



More Power to You

REMEMBERING A WORLD WITHOUT INTERNET

Shane L. Larson, Chief Executive Officer

Imagine going back in time 25 years to the early 1990s, and you'll get a good idea of what this morning was like here at the co-op.

As I'm writing this on Friday, Feb. 24, we are without Internet service. That doesn't seem like such a big deal until you realize just how web-connected our society has become. Rock Energy certainly wasn't alone in traveling through time. The graphic on this page shows the areas across the nation affected by Charter Spectrum's outage. That was just our carrier. Many other service providers had maps showing similar patterns.

See the big red splotch in the middle of the map where Wisconsin should be? That dark red shape symbolizes a high concentration of outages, compiled by [downdetector.com](#), which by the way I couldn't access until our internet service was restored.

Downdetector is operated by a company in the Netherlands that bills itself as "the weatherman for the digital world." It detects when technology fails and offers a real-time overview of outages for all kinds of services considered vital to our everyday lives. It tracks internet providers, mobile phone providers, airlines, public transportation, online services, and much more. The company analyzes social media to detect problems and then shows outages on its website.

For decades now, we have taken electricity for granted. We expect it to be available at the instant we need it. In recent times, the internet has become more and more essential to our daily lives. Certainly, internet connectivity is not as vital as electricity, but it's similar in that we don't appreciate its value until it's not there. Remember the song lyrics: "You don't know what you've got till it's gone"?

The Internet is a global collection of networks that are connected in many different ways. Normally, the infrastructure works great—providing us with what we need when we need it. But on Feb. 24 something went wrong. A broken cable, equipment malfunction, operator error, or cyber terrorism

might have caused the widespread outage. Terrorism would have created a firestorm of media reports, so we can safely eliminate that possibility.

But whatever the cause, it disrupted business here at Rock Energy.

Our website remained available, but certain elements weren't functioning. Members couldn't access their accounts or pay their bills through SmartHub, our online account management system. The electrical outage map on our website, which usually refreshes in real time, could not be displayed.

Line workers were notified of electrical outages the old-fashioned way—by telephone—instead of through our computerized outage management system. Our natural gas

department also used phone lines to relay information about gas emergencies.

Communication within the office and with the outside world was limited to phone calls instead of emails. After the problem was fixed, all the emails started flowing again. Nothing was lost, just delayed. In addition, data communication between our two offices in Janesville and South Beloit was slow.

All in all, it was an interesting morning.

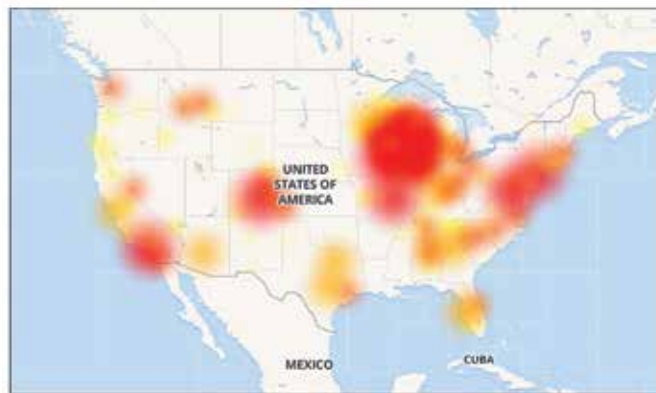
Fortunately, widespread

internet outages like this one don't happen often. But when they do, we realize just how much we depend on everything in cyberspace working properly.

I think you would agree though that given the choice between reliable internet service and reliable electricity, the latter would win every time. After all, electricity powers all our digital devices. Without electricity, there would be no cyberspace.

At Rock Energy, we are proud that electricity flows to our members more than 99 percent of the time. Outages are generally related to weather conditions, and we've been fortunate that most of the winter storms have missed us this year. Let's hope the trend continues through the spring and summer.

As always, it is our privilege to serve your energy needs. If we can do anything to improve our service, please let us know.



This map shows areas affected by Charter Spectrum's outage on Friday, Feb. 24. Red depicts a large concentration of outages.

Bright Futures

Await Scholarship Winners

The 2017 Rock Energy Cooperative Scholarship winners possess the qualities that will help them succeed in their college studies as well as their chosen professions. A committee of co-op members met in February to select 10 graduating seniors from our service territory to receive \$500 scholarships. Ask any of them, and they'll tell you it isn't easy task. A record number of 64 students submitted applications this year. Since 1989, Rock Energy has awarded more than \$97,000 in financial aid to deserving students. Funds for the scholarships come from unclaimed capital credits.

Here's a brief introduction to the winners:

Jackson Elliott, Craig High School,

wants to major in mechanical, chemical, or biomedical engineering at UW-Madison. "I plan to study the fields of engineering, math, and science," he said. "I have always enjoyed the STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) classes. I like the challenges they bring."

Jackson's list of extracurricular and community activities is extensive. "I have put a great deal of time and energy into my studying, but also into my community service, 4-H, scouting, and athletics," he said. "These activities have provided me a good balance of experiences in my life. I have learned many things that are not taught in school and been able to be of service to my community."



Emily Moccero, Evansville High School, plans to study environmental science or environmental engineering. During high school, she participated in many clubs, served on various committees, and played sports.

"It is important to address the environmental problems that have stricken our world, especially as it is becoming more crowded and more consuming," Emily said. "Problems such as air pollution, water pollution, resource depletion, climate change, and many more affect the living and non-living components of the environment, including us. I want to help find solutions to these problems while promoting a more sustainable society in order to ensure a better future. I hope to fulfill my aspirations of making a difference in the world."



Jake Negus, Craig High School, wants to study business with an emphasis in marketing and management. "I like that there are many different options and paths you can take with a business degree," he said.

Jake is in line to be selected as class valedictorian. "This requires a lot of hard work and making sacrifices," he said. "Also, my involvement in athletics and school clubs has allowed me to display my leadership qualities. This has taught team-building skills and how to work with others. With my involvement in various school organizations, I have been involved in numerous volunteer activities throughout the community, which has taught me valuable life lessons on giving back to others."



Erin Seichter, Parker High School,

has a long list of school and community activities that will help her prepare for a career in computer science. "Technology and its development are a crucial part of our modern world, and new problems and solutions with technology are presenting themselves every day," said Erin, who will be class valedictorian. "It is my goal to be someone who can solve problems presented to

the world by utilizing and creating technology as well as by improving current technology."

Rock Energy has been a part of Erin's family for three generations. "My great-grandfather owned a farm on County A in Janesville," she said. "Before rural Janesville had any electricity, he used a generator on his farm windmill to recharge batteries for the lights in his house. He did this up until he became a member of the Rock County Electric Cooperative Association."

Colleen Toberman, Parkview High School, plans to earn an associate degree from the agribusiness/science and technology program at Blackhawk Technical College and then study agricultural education and agribusiness at a four-year university. FFA is prominent in her list of school activities along with many awards from the MacDowell Music Club. She also will be valedictorian of her class.

Colleen wants to become a high school agriculture teacher and FFA adviser. "I believe that advocating for the future of agriculture begins in the classroom, where I can help students discover their own talents and interests related to the agriculture industry," she said. "I also want to major in agribusiness so that I will have additional knowledge for when I own my own farm in the future."



Catherine Vickerman, Milton High School, will study biomedical sciences and Spanish at Marquette University. "Biomedical sciences interest me because my goal is to continue on to medical school and pursue a career as a pediatrician or pediatric oncologist," she said. "I am also intent on studying Spanish because I think that, especially as diversity increases, it is important for me to have understanding and knowledge of the cultures and values of Spanish-speaking people."

Catherine's list of school and community accomplishments is wide-ranging. "Throughout my high school career, I have worked hard to maintain high academic standings, lead my peers in school and community organizations, and support my community in nearly 200 hours of volunteerism," she said.

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Cole Walker, Beloit Turner High School, plans to study medicine or dentistry. "When I was 5 years old, I broke my leg," he said. "The break was a spiral fracture, which put me in a cast for over 10 weeks. Since then, I have had an interest in the medical field for the satisfaction of helping others heal."

Cole has participated in numerous school clubs, volunteered for many community activities, and operated a produce stand last summer.

"My entire family is a member of Rock Energy—my father, my aunts and uncles, and my grandma and grandpa," he said. "We have lived in the country my whole life and have never had services from any other electric company. Rock Energy is always there for your needs and is quick to respond. Being part of a co-op is truly beneficial."



Brandon Wells, Hononegah High School, will pursue a career in music education with a vocal focus when he attends Illinois State University. When he was younger, he always wanted to be a singer. Then in his junior year, he became a teacher's assistant in a preparatory choir class. "After my experience with directing preparatory choir, I knew that I wanted to major in music education," he said.

Music has always been a part of Brandon's life, and he wants others to enjoy it as much as he does. As a music educator, "I will be able to wake up every day knowing that I can show people how music can affect them," he said. "Nothing will make me happier than seeing music make others as happy as it makes me."



Dylan Witte, Clinton High School, plans to study pre-veterinary medicine or animal science "because I want to be able to help those poor animals in need of nurturing and healing, as well as just helping our furry little friends to live the best lives that they possibly can."

Dylan has been active in 4-H, many school activities, as well as working part time. "I feel that I deserve this scholarship because I am a hard worker and do well in school," he said. "I really want to be able to attend school with the least amount of debt possible so that I can do what I love."



Bobby Wolter, Brodhead High School, wants to attend UW-Rock County and then transfer to UW-Platteville, where he will study mechanical engineering. "I enjoy the mechanics as to how things are built, work, and run," he said. "Always looking to see if there is a more efficient way or better design that could do a better job."

Bobby's list of school and community activities as well as job experiences is extensive. "My interest in mechanical engineering and skills from previous jobs show the dedication that I have in working with my hands and learning," he said. "Being able to work to fix or improve things as needed and dedication to community service. My goals are similar to Rock Energy's goals to their customers."





Happy Easter!



Rock Energy Cooperative offices will be closed on Friday, April 14, in observance of Good Friday. We will reopen at 7:30 a.m. Monday, April 17. Members can make payments in the drop boxes at both offices throughout the holiday weekend. Even though our offices are closed, 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.



Medithin Weight Loss Clinics, 2605 Kennedy Road, Janesville – 608-531-0400 – www.medithinweightlossclinics.com

Medithin Weight Loss Clinics offer a physician-supervised weight loss program that is safe, proven effective, and affordable. Clients are assessed and progress is monitored by a physician and nursing staff to ensure optimum care and support in reaching weight loss goals. **\$50 Off Initial New Patient Visit**



Computer Know How, 702 21st St., Brodhead – 608-897-3777 – www.compknowhow.com

Computer repair, website design, on-site computer/business support. **10% Discount on Labor**



Healthy Savings Discounts

The same program that offers discounts at local merchants and has saved Rock Energy members more than \$131,000 on prescriptions also offers significant savings on dental, vision, hearing, lab and imaging services, and chiropractic work. To locate participating providers in your area, 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.



Current Deals

For a complete listing of current deals, visit www.rock.coop and click on the Co-op Connections Card.

CAPITAL CREDITS GENERALLY NOT TAXABLE

As tax time is approaching, Rock Energy Cooperative members might be wondering if the capital credits they receive are taxable.

Controller Dave Lancour said he believes that capital credits generally are not taxable for individual members.

Whether your capital credit refund is taxable generally depends on whether or not you claimed your energy bills as a business expense, Lancour said. For example, a farm or other business claiming 75 percent business use of their energy costs would have to include 75 percent of the cash payment for the capital credits when received as income. The non-business portion is not subject to taxation.

Lancour suggested that members with specific questions should consult a tax adviser.



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



Dishwasher Efficiency Tip:

Air dry clean dishes to save energy. If your dishwasher does not have an automatic air-dry switch, turn off the dishwasher after the final rinse and prop the door open slightly so the dishes will dry faster.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

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ROCK ENERGY COOPERATIVE

Empowering Members Since 1936