



More Power to You

Electricity Powers Our Lives

*Shane L. Larson,
Chief Executive Officer*

Flip a switch, and a light comes on. Press a button, and you can watch the Super Bowl. Turn up the thermostat, and your furnace blower removes the winter chill from your home.

We do these things and plenty more every day without thinking about the one item they all have in common: Electricity, which we take for granted. While most people don't like to be taken for granted, at Rock Energy Cooperative we don't mind at all. We are committed to providing members with safe and reliable energy at an affordable cost and have been doing just that for more than 75 years.

Members depend on electricity to power their lives. Of course, electricity helps run everything in your home that's plugged in. But electricity's applications go well beyond that and are virtually endless. How about this magazine you're reading? Electricity powered the printing presses that produced it. The clothes you're wearing or the car you're driving? They were made with the assistance of electricity.

As society has become more technologically advanced, our dependence on electricity has increased substantially. The fastest growing component of national energy consumption is in the appliance category, which includes lighting, televisions, and consumer electronics, according to a 2014 report prepared by the Consumer Federation of America. Within that broad category, the fastest growing segment of home energy consumption involves household digital devices. In fact, the amount of electricity consumed by these devices increased more than fivefold between 2000 and 2010, and I

suspect that growth is continuing.

The Consumer Electronics Association estimates that Americans own about 25 electronic products per household, and we're using those devices for longer periods of time to accomplish tasks that consume more and more energy.

That's a far cry from the early 1900s when electricity was considered a luxury available only to city residents. As late as the mid-1930s, nine out of 10 rural homes were without electricity. But then electric co-ops

began to spread across America and helped electricity evolve from a luxury item to an essential part of daily life.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt was one of the first officials to recognize the importance of electricity in improving American's lives.

"Electricity is no longer a luxury," he said in a 1932 speech. "It is a definite necessity. It lights our homes, our places of work, and our streets. It turns the wheels of most of our transportation and our factories. In our homes it serves not only for light, but it can become the willing servant of the family in countless ways."

Roosevelt never could have envisioned how important electricity would become and how much we depend on it in everyday life. We definitely take

electricity for granted. Besides those occasional outages due to storms or accidents, electricity is available when you need it. It's one of very few on-demand commodities delivered directly to your home or business.

We truly appreciate the opportunity to serve your energy needs and don't mind that you take us for granted. If we can do anything to improve our service to you, please let us know. ■





79th Annual Meeting

Monday, March 30

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.



Natural Gas Odors Require Your Immediate Attention

Any unexplained natural gas odors require immediate attention and should be treated like an emergency, according to Randy Gant, natural gas superintendent at Rock Energy Cooperative.

As soon as you suspect a natural gas leak, it's important to immediately investigate the cause and take the appropriate action, Gant said. Although rare, a natural gas leak can result in an explosion.

Whether you call Rock Energy or an appliance repair person depends on the nature of the gas smell. If you smell gas every time you use your stove, dryer, or other natural gas appliance and the odor disappears when you turn it off, the appliance likely is malfunctioning and needs to be serviced. In this scenario it's appropriate to call a heating or plumbing contractor because Rock Energy provides natural gas to homes and businesses but does not operate a service department to repair malfunctioning gas appliances, Gant said.

If the source of the odor isn't apparent, such as a natural gas smell in your basement, then it's important to call Rock Energy at (866) 752-4550 immediately, Gant said.

"When members report a natural gas odor, we always ask how long the odor has been present," Gant said. "You'd be surprised at how many people say 'a few days' or 'a couple weeks.' It's extremely dangerous to let a potential leak go unreported for any length of time. Gas crews are available 24/7."

Please turn to page 9 for other important information about natural gas safety. ■

Energy Efficiency Rebates Available

If one of your New Year's resolutions involves making your home more energy efficient, you'll be pleased to learn that money is available to help pay for the improvements.

HomE 3.0, a new program administered by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives, can help co-op members who live in Illinois pay for insulation and weatherization projects, heat pump water heaters, geothermal systems, and air-source heat pumps.

The amount of rebates for specific projects is listed in the box on this page. The program starts Feb. 1 so projects done before that date are not eligible.

The HomE 3.0 program is a scaled-down version of the previous HomE programs, which provided more than \$46,000 in rebates to Rock Energy members for energy-efficiency measures. If you didn't get a chance to participate in the first rounds of HomE rebates, now you have another chance.

If you're interested in applying for a rebate, the process is simple. Just provide a copy of your bid or quotation to get pre-approval. This makes sure the equipment you choose meets the energy-efficiency qualifications of the program. Send to P.O. Box 1758, Janesville, WI 53547, fax to (608) 752-6620, or email to MikeS@rock.coop. Then after the work is finished, provide a copy of your receipt, and we'll mail your rebate.

Please remember that the rebates are available only for certain energy-efficiency measures. If you have any questions, please call Rock Energy at (866) 752-4550. ■



How much are the rebates?

Insulation and weatherization	30% of total project cost, up to \$500
Heat pump water heater	\$250
Geothermal system	\$1,000
Air-source heat pump (16 SEER or higher)	\$500

Get Connected

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



Black Bridge Bowl, 1141 Black Bridge Road, Janesville (608) 757-3030 – www.blackbridgebowl.com

A great place to have fun with family and friends. 24 lanes with automatic scoring.

Plenty of bumper bowling lanes just for the kids. Cool Glow Bowling. Funzi's Sportz Pizza serves up great food every day. BB Buckets Restaurant. Full-service pro shop. Open 7 days a week year-round. Check out our leagues and specials.

Buy 2 Games, Get 1 Free

Peterson Chiropractic Clinic, 92 E. Highway 59, Suite B, Edgerton (608) 884-4643

Caring, committed, and close to home. Since 2007, striving to bring comprehensive chiropractic care in a relaxed environment to all ages, resulting in improved health and wellness every day. Centrally located, convenient parking, wheelchair accessible.



Free Initial Exam

Healthy Savings Discounts

The same program that offers discounts at local merchants and has saved Rock Energy members \$105,000 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.

Youth Programs Build Strong Citizens

Rock Energy Cooperative offers two opportunities for high school students to learn more about the political process and develop leadership skills.

The co-op will sponsor two high school juniors on the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. The June 13–19 trip includes meetings with congressional representatives and tours of historic sites. More than 1,000 students from host cooperatives across the nation participate in the tour every year.

Another program is open to current high school freshmen, sophomores, and juniors. The Wisconsin Energy Cooperative Association's Youth Leadership Congress will take place July 15–17 at UW–River Falls. The program introduces students from across the state to cooperative business basics, demonstrates the value of cooperation in everyday life, and offers sessions to help develop leadership skills.

Applicants for both programs must be children of Rock Energy members and reside in the co-op's service territory. The deadline to apply for the Washington trip is Feb. 20, and applications for the UW–River Falls event must be received by March 20.

For more information, visit www.rock.coop or call Barbara Uebelacker, communications specialist, at (866) 752-4550 or email her at BarbU@rock.coop. ■

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



Did you know that 90 percent of the energy used to operate a washing machine comes from using hot water? A simple switch from hot to cold can save a great deal of energy! Also, consider air drying or even line drying to save even more household energy.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy



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