

## What's Happening

**December 25**  
**Christmas —**  
REC offices closed  
Dec. 23-24.

**January 1**  
**New Years —**  
REC offices closed  
Dec. 30 - Dec. 31.

**December is "Made In America" Month**  
Started in 1985 by then President, Ronald Reagan, in order to recognize American-made products and support businesses that don't outsource labor to other countries, December is "National Made in America Month."

### Rock Energy Cooperative

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## Energy Costs Continue to Rise

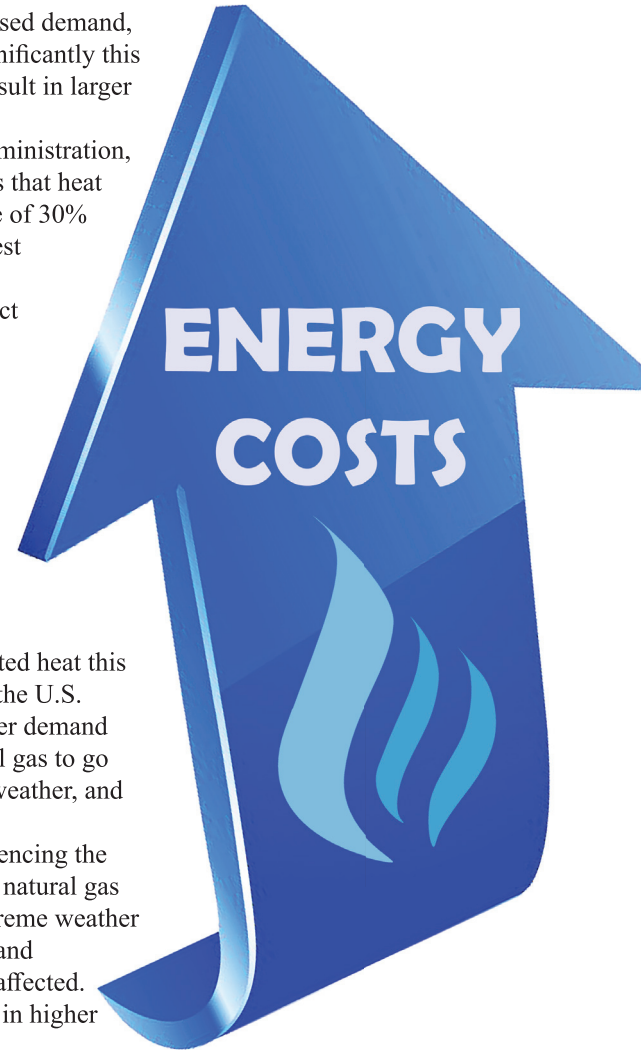
Driven by supply chain disruptions and increased demand, the price of natural gas is projected to go up significantly this winter. Unfortunately, these rising prices will result in larger winter heating bills for many consumers.

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, it's projected that nearly half of U.S. households that heat primarily with natural gas will spend an average of 30% more this winter. The Midwest will see the largest projected increase.

Natural gas prices have been caught in a perfect storm of lower supplies and rising demand. As economies have recovered from the pandemic, demand for fuel has increased. With industry returning, natural gas is now being used more in very large quantities, thus pushing the price up. Severe weather events have also led to the uptick in natural gas prices, which spiked back in February when parts of the south and the Midwest were struck by a massive deep freeze.

The freeze event was followed by unprecedented heat this summer that stoked air conditioning use across the U.S. The sizzling hot weather increased electric power demand for natural gas, thus causing the price for natural gas to go up. Add to that, any colder than normal winter weather, and prices could jump even more.

Natural gas is also one of the key factors influencing the price of electricity. For instance, when there are natural gas supply constraints or disruptions because of extreme weather events and accidental damage to transportation and delivery infrastructure, the cost of electricity is affected. Higher natural gas prices, in turn, usually result in higher costs to generate electricity.



*If you have any questions about your bill or available energy assistance, please contact Rock Energy at 866-752-4550.*



# BE SAFE DURING THE **HO-HO-HOLIDAYS** 10 TIPS TO HELP YOU STAY JOLLY



Before you plan out your new holiday lighting scheme or repeat last year's festive design, keep these 10 safety tips in mind when decorating outdoors.

- 1 Do not toss light strands up into the air. They could get too close to or come into contact with a power line.
- 2 Before using a ladder, always look up and assess all power line locations.
- 3 Carry a ladder horizontally when transporting it.
- 4 Keep at least 10 feet between yourself (and any item you are holding) and a power line.
- 5 Do not use staples or nails or tacks to secure light strands, cords, wires or extension cords.
- 6 String together no more than the number of strands (or fewer) recommended by the manufacturer.
- 7 Plug all lights and extension cords into GFCI-protected outlets.
- 8 Use lights and extension cords rated for outdoor use.
- 9 Do not use frayed, cracked or otherwise damaged cords, plugs or lights.
- 10 Use only lights and products certified by a reputable testing lab.

SafeElectricity.org

## REC Scholarships Available

**Application Deadline: January 10, 2022**

Rock Energy Cooperative again is offering scholarships of \$1,000 to graduating high school seniors who enroll at an accredited school. Students whose parents or guardians are active members of REC are eligible.

Our scholarship committee will judge applicants based on general merit, cooperation, leadership abilities, financial need, and class ranking.

Online applications are available at [www.rock.coop](http://www.rock.coop). Just go to the Community & Youth tab and click on Scholarships. The deadline for submitting applications is Jan. 10, 2022.



For questions, please contact Jonas Berberich at 866-752-4550, or [jonasb@rock.coop](mailto:jonasb@rock.coop).

In addition, scholarships of \$2,000 will be awarded through the Thomas H. Moore Illinois Electric Cooperatives (IEC) Memorial Scholarship Program. These scholarships are available to high school seniors who are the sons or daughters of an Illinois electric cooperative member receiving service from the co-op.

Applications must be completed on-line at [www.rock.coop](http://www.rock.coop). Just go to the Community & Youth tab and click on Scholarships. The deadline is Dec. 31.

## Rock Energy Launches Redesigned Web Site

Rock Energy has launched a new, redesigned web site! The updated site ([www.rock.coop](http://www.rock.coop)) boasts a fresh new look and includes all of the information that members need, such as access to SmartHub, an outage map, info videos, energy assistance information, electrical safety tips, and much more.

*NOTE: If you've bookmarked any pages from our previous web site, please update them with the new Rock Energy web site pages.*

### REC Offices Closed for Holidays

Rock Energy Cooperative offices will be closed on Thursday, Dec. 23 and Friday, Dec. 24, in observance of Christmas, and Thursday, Dec. 30, and Friday, Dec. 31, for the New Year's holiday. Members can make payments in the drop boxes at both offices throughout the holiday weekend and at the payment kiosk outside our South Beloit office, 15229 Willowbrook Road. Even though our offices are closed, standby crews are available. If you need to report a power outage, please call 866-752-4550.



### ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP

### CAULKING & WEATHERSTRIPPING

Caulking and weatherstripping are two simple and effective air-sealing techniques that offer quick returns on investment, often one year or less. Caulk is generally used for cracks and openings between stationary house components such as around door and window frames, and weatherstripping is used to seal components that move, such as doors and operable windows. *Source: Energy.gov*

