



### More Power to You

## Meter Tampering Is Not Only Illegal, But Consequences Can Prove Deadly

Shane L. Larson,  
Chief Executive Officer

Most people wouldn't think of pulling into a gas station, filling up their tank, and driving away without paying. But more and more people are tampering with their meters each year in an effort to steal electricity and natural gas.

During the first six months of this year, Rock Energy Cooperative discovered 14 cases of members who have tampered with their meters. In comparison, we investigated just one instance of meter tampering in 2006. The number has been gradually increasing each year, with eight cases in 2009 and nine in 2010. But if the trend for 2011 continues, we'll have experienced a 300 percent increase in just one year.

Both Wisconsin and Illinois have state laws that prohibit people from removing, tampering with, or bypassing a utility meter. Some people might think they can get away with stealing energy because the utility won't notice. But let me assure you that we do notice. Our personnel are not only trained to detect tampering, but we also have technology on our side. Advanced Metering Infrastructure, which we refer to as AMI, allows us to detect suspicious activity that might indicate possible tampering and theft.

When we suspect a meter has been altered in any way, we will dispatch a crew to investigate. If workers find evidence of power theft, they will immediately call authorities. In addition to criminal charges that may include fines and jail time, the offending member will be charged a \$200 fine for each service tampered with and required to pay the estimated cost of the energy stolen.

Some thieves might rationalize that they're stealing from a utility that can afford to absorb the costs of stolen energy. But that doesn't happen in the cooperative world. Rock Energy is a not-for-profit, cost-of-service provider, and our members have a financial interest in their coop-

erative. So the thieves are actually taking money out of the pockets of their family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers.

Those are the legal and moral ramifications of stealing power—either electricity or natural gas. But there's a bigger deterrent in my opinion. People might save a few bucks on their energy bill, but they might end up paying with their lives or the lives of others.

Power surging through a compromised electric meter can cause a catastrophe. A short circuit could produce an arc flash bright enough to cause blindness and powerful enough to launch fragments of shrapnel-like, red-hot debris, according to the Cooperative Research Network, a division of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Tampering also can lead to fires and explosions. An illegal electric hookup sparked a fire that killed a 29-year-old woman and her 8-year-old daughter in Philadelphia in 2009. Fire investigators said the suspected cause was a cord that bypassed the electric meter and was powering TVs, VCRs, heaters, and lamps. In Los Angeles, one man died and another was critically injured in a 2010 explosion that was blamed on a gas line that had been tampered with and rerouted.

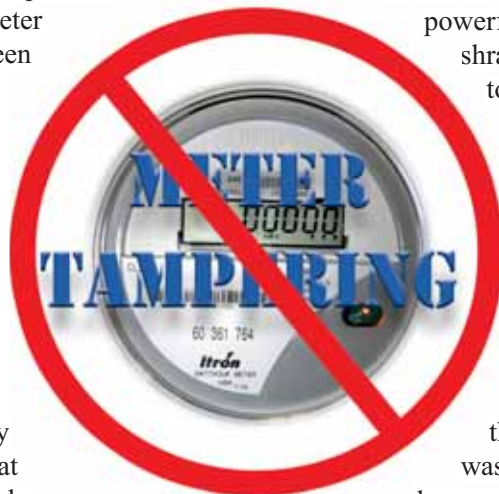
These are tragedies that could have and should have been avoided. I haven't been able to find statistics on how many deaths or injuries have been attributed to energy theft. But I think we all can agree that even one is too many.

Since everyone pays for lost power, please let us know if you suspect any meter tampering. Information can be given anonymously.

### Join Us for Member Appreciation Day

I hope you have Saturday, Sept. 17, marked on your calendar for Rock Energy's annual Member Appreciation

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# Member Appreciation Day Pancake Breakfast

*It's our way  
of saying  
"Thanks!"  
to you!*



**Saturday, Sept. 17**

**8 – 10:30 a.m.**

Rock Energy headquarters,  
2815 Kennedy Road, Janesville

- Pancakes, sausage, juice, milk, water, coffee
- 75th anniversary cake and ice cream
- Rock Energy history video and popcorn
- CFL Charlie visit
- Bucket truck rides
- Entertainment by the Oregon Jugglers Group
- Balloons and temporary tattoos for kids
- Bounce house
- Health fair



# We Have Money For These People

Rock Energy Cooperative holds unclaimed capital credit funds for the people listed here. The money will be forfeited and paid to the Wisconsin Electric Cooperatives' Federated Youth Foundation for educational purposes unless claimed by Nov. 30, 2011. You may send claims to Rock Energy Cooperative's headquarters at P.O. Box 1758, Janesville, WI 53547 or call (608) 752-4550 or (866) 752-4550.

Affholder, David D.  
Ahmer, Eron E.  
Andevor Farms  
Arneson, David E.  
Attica Towers Inc.  
Bailey, Alan W.  
Baumann, Janet R.  
Bennett, Mike D.  
Besley Wells Corp.  
Beyer, Sandra J.  
Bluhm, Alvin A.  
Boston, Stephen R.  
Boughton, Karen M.  
Brinkman, A.J.  
Brockner, James and Mary  
Brown, Edward J.  
Brown, Paula  
Buggs, Mark S.  
Byrne, Maxine M.  
Byrski, Ursel  
Chancellor Outdoor Group  
Chrostowski, Pamela J.  
Clark, Norm N.  
Clayton, Bob  
Clowes, Gordon  
Consolidated Freightways  
Cooke, James, and Angeline  
Riefer-Cooke  
Cowell, Gilbert L.  
Cox, Jeffrey W.  
Cutsforth, Kenneth  
Dahlen Transport Inc.  
Dassow, Jerry  
Delaney, Jennifer S.  
Delite Outdoor USA Inc.  
Driscoll, Winfred M.  
Duft, Michael  
Dwyer, A.  
Eberbach, Sylvia  
Elliott, Kermit

Employability Inc.  
Engen, Richard M.  
Fiorucci, Susan  
Fitzsimons, Michael J.  
Flannery, Robert B.  
Foley, James P.  
Fried Onion Bar/Grill, (The)  
Fronczak, Mary  
Gabert, Charles A.  
Gander, Gary  
Gardner, Ella  
Gilbertson, Arland  
Grady, Betty  
Greenheck, Francis  
Guernsey, Kenneth B.  
Harris, Marvin W.  
Heyerdahl, Brett D.  
Johns, Philip W.  
Johnson, Edna M.  
Johnson, Everett  
Jones, Edith  
Kane, Dennis L.  
Krueger, Kenneth L.  
Kruse, Gregory L.  
Kumba, Jerry  
Kuschel, Kathryn  
Lucas, Robin R.  
Lacount, Edward J.  
Laurenson, John  
Lindgren, Philip H.  
Link, David E.  
Lobrillo, Steven A.  
Lowell, Albert S.  
Luckey, Kenneth  
Lynch, John  
March, Steven J.  
Martin, Steven and Vickie  
Matthews, Estherbelle  
McClay, Lyle  
MCI Telecommunications

Meek, Allen C.  
Menke, Thomas F.  
Meuris, Kyle J. and Karla K.  
Miller, Victor R.  
Mobile Communications Corp./America  
MobileMedia Comm. Inc.  
Moeck, Richard  
Mueller, Mark  
Mulson, Troy D. and Kimberlee A.  
Nelson, Robert F.  
Nesvold, Alfred  
Nottestad, John E.  
Nugent, Richard E.  
Olmsted, Judith  
Osborn, Douglas  
Parker, Chris  
Peterson, Roger W.  
Petitt, Judy M.  
Plymouth Rock Farms  
Powell, Charles P.  
Prazak, Muriel  
Premier Real Estate  
Rath, Donald  
Rice, Patrick G. and Melanie J.  
Rich, Patrick  
Riefer-Cooke, Angeline, and James Cooke  
Rolon, Reinaldo  
Schmid, Frank L.  
Schoville, Don D.  
Schumann, Jenna

Schutt, James  
Selck Farms Inc.  
Shackett, Brian K.  
Sharlow, John S.  
Shipler, Gary D.  
Silva, Armando  
Smojver, William G.  
Sorg, David  
Spencer, Joseph  
Steines, David J.  
Stumm, William H.  
Templeton, Timothy L. and Stacey A.  
Terrill, Dorothy L.  
Teweles Seed-Americana  
Thompson, R.G.  
Thostenson, Jackquelyn  
Tracy, Otto J. & Layna  
Tubbs, Charlie C.  
United States Shoe Corp.  
Van Wheelden, Anna M.  
Vazquez, Brian  
Walters, Philip T.  
Warejcka, Douglas L.  
Webb, Gail K.  
Western Outdoor Avd. Co.  
Williams, Bruce  
Williams, Gary  
Williams, Gregory A.  
Williams, Robin J. and Rhonda L.  
Wilson, Ronald A.  
Yates, Ed W. ■

## Have a Safe and Happy Labor Day!

Rock Energy Cooperative offices will be closed on Monday, Sept. 5, in observance of Labor Day. We will reopen at 7:30 a.m. Tuesday, Sept. 6. Members can make payments in the drop boxes at both offices throughout the holiday week-end. 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



**Reich Chiropractic Clinic, 1831 Blackhawk Blvd., South Beloit – (815) 389-1492  
www.reichchiropracticclinic.com**



Eliminating Pain, Improving Wellness, Changing Lives. Complete family health care, specializing in chronic and difficult cases. Free health care talks on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month. Special kids program on the third Saturday. Wide variety of nutritional supplements and Biofreeze pain-relieving gel available. We're passionate about wellness—your wellness—on a structural, nutritional, and emotional level. So once you're out of pain—whether it's back pain, neck pain, headaches, extremity pain, or other problems—we'll teach you how to stay that way.

**Free Consultation and Chiropractic Evaluation Examination**

**The Studio, 759 S. Fremont St., Janesville – (608) 363-8273  
thestudiobeloit.com**



Full-service portrait studio. Involved in the photography field in the southern Wisconsin area since 1983. Photography is not just my business, it's my passion. Every session is treated as an event: kids, pets, families, senior portraits, modeling portfolio, weddings, business, events, and a couple of our "artsiest" sessions, Water's Edge and Trash Your Dress. Very traditional to cutting edge. Unique services include digital restoration of old photos, copy work, photographic business cards, passport photos, and greeting cards.

**Free 8-by-10 (\$40 Value) with Paid Portrait Session (\$25)**

**Best Western Legacy Inn & Suites, 5910 Technology Drive, South Beloit (815) 389-4211 – www.bestwestern.com**



Hotel with complimentary deluxe continental breakfast, wireless internet, heated pool, hot tub, exercise facility, meeting space available, refrigerator and microwave in all rooms, cable and HBO, free local calls, cribs available, hot tub rooms available, free parking. Easy access from I-90/39 and I-43.

**10% Off**

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 and to print online coupons.

## More Power to You

*(Continued from page 16a)*

Day. We debuted an all-you-can-eat pancake breakfast last year that was so successful we're planning a repeat.

A famous company called Chris Cakes will cater the meal, flipping pancakes right onto your plate. Maybe the cooks will even let me help out behind the grill this year.

In addition to the pancake breakfast, we'll also have the regular favorites: bucket truck rides, health fair, jugglers, jumping booth, balloons, popcorn, and ice cream. Because we're celebrating our 75th anniversary this year, we'll also show the Rock Energy history video that premiered at our annual meeting in March and have anniversary cake. 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. If I'm not behind the pancake grill, you may find me carrying a big trash bag and clearing tables. Let me know if there's anything we can do to improve our service. ■



**Energy Efficiency**

*Tip of the Month*

Is your washing machine more than 10 years old? According to the U.S. Department of Energy, families can cut related energy costs by more than a third—and water costs by more than half—by purchasing a clothes washer with an ENERGY STAR label. Choose a front-load or redesigned top-load model.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy



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