



Shane L. Larson,
Chief Executive Officer

More Power to You

'CO-OPS VOTE' CAMPAIGN COUNTS ON STRENGTH IN NUMBERS



You've probably heard the phrase "strength in numbers." Well, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association is counting on that principle in its "Co-ops Vote" initiative, a nonpartisan, nationwide effort to promote civic engagement and voter participation.

We all know that a group of people has more influence or power than one person. In fact, that's how this co-op got started. Local farmers banded together 80 years ago to accomplish what individuals alone couldn't do. They founded the co-op, signed up members, borrowed money, hired employees, put poles in the ground, and strung wire to get electricity to rural Rock County.

Today, as a Rock Energy member, you are one of 42 million Americans across the nation who belong to an energy cooperative. That's a lot of people and a lot of voting power. Co-ops Vote is designed to help members know when elections are, be informed about the issues, and learn how to make their voices heard.

The initiative is focusing on eight issues important to the health and prosperity of communities served by energy cooperatives:

- Affordable and reliable energy
- Low-income energy assistance
- Cybersecurity
- Renewable energy
- Water regulation
- Rural health care access
- Rural broadband access
- Employment and recognition of veterans

Co-op members now can visit vote.coop, a new website that provides information on the voter registration process, dates of elections, and information on the candidates running in those elections. The issues important to co-ops also are explained.

It's important to note that this project is completely nonpartisan and will not endorse specific candidates for office. Take the time to learn about the issues and candidates, so your values and beliefs will be better represented when you cast your ballot. It's all about co-ops and our members living out the two principles of our movement: democratic control and concern for community.

When you register on the vote.coop website, you gain access to a wealth of information specific to your state, congressional district, and state legislative district. For example, if you live in Wisconsin, you'll learn that the presidential primary is

coming up on Tuesday, April 5. You also can find out how to register to vote, get an absentee ballot, and locate your polling place. Illinois residents voted in the presidential primary on March 15.

The website provides information on the candidates running for national and state offices, their biographies, links to their campaign pages, and contact details. The candidate information is a valuable tool to help voters become involved and informed.

Another section of vote.coop lists national and state elected officials—again with their biographies, contact information, and links to their official government websites. With this resource, you'll have everything you need to stay knowledgeable on the issues. When residents are informed, they reinforce democracy and help to keep the government in check.

If you're a Wisconsin resident, I encourage you to learn about the issues and vote on April 5. If you live in Illinois, I hope you did your civic duty by voting on March 15.

As always, it is our privilege to serve your energy needs. Please let us know if we can do anything to improve our service.

CO-OPS

VOTE

A PROGRAM OF AMERICA'S
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

WWW.VOTE.COOP



Carson Brauer
Parkview High School



Katherine Butler
Hononegah High School



Erika Gustafson
Hononegah High School



Emma Hahn
Clinton High School



Jake Hermanson
Milton High School

Congratulations to **Scholarship Winners**

Rock Energy Cooperative is pleased to announce the 2016 scholarship winners. Each student will receive \$500 to assist with educational expenses at an accredited college or technical school. The co-op awards 10 scholarships each year to graduating seniors living in REC's service territory. Funds for the scholarships come from unclaimed capital credits.



Hanna Kearns
Parkview High School



Heather Messling
Evansville High School



Collin O'Sullivan
Hononegah High School



Amber Pickel
Brodhead High School



Jessica Pozzani
South Beloit High School

Remembering the ICE STORM of March 1976

When Denny Schultz was asked on March 4 if he remembered what he was doing 40 years ago, he thought for a moment. Then the memories of the great ice storm of 1976 came flooding back to him as if it had happened yesterday.

Schultz, who is now director of utility operations at Rock Energy Coopera-

tive, was a third-year apprentice lineman during the March 4-5, 1976, ice storm. He recalled that the storm knocked out all but one of the co-op's substations and more than 90 percent of the system was down. The damage was so extensive that some members were without power for more than a week. Rock County and 20 others were declared federal disaster areas.

"It was by far the worst ice storm this co-op has ever had and ranks right up there with the co-op's worst storms," he said.

The bad weather actually started a few days before, making for an extremely long and tiring week.

"Beginning Monday, March 1, ice began building up on trees and conductors," according to the co-op's monthly publication. "Crews worked throughout Monday night, Tuesday, Tuesday night, and at 4 p.m. Wednesday, we finally had all services intact. The ice continued to build; however, the crews were able to rest Wednesday night with no outages.

"On Thursday morning, March 4, all systems were 'double red.' By 10:30 a.m. a disaster was imminent... Because of the tempo of the ice storm, the work done on Thursday was lost during the night as the wind broke trees like toothpicks."

Schultz recalled that his crew had just finished repairing the line along Kemp Road between Highway 14 and County MM.

"The wind started blowing," Schultz

"It was by far the worst ice storm this co-o has ever had..." —Denny Schultz

said. "You could hear the tree crack. A great big limb from a soft maple tree came down and just ripped that whole line right back down. It happened all over the county. We had to start all over again."

Electric poles and wires were covered with up to six inches of ice, and winds gusting to 60 mph made a horrible situation even worse.

Crews from neighboring co-ops and construction companies helped with the restoration work. The first task is always getting power restored to all members as quickly as possible, Schultz said. Then it took weeks to fix everything they had cobbled together.

The co-op had only one bucket truck at the time, which meant that Schultz and others climbed a lot of poles during the storm and its aftermath. Climbing wasn't easy because the poles were covered with thick ice, Schultz said. He used two safety belts and a method called "hitch-

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This pole on County MM near Kemp Road is just one of the many that Denny Schultz climbed during the ice storm. The safety belt and climbing hooks he's holding were issued to him when he started working at the co-op in August 1973.



"We plan together. We stay safe together."

**APRIL 11 is NATIONAL
LINEMAN APPRECIATION DAY.**

#thankalinetman

Ice storm

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hiking." He would dig the hooks attached to his boots into the pole, throw the belt up the pole, and then take a step. That procedure was completed over and over again until he got to the top of the pole. Sometimes the belt would start slipping, and he would have to smash ice off the pole to continue.

The crews worked long hours, sometimes days with only a quick meal break and naps here and there. While one worker was driving the truck to the next job, the other worker slept, Schultz said.

"We were so tired, but you get your adrenaline going," he said.

Get Connected

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



The Villager, 429 E. Grand Ave., Beloit (608) 365-6007 – www.villagergallery.com

Art gallery and custom framing. Select from hundreds of picture moldings ranging from the exquisitely simple to the breathtakingly ornate. Discover a growing collection of local original artwork. Frame It At The Villager!

\$10 Off Framing Jobs of \$75 or More



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Pizza and ice cream. Great food for busy families!
\$1 Off Lunch or Evening Buffet (every day)



For a complete listing of current deals, visit www.rock.coop and click on the Co-op Connections Card. You also can use the card for discounts on prescriptions as well as dental, vision, hearing, chiropractic, lab, and imaging services. To locate providers, call 800-800-7616.

CAPITAL CREDITS GENERALLY NOT TAXABLE

As tax time is approaching, Rock Energy Cooperative members might be wondering if the capital credits they receive are taxable.

Controller Dave Lancour said he believes that capital credits generally are not taxable for individual members.

Whether your capital credit refund is taxable generally depends on whether or not you claimed your energy bills as a business expense, Lancour said. For example, a farm or other business claiming 75 percent business use of their energy costs would have to include 75 percent of the cash payment for the capital credits when received as income. The non-business portion is not subject to taxation.

Lancour suggested that members with specific questions should consult a tax adviser.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



Earth Day is April 22. Give back to the environment by planting a deciduous tree near your home. Deciduous trees lose their leaves during the fall, allowing sunlight to warm your home. The extra shade during summer months will keep your home cooler and give your AC a much needed break.

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**ROCK ENERGY
COOPERATIVE**
Empowering Members Since 1936