



## More Power to You

# PICTURE-PERFECT DAY FILLED WITH LOTS OF SMILING FACES

Shane L. Larson, Chief Executive Officer



*"The balloon maker was AMAZING! Definitely a wonderful new addition to the day for our kids! We always enjoy coming to this event."*

*"We value the shredding and recycling activities. We're glad to see them relocated to allow for better parking."*

*"It was easy to see the happiness of the employees as well as the guests. Everyone seemed to be having a great time."*

These are just a few of the comments we received after our Member Appreciation Day Pancake Breakfast. The morning of Saturday, Sept. 9, was a picture-perfect day. We couldn't have ordered better weather—lots of sunshine with bright blue skies—and you could see smiling faces everywhere.

Every September Rock Energy Cooperative employees and directors host a gathering to show our members how much we appreciate being their energy provider.

The crew from Chris Cakes, who catered the meal, flipped the pancakes hot off the grill right onto your plate. They put on quite a show, and I'm always fascinated with the way the specially designed dispenser rolls over the grill and plops perfectly formed circles of batter into neat rows.

Funny Faces Family Entertainment from the Madison area joined us for the first time this year. You could see the joy on the kids' faces as Tami Schroeder transformed ordinary balloons into everything from ladybugs to unicorns to ice cream cones. She even made a light bulb hat for Director Ron Richards.

Kim Danielski used faces as the canvas for her artwork, decorating them with dolphins, trains, basketballs, flowers, and making some kids look very cat-like. They were such a big hit that we'll be asking them to return next year.

This was the first year we moved electronics recycling and document shredding to a new location, which improved traffic flow and provided a safer environment for our members and employees. A record 22.5 tons of electronics were recycled, and 2.75 tons of

documents were shredded.

On behalf of all the employees and directors, I want to thank everyone who attended Member Appreciation Day. If you couldn't come this year, we hope you'll consider joining us next fall.

September was a busy month at Rock Energy. Two days after Member Appreciation Day, our Janesville location was a meeting spot for some of the crews

from 18 Wisconsin electric cooperatives heading to Florida to help restore power after Hurricane Irma. See story on page 18C.

Rock linemen Justin Busfield and Brent LaBuy joined the relief effort. We're really proud of these two for stepping up. They took time away from their families and used the skills they possess

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Left: Kim Danielski uses kids' faces as a canvas for her artwork.

Below left: Balloon sculptor Tami Schroeder loves entertaining kids.

Below: There's nothing like a pancake breakfast to start your day.





# Energy Assistance Available for Low-Income Households



**F**or many Illinois households, energy costs place a severe and continuing stress on the family's budget. In some cases, families will be forced to make painful decisions about which bills to pay and which necessities to cut.

The federally funded Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) helps eligible low-income households pay for winter energy services.

Fortunately, Rock Energy Cooperative works with LIHEAP, which benefits about 300,000 Illinois households each year.

## LIHEAP Details

LIHEAP heat and electric assistance is a one-time benefit payment per heating season that is intended to help pay a portion of a household's heat and electric costs. The benefit amount depends on household size, income, and energy costs.

In most cases, the benefit is applied as a credit directly to the household's Rock Energy account. You do not need to duplicate your efforts by applying for assistance with both your local agency and Rock Energy.

You are eligible for heating assistance if your household's combined income is at or below the levels shown on this chart:

### Illinois LIHEAP Income Guidelines for the 2017–2018 Heating Season

Household Size	30-Day Household Income	Annual Household Income
1	\$1,508	\$18,090
2	\$2,030	\$24,360
3	\$2,553	\$30,630
4	\$3,075	\$36,900
5	\$3,598	\$43,170
6	\$4,120	\$49,440
7	\$4,643	\$55,710
8	\$5,165	\$61,980

## When and Where to Apply

To apply for assistance, you'll need to complete a Home Energy Plus application and provide information on each household member and their income as well as records of your heating costs. Senior citizens and people with disabilities can apply beginning Oct. 2. Households with children younger than 6 and disconnected households can apply beginning Nov. 1. All other eligible households can apply beginning Dec. 1.

For more information and application details, please call your local office:

- Winnebago County (South Beloit, Rockton, and Roscoe residents only): 815-389-0914 or 815-624-7788, Rockton Township, 1315 N. Blackhawk Blvd., Rockton.
- Boone County: 815-544-3144, United Way of Boone County, 220 W. Locust St., Belvidere.
- Stephenson County: 815-232-3141 or 800-883-1111, Northwestern Illinois Community Action Agency, 27 S. State Ave., Freeport.
- McHenry County: 815-338-7752, McHenry County Housing Authority, 1108 N. Seminary Ave., Woodstock.

## Weatherization Services

When you apply for energy assistance, the local agency also will see if you qualify for the Weatherization Assistance Program, which helps fund energy-efficiency, home-improvement projects. If you are eligible for weatherization services, an energy auditor will look at your home to see what can be done to make it more energy efficient. Weatherization services differ with each home, depending on how it was built and its condition.

For general information, call toll-free 877-411-9276 or visit [www.illinoisliheap.com](http://www.illinoisliheap.com).

# 'IT'S WHAT WE DO'

## Rock linemen restore power after hurricane hits Florida

Justin Busfield was amazed at the hundreds of motorists honking their horns, waving, and giving a thumbs-up to crews traveling from Wisconsin to Florida for the Hurricane Irma relief effort. But Brent LaBuy wasn't surprised at all. This was the fifth time he had helped restore electricity after a hurricane.

Busfield and LaBuy, linemen at Rock Energy Cooperative, joined more than 50 co-op employees who left Wisconsin on Sept. 11. Each vehicle had a sign prominently displayed: "Hurricane Disaster Relief – Wisconsin's Electric Cooperatives."

Hurricane Irma was Busfield's first experience helping with hurricane relief. But this is LaBuy's fifth hurricane. While working as a contractor before coming to Rock Energy, LaBuy restored power after Rita and Katrina in 2005 and Gustav and Ike in 2008.

"This one wasn't as bad at all," LaBuy said of the damage. "That's not a bad thing because that means people didn't suffer as bad or lose as much."

The area where Busfield and LaBuy worked was mostly hit by wind damage—downed trees and broken poles. It was similar to what they have experi-

The damage from Hurricane Irma is similar to what is found in this area, but on a grander scale. This banana spider, however, isn't something linemen see here.



Justin Busfield, left, and Brent LaBuy were eager to join the Wisconsin group that helped restore power after Hurricane Irma.

enced in Wisconsin and Illinois but on a grander scale.

"It was just like another workday really," Busfield said, but quickly added that the weather was hotter and more humid and the days were longer. When the heat index is 109, it's hard to drink enough water to stay hydrated, he said.

The crews worked 16-hour days and would get five to six hours of sleep.

"You're definitely tired," LaBuy said of that 16th hour of work. "You've been on your feet all day, but it's one of those things that you push through."

"It's gratifying to watch the percentage of people without power go down every day," Busfield said.

Busfield, LaBuy, and their crew stayed in a hotel, had breakfast in the morning, got a sack lunch, and a nighttime buffet. But not all relief workers were that lucky. Farther south, they slept in their trucks and didn't have much food or water.

"Everybody was really, really nice down there," Busfield said. "We had people stop and give us water. Anything they had on hand, they were giving to us. We had many people just stop their cars and thank us for coming down."

Some Clay Electric Cooperative

members, where the crews worked, even sent notes after the workers returned to Wisconsin.

"My family would like to thank all the linemen, pole setters, helpers, and their families for coming to Florida and helping Clay Electric restore our electric so quickly," Art and Brenda Henderson of Middleburg, Fla., wrote in an email to Rock Energy.

Kaela Collins of Jacksonville, Fla., sent a handwritten note that said: "I wanted to personally thank each and every one of the linemen and women for coming to Florida's aid and helping to restore power to thousands. I really respect this job and the people that do it. Thank you to those that left the comfort of their homes and families to help us in Florida."

Families of linemen understand that they often are called away to help. They would want someone to do the same for their families in similar situations. LaBuy and his wife had to reschedule a belated anniversary celebration because of the hurricane.

"It's what we do," LaBuy said. "It's part of the job, and people need help. We happen to possess a special skill set that allows us to help."



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to help others. The mission was like one in 2005 when we sent crews to Louisiana after Hurricane Katrina.

It's also similar—on a larger scale—to the ROPE (restoration of power in an emergency) program in which Wisconsin co-ops help each other shorten recovery times when severe weather damages local systems. We are always willing to lend a helping hand because you never know when it will be our turn to need assistance. That's what cooperatives are all about.

As always, please let us know if we can do anything to improve our service to you. We truly are grateful to be your energy provider.



The women from Funny Faces Family Entertainment brought smiles to many faces at Member Appreciation Day. More photos are available at <https://rockenergy.smugmug.com>.

## HAVE A SAFE, HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

Rock Energy Cooperative offices will be closed on Thursday, Nov. 23, and Friday, Nov. 24, in observance of Thanksgiving. We will reopen at 7:30 a.m. Monday, Nov. 27. Members can make payments in the drop boxes at both offices throughout the holiday weekend. Even though our offices are closed, standby crews are always available 24 hours a day. If you need to report a power outage, please call 866-752-4550.



## SCHOLARSHIPS OFFERED TO HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

Rock Energy Cooperative again is offering scholarships of \$500 to graduating high school seniors who enroll at an accredited school. Students whose parents or guardians are active members of REC are eligible.

Our independent scholarship committee will judge applicants based on general merit, cooperation, leadership abilities, financial need, and class ranking.

Since 1989, Rock Energy has awarded more than \$97,000 in financial aid to deserving students.

Online applications are available at [www.rock.coop](http://www.rock.coop). Just go to the Community & Youth tab and click on Scholarships. The deadline for submitting applications is Jan. 3, and transcripts are due by Jan. 12. If you have any questions, please contact Barbara Uebelacker at 866-752-4550 or [barbu@rock.coop](mailto:barbu@rock.coop).

In addition, scholarships of \$2,000 will be awarded through the Thomas H. Moore Illinois Electric Cooperatives (IEC) Memorial Scholarship Program. These scholarships are available to high school seniors who are the sons or daughters of an Illinois electric cooperative member receiving service from the co-op. Applications must be completed online at [www.rock.coop](http://www.rock.coop). Just go to the Community & Youth tab and click on Scholarships. The deadline is Dec. 31.

## DIRECTOR NOMINATIONS OPEN

The Rock Energy Cooperative Nominating Committee will be selecting candidates to run for board of director positions that will be on the ballot at the March 26, 2018, annual meeting. Districts up for election are:

- District 1: Fulton, Porter, Albion, and Dunkirk townships in Wisconsin.
- District 3: Bradford, Johnstown, and Darien townships in Wisconsin.
- District 5: Clinton, Sharon, and Turtle townships in Wisconsin; Alden, Chemung, Hebron, Leroy, Manchester, and Roscoe townships in Illinois.

Active members who are interested in running for a position on the REC Board of Directors must permanently reside in one of the areas up for election and meet all other qualifications. For more information, please contact the co-op at 866-752-4550 or send an email to [questions@rock.coop](mailto:questions@rock.coop) by Dec. 1.

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