

More Power to You NEW METERING SYSTEM HIGHLIGHTS ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR



Shane L. Larson,
Chief Executive Officer

The camaraderie among friends and neighbors that I observed at Rock Energy’s 83rd annual meeting on March 25 makes me so very proud to be part of this co-op family.

Members who came early saved seats at their tables for friends arriving later. Then during dinner, the Eclipse Center was abuzz with conversations and filled with laughter. In this time of so much electronic communication, it was encouraging to see people interacting with each other face to face.

Thanks to everyone who attended the annual meeting and helped make it a big success. Our final count shows that 524 people were at the Eclipse Center and served a delicious dinner by Best Events.

Chairman Bill Dietsch opened the meeting by congratulating everyone on surviving this winter’s polar vortex.

“There’s no doubt that this winter has been very difficult for members,” he said. “We used more energy to keep our homes and businesses comfortable. That increased usage led to higher energy bills for all of us. I want you to know that the co-op is doing everything it can to help members manage their energy bills. Let’s hope this summer isn’t as extreme!”

In my remarks, I told members that the co-op temporarily expanded our Rock Cooperative Care program because of the extreme cold. Over the past eight years, the program has provided more than \$175,000 to members who have needed help paying their energy bills. Recently, a member who received the extreme weather benefit thanked one of our employees

with a tear in her eye. Our employee received the comment, but the real thanks goes to all our members who make Rock Cooperative Care possible.

I also updated members on Rock Energy’s investment in the West Riverside Energy Plant, which Alliant Energy is building just off Highway 51 between Beloit and Janesville. The natural gas power plant is scheduled to begin operations early in 2020.

With West Riverside, we are investing in generation for future generations. The facility will be the most efficient natural gas generating plant in the history of Wisconsin. With the plant’s high efficiency and the long-range forecast for natural gas prices, the plant will help provide long-term price stability for Rock Energy.

83rd Annual Meeting ELECTION RESULTS AT A GLANCE



Marian Trescher,
Re-elected
District 2 Director



James Quade,
Re-elected
District 4 Director



Wendell Boyer,
Re-elected
District 9 Director

MY CO-OP



Both Bill Dietsch (left), board chairman, and Shane Larson (center), chief executive officer, told members about the new metering system. Nearly 28,000 meters were replaced in about six months. Right: Members stopped at the registration tables to pick up their insulated Rock Energy grocery bag, which also included an LED bulb and two Beloit Snappers tickets.



When we make an investment in utility assets, we think long term. When we set a pole or string wire or invest in a power plant, we do it with the intention that the asset will last 30, 40, or even 50 years. Utilities are in a “pay me now or pay me later” business. Shortcuts will always come home to roost. That’s why we continue to invest in maintaining and upgrading our system. Over the past three years, the co-op has invested \$23 million in new plant and system upgrades.

One of those upgrades involved installing a new metering system. Our old system was failing and not supported by the manufacturer, so we needed to be aggressive on switching to the new system. Once we started installing the new meters late last summer, it took us about six months to replace nearly 28,000 meters.

The new system is fast, accurate, expandable, and extremely secure from a cyber standpoint. We now receive readings on all meters every 15 minutes, which amounts to almost 2 million meter readings every day. With all that



Snappy, the Beloit Snappers mascot, made an appearance before the meeting to promote Rock Energy’s Night at the Ballpark on Saturday, June 22.

data, we are better able to analyze and diagnose possible problems. Members also can view their usage on SmartHub, our online account management system.

If you’re not enrolled in SmartHub, you can sign up on our website.

The new metering system also helps with reliability. When there’s an outage, within seconds every impacted meter will report that it has no power. This information flows to our Outage Management System to help determine the location and possible equipment involved in the outage. The system also detects meter tampering. If the meter senses any unusual movement, we are notified with a tamper alert. We hope that this is a little used feature.

I also talked about our 2018 member survey. We believe it’s important to know what our members are thinking so every few years we have an independent company survey our membership. Overall, the survey found that our members are very satisfied with their co-op.

Within the survey are specific questions that produce the nationally recognized American Customer Satisfaction Index, which allows scores to be compared against other companies. Our



The kids room was filled with painted faces, balloon creations, and lots of games. Funny Faces Family Entertainment from the Madison area kept kids busy during the annual meeting.



Six students who were awarded \$500 college scholarships at the annual meeting are, from left, back row: Kyle Wille, Edgerton High School; Ryan Gasser, Milton; Katie Chesebro, Milton; front row: Madi Vine, Parkview; Emily Goodger, Milton; Brooke Gardner, Hononegah. Four scholarship winners were unable to attend the meeting: Emily McCabe, Hononegah; Brenna Mullooly, Clinton; Morgan Stengel, Craig; Rachel Strasser, South Beloit.

score on this survey was 88, the same as our 2016 score. We scored higher than Apple, Cadillac, and Coca-Cola.

Duane Noland, president and chief executive officer of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives, praised Rock Energy in his remarks, noting that Rock tied for the highest score of all Illinois energy cooperatives. He said the high score shows that the co-op is really focused on the local area, understands that the member always comes first, and works very hard to keep members satisfied.

Noland also commended Rock for having among the lowest electric rates of the 29 Illinois energy cooperatives. He noted that Touchstone Energy, a network of co-ops across the nation, recognized Rock a few years ago for having some of the lowest operational costs per meter of any co-op in the United States.

I shared with members charts that showed how Rock's rates compare with our neighboring utilities. We come in second lowest, and we are by far the smallest. Though we are small in

comparison, I would bet that each of the investor-owned utilities would love to have the type of support we have from our members. When it comes to the quality service we provide our members, using a boxing phrase, I'd say at Rock Energy we're punching above our weight class.

I also congratulated State Rep. Amy Loudonbeck, who is a Rock Energy member, for receiving the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association's Enlightened Legislator of the Year award. She always listens carefully to the cooperative's position on legislative matters.

We paid tribute to Jo Miller, a former, longtime director who passed away in September after a long illness. She was a wonderful board member and a very special person. Jo was totally committed to doing what she thought was right for the membership, and she never missed an opportunity to challenge us to do better. I'll always appreciate the support Jo provided me over the years.

During the business meeting, incumbent directors were re-elected to

three-year terms. Congratulations to Marian Trescher, District 2; Jim Quade, District 4; and Wendell Boyer, District 9. I want to extend a special thanks to District 9 candidate David Diestler, whose involvement is so important to the democratic process.

At its March reorganizational meeting, the board re-elected officers for the coming year. Continuing in their roles are Bill Dietsch, chairman; Ron Richards, vice chairman; Marian Trescher, secretary; and Jim Quade, treasurer.

Thanks to everyone who made our 83rd annual meeting a success. It's important to point out that this co-op is governed and run with the membership in mind each and every day. Being in business for 83 years doesn't just happen. It has required vision and hard work from hundreds of people. If you didn't make it to this meeting, we sincerely hope that you'll join us next year. It is a privilege to be your energy provider and a responsibility that we don't take lightly. Please let us know if we can do anything to improve our service to you.



CO-OP EMPLOYEES SOMETIMES WORK ON YOUR PROPERTY

Rock Energy Cooperative employees and contractors work throughout our service territory, including on the rights-of-way and easements, and across your private property and driveways.

Our efforts to ensure reliable energy for you and your neighbors mean we sometimes must work on your property.

You may see us:

- Making routine repairs.
- Restoring power after outages.
- Updating our electric and natural gas distribution system.
- Replacing meters.
- Maintaining vegetation in rights-of-way.
- Locating buried utilities for construction and digging projects.
- Working to upgrade poles, wires, transformers, and equipment.
- Inspecting lines, power poles, transformer boxes, and equipment.

Field work, except emergency power restoration, is conducted during normal working hours, 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Every effort is made to avoid damage and unnecessary intrusion.

If you have concerns about our work on your property, call Rock Energy at 866-752-4550.

We appreciate your cooperation!

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Avoid placing items like lamps and televisions near your air-conditioning thermostat. The thermostat senses heat from these appliances, which can cause the A/C to run longer than necessary.

Source: energy.gov



ROCK ENERGY FAMILY NIGHT AT THE BALLPARK

Saturday, June 22

Beloit Snappers vs. Quad City River Bandits

6:30 p.m. Pohlman Field at Telfer Park in Beloit

Special food prices!

Player autographs!

Spectacular fireworks!

Purchase vouchers in advance at Rock Energy offices for \$2 (a \$7.50 value). They're good for any home game this season.

HAVE A SAFE AND HAPPY MEMORIAL DAY!

Rock Energy Cooperative offices will be closed on Monday, May 27, in observance of Memorial Day. We will reopen at 7:30 a.m. Tuesday, May 28. Members can make payments in the drop boxes at both offices throughout the holiday weekend. Even though our offices are closed, standby crews are always available 24 hours a day. If you need to report a power outage, please call 866-752-4550.



Shane Larson, CEO

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ROCK ENERGY COOPERATIVE
Empowering Members Since 1936