

More Power To You



By Shane L. Larson,
Chief Executive Officer

Happy New Year! It's hard to believe we're now writing 2009 on our checks (I usually write the past year for a month or so). Maybe it's just me, but it seems like only a year or so ago that we were all holding our breath, waiting for civilization as we know it to come crashing down,

all because of that Y2K thing. It's amazing how fast nine years have gone.

Every year, New Year's resolutions are made and predictions are prognosticated. Usually, both fall away in short order. As we turn to energy, the crystal ball appears to be very cloudy when it comes to predicting where prices will go.

Like so many, I was glad when the political election season was finally over. Here's something from the unbelievable file: According to those who track such things, the two presidential candidates spent more than \$1 billion for a job that pays \$400,000 a year, plus benefits. And when all elections were totaled, a record-shattering \$5.3 billion was spent by all candidates, political parties and interest groups. I'm just one guy, but something seems terribly amiss about the whole process and the amount of money being spent.

After all the ballots were finally counted, Congress, the White House, and every statehouse in the country will have some new faces as well as some that are not so new. Based on the election results, we can be certain that when it comes to energy, there will be strong attempts to make substantial changes, espe-

cially in areas dealing with environmental issues.

Carbon dioxide (CO₂) will be in the legislative crosshairs. Over the next few years, we are going to be hearing a lot about cap and trade, carbon footprints, carbon tax, carbon sequestration, and carbon intensity, to name just a few.

The desire to limit CO₂ will be very interesting, to say the least, from an energy perspective. We as a country, use lots and lots of coal to generate electricity. Illinois, like the United States as a whole, generates 50 percent of its power from coal, while Wisconsin generates 70 percent.

While not all pollutants have been eliminated from coal generation, certain pollutants like NO_x and SO_x have been reduced over the past decades; but CO₂ is another matter. Carbon dioxide is relatively new to the "pollution" debate, so very little has been done to reduce CO₂ at coal generation plants.

Because coal plants emit massive amounts of CO₂ and because there is such a strong desire in the political realm to address climate issues, one could conclude that

coal generating plants will be subject to some type of CO₂ legislation. What the impact will be to energy prices remains to be seen. As I said, the crystal ball is cloudy and it's early in the game.

We'll do our best to keep our members informed of important energy issues. I would encourage you to read energy articles in this magazine; the writing staff does an outstanding job presenting timely, informative, and interesting pieces on energy.

Rock Energy Cooperative truly appreciates your patronage; it is a pleasure to serve your energy needs. If we can improve our service to you, please let us know. ■



Learn the Signs of a Natural Gas Leak

Natural gas is completely safe when it's sealed inside pipes and used correctly. Danger occurs when natural gas leaks out or doesn't combust properly in appliances. Because natural gas is colorless and odorless, utility companies add an odorant that smells like rotten eggs.

If there is a faint rotten egg smell in your home, check range burners and the pilot lights on your natural gas appliances. If you hear an unusual hissing or whistling sound, or if you see unexplained dead or dying grass in an otherwise healthy area, dirt or debris blowing in the air or water bubbling in a puddle, pond or creek, it may be the result of a leak. If you have a sudden or strong rotten egg smell in your home, get everyone out of the house immediately.

- Don't stop to open a window.
- Don't touch anything that might create a spark. Some ignition sources include telephones, cell phones, pagers, light switches, garage door openers, flashlights, vehicles and other operating equipment... carpeted areas can even spark with static electricity.

Appliance Check

An easy way to tell if natural gas appliances are adjusted properly and getting enough oxygen is to check the color of the flame. The flame should be about 90 percent

blue. A yellow flame indicates the appliance isn't working right and could be giving off harmful fumes. Remember, not all problems with natural gas appliances will have the symptom of a yellow pilot light — and not all pilot lights are visible.

Natural Gas Safety Tips

- Keep all natural gas appliances clean and properly vented.
- Never cover vents that supply air to your appliances.
- Do not store any flammable materials in or near the natural gas appliances.
- Don't use the oven as a storage area.
- Never use your oven or stove top to heat your apartment or dry your clothes.
- Keep the area around your furnace and water heater clear. ■

Cutting Winter Heating Costs

- **Maintain air filters and HVAC equipment** — Well-maintained equipment runs more efficiently, so change your air filter monthly or as needed and tune up your HVAC equipment yearly.
- **Set your thermostat as low as is comfortable** — Roll temperatures back by 10 to 15 degrees before bed and before leaving for work.
- **Take advantage of the sun's heat and light** — Keep your south-facing windows clean. Open curtains on south-facing windows during the day and close all curtains at night.



**Do You Need Help
Paying Your Bills
This Winter?**

Federal and state funded bill paying assistance programs for families that need help with their energy bills are now open in Illinois. Applications and complete details are available through your county government offices. To find out which office covers your area, please contact:

Call 1-877-411-9276 or 1-217-785-6135 or visit:
<http://www.illinoislieheap.com/>

LAST CHANCE...



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application deadline is January 9, 2009.**

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JACK'S TIRE Sales and Service
Locally owned and operated for three generations... offering the best tire products and services available – large inventory, quick turn-around, everyday low prices, expert service staff, one-stop shop, many brands, tires for all vehicles, customer satisfaction, lifetime free rotation, 24 hour roadside service.

\$10 Gift card with purchase of four tires (passenger car or light truck only)

For a complete listing of current "deals" visit www.rock.coop; terms and conditions of "deals" subject to change as desired by individual participating businesses.



EYE ON THE INDUSTRY

Monthly Notes on Issues Affecting Wisconsin Consumers

Doubling up.... Conservation efforts notwithstanding, the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) expects **world electricity usage** to double by 2030, compared with 2005 levels, with developing nations—no surprise—leading demand growth at 4 percent annually, vs. 1.3 percent in developed countries. EIA predicts total generation in developing nations will be nearly half again that of developed nations by 2030. Meanwhile, the United Nations' International Energy Agency (IEA) says coal will continue as the main generation fuel worldwide at least until 2030. **The nuclear option** should be on the table in **Wisconsin**, according to state lawmaker **Jim Soletski** (D–Green Bay). Soletski's views take on added weight with his December appointment to chair the Assembly Committee on **Energy and Utilities** in the 2009–10 session. Some tout new nukes as an answer to **Global Warming**, as the debate simmers with **2008** found to be the **coolest year of the decade** and the third consecutive year of falling global average temperatures since 2005, a British climate agency finds.



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Close your refrigerator door on a single sheet of paper that is half in and half out of the refrigerator. If you can move the paper easily without opening the door, you may need to adjust the door latch or replace the seals.



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PORTABLE ELECTRIC HEATERS

Don't Be Misled; Read This Before You Buy

With the cost of home heating fuels skyrocketing, homeowners are looking for ways to cut their heating bills. A number of portable electric heaters are being marketed using very misleading information. The fact is, it doesn't matter who makes the heaters, or how they are manufactured. ALL electric heaters, portable or otherwise, are 100 percent efficient and watt per watt, they all provide the same heat output and cost the same to operate. Heat pumps, however, do operate differently, resulting in efficiencies two to five times higher than the heaters we are referring to. Therefore, this information does not apply to heat pumps.

When selecting a portable electric heater to purchase, the most important consideration is the number of watts it draws. The higher the watts, the more heat it will deliver and the more it will cost to operate. Most portable heaters do not exceed 1,500 watts because a higher wattage would overload a typical 15-amp outlet and likely trip a breaker or blow a fuse.

A 1,500-watt heater delivers approximately 5,120 BTUs. BTU stands for British Thermal Unit and is the unit of measure for the output of heating and cooling systems. Typical residential furnaces range from 30,000 to 90,000 BTUs. If you purchase a portable heater that delivers 5,120 BTUs and you plan to heat your entire home with it in place of your central furnace, be sure to also purchase plenty of heavy blankets and winter clothing for use indoors — you are going to need them.

Electric heating devices will cause significant increases in the electric bill if used for long periods of time. Here's the formula to calculate the cost of operation:

$$A \text{ (amps)} \times V \text{ (volts)} = W \text{ (watts)}$$

$$W \text{ (watts)/1,000} \times \text{(hours of use/day)} \times \text{(number of days used)} \times \text{(electric rate)}$$

Example using 12.5 amp space heater:

$$12.5 \text{ amps} \times 120 \text{ volts} = 1,500 \text{ watts}$$

$$1,500 \text{ watts/1,000} \times 4 \text{ hours per day} \times 30 \text{ days} \times .0925/\text{kwh} = \mathbf{\$16.65/month}$$



Don't be misled by marketing hype: All 1,500-watt electric heaters, including this basic portable heater, cost the same to operate and deliver the same heat output.

Here are some other examples:

- **Portable heaters:** Most portable heaters draw 1,500 watts. $1,500 \text{ watts} / 1,000 = 1.5$. Multiply that by 8 cents and that totals 12 cents per hour. Twelve cents an hour doesn't sound like much, but that can add up to more than \$86 per month.
- **Stock tank heaters:** Many stock tank heaters draw 1,500 watts, or 12 cents per hour. As with a portable heater, that can add up to more than \$86 per month.
- **Engine heaters:** Most engine heaters draw between 850 and 1,500 watts, or 6.8 cents to 12 cents per hour. Over a month, that's \$49 to \$86.
- **Heat tapes and heat lamps:** The wattage of these varies widely. Look for the watts listed on the item and use the formula provided above.
- **Ovens:** Every year, we hear of someone who ran out of heating fuel and used their electric oven for heat. 5,000 watts is not uncommon for ovens. If you do the math, that's about 40 cents per hour, or \$288 per month. ■



By Shane L. Larson,
Chief Executive Officer

More Power To You

This month I want to talk to our members directly regarding the current debate about Rock Energy Cooperative's payment and disconnection policies.

Rock Energy Cooperative voluntarily follows the state's

cold weather disconnection moratorium. Simply put, any member who was previously in good standing, but falls behind on their bill in the winter, is not disconnected for non-payment between December 1 and March 31.

There are three exceptions to this policy that we occasionally face: when a member defaults on a payment agreement for an account that was already delinquent; when somebody uses electricity without ever signing up for service (which most commonly occurs at rental properties); or when somebody tampers with the electric system to bypass their electric meters (an extremely dangerous practice that can lead to fires and even death).

Since mid-December, the cooperative has used a device called a load limiter rather than disconnecting in these situations, so people will have at least some electricity to run essential devices.

We never want to see a situation get to that point, and it rarely does. The defining characteristic of Rock Energy is a part of our name: cooperative. We are dedicated to serving our members and the community, but our endeavor is a cooperative one. Our strength and success come from folks working together to accomplish the shared goals of keeping the lights on and the natural gas flowing.

Cooperation requires communication, so please let us know when you have a problem so we can work together to resolve it. If you're concerned that you might not be able to pay your bill, the worst thing you can do is nothing! Give us a call and talk to us about your situation.

We can't make bills go away, but we'll do everything we can to figure out a solution.

Both Wisconsin and Illinois operate energy assistance programs, and many faith and community groups also stand ready to help those in need. We maintain a list of contact numbers for local energy assistance programs and will gladly provide that information to any member who requests it.

Just like each of our members, REC gets an electric bill and a gas bill each month — the only difference between yours and ours is the number of zeros to the left of the decimal point. When members don't pay their bills, that shortfall doesn't come out of the pockets of Wall

When members don't pay their bills, that shortfall doesn't come out of the pockets of Wall Street investors in far away places; it comes out of the pockets of every active REC member.

Street investors in far away places; it comes out of the pockets of every active REC member. Through October of 2008, bad debt from former members amounts to roughly \$32 for each and every gas and electric meter on our system (that's approximately 26,000 total meters totaling \$826,000; compare that with \$4.16 per meter totaling \$29,000 in October 2006).

Statistics like that illustrate why it is so important for Rock

Energy Cooperative to act as good stewards of your resources. We understand that every action we take can have a direct impact on your family budget. That's why we work so hard to keep reliability high and costs as low as possible. In fact, the average residential REC member using 900 kilowatt hours of electricity per month pays \$4 less per month than Alliant WP&L customers, and \$10 less per month than ComEd customers (taxes excluded).

We understand that times are tough for a lot of people right now. Rock Energy Cooperative was established to improve our community and enhance the lives of folks in our area. If we communicate and cooperate, very few challenges will stand in our way.

We truly appreciate the opportunity to serve your energy needs. If we can do any thing to improve our service to you, please let us know. ■

Prevent Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Often called the “Silent Killer” because of its odorless, tasteless, and colorless nature, carbon monoxide remains the leading cause of accidental poisonings in the United States. Each year CO poisoning claims nearly 500 lives and causes more than 15,000 visits to hospital emergency departments. During winter months, incidents of poisoning increase due to the use of heating equipment. With that in mind, help prevent CO poisoning by installing and maintaining a CO detector.

CO can be found in combustion fumes, such as those produced by cars and trucks, other small gasoline engines, stoves, lanterns, coal / wood-burning units, and gas ranges and heating systems. CO can build up in enclosed or semi-enclosed spaces. Many people rely on portable electric generators during power outages, for example; it is vital that these units not be used improperly.

Noticeable signs that signal a CO problem: streaks of carbon or soot around the service door of your fuel-burning appliance; the absence of a draft in your chimney; excessive rusting on flue pipes; moisture collecting on the windows and walls of furnace rooms; fallen soot from the fireplace; small amounts of water leaking from the base of the chimney, vent, or flue pipe; damaged or discolored bricks at the top of your chimney; rust on the portion of the vent pipe visible from outside your home.

The most common symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning are headaches, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion. High levels of CO inhalation may lead to loss of consciousness and can even

be fatal. Unless suspected, CO poisoning can be difficult to diagnose because the symptoms mimic other illnesses, like the flu.

If your CO alarm sounds, immediately open doors and windows for ventilation. If anyone is experiencing symptoms, evacuate the area and call 911. If the alarm sounds and no one is experiencing symptoms, continue to ventilate the house, and turn off fuel-burning appliances until the problem can be identified.

- Have a qualified technician inspect fuel-burning appliances at the beginning of every heating season.
- Make certain that flues and chimneys are connected and in good condition, and not blocked.
- Install CO detectors outside bedrooms as most poisonings occur while sleeping.
- Test your CO detectors often (at least monthly, weekly if battery powered).
- Never use charcoal grills inside homes, tents, or campers; or charcoal briquettes in a fireplace.
- Never idle cars in an enclosed garage.
- Whenever possible, choose appliances that vent outside.
- Never use a gas oven to heat your home, even for a short time.
- Do not sleep in a room with an unvented gas or kerosene space heater. ■

REC is Looking For Co-op Youth Day Representatives

If you'd like to visit Washington, D.C., June 12–18, 2009, as our representative to the Co-op Youth Day Conference, we need to hear from you soon. This year, we will fully sponsor two current high school juniors who want to learn firsthand how our government and co-ops work. In addition, you'll be able to tour the capital and meet your elected representatives. To be eligible, you must write us a letter telling us why we should select you as our representative and get it to us by April 1, 2009. Please visit www.rock.coop or call Member Relations at 608-752-4550 or 866-752-4550 for complete details. ■

Youth Leadership Conference July 15-17, 2009

If you'll be a sophomore, junior, or senior in the fall but don't want to wait until then to begin identifying and developing your leadership skills, we have an opportunity for you. The Wisconsin Energy Cooperative Association's 46th Annual Youth Leadership Congress will be held July 15–17, 2009, at UW–River Falls. The three-day program is jammed with fun, hands-on activities and seminars led by topnotch professionals from many disciplines. If you're interested in being a sponsored representative of REC this year, please contact Marty Berg, Member Relations, at 608-752-4550 or by e-mail to: martyb@rock.coop. ■



Rock Energy members are often surprised when they open their January electric bill. Your January electric bill may be high because:

- Your indoor and outdoor holiday lights, displays, and decorations were powered by electricity. To help cut down on your holiday lighting costs for next year, stock up on the new energy-saving Light Emitting Diode (LED) lights when you shop for next year.
- Christmas often involves a lot of extra cooking and baking, which requires extra electricity.
- Shorter days and longer nights mean the lights stay on longer, both inside and out. You can help cut down on this cost by switching your standard incandescent light bulbs with energy-saving compact fluorescent lights.
- With colder temperatures, space heaters are often used in garages, basements, and other places to provide warmth and comfort. For both safety and economy, be sure to use them only when and where they are needed.
- Holiday houseguests often mean more hot water for showers, laundry, and dishwashing, and also more heating and lighting in guest rooms.
- Even if you don't have electric heat, most heating systems use electricity to power fans and other functions. Help keep your heating system operating efficiently by changing the filter regularly.
- You may be using engine block heaters on vehicles and farm equipment. Timers can help save energy in the winter. Also, be sure they're working properly and that you're not setting them at too high a setting. ■



Budget Billing for Residential Members

Tired of your electric bill going up and down? Sign up for our Budget Billing program and make your bills more predictable and easier to handle from month to month.

With the Budget Billing plan, the seasonal fluctuations over the year are leveled out, allowing you to pay a set amount for 11 months of the year.

Payments are based on an average of your previous year's usage (members must have been on our service for 6 months previous to begin participating). Reconciliation every six months will determine if we have overestimated or underestimated your usage and billing.

If you wish to be on the Budget Billing plan, you're a residential member, your account is current, and you have a good credit history, please call the office. ■

Energy Assistance

Federal and state funded bill paying assistance programs for families that need help with their energy bills are now open in Illinois. Applications and complete details are available through your county government offices. To find out which office covers your area, please contact:

Call 1-877-411-9276 or 1-217-785-6135 or visit:
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BUILDING BLOCKS for Learning

Building Blocks for Learning – Janesville, WI – 608-758-8901

The preeminent children's educational resource center where you will find a premium selection of education and school supplies; teacher resource materials, as well as educational games, toys & puzzles for the child in your life. **Volume Discount, 4th Saturday Sale** (in store only), **Complimentary Gift Wrap, Free Local Delivery & Free Assembly** (in store only), **Shipment of Product to 3rd party, Special Orders, Gift Cards, Laminating Service** (in store only), **Activity Room** (in store only), **Play Area** (in store only) and **The Learning Academy**: "We Make Learning Fun" is our mission... The Learning Academy is a way to promote and influence educational growth and development for both parents and children in fun and inspiring ways. **\$5 Off purchase of \$30 or more**

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Agard & Lipker Dental is the oldest family dental practice in Janesville dating back to 1951 and still delivering excellent, personal, and integrity driven care. Drs. Agard and Lipker provide a wide variety of services: including crowns, bridges, dentures & root canals... all provided in a caring and gentle manner, with a strong commitment to quality dentistry, our patients and the community.

5% Off (may not be combined with other discounts)

Angela's Attic – South Beloit, IL – 815-389-1679

A 30,000 square foot historic factory lovingly converted into large rooms of antiques and collectibles...over 100 dealers... unique gifts, home décor, furniture of all kinds, primitives, jewelry, Fenton Glass, Depression Glass, WWII Memorabilia and much, much more... stop in, explore, sit down and have a cup of coffee and snack on a cookie or two... just 1 mile west of I-90 at Exit #1.

10% Discount on purchase of \$20 or more (Cash/Check only; prices not marked "Firm" or "Sale")



Kid SPOT Tumbling – Roscoe, IL – 815-623-5437



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is the fastest growing cheer program in Northern Illinois. **Flip Flop & Cartwheel Clinics** - always popular; **Turning Pointe Competitive Dance Teams**; new this year – the **Martial Arts Class** and **Young Rembrandts Arts Program**; camps offer high quality activities during summer and school breaks including our **Young Explorers Day Camp** (ages 3 – 6)... a 12,000 square foot facility, housing in-ground trampolines, rod tumbling strips into a foam training pit, competitive size cheer floor, beams, bars, and a fun castle... two dance studios, a piano studio, and Pro-Shop with gym and dance apparel, and even bleachers for your comfortable, convenient viewing. **\$5 Off any session or camp**

For a complete listing of current "deals" visit www.rock.coop; terms and conditions of "deals" subject to change as desired by individual participating businesses.

Living Rooms



An Opportunity for Energy Savings

Living rooms are home to most of the electronics in our house. We watch TV, turn on the computer, answer the phone, and from time to time take a meal or two all in our living rooms, and the costs add up, even when those electronics are off. The living room is ripe for other energy-saving measures as well, especially if it has multiple windows, a fireplace, or several air vents.

What you can do:

- 1) Turn off the TV when no one is watching.
- 2) Use the sleep function on electronics, which can reduce their energy usage up to 60 percent.
- 3) Unplug power adapters and chargers when cell phones, digital cameras, and laptops are done charging.
- 4) Make sure air vents and registers aren't blocked by furniture or drapes.
- 5) Open window coverings during the day (winter months) and close at night. Reverse in the summer.
- 6) Shut the flue on your fireplace when not in use.
- 7) Weatherstrip windows.
- 8) Plug electronics into a power strip (surge protector). Group electronics into different power strips and flip the switch on the strip off when you're not using them.



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Check your outside dryer exhaust vent. Make sure it opens and closes freely. If it does not close tightly, cold outside air is getting into your house through the dryer.



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Report from the Chief Executive Officer

The past year has been a turbulent one for our nation. Widespread layoffs, falling home prices, foreclosures, and stock market instability have weighed heavily on all Americans. Whether or not you personally lost your job or saw

your retirement savings plummet, these difficult times are affecting everybody in one way or another.

At Rock Energy Cooperative, the tough economy has contributed to a surge in delinquent accounts and bad debt, and that, in turn, has put several of the core values of the cooperative in conflict with one another.

As a local company that is deeply rooted in the area we serve, Rock Energy Cooperative has a long and proud record of helping folks out in times of need. Whether it's donations to local groups or one of our line technicians stopping on the side of the road to help a stranded motorist, we try to do the right thing.

The very notion of a co-op is about neighbors helping neighbors...that powerful force that's created when a group of motivated people unite to overcome a challenge that is larger than any one person.

With local control comes local responsibility. Unlike large investor-owned utilities, we can't rely on Wall Street investors to pick up the slack when there's a budget shortfall. Every penny that's written off as bad debt by the cooperative comes out of the pockets of our members.

Fortunately, Rock Energy members are as kind and generous a group as you can find. I'm certain that if I asked REC members for \$5 to help ensure their neighbors in need could pay their utility bills, most of them would be willing to give \$10. But what about \$20? Perhaps. Or \$30? Maybe. How about \$50?

Where do we draw the line, and what do we do when that line is crossed?

In 2008, on average, every one of the 26,000 meters on the Rock Energy Cooperative system is on the hook for more than \$30 extra to cover the cost of those mem-

bers who have left the cooperative with a debt. If you have a gas and an electric meter, or more than one electric meter, that's \$30 for each meter. For perspective, the \$30 per meter amount is up from \$4 just two years ago.

Meanwhile, social service agencies are struggling to keep up with growing demand for a shrinking pool of energy assistance dollars, and not-for-profit organizations across the nation are seeing their resources dwindle as more and more Americans tighten their belts and reduce charitable giving.

All of this has forced the cooperative to take a close look at our payment policies and make some hard choices about how to balance our fiduciary obligation to preserve the financial health of the cooperative with our human obligation to look out for each other.

We've done a lot of things right, but we've also needed to make some adjustments. When change was needed, we figured out what we could do differently, and then we moved forward.

For more than 70 years, Rock Energy Cooperative and its members have chosen to unite as a collective body to energize our homes and our businesses. The decades have demonstrated that no matter what the challenge, the cooperative has remained focused

on its mission to deliver safe and reliable energy at a competitive price.

As these unprecedented times test the resolve of our organization, remember that the rural electrification movement was born out of the last great economic challenge our nation faced. Electricity brought with it a better life and economic opportunity for our region, and the cooperative spirit of our membership has sustained us ever since.

I hope you'll join the board, employees, and hundreds of the Rock Energy Cooperative family to celebrate our proud legacy and look forward to opportunities that lie ahead at our 73rd annual meeting on Monday, April 6, 2009, at the Eclipse Center in Beloit, Wisconsin. Registration starts at 4:30 p.m., with the program beginning at 5:30 p.m. ■

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Report from the Chairman

It is that time of year again—preparing for the annual meeting of your Rock Energy Cooperative. This is number 73 (not mine, but the co-op's). As I write this annual report, it is a cold (below zero) and snowy January day. By the time your monthly REC magazine reaches you in March, and the annual meeting date of April 6 arrives, the weather will have changed. But there could also be changes in what is happening in the energy world at that moment. History tells us that events and situations can change overnight.

So my report includes some events and facts that have been part of your co-op up to and including the present time.

One of the big events was, and is, the acquisition of Alliant Energy's utility assets in northern Illinois. That acquisition was finalized on February 6, 2007. That was a huge decision for your board and management, and has, and still does, engender some growing pains, but it was a positive and proper decision. This included natural gas as well as electric assets nearly quadrupling our size. As a cooperative, residents and businesses within that acquired territory joined all of us as members with voting rights in the election of co-op directors and to voice your opinions at annual meetings. That voice is never heard at investor-owned utilities' meetings because those are for shareholders—a cooperative serves its members.

There are some dissenting voices and concerns on rates and disconnect policies, required deposits, payment of bills, etc. Those concerns are not taken lightly, and we try to address them in a professional, civil, and fair manner. Sometimes the response of some members is not so civil, and that makes continuing communication difficult. We have excellent management, a dedicated board, and loyal employees who do everything possible to serve and benefit all the members, and to provide you with reliable, affordable energy. It is our responsibility to keep your cooperative financially viable.

On July 7, 2008, your co-op broke ground for a new district office and warehouse building on Willowbrook Road in South Beloit. This improvement will significantly aid the cooperative to better serve you. Construction is in progress and the hope is for completion in spring of 2009. Our main headquarters will remain in Janesville; all members can use either facility.

The economy, power availability, wholesale power costs, rates, climate change, carbon emissions, renew-

ables, reliability, and energy efficiency are all issues that need constant attention by your board and our state and national trade associations. Because the legislative process dictates so much of what we do in the utility business, we work hard at communicating on these important issues to our state and federal representatives. Additionally, to affect energy and safety policies in Illinois and Wisconsin, the board and employees actively participate on statewide boards and committees, including education, legislative and regulatory, job training and safety. These issues need even more effort in the months ahead with a new state legislature and national administration.

The board believes it is important to be an active part of the community—that's why Rock Energy Cooperative continues to provide high school scholarships and co-op educational opportunities for area youth.

Regular maintenance operations continue daily—upgrading lines, replacing poles, tree and brush trimming, covering outages, substation monitoring, etc. Office employees and staff are essential in keeping the co-op operating efficiently and they do a great job.

Thousands of automatic meter reading devices were installed this past year on Illinois members' meters; Wisconsin meters have had these devices for nearly a decade.

This past year 443 new services were connected. These included 345 electric and 98 natural gas.

Capital Credits totalling \$490,409 were paid in 2008. Since the inception of the cooperative, \$8,346,350 have been paid back to members.

Again, your Rock Energy Cooperative annual meeting date is set for April 6, 2009, at the Eclipse Center in Beloit, Wisconsin. As in past years, we'll have a sit-down dinner, business session, and election of three directors. There will be facilities and food provided for children, with supervision by co-op employees. So bring the kids along.

Thanks to CEO Shane Larson, the board, staff, and all employees for their dedicated efforts in moving Rock Energy Cooperative progressively forward. Finally, I want to thank you, the members. You are the cooperative.

Please join your fellow members on April 6, 2009. Hope to see you there. ■



Stanley Dybevik

Rock Energy Cooperative

Statements of Revenue & Patronage Capital

(subject to audit)

	Years Ended December 31,	
	2007	2008
Operating Revenue	\$ 36,629,178	\$ 47,329,950
Operating Expenses:		
Cost of Power	25,795,449	33,755,177
Distribution- Operations	1,452,830	1,543,848
Distribution- Maintenance	1,874,114	1,109,807
Member Accounts	761,829	1,668,726
Member Service & Information	136,542	228,773
Administrative & General	1,256,968	1,576,009
Depreciation	1,851,428	2,186,250
Taxes	136,828	203,450
Other Deductions	7,962	6,733
Total Operating Expenses	33,273,950	42,278,773
Operating Margins -before Fixed Charges	3,355,228	5,051,177
Fixed Charges:		
Interest on Long-Term Debt	2,018,556	2,331,108
Interest on Short-Term Debt	124,659	73,216
Total Fixed Charges	2,143,215	2,404,324
Operating Margins -after Fixed Charges	1,212,013	2,646,853
Patronage Capital Allocations	91,924	285,086
Net Operating Margins	1,303,937	2,931,939
Non-Operating Income:		
Interest Income	15,409	37,168
Equity Investments & Other	156,561	141,676
Total Non-Operating Income	171,970	178,844
Net Margins for Period	1,475,907	3,110,783
Patronage Capital- Beginning of Period	11,133,318	12,236,546
	12,609,225	15,347,329
Retirement of Capital Credits	372,679	490,410
Patronage Capital- End of Period	<u>\$ 12,236,546</u>	<u>\$ 14,856,919</u>

Balance Sheets

(subject to audit)

	As of December 31,	
	2007	2008
ASSETS		
Utility Plant:		
In Service	\$66,338,529	\$ 68,554,921
Construction Work in Process	1,293,238	6,902,974
	67,631,767	75,457,895
Less: Accumulated Depreciation	23,041,115	24,957,121
Net Utility Plant	44,590,652	50,500,774
Investments:		
Associated Organizations	822,024	978,572
Other Investments	896,473	977,025
Total Investments	1,718,497	1,955,597
Current Assets:		
Cash & Temporary Investments	415,541	237,271
Accounts Receivable	7,225,294	6,445,886
Inventory, Materials & Supplies	2,100,112	2,433,215
Other current assets	24,166	122,000
Total Current Assets	9,765,113	9,238,372
Deferred Debits	61,088	-
Total Assets	\$56,135,350	\$ 61,694,743
EQUITIES & LIABILITIES		
Equities:		
Patronage Capital	\$ 12,236,546	\$ 14,856,919
Other Equities	371,607	405,296
Total Equities	12,608,153	15,262,215
Long-Term Obligations	35,376,888	34,600,645
Current Liabilities:		
Current Maturities of Long-Term Debt	810,058	787,440
Notes Payable- Line of Credit	-	3,742,248
Accounts Payable	4,666,457	4,625,190
Member Deposits	147,494	378,869
Accrued Taxes	303,729	222,966
Other Current Liabilities	1,387,403	1,342,877
Total Current Liabilities	7,315,141	11,099,590
Deferred Credits	835,168	732,293
Total Equities & Liabilities	\$56,135,350	\$ 61,694,743

Rock Energy Cooperative

72nd Annual Meeting – April 7, 2008

An early bird drawing took place at 5:30 p.m.

The 72nd Annual Meeting of Rock Energy Cooperative was called to order by the Chairman, Stanley Dybevik at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, April 7, 2008 at the Eclipse Center in Beloit, WI. Chairman Stanley Dybevik called for a membership count and declared a quorum present: 203 members.

Robert Crave read the official notice of the annual meeting. A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the 71st Annual Meeting. Motion carried.

Treasurer James Quade presented the report of the 2007 business year. No questions were asked. Motion was made and seconded to accept the report. Motion carried.

Chairman Stanley Dybevik introduced board members and spouses, Attorney Dave Collins and CEO Larson.

Stan Dybevik presented the Chairman's report explaining the need to "Strike the Right Balance" between environmental goals and price of energy. He explained the need for a district building in South Beloit to better serve our members. He discussed cooperation Rock has had with the Illinois statewide organization. He emphasized the value of being a member of a cooperative.

CEO Shane Larson thanked the board for their commitment in providing decisions that are in the best interest of the membership. He thanked the employees for their dedicated service. Cooperation between Illinois and Wisconsin membership is very important. He discussed the significance of growing the cooperative from 6,000 accounts to 26,000 with the acquisition of the Illinois territory. He mentioned that while issues have been corrected the first year, the cooperative is dedicated to providing even better service in the future. The cooperative will be installing automatic meter reading devices this summer to improve the co-op's billing accuracy and timing. Increasing power costs were addressed.

Sheldon Petersen, CEO of Cooperative Finance Corporation, expressed great satisfaction in being invited to the meeting. Sheldon was the General Manager of Rock County Electric Cooperative when it had about 4,200 members in the early 1980s. He stated that Rock's purchase of the South Beloit territory is a great opportunity for both sides of the state line. He mentioned that several co-ops in other states have also purchased territories from Investor Owned Utilities, like Alliant. He noted that consumers are using 2% more power annually, therefore the need of more power plants continues. Sheldon commented that cooperatives don't make headlines because they provide good service for a fair price.

1st Vice Chairman Darrel Weber conducted the remaining part of the meeting.

Attorney Dave Collins explained the need for a proposed bylaw change. It was suggested that the two proposed changes be addressed with one ballot. A motion was made and passed.

Attorney Collins reviewed the minutes of the Nominating Committee meeting and those minutes were approved.

Attorney Dave Collins conducted the election. He introduced the incumbents and candidates. There were no nominations from the floor. All present nominees addressed the membership. Candidate Jill Dobbs was not present. Ballots were cast and collected by the appointed tellers. Candidates up for election were Robert Crave, Michael Duffy and Jill Dobbs in district 6, Bill Dietsch and Sue Trickel in district 7, and Stanley Dybevik and Ronald Richards in district 8. Voting followed.

Perry Baird, editor for the Wisconsin Energy Cooperative magazine, presented CEO Larson with an award for energy awareness in Rock's portion of the magazine.

Several legislators spoke as well as Duane Noland, CEO of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives.

Scholarships were presented by Chairperson Jo Miller, Director Marian Trescher and Darrel Weber. The recipients were: Joseph Johnson of Brodhead High School, Logan Krebs of Clinton High School, Jason Porter of Edgerton High School, Heidi Welch of Evansville High School, Sarah MacDowell, Megan McHugh, Austin Sanderson and Molly Stiffler of Hononegah High School, Derrick Zimmerman of Milton High School, and Danielle Jenson and Zack McManus of Parkview High School.

There was no old or new business.

Results of the election were as follows:

District 6	District 7	District 8
Robert Crave 164	Bill Dietsch217	Stanley Dybevik .. 203
Michael Duffy... 121	Sue Trickel 94	Ronald Richards .. 102
Jill Dobbs 26	Dietsch Elected	Dybevik Elected
Crave Elected		

Proposed Bylaw Change

Yes..... 243

No..... 53

Bylaw change passed.

There was another door prize drawing. The meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m. Shane Larson gave the meal invocation. Dinner was served.

Respectfully Submitted
Robert C. Crave, Secretary



Shane Larson, CEO
Marty Berg, Editor

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

(608) 752-4550 • (866) 752-4550

2009 Annual Meeting

ILLINOISTM

COUNTRY LIVING

March 2009

Changing times,
unchanging
principles

Agenda & Registration Card
Inside front cover

CEO Report • page 16a

Chairman's Report • page 16b

Financial Statements
page 16c

2008 Annual Meeting Minutes
page 16d

2009 Annual Meeting RSVP
Inside back cover

Board of Director Candidates
Back Cover

**Rock Energy
Cooperative**

Monday, April 6, 2009

Eclipse Center • Beloit, Wisconsin

Annual Banquet Program

Doors open.....4:30 p.m.

Annual Meeting 5:30 p.m.

Children's Rooms.....5:15-7:15 p.m.

Children ages 3 – 7 Pickles the Clown

Children ages 8 – 12 Videos & Games

Includes Snack & Dinner: Assorted Pizza & Cookies, Milk/Juice/Water/Pop

Adult Dinner6:45 p.m.

Menu – Broccoli & Wild Rice Stuffed Chicken Breast with Wisconsin Mushroom Supreme Sauce, Honey Glazed Copper Penny Carrots, Baby Red Jacket Potatoes, assorted Dinner Rolls with Butter, Coffee/Tea/Milk/Water & Dessert: Chocolate Cream Cheese Squares

Members must attend this meeting if they wish to vote on co-op business items. Only one ballot will be issued at time of registration per member. Proxy and absentee voting are not allowed.

Notice of Annual Meeting

**Rock Energy Cooperative
April 6, 2009 • 5:30 p.m.**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the annual meeting of Rock Energy Cooperative will be held at the Eclipse Center, Beloit, Wisconsin, on Monday, the sixth day of April, 2009, at 5:30 p.m. for the purpose of transacting whatever business may lawfully come before it. The order of business pursuant to the bylaws, shall be as follows:

1. Call to Order. Quorum Determination
2. Reading of Notice of Meeting
3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Annual Meeting
4. Reports of Officers, Directors and Committees
5. Election of Three (3) Directors
6. Unfinished Business
7. New Business/Questions
8. Adjournment

Dated this 27th day of February 2009.

*Robert C. Crave, Secretary
Rock Energy Cooperative*

OFFICIAL REGISTRATION

Tear off and bring this portion to the Annual Meeting – Monday April 6, 2009

Eclipse Center – Beloit, WI

Doors Open4:30 p.m.

Meeting5:30 p.m.

Meal6:45 p.m.

I hereby certify that I am a member of the Rock Energy Cooperative and as such I am eligible to participate in cooperative business:

Signature _____

Name (please print) _____

OFFICE USE ONLY: _____ (# of adults eating dinner)

Meet Your REC Board Candidates

District 1

Morris Nelson

Morris Nelson lives at 10422 N. Wallin Road in Porter Township. He is a farmer and does a combination of cash crop and dairy farming. He has lived on REC lines all his life.

“Being a director the last 12 years has been a real challenge. I have learned ‘a ton’ about the utility world. I have tried to represent what is best for you, the members of this co-op. As a current board member, I was involved with our acquisition of the Alliant utility in Illinois. I would like the opportunity to serve the next three years to help complete the project and get it off to a successful start. Thank you for your support.



District 3

Darrel Weber

Darrel Weber lives at 2708 N. County Road M, Milton, Wisconsin, in Johnstown Township. He has been a director of Rock Energy Cooperative for 18 years.

Darrel has been involved in farming for around 67 years and auctioneering for 49 years. He has been a member of REC for 49 years, but the Weber farm has been on the lines since the cooperative started.

He is an active member of the Johnstown Cemetery Association and the Rock County 4-H Fur and Feather Auction. He is a lifetime member of the FFA Alumni.

“I have enjoyed the challenges that being a director has given me for the last 18 years. My hope is still to help maintain the high quality of service to our customers for the lowest possible price. It has been a real pleasure and learning experience working with all the directors, staff at REC, and all the patrons of the REC Cooperative.”



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Rock Energy Cooperative
P.O. Box 1758
Janesville, WI 53547-1758

Meet Your REC Board Candidates

District 5

William (Bill) Fischer

Bill Fischer is the incumbent director for District 5. Bill has lived on co-op lines for approximately 35 years. He resides in Turtle Township at 6651 E. County Road P in Clinton, Wisconsin.

Formerly a crop farmer raising both hogs and beef for 15 years, Bill has been a Rock Energy Cooperative director for 6 years. Bill is a journeyman electrician. He has served as past President and past Treasurer of the Clinton Kiwanis. He has been active in many volunteer organizations in the Clinton area, notably the Clinton After School Program. Currently, Bill serves on the Building, Purchasing and Policy Committees and has served on the Scholarship Committee as part of his REC board duties.

"I am thankful to the Rock Energy members for allowing me to serve as a director. I would feel privileged to represent you for another three years. Good decisions made today will bring great rewards for the co-op tomorrow."



Thomas J. Hartwig

Thomas J. Hartwig lives at 15200 Albatross Drive, South Beloit, Illinois. Currently he's studying computer repair while on layoff from GM (employed since May 1995). Originally from the Chicago area, Tom lived in Milton for 10 years, then in South Beloit since 2000. He has worked at Milton Propane and as the night service manager at Smith Motors in Ft. Atkinson. Tom currently serves as commissioner on the South Beloit Zoning Board of Appeals & Planning (since 2003), and is a proud parishioner at St. Peters' Catholic Church.



"Conservation is key... working with individuals and families one at a time is key... I would like to do everything I can to help make our utilities more efficient while keeping them affordable. Becoming involved in the co-op, I intend to strengthen communication to help mold Rock Energy into being a 'model co-op.' My approach is to listen and work together to resolve issues and maintain standards while helping to build and improve our community. I am ready to share my knowledge and skills to help the co-op continue to grow into our community to further demonstrate how community and business can work side by side."

Annual Meeting RSVP

Use this card to RSVP for the Annual Meeting & Dinner. Please respond no later than March 26, 2009.

Name _____

Address _____

Account No. _____

(When filling out this form, please print)

_____ # of Adults for Dinner

_____ # of Children 8-12 for Children's Dinner

_____ # of Children 3-7 for Children's Dinner

Please mail the
RSVP Card back at your earliest
convenience, or you may either drop it
off at one of the offices in Janesville or
South Beloit or call 608-752-4550, both
during regular business hours,
7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

More Power To You



By Shane L. Larson,
Chief Executive Officer

Back in January of this year, I mentioned that we are going to be hearing a lot about cap-and-trade and carbon tax. Well, the time has arrived.

In President Obama's fiscal 2010 budget, the direction is being set. A subsection within the budget goes like this: "Begin a comprehensive approach to transform our energy supply and slow global warming."

According to the Administration's plan, after the budget is enacted, they will begin working quickly to develop an economy-wide program to reduce greenhouse gases to various levels over a period of years.

So, what type of program would be used to accomplish these established goals? Again, according to the budget report released February 26, 2009, the Administration desires a cap-and-trade system; one that utilizes a 100 percent auction process.

Is cap-and-trade like Cap'n Crunch? Well, I wouldn't expect cap-and-trade to be quite as tasty.

While there would obviously be numerous details to be worked out, my understanding right now is with a greenhouse gas cap-and-trade program, the government establishes a desired level of greenhouse gas for the entire country (the cap). Emitters of greenhouse gases would have to purchase, through an auction process, "emissions permits" from the government for every ton of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere. These permits would then be able to be traded like a commodity.

According to a recent article published in the *New York Times*, an auction that requires all or 100 percent of emissions be auctioned would generate about \$650 billion. Who said that transforming our energy supply and slowing global warming wasn't big stuff?

In the same *Times* piece, Jeff Bingaman, Chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, warned that a 100 percent auction "runs the danger or risk of causing a substantial increase in burden" on electric utilities, which would be passed on to customers.

Again, lots and lots of issues have to be resolved. But the fundamental question that we are very concerned about is cost. What is going to be the cost to our members? According to the language in the budget, a portion of the revenues derived from the auction will be "returned

to the people, especially vulnerable families, communities, and businesses to help transition to a clean energy economy." How much? To whom? When? What about other countries' CO₂ emissions?

Many people and businesses are struggling in this economy. Fundamentally changing our energy supply and addressing climate change is a really big deal with really big consequences. Will the proposed plan make things better today, tomorrow, and in the future? What an unbelievably difficult question to answer, and one that will most likely have to be answered by the next generation.

Last month, the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives published possible cost scenarios using a range of prices paid for a metric ton of CO₂. The analysis used 1,000 kilowatt hours, the monthly usage for an average residential service. The results of the study ranged from an additional \$10 per month to over \$100, again depending on the price of CO₂.

What can you do? We need to engage our national legislators and ask them to provide answers to our questions. The Our Energy, Our Future campaign has been promoted in past months and the campaign continues on today. Below is a form for those interested in participating. The Our Energy, Our Future website, www.ourenergy.coop, is also an easy way to get involved.

If there is anything we can do to improve our service to you, please let us know. It is our privilege to serve your energy needs. ■

Please visit
www.ourenergy.coop
to send an e-mail to
Congress or complete
this form and return it
to either REC office.



Our Energy, Our Future
A Dialogue With America
www.ourenergy.coop

**"I would like my electric co-op to send
an e-mail to Congress."**

Name _____

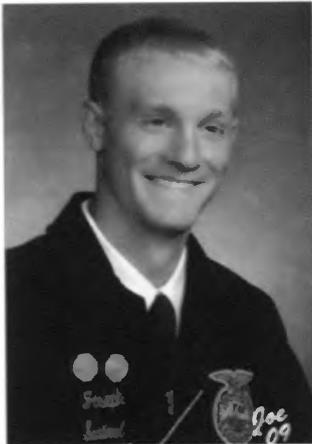
Home Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Home Phone _____

E-Mail _____

Signature _____



Joseph Cash
Orfordville Parkview
High School



Andrew Dal Santo
Hononegah Community
High School



Joshua Hergert
Milton High School



Bradley Karashinski
Beloit Turner High School



Staci Knudson
Evansville High School

Congratulations to our 2009 Scholarship Recipients

Rock Energy Cooperative is pleased to once again be able to support our youth and their education plans. Recipients of this year's scholarship awards are currently high school seniors. Each student pictured here will receive \$400 to assist with educational expenses beginning in the fall of 2009 at an accredited college or technical institute. ■



Antonio Little
South Beloit High School



Sarah Lund
Orfordville Parkview
High School



Dana Peterson
Hononegah Community
High School



Jeremy Rosheisen
Brodhead High School



Elizabeth Wettstein
Edgerton High School

High-Tech Thermostats Offer Potential Savings

Keeping your home hot or cold—depending on the season—accounts for a big chunk of your annual budget. In fact, the average U.S. homeowner spends \$2,500 a year on home energy, with 56 percent, or \$1,400, going toward heating and cooling costs.

Not surprisingly, savings can add up in a hurry when heating and cooling systems are tweaked for maximum efficiency. You can easily trim your energy bills in winter by setting the thermostat at 68 degrees F while you're awake and back a few degrees when you go to sleep or are away from home.

Even better, turning your thermostat back just 10 to 15 degrees for eight hours can save about 5 percent to 15 percent a year on your heating bill—about 1 percent for each degree.

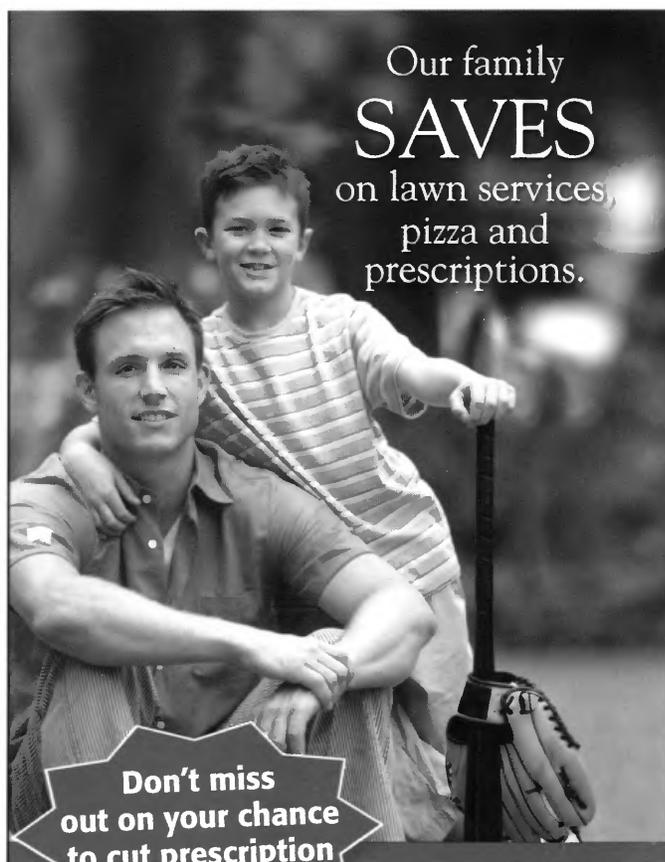
The location of your thermostat can greatly affect its performance and efficiency. Place thermostats away from direct sunlight, drafts, doorways, skylights, and windows.

Installing a programmable thermostat can take the thought out of saving energy. Your heating and cooling system will ramp up or switch off according to a preset time of day or even day of the week. However, maintaining a moderate setting is the most cost-effective practice.

To automatically manage electric resistance systems, such as electric baseboard heating, steam heating, or radiant floor heating, you will need to purchase a programmable thermostat specifically designed for the task. For more information, go to energystar.gov.—Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy ■

REC South Beloit Office Relocation

The co-op's Charles Street office will be closed permanently effective Thursday, April 9, 2009. Beginning Monday, April 13, 2009, at 7:30 a.m., the South Beloit District office of Rock Energy Cooperative will be located at our new Willowbrook Road building, 15229 Willowbrook Rd., South Beloit 61080. The facility is located approximately 3/4 mile south of the Flying J (Hwy. 75 exit off I-90). Payments may be made at Charles Street up until 4:00 p.m. on April 8; then at Willowbrook Rd. thereafter; and as always, at the Janesville office anytime. ■



Our family
SAVES
on lawn services,
pizza and
prescriptions.

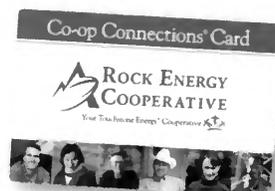
Don't miss
out on your chance
to cut prescription
costs!

We have a Co-op Connections® membership card, which means we save on everyday purchases and services. Our family even saves 10-60% off prescriptions at our participating local pharmacy.

In February 2009, Illinois and Wisconsin members saved almost \$30,000 on over 1,800 prescriptions.

It's easy to
save at over
48,000 pharmacies
nationwide!

Flash your card to save on everyday purchases and prescriptions.

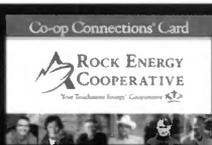


To learn more, visit
www.rock.coop.

Looking out for you.

Get Connected

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



BUMPER TO BUMPER

Bumper to Bumper Motor Parts & Exhaust - Edgerton, WI - 608-884-1900

Edgerton's only automotive parts store; locally owned and operated; motor parts and exhaust, custom hydraulic hoses and custom bent U-bolts, WIX Filters. **\$10 Off purchase of \$30 or more**

Best Western Legacy Inn & Suites - South Beloit, IL - 815-389-4211

Complimentary Breakfast, Wireless Internet Access, Heated Indoor Pool, Universal Gym, Meeting Facility, Refrigerator/Microwave in each room, Cable or Satellite TV w/HBO, In-room Hair Dryer and Coffee, work area in guestrooms. **10% Off Rack Rate**



Diamond Lanes - Beloit, WI - 608-362-9166

16 lane bowling center... home of DanDees Bar & Grill - 1/2 lb burgers, homemade pizzas and much more... year round leagues available for all ages... birthday party packages, family fun nights, and full food menu... host tournaments, charity or any kind of special event... a great place to have some fun. Check out our Summer Traveling League and Moonlight Bowling... full service pro shop too. **Buy One Game, Get One Free**

DiGiovanni's Ristorante - Roscoe, IL - 815-623-2320

DIGIOVANNIS

Offering a unique combination of authentic Italian dishes, seafood and steaks in a cozy intimate atmosphere... flavorful handmade recipes are meticulously prepared from scratch every day using only the finest ingredients, excellent service by a warm friendly staff... open kitchen, outside seating available.

\$5 Off with purchase of \$25 or more (dine-in only, does not include tax or gratuity)



Evansville Oil Pros - Evansville, WI - 608-882-6457

Car and light truck maintenance, oil changes, brakes, new tire sales, tune-ups, batteries and windshield replacement... where quality and service come together. **\$2 Off any service**

For a complete listing of current "deals" visit www.rock.coop; terms and conditions of "deals" subject to change as desired by individual participating businesses.

Last Chance to get in on Co-op Youth Day in Washington, D.C., and the Youth Leadership Conference!



Visit www.rock.coop for all the details. Sign-up for these once-in-a-lifetime, fully sponsored events closes April 10, 2009.

REC Closed for Business on Good Friday

The Janesville office of REC will be closed on Friday, April 10, in observance of Good Friday. The office will re-open at 7:30 a.m. on Monday, April 13. Payments may still be made at drop boxes in Janesville throughout that period.



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Cover and wrap food.

Uncovered food and liquids release moisture, forcing the fridge to work harder.



Shane Larson, CEO
Marty Berg, Editor

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

(608) 752-4550 • (866) 752-4550



By Shane L. Larson,
Chief Executive Officer

More Power To You

Another Annual Meeting is complete. For 73 years, Rock Energy Cooperative members have gathered to learn more about their cooperative and participate in its governance, and this year's meeting was no exception.

Nearly 700 members, guests, and friends met on April 6 at the Eclipse Center in Beloit. The Eclipse Center is a fine facility that provides a venue that can accommodate the number of members attending, while being centrally located in our service area.

Special thanks go out to all of our members and guests who joined us for a productive and enjoyable evening.

In board elections, Morris Nelson was re-elected in District 1, Darrel Weber retained his seat in District 3; while Bill Fischer was re-elected in District 5. Congratulations to those selected to represent the membership.

In my report at the annual meeting, I discussed briefly the Co-op Connections Card. This little card, which is mailed to all of our members, represents big savings. (If you don't have a card, please stop by any office for a card and key fob).

In these trying economic times, we could all use a little assistance and the Connections Card does just that. It provides discounts to local and national merchants, and it provides area businesses an extremely efficient means of advertising to thousands of potential customers.

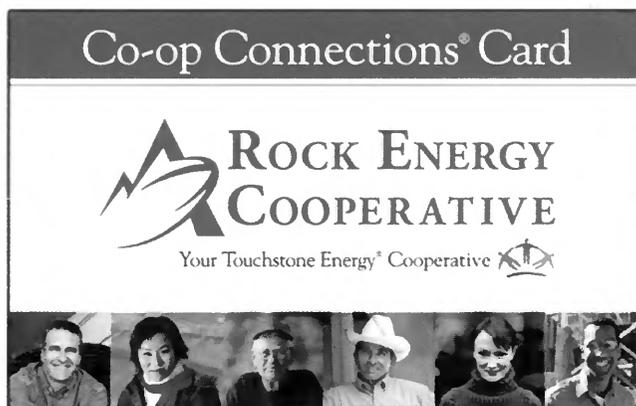
Some of our members have been taking advantage of tremendous savings the card provides on pharmacy prescriptions, but far too many of you are not. Each month we are sent stats on how are our members are using the card for pharmacy purchases (no individual information is provided to the co-op); when compared to other co-ops, we can do better.

Nationwide, over \$6.7 million has been saved using

the Cooperative Connections Card. This is real, in-the-pocket money for cooperative members throughout the country. In January and February of this year, over 35,500 prescriptions received an average 33 percent discount using the Connections Card.

Here at Rock, since the card rolled out in November 2008, our members have saved over \$4,600 on their prescriptions using the card. This figure represents 106 separate prescriptions. I know we can do better. We need to get the word out. With over 52,000 pharmacies nationwide accepting the card, there is a good probability that your pharmacy will accept the card.

For those with Internet access, check out www.connections.coop; there's tons of information, including a link to see the possible discount on your particular



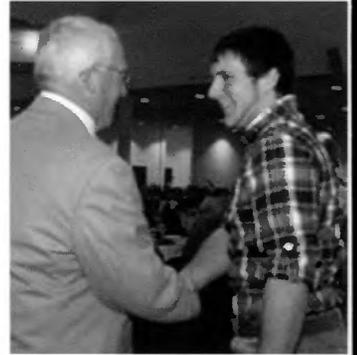
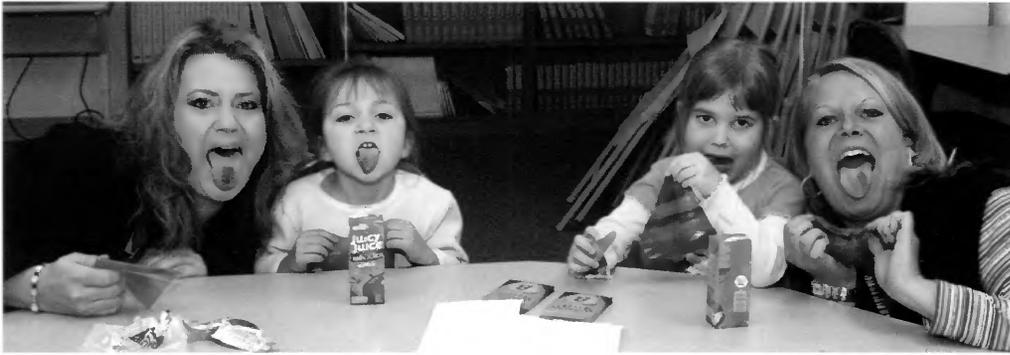
Nationwide, over \$6.7 million has been saved using the Cooperative Connections Card.

prescription. For those without the Internet, you can call 800-800-7616 for discount information.

Be sure to visit our website, www.rock.coop, for local deals. You save money while supporting local businesses by using your Co-op Connections Card—what a deal.

By pulling together we represent strength. Over 73 years ago, rural citizens pulled together to energize the countryside. Today, we've grown to meet the energy needs for tens of thousands in two states. The Co-op Connections Card is powerful because of the number of cooperative members behind the card. Millions of members together are an extremely strong force.

We are proud to be your energy provider. If we can do anything to improve our service to you, please let us know. ■



73rd Annual Meeting
April 6, 2009



The Co-op Commitment to Affordable Power

Each month you budget for your phone, electricity, house, and car payments. Generally you know how much each bill will cost and plan your spending accordingly. But what if you couldn't control your energy costs? What if, each month, they climbed beyond your reach?

At Rock Energy Cooperative, we deliver affordable power to you every day. It's why electric cooperatives were created, and it's a commitment we plan to keep. But national energy legislation could force prices higher than many consumers can afford, effectively taking us back to the dawn of the 20th century.

In the 1920s and early '30s, central station electric service was a luxury that only 10 percent of rural residents nationwide enjoyed, and those who had power paid dearly for it. When Franklin D. Roosevelt visited Warm Springs, Georgia, in 1924, he was dismayed to find electricity for his small cottage cost four times what it did at his estate in New York. After being elected president, he created the federal Rural Electrification Administration by Executive Order to make power affordable for all Americans. As a result, electric co-ops were born.

Innovations in line building pioneered by co-op engineers and the competitive pressure co-ops placed on investor-owned utilities to serve rural areas slashed the cost of providing electric service in the countryside by 50 percent or more. In the decades since, co-ops have established a proven track record of offering stable and affordable electric rates. Data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), in fact, shows that since 2000 co-op electric rates have consistently run lower than the



industry average. This is further proof that we're committed to keeping electricity bills within your means.

But the struggle for affordable power that farmers and their neighbors fought three-quarters of a century ago has flared up again. When adjusted for inflation, EIA predicts the price of electricity for residential consumers will climb 14.6 percent by 2030, but federal energy and climate change policy will likely impact energy prices further. Electric cooperatives are needed once again to make sure affordable power will be available in 2030 and beyond. Our job, on your behalf, is to work closely with Congress to find the

best solutions for addressing climate change while keeping the price of electricity within your means.

Rock Energy Cooperative remains committed to providing you with safe, reliable, and affordable power, but we need your help. Through the "Our Energy, Our Future"™ grassroots awareness campaign, co-op members across the nation are speaking out about the importance of keeping electric bills affordable. New energy and climate change policies being debated in Congress could turn your monthly budget upside-down. Now is the time to ask our elected officials: Will you please work with electric cooperatives to be sure public policy meets my need for affordable electricity?

Visit www.ourenergy.coop today and send an e-mail to your elected representatives sharing your concern.—Sources: *The Next Greatest Thing*, U.S. Energy Information Administration ■



Get Connected

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



Basics Cooperative – Janesville, WI – 608-754-3925
A full-service grocery store providing high-quality natural foods, healthy choices, top-notch service & information... natural foods loaded with nutrients, free from artificial colors, flavors & preservatives; in short with as little as possible removed and nothing added... at Basics, It's Only Natural!
5% Off Thursdays (excludes "everyday low price" items)

Dr. Detail • US Cellular – Beloit, WI – 608-362-6264
US Cellular Authorized Agent; providing a full range of services and products including phones and accessories.
25% Off any one accessory and/or \$10 Off new phone (w/2 year agreement)



Embroid This – Roscoe, IL – 815-623-2200
Custom embroidery & direct to garment printing... so much more than the name implies. Providing great embroidered apparel... our unique Digital Direct to Garment printing system as well as great promotional items. Visit our showroom; we can set you up... your one stop shop for Corporate Wear, Casual Wear, School Spirit Wear, Team Uniforms, Personalized Gifts... we have it all!
10% Off

Pat's Hair Salon – Machesney Park, IL – 815-639-9219
Offering quality services at affordable prices... experienced stylists... cuts, color, hi-lites, corrective color, perms, up-dos, facial waxing, OPI manicures & pedicures, Nioxin Scalp Renew Treatments, RETAIL – Biolage, Bed-Head, Aquage, Crew, Wella, & Color Preserve... we are waiting to serve you. Walk-ins are always welcome!
20% Off new clients - 10% Off existing clients (entire bill including retail, no other discounts apply)

Nyrie's Flower Shop – South Beloit, IL – 815-389-4646
Committed to offering the finest floral arrangements and gifts, backed by friendly and prompt service. Our professionals are dedicated to making your experience a pleasant one. We always go the extra mile to make your floral gift perfect... tropicals, plants, European/dish gardens, high-style, silk & dried floral arrangements, extensive gift line and gift baskets, gourmet and fruit baskets, greeting cards & candles.
10% Off in-store purchase (excluding wire orders and Valentine's Day)

For a complete listing of current "deals" visit www.rock.coop; terms and conditions of "deals" subject to change as desired by individual participating businesses.

Youth Leadership Congress Registration Extended

Still thinking about what you want to do this summer? Don't miss out on this very special opportunity. Identify and develop your leadership skills and get a taste of college life. Spend three days at the Youth Leadership Congress at UW-River Falls with other like-minded young people representing co-ops all over Wisconsin (open to *all* REC members).

Learn about the Cooperative Difference with Dr. David Trechter, see the S.O.S Players from Hudson, and participate in Craig Hillier's "Breakthrough Leadership" presentation. There will even be learning sessions on college life, alternative energy, careers in co-ops, and a special closing night dinner. Hands-on and fun, this conference is for you.

Visit www.rock.coop for all the details, and sign up for this once-in-a-lifetime fully sponsored event. ■

Rock Energy South Beloit Office Opens



Please visit us in our brand new Willowbrook Road building, 15229 Willowbrook Road, South Beloit, ILL 61080 (approximately 3/4 mile south of the Flying J on Hwy. 75 at the I-90 exit). We're almost all settled in—just waiting for you to stop by...

REC will be closed on Monday, May 25, in observance of Memorial Day. The office will re-open at 7:30 a.m. on Tuesday, May 26. Payments may still be made at drop boxes throughout that period.



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More Power To You



By Shane L. Larson,
Chief Executive Officer

Merriam-Webster defines the word cooperative as a willingness to work with others. That's just what energy cooperatives and Congress must do to keep electric bills affordable.

I have talked previously about the Our Energy, Our Future campaign. The movement engag-

es co-op members in a conversation with elected officials about how the country can meet climate change goals while keeping electricity reliable and affordable. I am pleased to report that Rock Energy Cooperative members are talking. Let's hope our national leaders are listening.

A total of 185 members submitted Our Energy, Our Future cards at the April 6 annual meeting. The cards authorized co-op employees to contact U.S. senators and representatives on behalf of members regarding climate change legislation. One plan, commonly called cap-and-trade, is getting the most air time. Since the campaign started in February 2008, Rock Energy members have sent more than 888 messages to lawmakers. Nationally, almost 300,000 members have made their voices heard.

In a nutshell, here's how the cap-and-trade program works. The government establishes a desired level of greenhouse gas for the country (the cap). Emitters of greenhouse gases then would buy emissions permits/allowances for every metric ton of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere. These permits/allowances would be purchased through an auction process (the trade). Thereafter, these allowances could be traded like stocks.

As I write this, the House Energy and Commerce Committee is busy negotiating proposals and counter-proposals on both the cap and the trade. Committee leaders hope to have the bill out of committee by Memorial Day and on the House floor by the August recess.

The trade or purchase of allowances is expected to generate about \$650 billion. That's a big chunk of change, and who will get that money is the \$650 billion question. President Barack Obama's budget assumes that some of the revenue will help consumers pay for higher energy costs. One committee proposal doesn't specify

how the money should be distributed.

When Glenn English, CEO of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, testified April 23 before the House Energy and Commerce Committee and the Subcommittee on Energy and the Environment, he voiced strong opposition to auctioning all emission allowances on the open market.

"The only reason to auction emission allowances is to raise revenue for the government—the very definition of a tax," English told the committee. "NRECA does not believe that climate change legislation should be used as a method to enhance the government's revenues. Such a scheme would only serve to establish a variable tax to fund government programs."

Should climate change legislation become law, the consensus is that power bills will increase. No matter what the final legislation looks like, it's clear that changing our energy supply and addressing climate change will be expensive. The average household could pay an extra \$98 to \$140 a year to achieve emissions reductions called for in the original version of the bill,

according to an analysis by the Environmental Protection Agency. That estimate assumes that 40 percent of the money collected from auctioning off emissions credits would be returned to consumers to help pay energy bills.

By working together, cooperatives and Congress can help make the apparent cost increases as painless as possible. As a member-owned, not-for-profit organization, Rock Energy is joining other cooperatives around the nation to:

- Educate members about affordability, reliability, and energy policy.
- Work to manage costs and ensure reliability.
- Help our members save money and energy with efficiency and conservation.
- Work with government to develop technology needed to meet climate change goals.

For its part, government must:

- Work with electric co-ops to develop least-cost solutions.
- Be honest with consumers about the costs and who will pay—no backdoor taxes or hidden agendas. ▶





- Invest in technology necessary to meet climate change goals.

It's not too late for you to join the conversation. Go to www.ourenegy.coop and complete the simple form. Rock Energy members who live in Illinois should select Wisconsin as the location of the cooperative because that's where our headquarters is located. E-mails and letters will be sent to legislators based on your home address. If you don't have access to the Internet, just call the office and we'll fill out the online form for you.

As always, it's a privilege to serve your energy needs. Please let us know if we can do anything to improve our service to you. ■

REC Board Reorganization Complete

Darrel Weber of rural Milton is the new chairman of the board of directors for Rock Energy Cooperative. The board elected new officers at its April reorganization meeting. Weber has represented Bradford, Darien, and Johnstown townships on the board since 1991. He previously served as first vice chairman. Other directors elected to leadership positions include:

William Dietsch, first vice chairman, has represented Newark and Plymouth townships on the board since 1999. He previously served as second vice chairman.

William Fischer, second vice chairman, has represented Alden, Chemung, Clinton, Hebron, Leroy, Manchester, Roscoe, and Turtle townships since 2003.

Marian Trescher, treasurer, has represented Lima and Milton townships since 2005.

Robert Crave was re-elected as secretary. He has represented Beloit, Rock, and Rockton townships since 1983.

The board expressed gratitude to Stan Dybevik, who had served as chairman since 1995, and James Quade, treasurer since 1996. ■

Rock Energy Family Night at the Ballpark

Saturday, June 20

Beloit Snappers take on the Quad Cities River Bandits
Gametime 7:00 p.m. • Pohlman Field at Telfer Park, Beloit, WI

Special "member-only" food pricing

The first 30 "member kids" (w/parent or guardian) purchasing food vouchers receive a special gift!

Come early for autographs from 6:15 – 6:45 p.m.—you never know who the next major leaguer will be! Stay for the spectacular fireworks show immediately following the game.

All summer long, get Snapper tickets for any home game. Purchase vouchers in advance at either REC office location—just \$2.00 for each voucher (\$6.50 value).

Get Connected

Co-op Connections Card



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

Vibrational Energy Solutions – Edgerton, WI – 608-359-1613



Vibrational Energy Solutions

Providing the body with stress reduction and relaxation services naturally increasing awareness, including biofeedback, hypnosis and Erdsal Zone Therapy – an advanced form of reflexology. At Vibrational Energy Solutions, we believe that healing begins from within.

20% Off Stress Reduction Services

The Red Rooster – Milton, WI – 608-868-5555

Unique country gifts and home décor... The Red Rooster is a warm, cozy, primitive shop. We specialize in providing unique and different furnishings for your home and gift giving. Whether it be in accent lighting, seasonal items, candles and accessories, linens, or rugs, we are here to help you make the perfect look for your family home and to give a gift that sends a message to the person that they are special. We also serve 16 tantalizing flavors of ice cream along with refreshing smoothies, shakes, and root beer floats. Stop by for a visit and make yourself at home with our comforting scents and relaxed atmosphere.



20% Off Cheerful Giver Candles

National Flag Store – Roscoe, IL – 815-623-8022



Flags & flag poles; custom flags; retractable awnings, Italian charms & bracelets; garden flags & poles and banners. We deal in only the highest quality and "Made In The USA" when it comes to our flags. We offer the complete line of

TopFlight™ flagpoles. Pro Motorized Awnings are available from dealers only. Awnings from SunSetter® let you take control of the weather on your deck or patio - in seconds. We offer manually operated awnings and electric motorized awnings to fit every home.

10% Discount

Huber Haus Handmades – Durand, IL – 815-248-2300

Offering handmade gifts to order – dolls, toys, quilt afghans, dishtowels, shirts, hats & scarves... Grandm Huber knits, crochets, quilts, sews & embroiders.



10% Discount

Knight's Inn – South Beloit, IL – 815-389-2281

37 newly renovated rooms; all ground floor, free parking at your door, exterior corridors; 4 HBO channels; free lobby coffee; near restaurants and shopping; small pets allowed; AM/FM Alarm Clock; No Smoking Rooms; small pets allowed; RV/Bus/Truck Parking; guest laundry facilities with free detergent.



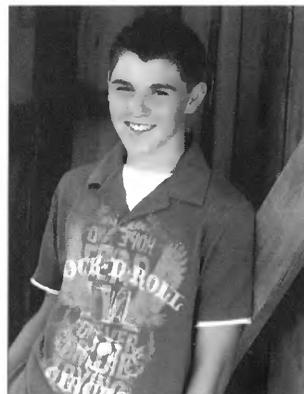
Every Knight, Just Right®

10% Off Rack Rate

For a complete listing of current "deals" visit www.rock.coop; terms and conditions of "deals" subject to change as desired by individual participating businesses.



Tyler Long



Matt Valenti

"Youth to Washington Tour" Winners Selected

Congratulations to Tyler Long of Orfordville, Wisconsin, and Matt Valenti of Rockton, Illinois. Tyler is a sophomore at Orfordville Parkview High School. He has been active in 4-H for 10 years in many different capacities, a marching member of Janesville Fife & Drum, and a performer in his high school show choir, Heatwave. He's even got a second degree black belt in karate.

Matt, a junior at Hononegah High School, is a member of the National Honor Society, the Key Club, and president of the Renaissance Club. He is a Life Scout, working toward Eagle Scout status. He's also helped out at the local food pantry and Rockford Rescue Mission.

Both are off to Washington, D.C., this month with high schoolers from all across the country for a week of fun and education... perhaps even life-changing experiences. Great job, boys! ■

REC Closed for Business on July 4

REC will be closed on Friday, July 3, in observance of the July 4th holiday. The office(s) will reopen at 7:30 a.m. on Monday, July 6. Payments may still be made at drop boxes throughout that period.



Shane Larson, CEO
Marty Berg, Editor

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Don't Let Electricity GROUND Your Summer Water Fun



Summer brings to mind a cool dip in the pool, a refreshing day at the lake or fishing on the bank of a trickling stream. Don't let a safety hazard dampen your summer fun. Here at Rock Energy, we want to remind everyone once again of the obvious—water and electricity are a dangerous combination. Assessing electrical hazards near areas of water is a wise investment of time and personal energy.

The result of contact between water and electricity can be serious, or even deadly. And in most instances, if potential safety hazards are taken into consideration and handled proactively, accidents and deaths could certainly be avoided.

Electrical equipment around swimming pools can pose a real hazard; indeed, deaths and serious shocks occur in and around swimming pools each year. Keep these tips in mind to stay safe in or around swimming pools:

- Do not put any electrical appliances within 5 feet of a swimming pool.
- Any electrical outlets within 20 feet of a pool should be equipped with a Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI).
- Pools and decks should be built at least 5 feet away from all underground electrical lines, and at least 25 feet away from overhead electrical lines.
- Never swim during a thunderstorm.
- Use battery operated, rather than electrical, appliances near swimming pools.

- If a swimmer is electrocuted or shocked, don't dive in yourself or you could be electrocuted as well. Turn off the power, and then use a fiberglass shepherd's hook to pull the victim out of the water.

When you leave the pool, don't change the radio station or touch any electrical appliances until you are dry—never touch any electrical appliances when you are wet or standing in water. If children wish to play with sprinklers or hoses, emphasize that they should be set up well away from any electrical outlets or appliances.

Larger bodies of water pose dangers as well. If you plan to go boating or fishing this summer, be aware of your surroundings and potential electrical hazards.

Always check the location of nearby power lines before boating or fishing. Contact between your boat and a power line could be devastating. Maintain a distance of at least 10 feet between your boat and nearby power lines to be safe.

If your boat does come in contact with a power line, never jump out of the boat into the water—the water could be energized. Instead, stay in the boat and avoid touching anything metal until help arrives or until your boat is no longer in contact with the line.

Be sure dockside outlets have GFCI protection and check cords that are plugged into them to make sure there is no broken casing or exposed wires.

Check for the location of power lines before fishing. Make sure you are casting the line away from power lines to avoid potential contact. ■



By Shane L. Larson,
Chief Executive Officer

More Power to You

If you've seen the recent news coverage about a legal dispute between Rock Energy Cooperative and the village of Rockton, you might be wondering what's going on at the co-op. Rest assured that we filed the lawsuit only after years and years of discussions with village officials.

We are asking the federal court to invalidate an April 2005 referendum that village officials claim authorizes them to acquire and operate the electric and natural gas distribution systems needed to provide electric and gas service within the village. We believe the 2005 referendum was flawed, primarily for two reasons.

First, there is a \$13 million difference between the dollar amount shown on the ordinance published before the election (\$35 million) and the dollar amount shown on the ballot voters received on Election Day (\$48 million). That's a big difference and simply isn't right. Just like it wouldn't be right for a retailer to advertise an item for \$35 and then expect you to pay \$48 at the checkout. Or for my son to ask me for \$35 for the latest video game and then take \$48 out of my wallet after I agreed to the smaller amount.

Second, the referendum specifically authorizes the village to buy the assets of South Beloit Water, Gas & Electric. It did not refer to acquiring assets from Rock Energy or Rock County Electric Cooperative Association, which was our name at the time. This is significant because Rock Energy Cooperative (or Rock County Electric Cooperative) is not SBWG&E. Rock Energy Cooperative is a cooperative, which means that residents of Rockton, like all of our members, already have a financial stake in their electric and natural gas company, so essentially they would be buying something they already own.

While our current lawsuit focuses on the flawed referendum, we firmly believe that Rock Energy can provide less expensive, more reliable, and safer service to the village. For the past seven decades, Rock Energy Cooperative has operated as a not-for-profit, cost-of-service provider. As a cooperative, any revenue collected by the co-op that isn't needed to cover the cost of providing ser-

vice is returned to members in the form of capital credits. To date, Rock Energy Cooperative has paid out nearly \$9 million to our members through capital credits.

Rockton officials have publicly stated that the village can purchase the utility, operate and maintain it, and give better service at the same cost as or less than residents are currently paying. But they haven't provided specifics. Where will the energy come from? How can such a small entity, like the village, negotiate favorable rates? Who is going to run the utility? How much will it cost to hire well-qualified people?

If you live in Rockton, you deserve to know the answers to these and other questions. I encourage you to talk to your village officials to assure that a potential purchase of the utility services would be in your best interest. Remember that as a co-op member, you already have a financial stake in Rock Energy. Again, why buy something that you already own?

Here's an interesting fact: In Illinois, the last municipal utility takeover occurred more than 50 years ago. Existing municipal systems were created decades ago when federally subsidized power and other financial advantages were available. There must

be legitimate reasons why a municipality in the state of Illinois hasn't taken over an existing utility in over 50 years. Rockton isn't the first Illinois municipality to explore a utility takeover in recent years; however, over the past 50-plus years, all others have done the analysis and determined that it was not in the best interest of their residents.

Rock Energy also is concerned that safety and reliability may suffer greatly if the village attempted to take on this very serious responsibility. We have been providing safe and reliable utility service for more than 70 years. It's what we do, and we do it well. And it's the only thing we do. Municipalities already provide many necessities—paving and plowing streets, keeping residents safe with police and fire protection, and maintaining city parks. The list goes on and on. Why does Rockton want to get into the electric and natural gas business?

Village officials recognize when other entities can operate businesses better than they can. In March 2009, the village board entered into a contract with the Stateline Family YMCA to take over management of the village-

As stewards of the co-op, we have a duty to our members to ensure that the cooperative's assets are secured.



When Thunder Roars, Go Indoors!

Follow These Tips to Protect Yourself from Lightning

Lightning kills an average of 62 people each year, and hundreds of others suffer permanent neurological disabilities, according to the National Weather Service.

Most of the fatalities occur outside, so get to a safe place quickly when thunderstorms threaten and stay there for at least 30 minutes after you hear the last thunder clap.

Even though most lightning injuries occur outdoors, caution also should be taken indoors. You can be struck while using electrical equipment or corded phones or having contact with plumbing, a metal door, or a window frame.

Follow these tips to keep you and your family safe from lightning this summer:

- Seek shelter immediately if you hear thunder. Lightning is not far away.
- Find shelter in a substantial building or in a fully enclosed vehicle with the windows rolled up.
- Do not seek shelter under trees, picnic or rain structures, or in open-frame vehicles.
- Avoid objects like electric wires or metal fences.
- If you cannot find shelter, keep your feet together and crouch on the ground, using the “lightning crouch” with feet together, squat low, tuck head, and cover ears.
- If you are inside, do not plug or unplug anything during an electrical storm.
- Avoid contact with any electrical equipment, including computers.
- Do not use corded phones except in an emergency. Phone use is the main cause of indoor lightning injuries in the United States. Cordless phones and cell phones are safe to use.
- Avoid contact with water, pipes, washers, or dryers. Water pipes conduct electricity, so don’t take a bath or shower during a storm.
- If a person is struck by lightning, call 911 and care for the victim immediately. You can’t be harmed by touching a victim after the lightning strike. ■

(Photo courtesy of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration)



owned swimming pool. A Rockton official was quoted in the *Rockford Register Star* saying this about the Y running the pool: "I think it'll be a professional operation, run well and more efficiently, and the bottom line is it will be less of an expense to the village. They have trained staff on hand and do a lot of the training we previously had to outsource."

The outcome of this lawsuit and a countersuit the village filed in state court will affect all Rock Energy members—those living outside of Rockton as well as those within the village. As a cooperative, we have a responsibility to do what is best for all of our members. When Rock Energy acquired the Illinois service territory from Alliant in 2007, our size more than tripled. With the additional members, our fixed costs are spread over more accounts, which helps keep costs down for everyone.

We didn't file this lawsuit on a whim. As stewards of the co-op, we have a duty to our members to ensure that the cooperative's assets are secured. As these matters work their way through the courts, Rock Energy will remain focused on delivering safe and reliable utility service at the lowest practical cost to all of our members, both in Rockton and across the rest of our system.

As always, we truly appreciate the opportunity to serve your energy needs. If we can do anything to improve our service to you, please contact us. ■



Darrel Weber, new chairman of the Rock Energy Cooperative Board of Directors, presents Stan Dybevik (above, right) with a plaque in recognition of his service as chairman. Dybevik, who had served as chairman since 1995, passed his gavel to Weber. James Quade (below, right) receives a plaque for serving as treasurer since 1996.



Offices Closed for Independence Day

Rock Electric Cooperative offices will be closed on Friday, July 3, in observance of Independence Day and will reopen at 7:30 a.m. Monday, July 6. 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 (608) 752-4550 or toll-free (866) 752-4550. Have a safe and happy Fourth of July! ■



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

When using your laptop computer at home, put the battery charger (an AC adapter) on a power strip that can be turned off. The transformer in the charger draws power continuously, even when the laptop is not plugged in.—Source: U.S. Department of Energy

Get Connected

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



Marcella's Ceramics - Beloit, WI - (608) 362-5056

Hobby ceramics supplies, equipment, and services since 1958. We also manufacture casting slip, greenware, and bisqueware.

20% Off Retail Products (excluding equipment)



Milwaukee PC - Janesville, WI - (608) 743-1267

Local computer retailer specializing in service and repairing all name brand PCs. We also sell new custom computers and various parts. Milwaukee PC is unique in the philosophy of providing outstanding customer service, alongside aggressively competitive pricing.

10% Off Parts; 25% Off Labor



Patterson Auto Sales - Edgerton, WI - (608) 884-6890

Quality pre-owned vehicles, lowest prices around on cars, trucks, and accessories. Family owned.

10% Over Cost on All Truck Accessories



Green Living Today - Beloit, WI - (608) 364-4585

Committed to healthy living in today's world. Offering multiple products that provide cleaner indoor air, purified drinking water, energy savings, and nutrition for a healthy body, home, and workplace. Our products are designed to make the entire indoor environment safer and greener. Ask about a free in-home trial of our fresh air purifier.

5% - 10% Discount

For a complete listing of current deals, visit www.rock.coop. Terms and conditions subject to change as desired by individual participating businesses.

Tell Us What's Happening

Several pages in this magazine each month are devoted to news and features about Rock Energy Cooperative and its members, and we want to tell your story.

Have you taken any unusual steps to save energy and lower your utility bill? Do you know of a member who has installed a renewable energy source, such as solar or wind, to help conserve resources? Have you saved a significant amount of money using your Co-op Connections Card?

If the answer to any of these questions is "Yes," we want to hear from you so we can tell other members about your success. Call Barbara Uebelacker, communications specialist, at (866) 752-4550, e-mail her at BarbU@rock.coop, or write to her at Rock Energy Cooperative, P.O. Box 126, South Beloit, IL 61080. ■

Member Appreciation Day 2009

Saturday, September 19
REC Headquarters

Hot dogs • Brats
Hamburgers • Chips
Popcorn



Shane Larson, CEO
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More Power to You



By *Shane L. Larson,*
Chief Executive Officer

When you heard news that the House of Representatives took action on climate change legislation, you may have thought it was time to kick back, relax, and enjoy the rest of the summer.

Well, that's not the way Congress works. The House passed its version of the bill, commonly called cap and trade, on June 26. But that's just the beginning. The same process now begins in the Senate, and it's impossible to predict what might happen there.

In fact, it's difficult to figure out exactly what happened in the House. The climate change bill is more than 1,500 pages long, and a 300-page amendment was added the morning of the vote. Do you think anyone has read it? And if they have read it, do they fully understand the ramifications of everything in it?

By the way, if you're interested, the Library of Congress has the full text posted on its web site at <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d111:H.R.2454>: Doctors are recommending that insomniacs read it as a sure-fire way to help them get some sleep.

Seriously, that 1,500-page bill is as long as Tolstoy's epic novel "War and Peace." The bill's stated goal is admirable: "to create clean energy jobs, achieve energy independence, reduce global warming pollution, and transition to a clean energy economy." Who can argue with that? But as good intentioned as those goals are, no one can predict the bill's unintended consequences. And surely those 1,500 pages contain at least a few.

How high will energy prices go? Are consumers ready to pay the extra costs? Will this new energy policy further damage the nation's economy?

Remember the old saying: The devil is in the details. Even if the overall bill appears to be good, it might include small things that could cause big problems down the road if overlooked. You can imagine how easy it would be to overlook several small details in 1,500 pages. To quote another old saying: It would be like trying to find a needle in a haystack.

Granted, the House bill includes some compromises

that would protect co-ops if they make it to the final legislation. Co-op members from across the country—including those from Rock Energy Cooperative—voiced their opinions on climate change, and the House of Representatives appeared to listen.

In the initial bill, industries could have received more than 100 percent of the allowances they need to comply with mandatory reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. So, for example, one California-based utility would have received 181 percent of the allowances it needs, while a Midwest energy co-op would have received only 59 percent of its needs. The California utility could have sold its extra emission allowances to the Midwest co-op. Essentially, rural America would have been subsidizing the energy bills of consumers with greater access to low-carbon energy.

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association pointed out this unfairness, and the wording was changed. "Providing language that no utility should receive allowances in excess of 100 percent of their needs deals with

an inequity that could have cost consumers," Glenn English, NRECA CEO, said in a letter to the chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Commission.

The bill now calls for any allowances above 100 percent to be transferred to other utilities based on their emission levels. That provision is fair

and makes more sense.

Another change in the bill focuses on small utilities, like Rock Energy. A total of 0.5 percent of all allowances would be set aside for co-ops and municipal systems with less than 4 million megawatt-hours in annual sales. Those allowances would be based on emissions and must be used for energy efficiency, renewable electricity, or low-income assistance programs.

The transformation of the climate change legislation in the House shows democracy in action and demonstrates the power of the people. You've heard me mention the Our Energy Our Future campaign many times before. The grass-roots campaign encourages co-op members to talk with their elected representatives about how the country can meet climate change goals while keeping electricity affordable and reliable. Since the campaign started in February 2008, I'm proud to report that Rock Energy members have sent more than 1,400 messages to their lawmakers. ►



Our Energy, Our Future
A Dialogue With America
www.ourenergy.coop

Waste Not, Want Not

Efforts Under Way to Manage and Reprocess Nuclear Waste

Nuclear energy, first generated in the 1950s, supplies power to one out of five homes and businesses nationally. With climate change policy dominating congressional debate, nuclear power—largely dormant for the past 25 years—may be poised for a comeback.

Unlike fossil fuels like coal and natural gas, nuclear generation does not emit carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas blamed as the principal contributor to global warming. In addition, nuclear reactors produce electricity in much larger quantities and more reliably than other non-carbon emitting generation sources like wind and solar.

“As a zero-carbon energy source, nuclear power must be part of our energy mix,” predicts U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Secretary Stephen Chu.

Nuclear power plants use fission, the process of splitting atoms apart, to produce electricity. When a uranium atom splits, heat and radiation are released. The heat turns water into steam, which spins turbines to generate electricity. The uranium, housed in special rods, becomes highly radioactive once used.

The main drawback to nuclear power has always been the waste. Currently, spent fuel rods are stored at nuclear power plants in one of two ways: in special cooling pools where water removes heat from the rods and shields the area from the radiation and in dry cask containers stored in air-conditioned concrete or steel buildings. Both measures, however, were only meant as temporary steps.

For the last 25 years, the federal government has pursued a policy of developing a permanent, central repository for waste storage—an effort that’s met political and legal resistance and appears to have been abandoned. Yet as of the end of 2008, nearly 66,000 tons of nuclear waste was sitting at 126 temporary sites in 39 states, all in above-ground cooling pools or dry casks. DOE says the nation’s fleet of 104 commercial nuclear power reactors could produce 143,000 tons of waste over their operating lives.

According to the Electric Power Research Institute, a utility research consortium that includes electric co-ops, almost 100 times more energy remains available in spent fuel rods than is produced during the first cycle of use. To fully realize the potential of nuclear power as an essential part of America’s energy mix, scientists are researching how to effectively and safely recycle used nuclear fuel and affordably reprocess it to generate electricity again.

With this capability, nuclear power plants could

operate with a closed fuel cycle—the same material being used many times, leaving limited waste to store. The World Nuclear Association estimates materials potentially available for recycling spent fuel rods could keep American nuclear reactors running for the next 30 years.

To learn more about America’s evolving nuclear power program, visit www.ne.doe.gov. ■

Four Generations of Nuclear Power

Nuclear power has been evolving since the first atom was split in 1934. Four waves of technology mark its development:



Dec. 2, 1942
The world's first nuclear reactor is constructed and tested on a squash court at the University of Chicago
Capacity: No electricity produced

1940

FIRST GENERATION



1950s and '60s
The initial wave of prototype reactors is built for demonstration and research, with limited capacity
- Capacity: Around 50 MW
- Example: Dairyland Power Cooperative's La Crosse Boiling Water Reactor (1967 - '87)

1950

1960

SECOND GENERATION



Late 1960s - Early 1980s
The majority of reactors in the U.S. are built, using a wide variety of designs
- Capacity: Limited to 1,300 MW for safety reasons
- Example: North Anna Nuclear Power Station, co-owned by Old Dominion Electric Cooperative (1978 - present)

1970

1980

THIRD GENERATION



1990s - 2030
The next wave of U.S. reactors, already operating in some countries, will utilize three primary designs
- Capacity: Up to 1,500 MW
- Enhanced safety and plant efficiency

1990

FOURTH GENERATION



2030 - ?
Advanced reactors will feature additional safety measures and compact, economical designs
- Produce minimal radioactive waste
- Large reactors can be scaled down for use as small, local sources of power

2000s

Source: National Rural Electric Cooperative Association
Image Sources: U.S. Department of Energy; Dairyland Power Cooperative; Old Dominion Electric Cooperative; CANDU; Hyperion



I believe that House members listened and took co-op members' concerns into account as they shaped their version of the bill. It's time now to turn our attention to the Senate. They say that enacting legislation, like making sausage, is messy and not very appealing to watch. But we need to do more than just watch. We must participate in the process.

Please join the more than 362,000 co-op members nationwide who have sent more than 2.2 million messages to their congressional representatives. Please take a few minutes now and go to www.ourenergy.coop. Click

on "Join the campaign" and complete the simple form. Rock Energy members who live in Illinois should select Wisconsin as the location of the cooperative because that's where our headquarters is located. E-mails and letters will be sent to legislators based on your address. If you don't have Internet access, just call our office and we'll fill out the online form for you.

It's a great privilege to serve your energy needs and do our part to keep your service affordable and reliable. If we can do anything to improve, please let us know by stopping by or calling our Janesville or South Beloit offices. ■

Can You Help Us Find These People?

Rock Energy Cooperative holds unclaimed funds for the people listed here. These funds will be forfeited and paid to the Wisconsin Electric Cooperatives' Federated Youth Foundation for educational purposes unless claimed by Sept. 30, 2009. You may send claims to Rock Energy Cooperative's headquarters at P.O. Box 1758, Janesville, WI 53547-1758 or call (608) 752-4550 or (866) 752-4550.

Phyllis B. Abb
Abrahamson Bros
Thomas L. Adelman
Gladys Anderson
Andevor Farms
Jeanette Arnold
Carol J. Atkinson
Attica Towers Inc.
Badger Farm Store
Marvin W. Bailey Jr.
Alan W. Bailey
Robert Bartlett
Janet R. Baumann
Mike D. Bennett
James C. Berlin
Besly Welles Corp.
Sandra J. Beyer
Alvin A. Bluhm
Karen M. Boughton
Nancy Braun
A.J. Brinkman
James Brockner
Edward J. Brown
Grant P. Budd
Gregory L. Burkheimer
Ursel I. Byrski
C-5 Partners (Dairy Feed)
Allan Calhoun
Chancellor Outdoor Group
Gordon Chapman
Norm N. Clark
Bob Clayton

Kyle F. Condon
Consolidated Freightways
James Cooke
Richard A. Coplien
James Costigan
Ivan Cowell
Kenneth Cutsforth
Dahlen Transport Inc.
Jerry Dassow
Jennifer S. Delaney
Delite Outdoor USA Inc.
Kevin Derus
Gerald A. Dionysius
Thomas A. Douglas
Robert L. Dowds
Winfred M. Driscoll
Michael Duft
A. Dwyer
Sylvia Eberbach
Kermit J. Elliott
Grace Ellis
Employability Inc.
Richard M. Engen
Allen Erickson
Matthews Estherbelle
Family Foot Clinic
Perry A. Fischer
Michael J. Fitzsimons
Robert B. Flannery
James P. Foley
Andrew G. Forrest
James P. Fullerton

Charles A. Gabert
Dennis Gallagher
Gary Gander
Ella Gardner
Arland L. Gilbertson
Robert H. Gordon
Jeremy P. Gorton
Betty Grady
Gerald A. Gray
Francis Greenheck
Kenneth B. Guernsey
Robert J. Hagan
Mark W. Hanewall
James E. Hannaford
Jon H. Hannahs
Lawrence Harding
Marvin W. Harris
Eldon D. Haseltine
Louis Heinze
Brett D. Heyerdahl
Bruce Heyerdahl
Richard A. Hiller
Phyllis Hoekman
Robert E. Holmes
Kirk D. Hovland
Robert Hufford
Roger H. Hull
Philip Johns
Tom S. Johnson
Russell S. Johnson
Everett Johnson
Edith Jones
Marion G. Jorgensen
Verne Kapke
Gail Katzman
Alvin O. Keesey Jr.
Walter R. Kemmerer
Kathryn Kuschel
Daniel J. LaBonte
Edward J. LaCount
Wilbur Lakin
Robert K. Larsen
John Laurenson
Philip H. Lindgren
David E. Link
Steven A. Loblillo
Justiliano Lopez
Joynelle J. Lovell

Albert S. Lowell
Robin R. Lucas
Kenneth Luckey
John Lynch
Clifford Maas
Steven J. March
William H. Marcum
Daniel R. Martin
Steven Martin
James W. McCarty
Lyle McClay
MCI Communications
Webb R. McNall
Allen C. Meek
Judith Meidl
Kenneth H. Meidl
Thomas F. Menke
Victor R. Miller
Mobile Communications Corp.
Mobilemedia Comm Inc.
John R. Moccero
Richard Moeck
Merle Morgan
Mark Mueller
Troy D. Mulson
Charles R. Myers
Alfred Nesvold Jr.
Dan A. Newton
John E. Nottestad
Richard E. Nugent
Herbert Olmstead
Judith Olmsted
Carmen Olson
Edith F. Olson
Douglas Osborne
Chris Parker
Ronald T. Partridge
Roger W. Peterson
Judy M. Pettitt
Karen L. Pierson
Plymouth Rock Farms
Sandra L. Porter
Premier Real Estate
Donald Rath
Merlyn Reum Trust
Patrick G. Rice
Patrick Rich

Don R. Ritter
Reinaldo Rolon
Frank R. Romanski
Larry Schlichting
Frank L. Schmid
Clarence F. Schulz
James Schutt
Selck Farms Inc.
Gary D. Shipler
Gerald Smith
Wayne Smith
Frank E. Smith
William G. Smojver
David Sorg
Diana M. Spoon
Mary N. Spriggs
Debbie J. Stacey
David J. Steines
William H. Stumm
Robert Sullivan
Ronald J. Syphard
Timothy L. Templeton
Joseph C. Thomas
Dale R. Thompson
R.G. Thompson
Otto J. Tracy
Anna M. Vanweelden
Mark E. Veley
Philip T. Walters
Douglas L. Warejcka
Gail K. Webb
Ralph E. Welch
Gordon Westover
Charles M. White
Samuel P. Wille
Bruce Williams
Gary Williams
Gregory A. Williams
Robin J. Williams
Ronald A. Wilson
Eric J. Wirth
Dan L. Wonder
Roger L. Wunderlin
United States Shoe Corp.
Glen A. Yaeger
Kurt A. Yager
Ed Yates
Philip Zeilinger ■

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



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Locally owned and managed. We pride ourselves in having a very friendly and welcoming atmosphere. Come visit us in our new location! Wide choice of only the best products, and as always, kids pay according to their age. Walk-ins welcome!

One Free Kid's Cut (per family) & \$3 Off any man/woman's cut

**Office Pro - Janesville, WI - (608) 531-6001
www.goofficepro.com**

35,000 square feet of new and used furniture, chemical and janitorial supplies, document shredding services, recycling, and office supplies. The area's just-in-time supplier of office environment needs with an incredible depth of products and services to offer—school supplies, custom stamps, packaging supplies, and facility maintenance supplies to corporate accounts and small businesses. Our small, knowledgeable staff allows for personalized service and prompt delivery resulting in hundreds of loyal and satisfied customers.

20% Off all used furniture



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Tax and financial services. Preparing the nation's taxes since 1955. Spanish language available, tax audit support available. Year-round assistance.

\$29 Second Look for any prior return to verify accuracy of preparation

**House of Carpets - Beloit, WI (608) 362-7113
www.houseofcarpetsofbeloit.com**



Beloit's Carpet Superstore, servicing the Stalene Area for over 43 years, offering quality merchandise, honest and dependable craftsmanship, and always prompt

and courteous service. Find a comprehensive selection of brands and products for builder/residential, educational, multifamily housing, and office/tenant needs. Opened in 1966 as Carpet Seconds on Park Avenue. In 1977, became House of Carpets, one of Wisconsin's largest carpet stores, featuring over 400 rolls of carpet in stock as well as vinyl flooring tile and laminate.

10% Off all remnants

For a complete listing of current deals, visit www.rock.coop. Terms and conditions subject to change as desired by individual participating businesses.

Save the Date...

**MEMBER
APPRECIATION
DAY 2009**

**Saturday, September 19
REC Headquarters**

Hot dogs • Brats • Hamburgers
Chips • Popcorn



Energy Efficiency
Tip of the Month

Keeping your tires properly inflated improves gas mileage for the average vehicle by around 3 percent, saving up to 20 gallons of gasoline per year.

Source: Alliance to Save Energy



Shane Larson, CEO
Barbara Uebelacker, Editor

P.O. Box 1758 P.O. Box 126
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More Power to You

You Can Help Your Neighbor With Project Lift Up Donation



By Shane L. Larson,
Chief Executive Officer

Recent headlines paint a grim picture of the local economy:

*Jobless rate soaring. Jobless rate up again.
More workers are looking for jobs.
Jobless claims rise more than expected.*

The national unemployment rate rose to 9.5 percent in June, reaching a 26-year high. With its heavy reliance on manufacturing jobs, our area is faring worse than the rest of the nation. The rate was 14 percent in Winnebago County and 13.2 in Rock County. Beloit's jobless rate was the highest in Wisconsin at 18.6.

Numbers help us quantify the problem, but we must remember that those statistics represent real people who no longer collect a regular paycheck. They are our neighbors, and they need our help. In the true spirit of neighbor helping neighbor, Rock Energy Cooperative is launching Project Lift Up, a voluntary donation program that will help members who are struggling financially pay their energy bills.

Starting Sept. 1, you will have the opportunity to voluntarily donate to Project Lift Up by adding spare change to the amount paid on your monthly energy bill. That small amount of extra money will help fund our Rock Cooperative Care program. With the help of local agencies, Rock Cooperative Care assists low-income members with their utility bills. I have found that our co-op members are as kind and generous as they come and are always willing to lend a hand to a neighbor in need.

You have four options in which you can participate in Project Lift Up:

- Round your energy bill up to the nearest whole dollar amount. So if your bill this month is \$83.23, you would pay \$84. The extra 77 cents would be donated to Rock Cooperative Care. The most you could donate would be \$11.88 per year.
- Add \$1 each month to your budget billing plan. If you are on the budget plan, your bill already is a whole

dollar amount so \$1 will be added to your statement. If you choose this option, your annual donation would be \$12.

- Add a set monthly contribution each month. If you want to make a larger regular donation, this is the option for you. For example, \$5 could be added to your monthly statement for an annual contribution of \$60.
- Make a one-time only donation. If you choose this option, the amount you select will be added to your next bill.

Sign-up forms for Project Lift Up will be included in the newsletter you receive with your September energy bill. Participation forms also will be available at Member Appreciation Day on Sept. 19. Additionally, the form can be found online at www.rock.coop/projectliftup.html.

The funds you donate will go directly to Rock Cooperative Care, which offers a one-time grant of up to \$500 to help our residential members pay their utility bill. The actual level of assistance is determined by income guidelines. Rock Cooperative Care is designed to supplement the federal Low Income

Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), which helps income-eligible consumers offset the cost of their heating bills.

Project Lift Up funds donated to Rock Cooperative Care will be distributed to low-income members through local community action agencies. This assistance is in addition to funding available through LIHEAP and actually will help more members because the income guidelines are less stringent. It will benefit members who fall through the cracks because they earn too much to qualify for federal assistance but not enough to make ends meet.

Please consider participating in Project Lift Up. Times are tough for a lot of our neighbors, and they need our help. Remember that one of the seven principles of Rock Energy and all cooperatives is Concern for Community. This is your chance to show you care.

I also want to call your attention to other items of ►





interest in this month's magazine. You've heard a lot about the federal stimulus bill, formally known as the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, and you might be wondering: What's in it for me? Well, on the energy side, Uncle Sam is offering tax credits for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. If you're in the market for a new furnace or central air conditioning system or want to take steps to make your home more energy efficient with insulation or new windows, your tax refund next year might be bigger than you expected. Tax credits also are available for renewable energy projects. See page 16c for all the details.

Once again, I'm asking for your help with the Our Energy, Our Future campaign, which asks Congress to remember consumers when they debate climate legislation. Since early this year, Congress has been considering what is commonly referred to as cap and trade as a way to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. Any action undoubtedly will increase electric bills. Electric co-ops like Rock Energy want Congress to make sure the results are fair, affordable, and achievable. While some progress was made, the bill that came out of the House could still prove to be devastatingly expensive for those of us in the Midwest. The time is now to let our senators know we are very concerned and we are monitoring their actions. See the ad on this page to join the grass-roots campaign. If you don't have Internet access, call our office and we'll fill out the online form for you.

And, finally, please join us on Saturday, Sept. 19, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. for Member Appreciation Day. The festivities will take place at our Janesville headquarters, 2815 Kennedy Road. Our employees and directors have lots of activities planned and will be grilling plenty of food, so bring your appetites. See page 16d for the details. Member Appreciation Day is our way of saying "Thank You" to the most important part of the cooperative: You—the members. ■

Have a Safe and Happy Labor Day!

Rock Electric Cooperative offices will be closed on Monday, Sept. 7, in observance of Labor Day. We will reopen at 7:30 a.m. Tuesday, Sept. 8. 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 (608) 752-4550 or toll-free (866) 752-4550.

WE NEED YOUR HELP.



Our Energy, Our Future™
A Dialogue With America

Senators are drafting climate change legislation NOW, and you can impact the outcome.

Climate Change legislation should be:

Fair.

Climate Change legislation needs to recognize regional differences in how electricity is produced.

Affordable.

Any climate change plan must keep electricity affordable for all Americans.

Achievable.

Climate Change legislation must be realistic to ensure long-term success.

▶ Go to www.ourenergy.coop to make your voice heard.



Shane Larson, CEO
Barbara Uebelacker, Editor

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Use Tax Credits to Fund Efficiency Upgrades

The idea of living in a more efficient home—and paying lower utility bills—has widespread appeal. But finding ways to fund improvements can be difficult during hard economic times.

Fortunately, the federal government offers two ways to recover some of your expenses when planning upgrades: energy efficiency tax credits and renewable energy tax credits.

Through the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act—known as the federal stimulus bill—Uncle Sam offers a personal tax credit of up to \$1,500 for energy efficiency measures made at existing homes in 2009 and 2010. You can recover 30 percent of the cost of adding insulation materials and exterior doors, windows,

and roofs designed to help reduce your home's heat loss or gain. The credit also covers efficient central air conditioners, air-source heat pumps, hot water boilers, and biomass stoves.

The credit may be applied toward material costs on all projects. You can also use it on installation costs for heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems and biomass stoves.

Also, consider a renewable energy tax credit covering 30 percent of the cost of materials and installation for solar panels, solar water heaters, and geothermal heat pumps. This credit applies to existing homes and new construction. Projects must be placed into service between January 1, 2009, and December 31, 2016.

ENERGY STAR, a program of the U.S. Department of Energy and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, provides guidelines on what qualifies for both tax credits at www.energystar.gov, keyword "Tax credits."

File for energy tax credits using IRS Form 5695. Remember to get a Manufacturer Certification Statement (a signed statement from the manufacturer certifying that the product qualifies for the tax credit) for your records. Both energy tax credits are non-refundable—they can increase your refund by reducing the taxes you owe, dollar for dollar, and can be carried forward to reduce your taxes in following years. But you don't get a separate check for the credit amount. ■



Saving with the
STIMULUS

Making Sense out of Federal Stimulus Energy Efficiency Tax Credits

The 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provides incentives for you to make energy efficiency improvements to your existing home in 2009 and 2010. Receive a tax credit for 30 percent of the cost of materials for qualifying improvements—up to \$1,500 over both years. The cost of installation is not covered for windows, doors, roofing and insulation. A list of qualified improvements is at www.energystar.gov, keyword 'tax credits.' Examples include:

Windows and Doors

Exterior Windows, Doors and Skylights Must have Solar Heat Gain Coefficient (SHGC) and U-factor less than or equal to 0.30.

Storm Windows and Doors When combined with the window/door over which it's installed, it must meet the International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) in your climate zone.

Roofing

Metal, Asphalt Roofs All ENERGY STAR metal and asphalt roofs qualify. Must be expected to last 5 years or have a 2 year warranty.

Insulation

Insulation Primary purpose must be to insulate. For example, vapor retarders are covered but insulated siding does not qualify. Also must meet 2009 IECC and be expected to last 5 years or have a 2 year warranty.

Heating, Ventilating, and Air Conditioning (HVAC)

Central Air Conditioning For split systems, must have an energy efficiency ratio (EER) greater than or equal to 13 and a Seasonal EER greater than or equal to 16. For package systems, must have an EER greater than or equal to 12 and a SEER greater than or equal to 14.

Air-Source Heat Pumps For split systems, must have a Heating Seasonal Performance Factor (HSPF) greater than or equal to 8.5, an EER greater than or equal to 12.5, and a SEER greater than or equal to 15. For package systems, must have a HSPF greater than or equal to 8, an EER greater than or equal to 12, and a SEER greater than or equal to 14.

Natural Gas or Propane Furnace Must have an Annual Fuel Utilization Efficiency (AFUE) greater than or equal to 95.

Gas, Propane, or Oil Hot Water Boiler and Oil Furnace Must have an AFUE greater than or equal to 90.

Advanced Main Air Circulating Fan No more than 2 percent of furnace total energy use.

Source: ENERGY STAR. For details visit www.energystar.gov.

NOTE: Select non-solar water heaters and biomass stoves also qualify for energy efficiency tax credits. Tax credits are also available for renewable energy, including geothermal heat pumps. For tax purposes, the Manufacturer's Certification Statement and receipt are generally required.



Member Appreciation Day

is our way of saying

THANKS

to you—our valued members!

The employees and directors of Rock Energy Cooperative invite you to join us

Saturday, Sept. 19
11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

REC headquarters,
 2415 Kennedy Road, Janesville

- Free hamburgers, hot dogs, and brats grilled by employees and directors
- Popcorn and ice cream
- Bucket truck rides high up in the air
- Jumping booth for kids
- Health fair
- Jugglers
- Balloons
- Neighborly atmosphere



Bring your Rock Energy Co-op Connections Card to receive a free CFL

(Limit one per member)

Get Connected

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



All Game Taxidermy



All Game Taxidermy - Evansville, WI
 608-322-5494 - www.allgametaxidermy.net

Full-service taxidermy. Formed in 2008, experienced, offering better service and higher quality work, with very affordable prices. Matt and Nick are also avid hunters and sportsmen and enjoy working on all projects to bring out the beauty in all of the animals that are brought to them.
5% Off

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Proudly serving the South Beloit area. Family owned and operated, committed



to offering only the finest floral products, backed by service that is friendly and prompt. Our professional staff is dedicated to making your experience a pleasant one. We always go the extra mile to make your floral gift perfect. Specialties include: tropicals; plants; European/dish gardens; contemporary, traditional, and "high style" arrangements; silk and dried floral arrangements; wedding and funeral designs; extensive line of gift, gourmet, and fruit baskets; greeting cards and candles. Let us be your first choice for flowers.

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Tupperware - Janesville, WI 608-359-9022
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Featuring exceptional designs for food preparation, cookware, knives, and upscale serve ware. Buy in bulk and store with confidence. Create healthy meals in advance. HOME PARTY PLAN—Earn lots of free, lifetime guaranteed products. FUNDRAISERS—Earn 40% of sales using the Exclusive Fundraiser Line. CUSTOM KITCHEN PLANNING—Utilizing the "Modular Mate" organizational system. Lifetime guarantee against chipping, cracking, breaking, and peeling. No receipt required.

25% Off next product (with \$40 purchase); extra 5% Off for fundraisers

Fox Point Grille - Edgerton, WI - 608-884-0663

Simple elegance in dining. An intimate 50-seat restaurant and 10-seat full bar. Swing by, enjoy a glass of wine at the bar, or grab a table and savor a delicious meal. Featuring steaks and seafood, BBQ ribs and chicken, Cajun and German specialties. Family owned and operated in a beautifully restored historic building in downtown Edgerton. The menu honors four generations of family recipes and Midwestern favorites. Serving both lunch and dinner Tuesday through Saturday, brunch on Sunday, and now serving a FRIDAY NIGHT FISH FRY!

10% Off Dinners Tuesday-Thursday PMs



For a complete listing of current deals, visit www.rock.coop. Terms and conditions subject to change as desired by participating businesses. You also can use your Co-op Connections Card to receive a discount on prescription drugs. In July, Rock Energy members saved \$1,436 on their prescriptions, a 34% discount.



By Shane L. Larson,
Chief Executive Officer

More Power to You

Longtime Members of Our Co-op Family Keep Rock Energy Running Smoothly

With October being National Co-op Month, I want to take this opportunity to recognize and give a special thanks to a handful of employees and directors who have been an important part of this cooperative for more than a quarter of a century. When the co-op experience of these nine people is added together, the total equals 284 years. Good gravy, that's a lot of experience!

The pictured group includes six employees, two directors, and our longtime attorney, all of whom came on board when we were Rock County Electric Cooperative Association. Individually, they have contributed to the success of the co-op in their own way. Collectively, they are part of our co-op family.

If you talk to these folks, they'll probably tell you how much the co-op has grown since their first day on the job. Twenty-five years ago, back in 1984, the co-op had just 4,028 meters. Today, that number has soared to about 27,000 meters.

Denny Schultz, director of utility operations, says his most gratifying accomplishment in his 36 years at the co-op occurred just a few years ago when Rock Energy purchased the electrical and natural gas assets in northern Illinois from Alliant. "We worked hard to make sure we were buying a good product," Denny says. "It's been a great thing, more than tripling our size and bringing our Illinois members into the cooperative family."

The longtime employees also frequently mention the positives of working for a co-op. "There isn't a better atmosphere to work in than the co-op atmosphere," Denny says. "They know how to treat their employees and their members."

The variety of work is what appeals to Denny Dolgner, who started in 1976. We call him Denny D. to distinguish him from the "other" Denny. While his title is staking engineer, he wears many hats and is seldom seen around the warehouse without one on his head.

"My job is never the same. I do something different every day," Denny D. says. One day he might be working with automated meter-reading equipment or inspecting a substation, while another day he'll be serving as a backup lineman. "It's the best move I ever made," he says about getting a job at the co-op.

Lynn Maier, operations manager-north, came to work at the co-op 32 years ago after leaving the Chrysler plant in Belvidere. He started as a meter man and groundsman but set his sights on the line crew because it looked like a lot of fun.

"There was a thrill about going out there during a storm," Lynn says. "I always got a rush when there was an outage, and we'd get out there and get people connected again. Someone always took the time to say 'thank you,' which really means a lot." He remembers being on a team of co-op employees who helped out in Iowa after a 1995 ice storm. The members were so grateful that they



Folks who have served Rock Energy Cooperative for more than 25 years are, from left, Bill Kayser, Denny Schultz, Bob Crave, Lynn Maier, Stan Dybevik, Kathy Ellefson, David Collins, Denny Dolgner, and Ron Sowles.



provided workers with meals even though they had no electricity and relied only on generators for power.

Ron Sowles, area man who started at the co-op in 1984, also was a member of the team that helped out in Iowa. "Getting the lights on for people after a storm is the most rewarding part of the job," Ron says. "Members really appreciate what you do."

Ron, the newest member of the quarter century club at Rock Energy, received his commemorative meter lamp for 25 years of service this summer. After his first day of work, he remembers getting a call at home during a thunderstorm. He went back to work and didn't get home until noon the next day. When he hears thunder, he knows he might be called into work. It's less of a burden on workers' families now than it was in the days before cell phones. When Ron was called in for emergency work back then, he would tell his wife, "I'll see you when I see you." But now with cell phones, he can keep his family informed about where he is and when he might be home.

The Dennys, Lynn, and Ron are the more visible members of our co-op family because their jobs directly keep the lights on. But a team of people also works behind the scenes to keep the co-op running. Kathy Ellefson, bookkeeper since 1977, and Bill Kayser, accountant since 1982, are two people who help make sure the financial side of the co-op is in balance.

Kathy has watched the co-op grow from a tiny operation located in a dinky office to today's co-op with two locations. She remembers the days when office workers were required to wear uniform outfits, a different color blazer and slacks or skirts for each day of the week. Back in those days, co-op workers never had to decide what to wear to work, but they worried about maintaining a consistent weight because only one uniform was replaced each year.

Bill remembers when the co-op bought its current building on Kennedy Road in Janesville in 1984. The deal included a building swap, and the co-op actually got money back at closing. That doesn't happen every day.

When it comes to our governing body—the board of directors—we have two directors with a combined total of 64 years on the board. With dedicated directors like Stan Dybevik, on the board since 1971, and Bob Crave, a director since 1983, it's easy to see why your co-op is so successful. Our board attorney also is a seasoned veteran. David Collins has been providing legal advice to the co-op since 1974.

During Stan's 38 years on the board, he has served

as board secretary for 16 years and board chairman for 14 years. Bob currently serves as board secretary, a position he has held since 1987, and was chairman of the building committee for the South Beloit office and warehouse project. Along the way, both have acquired enough memories to fill several volumes and make plenty of lasting friendships.

Bob notes that the biggest change during his 26 years on the board has been in the demographics of the co-op. "Our membership is no longer dominated by agriculture," he said. "In the past, a majority of our membership had some connection to agriculture." That changed with the acquisition of the Illinois territory and subdivisions popping up over the countryside.

Stan says the best part is "just being part of a great national movement and the co-op family, serving with so many great directors and employees."

As a member of Rock Energy, you're not just a local co-op member. You're also part of something much bigger. Nearly 900 rural electric cooperatives operate nearly half of the electric distribution lines in the United States, covering three-quarters of the land mass. They provide electricity for more than 37 million people in

47 states. That's just the energy part of the co-op family. Throughout the nation, about 48,000 cooperatives serve 120 million people. They offer credit and financial services, health care, child care, housing, insurance, and other professional services. They sell food, farm supplies, hardware, and recreational equipment.

This year, we are celebrating National Co-op Month with an open house for members at our new South Beloit facility, 15229 Willowbrook Road, on Thursday and Friday, Oct. 15–16, from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. We're not planning anything elaborate, but we want to provide an opportunity for our members to take a look at the facility that we moved into this spring. It's a chance for you—our members—to stop by, take a brief tour, learn a little more about how your co-op runs, and meet a few of the friendly people who make sure the lights are on when you flip a switch at home.

Again, I want to give a big thanks to these terrific employees and directors who have given so much to the cooperative over so many years. Whether an employee has worked for Rock Energy for three months or three decades, we consider it our privilege to serve our members' energy needs. As always, if we can do anything to improve our service to you, please let us know. I hope to see you at our open house. ■

COOPERATIVES :
STRONGER
TOGETHER

Rock Energy Helps School, Businesses Reduce Energy Use

Rock Energy Cooperative helped five members who represent five types of energy needs—a public high school and four South Beloit businesses—conduct energy audits in August to show how they can identify and implement measures that will save energy and ultimately reduce their energy costs.

At the request of Rock Energy, the Smart Energy Design Assistance Center (SEDAC) conducted energy site assessments at five Illinois locations:

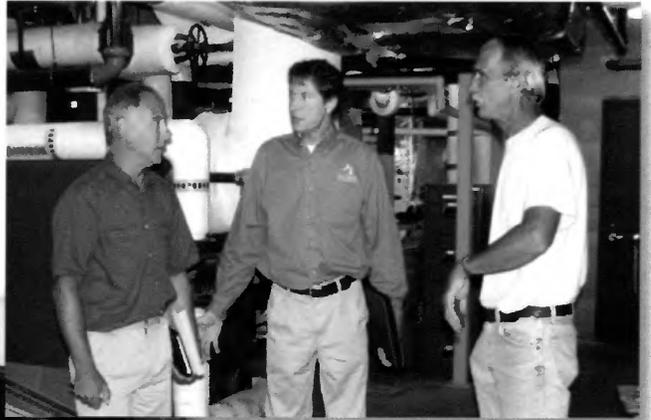
- Hononegah High School in Rockton
- North American Tool, maker of custom taps and dies
- Cinetic Landis Corp., manufacturer of industrial grinding wheels
- Top Die, an aluminum die casting company
- Flying J truck stop and restaurant

SEDAC, which is based at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, provides advice to enable businesses and public facilities in Illinois to increase their economic viability through the efficient use of energy. The service is sponsored by the Illinois Department of Community and Economic Opportunity and is provided to clients throughout the state, including those in the Rock Energy service area.

“In these difficult economic times, we want to ensure that our members have all the tools necessary to keep their energy costs as affordable as possible,” said Shane Larson, CEO of Rock Energy. “This is especially important for a school like Hononegah that is supported by tax dollars and businesses that provide jobs for area residents.”

Energy engineers Andy Robinson and Eileen T. Westervelt from SEDAC first spent some time talking to the members about their energy use and then conducted a walk-through analysis of the facilities. Afterward, they developed recommendations for how energy can be used more wisely with the goal of reducing energy costs.

At Hononegah, Robinson and Westervelt praised Ehren Jarrett, principal, and John Fallon, director of



Above: Discussing energy use in the boiler room at Hononegah High School are, from left, Rick Pettibone, energy consultant; Dale Kessinger, energy services manager at Rock Energy; and John Fallon, director of building and grounds at the high school. Left: Andy Robinson, energy engineer at the Smart Energy Design Assistance Center, checks out the heating and cooling system for the high school's dome.



building and grounds, for steps they already have taken to reduce energy consumption and lower their costs.

“The more dollars we save in maintaining the building, the more money we can put into educating students,” Jarrett said.

Fallon and his crew already have put in energy-efficient lighting in most areas, removed some light bulbs from hallways, painted walls a light color to improve lighting, and installed motion detector lighting in hallways, classrooms, and rest rooms.

Robinson and Westervelt also recommended installing LED exit signs and low-flow showerheads, checking computer settings to make sure screensavers aren't running, changing some hallways from uplighting to downlighting, and making sure there aren't a lot of energy-sucking devices like coffee pots and refrigerators being used in individual rooms.

“At all five sites visited, the energy auditors complimented members for undertaking many cost-effective energy conservation measures already,” said Dale Kessinger, energy services manager at Rock Energy. “SEDAC also offered a number of new opportunities for increased savings. Wherever possible, we want to help our members not only save energy, but also reduce their costs.” ■



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Beware of Phone Scams

If you get a call from someone claiming to represent an Energy company, do not provide your credit card information or Social Security number.

"Rock Energy will never call members to request this type of information," CEO Shane Larson said. "If you receive a call like this, please hang up and immediately call your local police department to report this scam."

In one instance, the caller said service would be disconnected if the member did not provide credit card information. In another call, a member was told that lower rates were available from ComEd, but the member needed to provide credit card information. Unlike phone companies, utility providers have a defined service territory and do not solicit consumers to switch services. ■

Director Nominations Open

The Rock Energy Cooperative Nominating Committee will be selecting candidates to run for board of director positions that will be up for election at the March 29, 2010, annual meeting. Districts up for election are:

- District 2: Milton and Lima townships
- District 4: Harmony and La Prairie townships, city of Janesville
- District 9: Magnolia, Center, and Janesville townships

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. Please contact REC headquarters at (608) 752-4550 or (866) 752-4550 or send an e-mail to questions@rock.coop by Dec. 1. ■



New South Beloit Facility Open House October 15-16

Visit our new facility and take a brief tour.

7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Thursday, Oct. 15, and Friday, Oct. 16

15229 Willowbrook Road • South Beloit, Ill.

*We're located less than a mile south of the Flying J,
Highway 75 exit off I-90.*

Get Connected

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

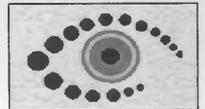


First American Credit Union - Beloit, WI
(608) 364-3700 - www.firstamericancu.com

A member-owned financial cooperative serving anyone living in Rock, Green, and Walworth counties in Wisconsin and Winnebago County in Illinois. With locations in Beloit, Janesville, and Rockton, the credit union offers free and dividend checking accounts, savings accounts, free online banking and bill payer, free e-statements, IRAs, CDs, fixed rate and adjustable rate mortgages, vehicle loans, business checking, commercial loans, and more.

Free Safe Deposit Box (one-year rental) with new checking account

Eye Contact - Beloit, WI - (608) 365-9591
www.eycontact.optometry.net



A private practice serving the entire family and providing routine vision examinations for glasses and contact lenses as well as contact lens fittings. We also sell contacts and a wide variety of designer frames. Family-owned and operated since 1987, our facilities feature the newest technologies in eye examining equipment, thousands of frames and contact lenses in stock, and four Wisconsin-licensed optometrists who take appointments six days a week. Our goal is to anticipate your needs and exceed your expectations in all aspects of eye care and eyewear.

15% Off Complete Pair of Glasses (lenses & frames)



Country Lakes & Farms Realty
Janesville, WI - (608) 751-4087
www.countrylakesandfarms.com

Offering Wisconsin and Michigan Upper Peninsula real estate for sale, including lakefront, riverfront, and wooded land. If you are searching for vacation, investment, or recreational real estate, search no further! All of our properties are guaranteed buildable and come with our exclusive Buyers Protection Plan. Our land specialists are available seven days a week to provide you with up-to-date availability and pricing information.

\$125 Off Closing Costs (must ask for Conrad)

Edgerton Therapeutic Massage & Bodywork
Edgerton, WI - (608) 931-5246



Services include a variety of holistic massage techniques called "Synergy Massage." Synergy Massage is designed to relieve your pain and melt away stress related to everyday living, while aiding in the rehabilitation of physical injuries. My goal is to return you to a state of pain-free movement and leave you feeling totally relaxed and rejuvenated.

10% Off

For a complete listing of current deals, visit www.rock.coop. Terms and conditions subject to change by participating businesses. You also can use your Co-op Connections Card to receive a discount on prescription drugs. In August, Rock Energy members saved \$1,379 on their prescriptions, a 34% discount.



More Power to You

A Sincere Thank You to Our Members

By Shane L. Larson,
Chief Executive Officer

Throwing a party for more than 700 people requires a great deal of teamwork and a little help from the weather. Employees and directors worked hard to assure that this year's Member Appreciation Day was fun for everyone, and the weather blessed us with abundant sunshine and very comfortable temperatures.

Each year during our Member Appreciation Day, I pull garbage duty. As I schlep around with my trash bags, I have the wonderful opportunity to visit with hundreds of members. During these visits, the uniqueness of the cooperative business model is in full display. Our business, our service, exists exclusively for the benefit of our members.

While it's impossible to have personal contact with

Below: Lynn Maier, Operations Manager-North, makes sure members have freshly popped popcorn during Member Appreciation Day. Right: The jumping booth is always popular with the youngsters.



all of our members, events like our Member Appreciation Day allow interaction between members and co-op employees and directors. I believe this interaction is extremely important for all of us. So, thank you to those who were able to come out for our 9th Annual Member Appreciation Day—your attendance means a great deal.

Project Lift Up

Thanks also to members who are contributing to Project Lift Up. All donations go directly to our Rock Cooperative Care program, which helps low-income members pay their energy bills. We launched Project Lift Up on Sept. 1, and more than 120 members have volunteered to help their neighbors in just the first month.

A total of 58 members have decided to round up their energy bill to the nearest whole dollar amount. Others have signed up to add a set amount to their bills, while other members generously contributed in one-time donations.

Project Lift Up shows the true cooperative spirit of Rock Energy members, who are always willing to lend a hand to a neighbor. If you haven't signed up yet, stop by our office to pick up a form or visit www.rock.coop/projectliftup.html to print a copy. Thanks again for your generosity.



Energy Assistance

November is the time of year when the amount of daylight gets shorter, the weather gets colder, and furnaces gear up for their winter workout. With the national economy still struggling and local unemployment rates at record highs, more people will need help paying their energy bills this heating season. If you or someone you know falls into that category, check the charts on page 16b to see if you qualify for assistance.

The federally funded Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program is designed to help the neediest people. Our new Rock Cooperative Care program, however, has more flexible income guidelines. That's the program funded with your generous contributions to Project Lift Up that I mentioned earlier.

(Continued on page 16d) ►



Energy Assistance Available for Low-Income Households

Record-high unemployment rates will make the 2009-2010 heating system challenging for many Illinois households. 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.

Low-income Rock Energy members also are eligible for assistance through Rock Cooperative Care, which is designed to supplement LIHEAP. Because the programs have different income guidelines, check each chart on this page to see if you qualify. For your convenience, the same agency handles both applications so you need to visit only one office.

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.

If you qualify to receive heating assistance, you are automatically eligible to receive electric bill assistance from Rock Energy. We will send you a letter stating your level of assistance about a month after you qualify. In most cases, the benefit will be applied as a credit directly on your account.

Illinois LIHEAP Income Guidelines for the 2009-2010 Heating Season

Household Size	30-Day Household Income	Annual Household Income
1	\$1,354	\$16,245
2	\$1,821	\$21,855
3	\$2,289	\$27,465
4	\$2,756	\$33,075
5	\$3,224	\$38,685
6	\$3,691	\$44,295
7	\$4,159	\$49,905
8	\$4,626	\$55,515

Rock Cooperative Care Details

Rock Cooperative Care offers a one-time grant of up to \$500 to help residential customers pay their energy bills. This program is designed to help members who are struggling to pay their energy bills but do not meet the more stringent LIHEAP requirements.

Rock Cooperative Care Income Guidelines for the 2009-2010 Heating Season

Family Size	150% of Poverty Level (eligible for up to a \$500 grant)		200% of Poverty Level (eligible for up to a \$350 grant)		300% of Poverty Level (eligible for up to a \$250 grant)	
	30-Day Income	Annual Income	30-Day Income	Annual Income	30-Day Income	Annual Income
1	\$1,300	\$15,600	\$1,805	\$21,660	\$2,708	\$32,490
2	\$1,750	\$21,000	\$2,428	\$29,140	\$3,643	\$43,710
3	\$2,200	\$26,400	\$3,052	\$36,620	\$4,578	\$54,930
4	\$2,650	\$31,800	\$3,675	\$44,400	\$5,513	\$66,150
5	\$3,100	\$37,200	\$4,298	\$51,580	\$6,448	\$77,370
6	\$3,550	\$42,600	\$4,922	\$59,060	\$7,383	\$88,590
7	\$4,000	\$48,000	\$5,545	\$66,540	\$8,318	\$99,810
8	\$4,450	\$53,400	\$6,168	\$74,020	\$9,253	\$111,030

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. When you apply for energy assistance, the local agency will see if you qualify for the Weatherization Assistance Program, which helps fund energy efficiency home improvement projects.

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

Winnebago and Boone Counties

Rockford Human Services Department
555 N. Court St., Suite 301
Rockford, IL 61103
(815) 987-5782

McHenry County

McHenry County Housing Authority
1108 N. Seminary Ave.
Woodstock, IL 60098
(815) 338-7752

Stephenson County

Northwestern Illinois Community Action Agency
103-109 N. Chicago Ave.
Freeport, IL 61032
(815) 232-3141 or (800) 883-1111

In Stephenson County, applications also will be taken on a walk-in basis from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 10, at US Bank, Rock City Office, 123 Main St., Rock City, Ill. No appointments are necessary. Bring Social Security cards and proof of 30-day income for all household members in addition to most recent energy bills.

For general information, call toll-free (877) 411-9276 or visit www.illinoisliheap.com.

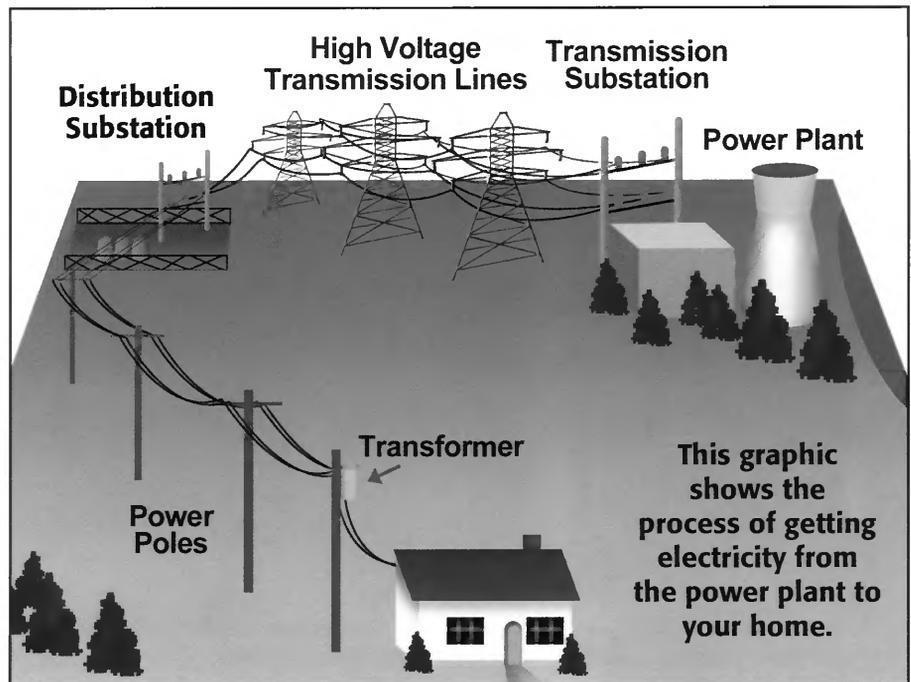
Area's Growth Prompts Need for New Substation

Have you ever thought about how electricity gets from the power plant to your home? Of course, it travels through the power lines you see along roads. But the complicated process needed to accomplish the feat of delivering power from one place to another combines several key components, including substations.

Electricity cannot be stored, so it's necessary to generate the electricity at nearly the moment it's needed. In very simple terms, to make this happen, electricity needs to travel from the generating plant to the end user. Along this path, transmission lines are needed to move electricity from the generating plant to the distribution substation. This type of substation is typically located close to the customers.

As an area grows, substations are added to maintain reliable electric service. Rock Energy Cooperative has been working with the town of Milton, the City of Milton, and area residents to site a new substation, the Red Hawk Substation, near Milton Harmony Townline Road and County M in northern Rock County. This substation will serve a growing electrical need in the Milton Township area and support anticipated growth of the Milton Industrial Park.

Several types of substations are found between power plants and homes. Each contains a wide array of equipment, including transformers, lightning arrestors, circuit breakers, and insulators. A transformer performs the heavy work, altering voltage as needed. The area around substations is landscaped with flowers, bushes,



and trees to blend in with the neighborhood.

Initially, step-up substations located right at the power plants increase electricity's voltage to levels between 115,000 and 765,000 volts so it can be shipped through high-voltage transmission lines. When electricity gets closer to its destination, transmission substations reduce the voltage to between 23,000 and 69,000 volts.

American Transmission Company (ATC) is in the process of selecting the best route for the transmission line that would connect the new Red Hawk Substation to the transmission grid that serves south central Wisconsin. At the distribution substation, transformers drop the voltage even lower, normally to 12,500 volts (phase to phase).

At this point, the distribution lines you see along roads and across fields bring power to homes and businesses. To make that electricity usable for our appliances and other devices, a transformer lowers the voltage once more, to between 120 and 240 volts.

The Red Hawk Substation, which is expected to be on line in late 2010 or early 2011, will become an important part of Rock Energy's distribution system by serving the electrical needs to the Milton area, while providing additional backup support for neighboring townships. ■



Shane Larson, CEO
Barbara Uebelacker, Editor

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Happy THANKSGIVING

Rock Energy Cooperative offices will be closed on Thursday, Nov. 26, and Friday, Nov. 27, in observance of Thanksgiving. We will reopen at 7:30 a.m. Monday, Nov. 30. 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 (608) 752-4550 or toll-free (866) 752-4550. ■

Get Connected

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



ABC Fire & Safety - Beloit, WI - (608) 362-1634
Sales and service of fire extinguishers.
10% Off All New Fire Extinguishers

Bedazzled Salon & Day Spa - Roscoe, IL - (815) 389-4965
Offering haircuts, color, highlights, perms, scalp treatments, massages, manicures, pedicures, full sets, facials, and body waxing.
20% Off Retail Products (with service purchase of \$20 or more)

Captain's Galley - South Beloit, IL - (815) 389-4592
One-of-a-kind subs, chili, polish sausage, brats, Vienna hot dogs, Italian beef, and soup.
One Free Medium Drink (with purchase of any sub)

Dads & Lads Barber Shop
South Beloit, IL - (815) 389-1224
Full-service barber shop.
\$1 Off Haircut

For a complete listing of current deals, visit www.rock.coop. Terms and conditions subject to change as desired by participating businesses. You also can use your Co-op Connections Card to receive a discount on prescription drugs.

More Power to You

(Continued from page 16a)

Rock Cooperative Care will benefit members who otherwise might fall through the cracks—those whose incomes are too high to qualify for federal programs, but too low to make ends meet. Please consider applying for assistance if you qualify.

Our Energy, Our Future

I also want to thank the Rock Energy members who have joined the successful Our Energy, Our Future post-card campaign. Co-op members from around the country have sent more than half a million postcards to their senators urging them to keep energy affordable as they debate climate change legislation.

This climate change issue is complicated; both sides have their set of “facts” and opinions. Members have contacted me expressing their thoughts about the Our Energy, Our Future campaign; I truly appreciate the comments. The Our Energy, Our Future campaign doesn't take sides with regards to whether the earth is warming or not (remember when it was called global warming) the campaign is focusing on costs—costs to our members. If Congress moves forward with climate change legislation, we are telling them, our legislators, that it cannot financially harm our members. Now that's a very tall order, but together we can make our voices heard.

We look forward to serving your energy needs this winter. If we can do anything to improve our service to you, please let us know.

Have a wonderful Thanksgiving. ■



Our Energy, Our Future
A Dialogue With America
www.ourenergy.coop



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Only 20 percent of homes built before 1980 are properly insulated. You can increase the comfort of your home while reducing heating and cooling needs up to 10 percent by investing in proper insulation and sealing air leaks.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy



More Power to You

Your Donation to Project Lift Up Will Brighten Someone's Holiday

By Shane L. Larson,
Chief Executive Officer

I hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving with lots of food, plenty of football, and loads of special time with family and friends. Those are three things that I especially love about this time of the year.

Now that the turkey leftovers are gone, from a holiday standpoint, it's time to focus on the next big day. Whether you and yours celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah, or Kwanzaa, December is a time to count your blessings and exchange gifts with family and friends. While shopping this season, perhaps you might consider buying some extra groceries for the local food pantry or maybe a small gift for one of the many programs designed to brighten the holidays of less fortunate people.

As you're planning your holiday giving, please also consider making a donation to Project Lift Up, a voluntary member donation program designed to help people

who are struggling financially pay their energy bills. The program allows you to round up your monthly energy bill to the nearest dollar, add a set monthly contribution, or make a one-time donation.

Just as the program's name implies, your contribution will help lift up your neighbor financially. And in the process, I'm certain your spirit will be elevated knowing that you helped someone in need.



To the 134 members who have signed up for Project Lift Up since the program started in September, I want to express thanks for your generous contribution. We are working with local community action agencies to assure that the funds go to the people most in need. Your act of kindness shows the true cooperative spirit of Rock Energy members, who are always willing to lend a hand to help a neighbor in need.

If you haven't signed up yet, it's very easy. Please add Project Lift Up to your holiday gift list by filling out the form on this page and returning it to Rock Energy.

Yes, I want to make a holiday gift to Project Lift Up.

(Choose only one option.)

- Round up my monthly energy bill to the nearest whole dollar.
- Add \$1 each month to my budget billing plan.
- Add a monthly donation of \$_____ to my energy bill. *(Please enter dollar amount.)*
- Add a one-time donation of \$_____ to my next energy bill. *(Please enter dollar amount.)*

Name: _____

Account Number: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Our Energy, Our Future

I want to share an amazing statistic that I found in a recent poll by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. Pew is an independent, non-partisan group that studies people's attitudes on various public policy issues.

Are you sitting down? According to the survey, a majority of people polled—55 percent—said they have heard nothing about a cap-and-trade policy. Isn't that astounding? Those people obviously aren't Rock Energy members. For the past year, I've been writing in this column about how proposed climate change legislation, which is commonly referred to as cap and trade, will affect the price of energy. The legislation would put a mandatory cap on greenhouse gas emissions, and companies could buy and sell emissions allowances to meet the required cuts.

Rock Energy and co-ops throughout the nation have been participating in the Our Energy, Our Future campaign. This grassroots movement engages co-op members in a conversation with elected officials about how the country can meet climate change goals while keeping electricity affordable. ►



As I write this, Senate committees are reviewing proposed climate change legislation that could lead to significant regional disparities for consumers. Some states would receive more emissions allowances than they need to offset higher electricity costs under a cap-and-trade program, according to an Environmental Protection Agency assessment of the legislation.

Midwestern states, which rely mostly on coal to produce electricity, would be hit hardest. They would have to acquire more permits to comply with the law's provisions, resulting in costs that would be passed on to consumers.

The EPA study shows the inequity by comparing utility allocations in two states—Illinois and California. Under the proposed formula, Illinois would receive permits for 78 million tons of annual emissions, but its annual emission level is 107 million tons. In contrast, California would receive allowances for 99 million tons, significantly more than its needed 87 million tons.

The Our Energy, Our Future campaign urges lawmakers to make sure that any climate change legislation is fair, affordable, and achievable. You can join more than 444,000 co-op members from around the nation who already have contacted their lawmakers. As the legislation makes its way through the Senate, make sure your

senator understands that the current proposal is unfair to Midwestern states.

Visit www.ourenergy.coop, and click on "Join the campaign." Rock Energy members who live in Illinois should select Wisconsin as the location of the cooperative because that's where our headquarters is located. If you don't have Internet access, just call our office and we'll fill out the online form for you.

Happy Holidays

During Member Appreciation Day in September, we gathered employees, directors, and their families outside the Janesville warehouse for a group picture. Then we sent Dennis Dooley, husband of member service representative Angie Dooley, up in a bucket truck with his camera. The resulting photo is our holiday greeting to members, which is printed on this page.

I hope you enjoy seeing the smiling faces of the people here at Rock Energy who believe it's a privilege to serve your energy needs. If we can do anything to improve, please let us know by visiting or calling our Janesville or South Beloit offices.

From all of us at Rock Energy Cooperative, we wish you Happy Holidays! ■



Beware of Holiday Fire Hazards

Rock Energy Participates in Fire Safety Training

Within seconds, a traditional Christmas tree that hasn't been properly maintained can turn a special holiday into a deadly inferno.

That's one of the messages firefighters delivered to about 150 people who attended fire safety demonstrations Oct. 10 at Fire Safety Day sponsored by the South Beloit Fire Department.

During the busy holiday season, fire hazards develop when families pick out a beautiful tree, bring it home, decorate it, and then forget about it. Live trees require more maintenance than their artificial counterparts, South Beloit Fire Chief Ken Morse said.

"Live Christmas trees need to be well hydrated and decorated with safe lighting equipment," Morse said. "Homes also need smoke detectors that are working, and families need an evacuation plan in case a fire does start."

Natural Christmas trees account for 200 fires annually, resulting in six deaths, 25 injuries, and more than \$6 million in property damage, according to the U.S. Fire Administration. Shorts in electrical lights or open flames from candles, lighters, or matches typically start tree fires.

Artificial trees don't pose the same hazard, but Morse cautioned that lights still need to be in good working condition. He recommended carefully examining strings of lights each year before decorating the tree to make sure wires aren't frayed.

People who attended Fire Safety Day also watched the progression of a fire caused by an unattended candle, saw a demonstration of a residential sprinkler system, and witnessed a simulated rescue of trapped fire victims.

Rock Energy Cooperative participated in Fire Safety Day by donating the use of a house on Willowbrook Road for safety demonstrations.

The house also is being used to train firefighters.

The cooperative purchased the property just south of its new South Beloit facility to provide additional needed parking. The use of the house was donated to the South Beloit Fire Department because moving it to another location wasn't feasible.

"Rock Energy Cooperative generously donated this house for the purpose of realistic training," Morse said. "This type of community-involved fire safety training is rare, and we are grateful for this tremendous opportunity."

Rock Energy CEO Shane Larson noted that "Concern for Community" is one of the seven principles that all co-ops follow. "We were pleased to participate in Fire Safety Day and hope that these demonstrations not only prevented fires, but also maybe saved some lives," he said. ■



Scholarships Offered to High School Seniors

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

An application form must be completed by the student as well as by the student's guidance counselor. Applications are available at area high schools, online at www.rock.coop, and at our Janesville and South Beloit offices.

Our 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 \$60,000 in financial aid.

The deadline for returning completed applications is Jan. 8. If you have any questions, please contact Barbara Uebelacker at (866) 752-4550 or barbu@rock.coop. ■

Happy Holidays

Rock Energy Cooperative offices will be closed on Thursday, Dec. 24, and Friday, Dec. 25, in observance of Christmas and Thursday, Dec. 31, and Friday, Jan. 1, for the New Year's holiday. Members can make payments in the drop boxes at both offices throughout the holiday weekends. 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 (608) 752-4550 or toll-free (866) 752-4550.



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Turn off kitchen, bath, and other exhaust fans within 20 minutes after you are done cooking or bathing. When replacing exhaust fans, consider installing high-efficiency, low-noise models.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

Get Connected



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We are a pack-and-ship business. Packages via FedEx, DHL, UPS, U.S. Postal Service all over the world. We are an authorized postal center and provide other services—fax, money orders, black and white copies, landlord drop boxes, and P.O. boxes. Best rates in the area. **10% Off Package & Shipping Services**



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For a complete listing of current deals, visit www.rock.coop. Terms and conditions subject to change as desired by participating businesses. You also can use your Co-op Connections Card to receive a discount on prescription drugs.



Shane Larson, CEO
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