



### More Power to You

# Co-ops Played Vital Role in Electrifying Countryside

By Shane L. Larson,  
Chief Executive Officer

**D**o you remember when electricity was a luxury rather than a necessity? I certainly don't. My kids might consider me ancient, but I keep reminding them that I didn't grow up in what they consider to be the dark ages.

Throughout my life, I have always counted on just flipping a switch for light, turning up the thermostat for heat, and plugging in various appliances to do any number of tasks quickly and easily. Even though I'm in the energy business and know the workings of electricity inside and out, I take these things for granted. Most of us do.

But I bet there are a few Rock Energy Cooperative members out there who recall the good old days of kerosene lamps, real ice boxes, hand water pumps, washboards, and the other items that people used before electricity was available. Some of these old-timers might disagree about whether the old days were actually "good," but they'll certainly agree that electricity quickly made their families' lives easier and soon became a necessity.

By the early 1900s, people who lived in urban areas around the Midwest already had the luxury of electric lights, refrigerators, and other appliances that used the miracle of electricity to help take the drudgery out of everyday household tasks. But those luxuries weren't available to rural folks.

Electric companies said it wasn't profitable for them to extend service to the countryside. It was just too expensive to run power lines to these sparsely populated areas. Without electricity, farmers continued to struggle economically.

That began to change on May 11, 1935, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the Rural Electrification Administration. A year later, Congress passed the Rural Electrification Act. To many of our longtime members, the co-op still is known as the REA.

The articles of incorporation for Rock County Electric Cooperative Association, which is now Rock Energy Cooperative, were signed on April 23, 1936. Using the financial and technical resources of the federal government, local farmers united to form an electric cooperative

family. The poles were set, the wires were strung, the lights were illuminated, and the economic gap between urban and rural living began to narrow.

Now, almost 75 years later, that family has grown substantially and remains strong. When RCECA was first energized on July 15, 1937, the co-op provided electricity to 166 rural Rock County members. Today, Rock Energy distributes electricity and natural gas to almost 27,000 meters across nine counties in southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois. That's a big family!

In the coming year, you'll learn a lot more about the history of your cooperative and the people who worked hard to bring electricity to this area. Because this milestone would not have happened without you—our mem-

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# Member Appreciation Day Pancake Breakfast

**Saturday, Sept. 18  
8 - 10:30 a.m.**

**Rock Energy headquarters,  
2815 Kennedy Road, Janesville**

- Pancakes, sausage, juice, milk, water, coffee
- Bucket truck rides
- Health fair with blood pressure, glucose, and cholesterol screening
- Entertainment by the Oregon Jugglers Group
- Balloons and temporary tattoos for kids
- Bounce house
- Popcorn and ice cream



**It's all free—  
our way  
of saying  
"Thanks!"**

## Help Us Celebrate Our 75th Anniversary!

Was your family among the first members of this cooperative? Do you remember the early days of electricity? If so, we invite you to share your memories with other members as Rock Energy Cooperative plans its 75th anniversary celebration.

The articles of incorporation for Rock County Electric Cooperative Association, which now is Rock Energy Cooperative, were filed on April 23, 1936. That action paved the way for months and months of planning that included getting a start-up loan from the federal government, signing up potential members, and obtaining easements. Then the actual work of installing the power lines and wiring the farms started.

On July 15, 1937, a total of 122 miles of power lines were energized and the lights in rural Rock County were turned on for the first time. Maybe you or a family member were among the first 166 rural members of the cooperative, who marveled at the wonders of electricity and could now appreciate the conveniences that city folks had known since the turn of the century.

If you would like to share your photos and special memories with other Rock Energy members, send them to: Barbara Uebelacker, Rock Energy Cooperative, P.O. Box 1758, Janesville, WI 53547, or e-mail BarbU@rock.coop. You also can call her at (608) 752-4550 or (866) 752-4550. ■



## Rebates Available for Energy-Efficiency Upgrades

Rock Energy members who live in Illinois are eligible for rebates of up to \$1,500 when they make specific energy efficiency improvements to their homes.

### 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*

### How does the program work?

1. 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.
2. You will receive recommendations about how to improve your home's energy efficiency, performance, and comfort.
3. Decide what work will be completed and submit a proposal form and cost estimate to us. We will return a signed copy, stating that funds have been set aside for you.
4. Work must be completed within 60 days.
5. Send us a completion form with copies of your receipts.
6. We will issue a 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.



## Get Connected

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



### The 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)**

### Big Scoop Ice Cream Parlour – Durand, IL – (815) 248-2300

Ice cream parlour featuring Cedar Crest Ice Cream. Cones, sundaes, shakes, malts, slushies, hot chocolate, tea and flavored coffee.



**Wednesday Special – Buy 1 Single Scoop Cone and Receive the 2nd Single Scoop Cone for 75 Cents**

### Mullen's Corner Tap – Davis, IL – (815) 865-5712



Homemade food. Best burgers in town.

**10% Discount**

**Debbie Jean's Custom Framing & Whimsical Treasures  
Brodhead, WI – (608) 879-2018  
[www.greencountyspotlight.com/greencountylistings.aspx?b=2062](http://www.greencountyspotlight.com/greencountylistings.aspx?b=2062)**

Specializing in beautiful custom framing at reasonable prices. Stop in and browse our selection of unique gift items and home decor including soy candles, jewelry, Watkins products, wreaths, seasonal and garden items, and much, much more.



**\$5 Off Any Purchase of \$30 or More**

For a complete listing of current deals, visit [www.rock.coop](http://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 who used their card saved more than \$2,000 on prescriptions.

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bers—we want to include your stories and memories in the celebration. Please see the story on Page 16c to learn how you can share your favorite memories and photos with other members. We look forward to hearing from you.

I hope you are planning to join us on Saturday, Sept. 18, for our first Member Appreciation Day Pancake Breakfast from 8 to 10:30 a.m. We decided to do something different this year for our 10th annual Member Appreciation Day. Instead of serving burgers, hot dogs, and brats, we're setting up an all-you-can-eat pancake breakfast.

A nationally known company called Chris Cakes will cater the meal, flipping pancakes high in the air. Hopefully they'll land gracefully on your plate. Over the years, I have flipped a lot of pancakes, but I have never tried pancake gymnastics before—at least not on purpose.

In addition to the pancake festivities, we'll have all the regular favorites: bucket truck rides, health fair, jugglers, jumping booth, balloons, popcorn, and ice cream. Turn to page 16b for all the details.

This annual fall event allows Rock Energy directors and employees to say a special thank you to our members. We hope to see you there, and please let us know if there's anything we can do to improve our service. ■

## Have a Safe and Happy Labor Day!

Rock Energy Cooperative offices will be closed on Monday, Sept. 6, in observance of Labor Day. We will reopen at 7:30 a.m. Tuesday, Sept. 7. 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.



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