



More Power to You ELECTRIC LINES, METERS NEED CLEARANCE FOR RELIABILITY, SAFETY



Shane L. Larson,
Chief Executive Officer

Three months ago this column focused on one of our biggest threats to reliable electricity—squirrels. They perform their high-wire antics on our lines, explore our substations, and chew through our electrical wires. This month I am writing about another common culprit that can be found across the countryside, in members’

yards, and almost everywhere—trees.

Oak, maple, elm, birch, and many other varieties of trees grow along our 1,265 miles of distribution lines. They are an essential part of the environment, providing wildlife habitat, protecting our homes from the elements, and beautifying the landscape.

But when members’ trees grow too close to our power lines, a potential problem exists. Since 2010, trees have caused about 20 percent of our power outages. If you include outages caused by major storms and high winds, which likely involve trees, that number approaches 40 percent.

Rock Energy Cooperative maintains tree clearance on primary distribution lines that run along roadways and rights-of-way. These are the lines that carry high-voltage electricity from substations to pole-top transformers. Our crews look for foliage under lines, leaning trees, overhanging branches, trees that could grow into lines, and other potential hazards that could pull down a power line. As you might suspect, this is a job that never ends because the vegetation continues to grow.

The co-op does minor branch trimming near secondary lines, which carry low-voltage electricity from pole-top transformers to members’ houses, barns, or businesses. If you need more extensive trimming or tree removal, you can hire a contractor to do the work. To help with the process, we would be happy to de-energize and drop the line so you



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Ron Sowles is disconnecting and dropping a secondary line so the homeowner can safely have nearby trees trimmed.





can have the tree safely removed and then reconnect power when the work is completed. This is done without charge during regular operating hours with advance scheduling.

The best tree maintenance program, however, is careful planning. Before planting trees in your yard, think about how tall they may grow and how wide their branches may spread. That seedling might be less than a few feet tall now,

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but consider how large it will get when mature. Generally, 25 feet of ground-to-sky clearance is necessary around utility poles. When planning your landscaping, choose tree varieties with power lines in mind. See the graphic below for more information about the best placement of trees in your yard.

Keeping a clear path to your electric and gas meters is also important for routine maintenance, billing accuracy, and most importantly, the safety of you and our employees.



Shrubs prevent easy access to this gas and electric meter, making it difficult for co-op workers to read meters, do routine maintenance, and handle emergencies.

During emergencies, it is critical that we have quick and easy access to your meters so we can shut off service for repairs. It's important to make sure there are no obstacles blocking the meters. When bushes, lawn decorations, storage bins, decks, or other items are too close to meters, our employees have a difficult time doing their jobs.

To test the accessibility of your

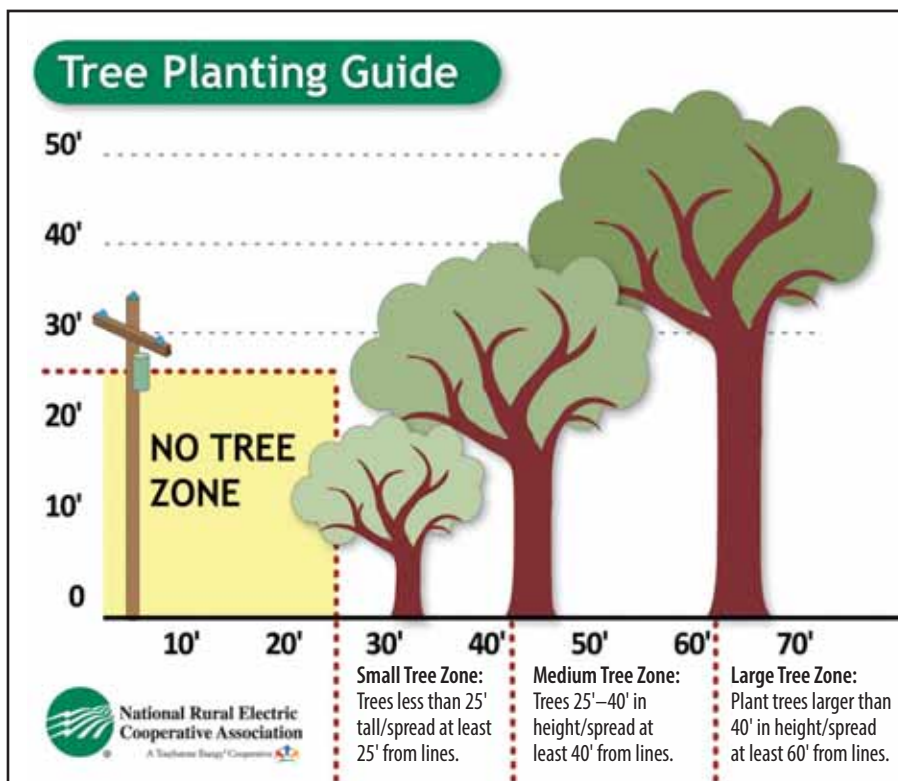
meters, periodically try walking to them from the roadway. Are you weaving through the branches of shrubs and other vegetation? Do tall weeds make the trip treacherous? Remember that if you can't easily and safely get to the meter, neither can we.

I want to thank everyone who contributed to our Back-to-School Supplies Drive in July. Thanks to your generosity, students in our area will be starting the school year with the tools they need to succeed.

Remember to keep the morning of Saturday, Sept. 17, available for our Member Appreciation Day Pancake Breakfast. About 1,350 people of all ages visited the co-op's Janesville warehouse for last year's celebration. See page 16c for all the details.

Document shredding and electronics recycling are back this year by popular demand. A total of 11.2 tons of electronics and 2.5 tons of paper were collected last year. Workers will be available to help members carry their bags and boxes of documents to the shredding truck and unload heavy electronics from vehicles.

Our annual fall event allows the co-op's employees and directors to say a special thank you to all our members. We hope to see you there, and please let us know if there's anything we can do to improve our service to you.





Member Appreciation Day Pancake Breakfast

Saturday, Sept. 17

8 - 10:30 a.m.

Rock Energy headquarters,
2815 Kennedy Road,
Janesville

- Pancakes, sausage, juice, milk, water, coffee
- Health fair
- Bucket truck rides
- Jugglers
- CFL Charlie and LED Lucy
- Spin-to-win prize wheel
- Bounce house, balloons
- Popcorn, ice cream



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

Back by popular demand:
Document Shredding
Electronics Recycling

Document Shredding



- Limit: 4 boxes or bags of material per member.
- You do not need to remove staples, paper clips, hanging files, or black binder clips from materials.
- CDs and credit cards also will be shredded.
- No three-ring binders.
- All material will be shredded on site.

Electronics Recycling



- Accepted items: TVs, personal computers, printers, scanners, fax machines, calculators, cell phones, keyboards/mice, radios, stereos, telephones, DVD/CD players, VCRs.
- No air conditioners, microwaves, dehumidifiers, vacuums, toasters, or large appliances.
- No businesses please.

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Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



Consider insulating your water heater tank, which could reduce standby heat losses by 25 to 45 percent and save you about 4 to 9 percent in water heating costs. You can find pre-cut jackets or blankets available from around \$20.

Source: energy.gov

Get Connected

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



Peterson Chiropractic Clinic, 92 E. Highway 59, Suite B, Edgerton – 608-884-4643

Caring, committed, and close to home. Since 2007, striving to bring comprehensive chiropractic care in a relaxed environment to all ages, resulting in improved health and wellness every day. Centrally located, convenient parking, wheelchair accessible.



Free Initial Exam

Happy House Liquor, 1121 Elmwood Ave., Beloit – 608-362-1831

Fully stocked liquor store.

\$5 Off Any Purchase of \$40 or more (excludes lottery and cigarettes)



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.



Add Up Your Savings!

Tell us how much you have saved by using your Co-op Connections Card. If you have a story you'd like to share, e-mail Barbara Uebelacker at BarbU@rock.coop or call her at 866-752-4550.

DON'T TRY TO CATCH POKÉMON IN SUBSTATIONS

Rock Energy Cooperative and other utilities are reminding players of Pokémon Go to stay away from electric substations, power plants, and other electric equipment.

The new smartphone-based augmented reality game sends players to real-world places to “catch” Pokémon. Pokémon turn up everywhere—from grocery stores to hospitals. But they’re also appearing at electric substations, drawing players into dangerous situations.

“Electric utilities cannot control where the Pokémon appear, and players should make sure they catch their Pokémon from a safe distance,” said Dennis Schultz, director of utility operations for Rock Energy. “Any game or activity that distracts people from the possible dangers around them and potentially brings them in proximity to our electric equipment and lines is a major concern for all us.”

Remember these important electrical safety tips as you try to #CatchEmAll:

- Never touch electric equipment, including transformers and power lines.
- Never touch a downed power line. Assume all lines are energized and dangerous.
- Never climb utility poles.
- Never enter an electric substation.



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 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.

Shane Larson, CEO

P.O. Box 1758, 2815 Kennedy Rd., Janesville, WI 53547
P.O. Box 126, 15229 Willowbrook Rd., South Beloit, IL 61080
608-752-4550 • 866-752-4550

Barbara Uebelacker, Editor



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