



Shane L. Larson,
Chief Executive Officer

More Power to You

Electricity's Cost Hinges on Details of President's Climate Action Plan

President Obama has laid the groundwork for the possibility of significant changes in environmental regulations, but it's too early in the process to predict how co-op members will be affected. Like similar ambitious endeavors, the details are massive and have yet to be determined.

The president's Climate Action Plan, which was released June 25, directs the Environmental Protection Agency to set carbon emission standards for both new and existing power plants. A standard for existing power plants would be proposed by June 2014 and finalized in 2015. Carbon regulations for new generating units are expected to be drafted by September.

Until we have details, the future cost of electricity remains unknown. What we do know is that power generators will be spending billions of dollars to retrofit their power plants to meet the requirements. Those power plants deemed too inefficient to update will be shut down.

The vast majority of plants that will be retrofitted or shut down are coal plants. In this part of the country, coal plants generate about 50 percent of all electricity. There are hundreds of coal plants in the Midwest, so whatever happens—whether these plants are updated or moth-balled—we will see an impact on costs.

Energy cooperatives are especially concerned because we are generally smaller than investor-owned utilities and costs are shared among fewer consumers. So any policy changes that affect affordable energy may have a disproportionate impact on co-op members.

Cooperatives throughout the country are resolute in their goal to provide reliable, affordable power 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. We support a balanced, technically realistic, and economically feasible approach to environmental and climate change policy.

As details about the new standards become available, I'll keep you informed about the impact on your energy costs. Until then, we'll just have to wait and see what happens.

Concern for Community

Local people working for local good. That's the essence of the Seventh Cooperative Principle, "Concern for Community," one of seven guidelines that govern energy cooperatives and other co-ops throughout the world. Co-op members Bob and Sherri Haakenson serve as a great example of that principle. As a host family for the Beloit Snappers for the past seven years, they have opened up their home and their hearts to players from various countries. You can read about their commitment on 16b.

We're fortunate to have the Haakensons and families like them living in our area, supporting our communities,

and helping to improve our lives. The time and resources they invest help so many people in so many different ways.

But these families will be the first to admit that they are the ones reaping the most benefits. "The blessings have just overflowed for us," Sherri says.

If you know of a co-op member who exemplifies the "Concern for Community" principle, please let us know so we can share their story.

In the meantime, we have plenty of discounted Snappers tickets available for the rest of the season. You can stop at our Janesville or South Beloit office to buy tickets for just \$2 each. While you're in the office, please let us know if there's anything we can do to better serve your energy needs. ■

We support a balanced, technically realistic, and economically feasible approach to environmental and climate change policy.



'We Are So Blessed'

Family Shares Home with Snappers Players

When Johannes Haakenson grows up, he hopes to become a professional baseball player just like his 40 brothers. He has more brothers than the usual 12-year-old because his parents, Bob and Sherri, have served as a host family for the Beloit Snappers minor league baseball team for the past seven years.

"I tell people that I have 40 sons, and one of them is biological," Sherri says with a smile. All of her sons call her Mom, and Bob is Dad. Johannes is the little brother.

Since 2007 the Rock Energy Cooperative members have hosted a total of 40 players, usually four at a time, in their home between Janesville and Evansville. Some stay for an entire season, but others are there only briefly before heading to their next stop on what they hope will be a long baseball career.

Bob, Sherri, and Johannes started going to Snappers games in 2003, attending a handful each season. After a couple years they became season ticket holders. But they never really planned to become a host family until they received a call just before the 2007 season started. A house that some players were planning to rent turned out to be in such disrepair that the Snappers office was making calls to see if anyone knew of a place for the players to stay until a more permanent solution could be found.

That's when the Haakensons borrowed some beds and set up dorm-style living quarters in their finished basement.

"We instantly fell in love with them and knew we had done the right thing," Sherri says.

Shortly after the first players arrived, Sherri recalls going downstairs and finding a player reading scripture to his fellow teammate. "At that moment, there was no doubt in my mind that this is the right thing to do. We are so blessed. The blessings have just overflowed for us."

After seven years their home has become known as the Latin House, and new Latino players get recommendations from their teammates to request the Haakensons as their host family. Of the 40 players in their family, 17 are from Venezuela, 12 from the Dominican Republic, five from Puerto Rico, two from

Australia, and one each from Mexico, Columbia, South Korea, and the United States.

Language differences have been challenging over the years because the Haakensons do not speak Spanish and many of the players know little English. The family breaks through the language barrier with smiles, nods, and lots of hugs. Bob recalls that one player said he learned English by watching movies. So Bob tuned to a Spanish-speaking TV channel in an effort to learn some of the language. That didn't work, so his answer to the language barrier has been to talk loudly and very slowly, Sherri and Johannes explain with a laugh.

The Haakensons have not only shared their home with the players, but they also have opened up their hearts. The players become part of the Haakenson family during their stay with the Snappers.

After home games Sherri makes a home-cooked meal for the whole family. While the Haakensons were enjoying a recent game, a roast was cooking in the crock pot, and Sherri planned to make rice and crescent rolls when she got home.

"I have a meal ready for them after home games so they have a good solid reason to come home," Sherri says. "I make sure they eat."

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Bob, Sherri, and Johannes Haakenson with their Snappers family, from left: Renato Nunez, Andres Avila, Michael Ynoa, and Snappy.

Haakenson Family

(Continued from page 16b)

Mom and Dad Haakenson are there to support the players through the ups and downs that come with playing minor league baseball. They share the players' joy when they advance up the ranks and their sorrow if they are cut from the team.

By providing a good home structure and showing by example that successful families work hard and work together, the Haakensons encourage the players to focus on their careers. The support system they provide is crucial because many of the Latino players have large families back home who are counting on them to make it big.

Third baseman Renato Nunez's family recently visited from Venezuela, and even though Sherri and Renato's mom couldn't communicate with words, they knew they shared a common bond—their love of Renato. Sherri says she looked in his mother's eyes and could see how much she appreciated that the Haakensons had opened up their home, their lives, and their hearts to her son.

When asked if Johannes' desire to become a professional baseball player was a result of his parents' involvement with the Snappers, both Bob and Sherri agree that their son has always been a fan and his love of baseball has only grown through the years. He started playing T-ball when he 3, now plays on two youth teams, and will head to Cooperstown, N.Y., in August for the American Youth Baseball Hall of Fame Invitational Tournament.

When the Beloit Snappers changed its team affiliation from the Minnesota Twins to the Oakland Athletics this season, the Haakensons briefly considered ending their run as a host family, but that definitely would have disappointed Johannes. Ever since he can remember, Snappers players have lived with the family every April through September. "I don't think I know how to live with them not in the basement," he told his parents.

Johannes has really connected with many of the players, who sometimes work with him on his baseball skills.

"The experience has been priceless for our family," Sherri says. "You cannot put a value on what our child is getting in life experience."

Pohlman Field is like the Haakensons' own *Cheers*, a place they can go where everyone knows their name. They like the camaraderie of the Snappers organization and have the same feeling about Rock Energy Cooperative.

"We truly enjoy the cooperative," Bob says. "We're so lucky to be a part of the co-op and participate in the activities." ■

Volunteers are Priceless

"Volunteers aren't paid, not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless."

—Anonymous

As a not-for-profit, community-owned franchise, the Beloit Snappers exist because of volunteers, Dennis Conerton, board chairman, says.

Conerton, who also is a Rock Energy Cooperative member, is one of nine host families who open up their homes to players.

During home games at Pohlman Field, volunteers also staff the concession stands, take tickets at the gate, serve as ushers, and work in the information booth. In addition, their skills often are used to complete maintenance projects around the ballpark.

More than 200 volunteers help out in various ways during each season, Matt Bosen, general manager, estimates. That amounts to \$30,000 to \$40,000 in saved labor costs.

Conerton and Bosen expressed gratitude to the many volunteers, businesses, and fans who have supported the franchise for the past three decades.

"Without their support, we wouldn't be here," Bosen said. "We definitely appreciate and need all the community and corporate support."

Anyone interested in volunteering can call the Snappers office at (608) 372-2272 or email snappy@snappersbaseball.com.



Dennis Conerton, left, and Matt Bosen appreciate the support that the Beloit Snappers receive from the community.

Get Connected

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



Indulge Spa & Salon, 807 Brown School Road, Evansville – (608) 882-6391
Full-service salon specializing in hair, nails, pedicures, massage, facials, and tanning.
\$5 Off Any Service Valued at \$20 or More

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Premier Technologies, 617 E. Grand Ave., Beloit – (608) 361-1000 – www.premier-technologies.com

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Healthy Savings Discounts

The same program that offers discounts at local merchants and has saved Rock Energy members \$52,000 on prescriptions also provides significant savings on dental, vision, hearing, lab and imaging services, and chiropractic work. To locate providers that participate in the Healthy Savings program, call (800) 800-7616 or go to www.rock.coop, click on the Co-op Connections Card, and look under the Healthy Savings tab. Be sure to have your Co-op Connections Card handy.

Add Up Your Savings!



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Mark Your Calendar! Member Appreciation Day 2013 Pancake Breakfast

Watch for details!

Saturday, Sept. 14
8 to 10:30 a.m.

REC Headquarters,
2815 Kennedy Road, Janesville, Wis.



Have a Safe and Happy Labor Day!

Rock Energy Cooperative offices will be closed on Monday, Sept. 2, in observance of Labor Day. We will reopen at 7:30 a.m. Tuesday, Sept. 3. 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.



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

When shopping for a new appliance, consider lifetime operation costs as well as the up-front purchase price. Refrigerators last an average of 12 years, clothes washers about 11, and dishwashers about 10. Check the Energy Guide label for the appliance's estimated yearly operating cost, and look for ENERGY STAR units, which usually exceed minimum federal standards for efficiency and quality. To learn more, visit EnergySavers.gov.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy