



# Monday, April 8, 2024 Eclipse Center, Beloit, WI

Rock Energy's 88th Annual Meeting will be held on Monday, April 8, at the Eclipse Center in Beloit, WI. We are very excited to announce that at this year's meeting, we are bringing back the full-service, sit-down dinner for our members. Full details about the annual meeting will be in the March magazine.



## 88TH ANNUAL MEETING



# Make Sure To Have A Backup Plan For At-home Medical Equipment



Electricity is something we take for granted.

When you depend on electricity to power medical equipment and medicine at home, then it comes as an unpleasant surprise when storms (tornados, ice storms, etc.) or extreme weather overloads power grids, leading to a power

outage. For these times, its essential to think ahead and not wait until you are facing a crisis.

If you or another person in your home relies on medical equipment, plan ahead for a power outage. Below are seven important factors that you should consider.

- 1 EQUIPMENT INVENTORY:** Make a list of all the different medical devices in your home that are operated with electricity. This could include breathing machines (CPAP, respirators, ventilators), power wheelchairs and scooters, oxygen, suction, or home dialysis equipment, and even a refrigerator to store medicine, such as insulin.
- 2 BACKUP PLAN:** Plan for how you will power/manage each item in the event of a power outage. Your plan may include backup batteries, a generator, and even asking local authorities (such as a hospital, fire station, and energy provider) for assistance. It's best to reach out to these sources in advance of a power outage to ask how and if they can help.
- 3 BATTERIES:** If you use hearing aids, keep a supply of hearing aid batteries on hand. Create a plan for how to recharge batteries when the electricity is out. Check with your vendor/supplier to find alternative ways to charge batteries.
- 4 EMERGENCY CHECKLIST:** Create an emergency power checklist that includes model and serial numbers for your medical devices, emergency contact information, power backup sources, etc.
- 5 USER MANUALS:** Have all equipment instruction manuals located in one easy place to find in the event of a power outage. Read the user manual or contact the manufacturer to find out if your medical device is compatible with batteries or a generator.
- 6 PLAN AHEAD:** Fully charge your cellphone, battery-powered medical devices, and backup power sources if you know a big storm is coming.
- 7 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:** Get manual alternatives for your electric devices that are portable, dependable, and durable. For example, a manual wheelchair, walker, or cane as a backup for an electric scooter.



# Electrical Theft Is Not Worth It

Every year, energy cooperatives across the country cope with thieves—folks who deliberately tamper with their meter to steal power. **ELECTRICAL THEFT** is a serious crime that could result in hefty fines and jail time.

Most electrical theft crimes occur through **METER TAMPERING**, **BYPASSING METERS**, and **TAPPING POWER LINES**. Other less frequent crimes include tapping into neighboring premises, using illegal lines after disconnection, self-reconnection without consent, and electrifying fences.

Not only is electrical theft illegal, it is also very dangerous, as **POWER SURGING** through a compromised meter can cause an electrical catastrophe, according to the Cooperative Research Network, a division of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

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. Serious injury or death from electrocution, explosion, or fire can result from meter tampering.

Also, electricity theft is **NOT A VICTIMLESS CRIME**. Rock Energy loses revenue and expends resources to investigate meter tampering. These costs, unfortunately, are then passed onto the entire membership.

*Since everyone pays for lost power, please let us know if you suspect meter tampering. Call 866-752-4550 to report possible theft of service. All information can be given anonymously.*



## Do Not Tamper With An Electric Meter

Meter tampering can result in electric shock, it is illegal, and it increases electricity rates for other co-op members.

- **Never break a meter seal.**
- **Never open a meter base.**
- **Never remove a meter or alter an entrance cable in any manner.**

If you know of or suspect that someone has tampered with a meter, please contact us immediately at 866-752-4550.

# Insurance Policies Cover Losses From Power Outages

Rock Energy Cooperative works diligently to make sure your electricity and natural gas are there when you need them. **But like most things, nothing is 100 percent guaranteed.**

- Outages or voltage issues—whether triggered by a storm, lightning, trees, equipment failure, animals, or vehicles hitting power poles—can damage computer equipment, TVs, and other appliances in your home. If an outage occurs due to an act that is out of Rock Energy's control (such as those events mentioned in the previous sentence), you won't be compensated for any damaged equipment.

- Most homeowner's and business insurance policies cover losses from interruptions caused by lightning, windstorms, and other sources. Make sure you're familiar with your policy and what is covered. Call your agent if you're not sure about your specific coverage.

- You can help protect your own equipment by unplugging it during a power outage and by installing surge protection.

### IMPORTANT NOTE:

Rock Energy will do everything it can to provide continuous service for members, but the co-op does not guarantee an uninterrupted or undisturbed supply of service. The co-op will not be responsible for any loss or damage resulting from an interruption or disturbance of service.



# 2024 YLC To Take Place In July

A key component of WECA's educational programming for young people, the three-day Youth Leadership Conference (YLC) has been held each summer since 1963. This year's YLC event will take place **July 16-18, 2024**, at UW-Stout in Menomonie, WI. YLC offers a head start in understanding cooperative business principles for the next generation of co-op leaders.

The 2023 YLC attracted more than 73 young people, representing 15 electric cooperatives. Activities focus on maximizing leadership potential, understanding cooperatives, and co-op governance—the students organize and operate a functioning cooperative during the event—effective communication, and turning mistakes into success.

Participating students elect a six-member WECA Youth Board who will help plan the following year's Youth Conference. They will also have the opportunity to attend the NRECA Youth Tour, and visit the WECA offices and State Capitol legislative offices. Another feature of the Youth Conference is the annual WECA Essay Contest. Students, writing on co-op subjects, compete for three scholarships of \$1,000, \$500, and \$250.

Rock Energy now is accepting online applications for YLC. Just go to [www.rock.coop](http://www.rock.coop) and click on the Community & Youth tab. For more information, call Jonas Berberich, Communications Manager, at 866-752-4550 or email him at [Jonasb@rock.coop](mailto:Jonasb@rock.coop).



*Pictured above, attendees take part in activities at the 2023 YLC event.*



*Pictured above are the participants at the 2023 YLC event, representing 15 different cooperatives. The 2023 event took place at UW-Stout in Menomonie, WI, which is where it will be held again this year.*

**Shane Larson, CEO**

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