



Shane L. Larson, Chief Executive Officer

## More Power to You Advances in Technology Make Us More Vulnerable to Various Scams

Your phone rings, and you look at the caller ID. You recognize the name of the local business and the phone number. You can automatically assume that the call is legitimate, right?

Wrong! As technology becomes more sophisticated, so do scammers' tactics. By using a technique called spoofing, scam artists can trick consumers into thinking a phone call is from a local business they trust. Then the criminals use that trust to obtain credit card information or Social Security numbers. We've learned that at least one such bogus call was made this past spring using Rock Energy's name and phone number as the caller ID. Fortunately, the person who received the call didn't provide any financial information.

Less sophisticated scammers just block the caller ID. In the past few months, members have told us that they've received phone calls from a person claiming to be a Rock Energy employee and threatening to disconnect service unless an immediate payment is made. Unfortunately, a few members have provided credit card information and then phoned us to see if the call was legitimate. When that happens, we advise the members to call the police and immediately cancel their credit card.

Co-op members—and all consumers—must be diligent in protecting their financial information. Our employees will never call members and demand that an immediate payment be made over the phone or service will be disconnected. In fact, the disconnection procedure for nonpayment is quite lengthy and involves several contacts between the member and co-op employee.

Members with past-due balances initially will get a disconnection notice on their monthly statement telling them that their bill must be paid within 10 days. In the days before and after the statement is mailed, members will receive three automated phone calls that state: "This is an important call from Rock Energy Cooperative. Please contact us in the next 48 hours regarding your past-due bill." If the bill

remains unpaid after the third call, members will receive another automated call that states: "Please hold for an important call from Rock Energy Cooperative. ... This is your final courtesy call regarding your past-due balance. Please contact us to avoid disconnection."

If members still don't respond, a co-op employee will deliver a blue pre-disconnection notice to the home. That will be followed with a phone call the next day from our collections department stating that the balance must be paid or service will be disconnected tomorrow. If a payment or arrangements still haven't been made by the following day, a line worker will deliver a red disconnection notice and proceed to disconnect service.

Members who receive a call from our collections department will be given the option of making a payment over the phone or at the office, but we will never demand immediate payment by phone in order to avoid disconnection. If you have any questions regarding the legitimacy of a call, do not provide the caller with any information. Simply hang up and call us at (866) 752-4550. If the call was a legitimate one, we'll understand that you were just protecting yourself. If it wasn't, you'll have saved yourself from falling victim to a scam. Remember that if you didn't initiate the call, you really have no idea who is on the other end of the line.

Of course, scammers don't just rely on the phone. They also target people using email and some even are bold enough to visit homes and try to scam you in person. Through the years we've issued several scam warnings after learning about them from our members.

One email scam involved bogus invoices that instructed members to click on a hyperlink to view their utility bill. The link went to a site that infected devices with malware, which could go after banking information or attempt to steal usernames or passwords.

The boldest scam that affected a Rock Energy member occurred in May 2011 when a thief posed as a utility worker to gain access to a home and then stole valuables. A couple was outside doing yard work when a man got out

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## Check Breakers, Fuses Before Reporting Outage

When your power goes out during a storm, your first reaction is to grab the phone and call Rock Energy Cooperative. That's logical, but it's important to first check your fuse box or circuit breakers to determine if the problem is on the co-op's lines or with your own electrical system.

During the recent June 30 storm when outages were widespread, many callers questioned why they were asked to check their fuses and breakers. It seemed obvious to them that the outage was caused by the storm and the co-op needed to make repairs.

But not all outages are the co-op's responsibility. The storm, for example, could have caused a fuse to blow or a circuit to trip. Even some outdoor issues might be the member's responsibility. Rock Energy maintains the electric lines leading to your house and the meter itself. But if the weatherhead, which is usually found on the roof, or meter socket is damaged or pulled away from the house, members must call an electrician to make repairs. These items are considered part of your house and are your responsibility.

Our member service representatives who answer outage calls during the day and our after-hours service, Co-

## Rock Energy Director Dies

Mike Duffy, director of Rock Energy Cooperative, died unexpectedly on June 20, in his home. He was 68.

Duffy of South Beloit was elected to the board in 2011 and was re-elected at the co-op's annual meeting in March.

He also had served as mayor of South Beloit since 2011 and previously worked in the education field for more than 40 years as a teacher, principal, superintendent, and consultant at school districts in Illinois. He was superintendent of the South Beloit District for 15 years and most recently worked as interim superintendent at the Durand School District.

"Mike was an excellent director and a terrific person," said Shane Larson, Rock Energy's chief executive officer. "His knowledge of the area, particularly South Beloit, was extremely valuable. He will be greatly missed."

Memorials may be made in Duffy's name toward a scholarship fund that will be established at a later date. ■



operative Response Center, are instructed to ask members if they have checked the fuses and breakers. It's done to save our members money. If crews are dispatched and the problem turns out to be a blown fuse or tripped circuit, the co-op will require the member to pay a trip charge.

Here are some other items to remember when reporting an outage:

- Provide as much information as you can. What time did the power go out? Did the lights flicker? Did you hear a pop? Do you see any power lines down? These details help our crews detect the problem and make repairs.
- Don't assume that we know about your outage. Call us at (866) 752-4550 with your name and the address that is without power. It's also helpful to provide a cell phone number where you can be reached.
- After you report the outage, give us enough time to respond and repair the damage. Don't be concerned if you don't see utility trucks near your house. The problem with your power may be far away.
- Callers understandably want to know when they can expect their power to be restored. However, it's often difficult to estimate restoration times on a per member basis, especially if the outages are widespread.
- Be patient. Rock Energy crews are working quickly and safely to restore your service. ■

## Open Board Seat

The Rock Energy Cooperative Board of Directors will be evaluating potential candidates to fill the remaining term (expires spring 2017) of the open District 6 board seat. Candidates must meet all qualifications prior to being considered. District 6 is comprised of the following townships: Rock and Beloit in Wisconsin and Rockton in Illinois. Members who are interested in being considered must submit a letter of interest by August 11, 2014, to Barb Uebelacker at [barbu@rock.coop](mailto:barbu@rock.coop) or at P.O. Box 1758, Janesville, WI 53547. For board qualifications, go online to [www.rock.coop/node/745](http://www.rock.coop/node/745) or stop by the Janesville or South Beloit offices during regular business hours. ■

# Great Night at the Ballpark

Co-op members filled the stands at Beloit's Telfer Park on Saturday, June 21, for the annual Rock Energy Night at the Ballpark. About 450 co-op members enjoyed baseball, food, and a fabulous fireworks show.



The first 50 kids at the game received a Snappers souvenir, which they had autographed by players. Co-op members also participated in many of the between-inning games.



Co-op member Chris Natale, who owns the Captain's Galley in South Beloit, started the festivities by playing the national anthem.



## Discounted Tickets Available

Discounted tickets are still available for Beloit Snappers home games. Co-op members can buy them for \$2 each at the Janesville or South Beloit co-op offices, and they can be used during any 2014 regular season game. The tickets are originally priced at \$7.

Mark Your Calendar!

**Member  
Appreciation Day  
2014  
Pancake Breakfast**



**Saturday, Sept. 13 • 8 to 10:30 a.m.**

REC Headquarters, 2815 Kennedy Road, Janesville, Wis.

## More Power to You

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of an unmarked truck and said he was from the utility company and needed to go inside to do some work. The couple continued working outside while the man went inside. Later, the couple discovered that valuables had been stolen and called the police.

We appreciate that our members have such trust in the co-op, but we urge everyone to be careful with their information and possessions. You may have heard of the old saying: "Trust, but verify." If a worker from a utility or any business comes to your house, ask to see a photo ID that proves the worker is legitimate. Our crews always travel in trucks with the co-op logo prominently displayed on the sides. Workers also carry IDs that they will gladly show when asked.

Please don't fall victim to any of these scams. If you receive an email, phone call, or personal visit from someone who claims to work for Rock Energy and are suspicious, just call our office at (866) 752-4550. Remember to "trust, but verify."

On June 20, we lost a member of the cooperative family when board member Mike Duffy passed away unexpectedly at his home. Mike served on the co-op board for a little more than three years and was re-elected at our annual meeting in March. As most know, he was also the mayor of South Beloit.

While Mike's time on the board was relatively short, his contributions were many. Mike was as quick with a smile as he was with his sage advice. His cooperative roots ran deep, beginning as a farm kid in Illinois. He was committed to doing the right thing for the members of Rock Energy Cooperative. We will miss his wisdom, his smile, and his Chicago Bears socks. Our continued thoughts and prayers to Lori and the Duffy family. The Rock Energy family is going to miss Mike.

Please let us know if there's anything we can do to improve our service to you. We truly are grateful to be your energy provider. ■

## Have a Safe and Happy Labor Day!

Rock Energy Cooperative offices will be closed on Monday, Sept. 1, in observance of Labor Day. We will reopen at 7:30 a.m. Tuesday, Sept. 2. 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. ■

### Get Connected

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



**Angela's Attic, 1020 Gardner St., South Beloit – (815) 389-1679 – [www.angelas-attic.com](http://www.angelas-attic.com)**

Antiques and collectibles.

*Angela's Attic*

**10% Discount on**

**Purchase of \$20 or More (cash/check only; prices not marked "Firm" or "Sale")**

**CR Styles, 1691 E. Gale Drive, Beloit – (608) 361-0920 – [www.crstyles.com](http://www.crstyles.com)**

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friendly and welcoming atmosphere. Come visit us in our new location! Wide choice of only the best products, and as always, kids pay according to their age. Walk-ins welcome!

**One Free Kid's Cut (per family) & \$3 Off Any Man's/Woman's Cut**



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