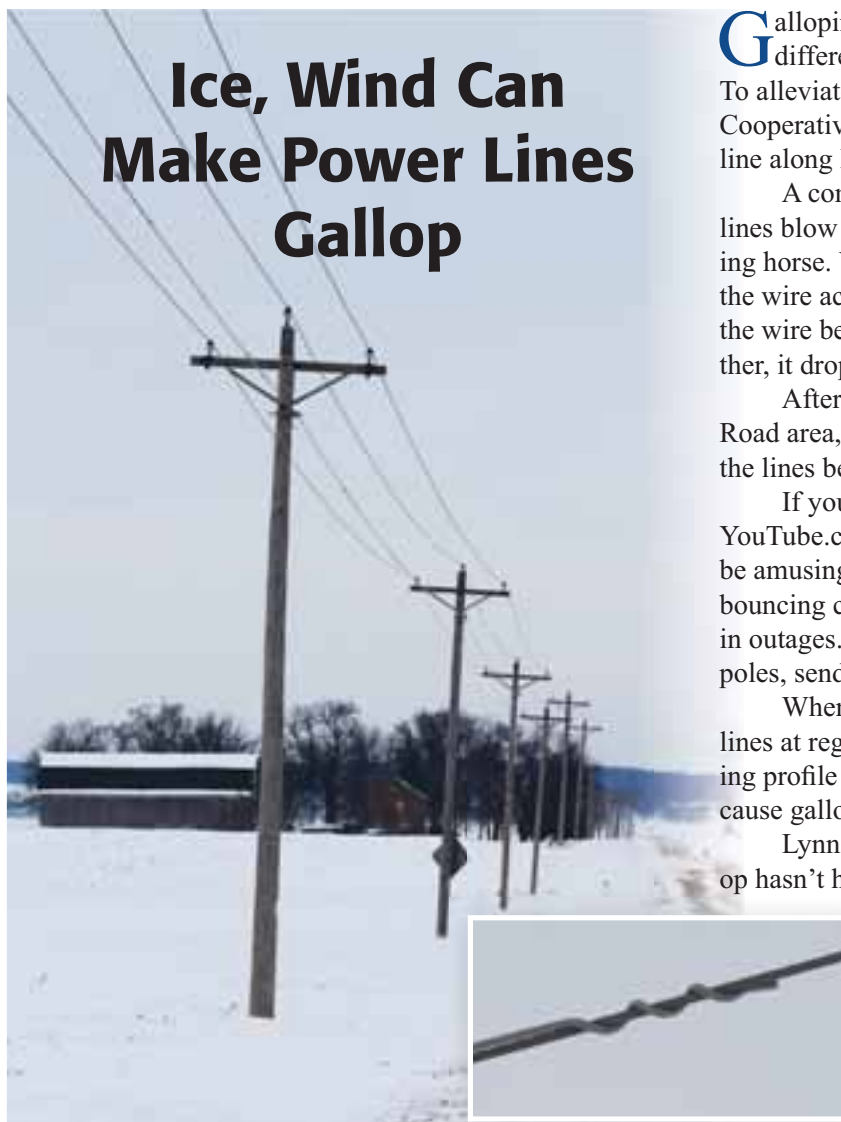
Applicants must be children of Rock Energy members and reside in the co-op's service territory. The all-expense-paid trip includes transportation, lodging, meals, and admissions to events. Round-trip travel is by motor coach from Springfield, Ill. Travel to Springfield is not included.

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.

Applications must be submitted to the co-op by Feb. 21. 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 Cooperative

Ice, Wind Can Make Power Lines Gallop



Galloping horses are magnificent to watch, but it's different when power lines are doing the galloping. To alleviate the problem of galloping wires, Rock Energy Cooperative has installed air flow spoilers on a span of line along Kemp Road east of Janesville.

A combination of ice and wind can make power lines blow in a rhythmic motion that resembles a galloping horse. When the wind blows across the power lines, the wire acts like an airplane wing. As the wind blows, the wire begins to lift. When the wire can't lift any farther, it drops and causes the wire to gallop.

After several unexplained outages in the Kemp Road area, fiberglass air flow spoilers were installed on the lines because galloping was the suspected cause.

If you would like to see videos of this, just go to YouTube.com and search for galloping wires. It might be amusing to watch these dancing power lines, but the bouncing can cause the lines to strike each other, resulting in outages. Galloping lines also can break crossarms and poles, sending wires to the ground and causing outages.

When air flow spoilers are wrapped around power lines at regular intervals, they create a constantly changing profile to wind flow and cancel the lift forces that cause galloping.

Lynn Maier, north operations manager, said the coop hasn't had any unexplained outages in the Kemp Road area since the spoilers were installed about a year ago, so it appears they're working. ■

Air flow spoilers were installed on power lines along Kemp Road east of Janesville to minimize outages caused by galloping wires.

78th ANNUAL MEETING



Monday, March 31
Eclipse Center, Beloit

Be sure to mark your calendar and join us for the meeting and dinner.

Look for complete details in next month's magazine.

Get Connected

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



Hair Designs Plus, 514 N. Main St., Edgerton – (608) 884-9200

Family hairstyling for men and women. Flexible appointments. Tanning and aqua massage.

20% Off Any Product

Computer Know How, 702 21st St., Brodhead – (608) 897-3777 – www.compknowhow.com

Computer repair, website design, on-site computer/business support.



10% Discount on Labor

Healthy Savings Discounts

The same program that offers discounts at local merchants and has saved Rock Energy members \$59,000 on prescriptions also provides significant savings on dental, vision, hearing, lab and imaging services, and chiropractic work. To locate providers that participate in the Healthy Savings program, call (800) 800-7616 or go to www.rock.coop, click on the Co-op Connections Card, and look under the Healthy Savings tab. Be sure to have your Co-op Connections Card handy.



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.



P.O. Box 1758
2815 Kennedy Rd.
Janesville, WI 53547

(608) 752-4550 • (866) 752-4550

Shane Larson, CEO
Barbara Uebelacker,
Editor

P.O. Box 126
15229 Willowbrook Rd.
South Beloit, IL 61080

Youth Tour

(Continued from page 16b)

politically active and to educate myself about political issues and how our government responds to such issues.”

All three students said their favorite part of the trip was meeting other students with similar interests and making what they hope will become longtime friendships.

“The people on this trip weren’t just other students,” Hahn said. “We all become really close, like a family, and made memories together. It was something that I’ll never forget.”

All three students encouraged current high school juniors to consider applying for the 2014 trip.

“The trip was eye-opening,” Balsley said. “The friends I made are irreplaceable. The amount I learned is priceless. I am also thankful to have such a great co-op that sponsors students to go on the Youth Tour trip.” ■

More Power to You

(Continued from page 16a)

ing thanks. The May family of Rockton even delivered homemade soup, bread, and cookies to the linemen the next day.

When the co-op has a situation that impacts 1,300 homes and businesses, we expect a significant number of phone calls, especially when it’s so dangerously cold. On Jan. 6, we did, in fact, receive hundreds of calls associated with the downed power line. While the vast majority of the calls were answered in a timely fashion, there were a percentage of members who received busy signals or network messages.

Phone systems, like most pieces of equipment, have capacity limits. At certain times, when the call volume was extraordinarily high, the phone system hit its limit. We are evaluating what economically viable options may be available to increase the phone system’s capacity. To those who were unable to get through, we certainly apologize and we appreciate your understanding.

Power outages are major inconveniences, but the weather often makes them unavoidable. We continually evaluate our distribution system and make changes as new technology is developed. See the article on page 16c to learn how we are dealing with a problem called galloping wires.

We appreciate all the comments we receive from our members, and please let us know if there’s anything we can do to improve our service to you. ■