

Start the new year with energy efficiency

HomE program already has awarded Rock Energy members \$23,000

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

In May, Rock Energy Cooperative was allocated \$27,000 through the HomE energy-efficiency rebate program in Illinois. Through mid-November, more than \$23,000 of that total had been awarded to Rock Energy members living in Illinois. Now, an additional \$17,000 in rebates is available to extend the program into 2011.

"We're delighted that the program extension will allow us to help more members make energy-efficient improvements to their homes," said Dale Kessinger, energy services manager for Rock Energy. "The program actually helps members in two ways. First, it provides a rebate that reduces the cost of improvements. But more importantly, the completed projects help members reduce their future energy bills, resulting in ongoing savings."

The HomE program was created to provide a comprehensive energy-efficiency program to co-op members in Illinois as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Program. In May, the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives received \$1.5 million in State Energy Plan funding to distribute to co-ops throughout the state. The program was so successful that an additional \$1 million was allocated to the program in November.

Through mid-November, 43 Rock Energy members have received incentives to make energy-efficient improvements, including installing heat pump systems (both air-source and geothermal), furnaces, central air-conditioning systems, and insulation, Kessinger said. Gas furnaces must be at least 95 percent efficient, and central air-conditioning systems must have a SEER rating of 16 or higher to qualify.

Dale Oas is conducting the home energy assessments for Rock Energy and so far has completed more than 80. He often finds inadequate insulation and old, inefficient furnaces in the homes he visits.

Some people don't replace old furnaces because they still operate, but that's not necessarily the most cost-effective practice, Oas said. One of the homes he visited had a 46-year-old furnace. It was still functioning, but not very efficiently.

Uncovered furnace filters are another common problem he encounters. Without a cover, the furnace pulls air from the basement rather than the ductwork, causing the furnace to operate inefficiently and circulate excessive dust in the home, Oas said.

Besides the big-ticket items like furnaces and air-conditioning units, Oas said people can increase their home's energy efficiency by sealing air leaks around windows and doors.

The HomE program will continue through spring or until the \$44,000 allocated to Rock Energy has been distributed. Although members do not have to meet income restrictions to qualify, they are not eligible if they receive low-income energy assistance.

The process for applying for a rebate is easy, and the program does not have any income restrictions. Just follow these simple steps:

- Call Rock Energy at (866) 752-4550 to arrange an energy assessment, which is required to qualify for the rebates. Appointments will be scheduled between 8 a.m. and 2 p.m. A \$25 fee will be collected at the time of the in-home assessment.
- You will receive recommendations about how to improve your home's energy efficiency, performance, and comfort.

- Decide what work will be completed and submit a proposal and cost estimate. The most common way of doing this is to provide us with a copy of the dealer or contractor's quotation or bid. We use this information to pre-approve your rebate and set aside funds for you.
- Work must be completed within 60 days.
- When the project is completed, forward a copy of your receipt to us. This provides us with proof that the energy-efficiency measures have been installed.
- We will then send a rebate check to you.

If you have questions about the program, call our office at (866) 752-4550 between 7:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. You also can visit www.rock.coop

and click on the HomE logo.



How much are the rebates?*

Geothermal heat pumps	\$1,500
Air-source heat pumps	\$1,000
Central air conditioning	\$350
Natural gas or LP furnace	\$350
Heat pump water heater	\$250
Insulation/air sealing	\$500 maximum, 30% of project cost

**Rebates will be approved for only one piece of heating or cooling equipment*



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