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More Power to You BACKUP POWER SOURCE CAN SERVE AS INSURANCE POLICY

Shane L. Larson, Chief Executive Officer

Benjamin Franklin once said, “In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes.”

Wouldn't it be great if electricity could be added to that list? But it's impossible for Rock Energy Cooperative or any energy provider to guarantee uninterrupted power 100 percent of the time. Sometimes events beyond our control occur and cause outages, like the many thunderstorms in June and July.

Those storms also dumped more than 13 inches of rain in our area and unfortunately flooded some members' basements. That amount of rain is about 4½ inches more than normal for those two months and comes after an unusually wet spring. Since the beginning of the year, the area has received more than 8 inches above our normal precipitation.

The ground is so soaked; it just can't absorb any more moisture. That's when water starts seeping into basements and members call to tell us they need their electricity back on right away to power their sump pumps or their basements will flood.

We do the best we can to restore power as quickly as possible, but members who require electricity to avoid disaster need to strongly consider a backup generator. We buy insurance to protect us from various unavoidable risks. That's what a backup generator can provide to members who require electricity 24/7 for sump pumps or businesses.

More seriously, some members' homes are equipped with life-sustaining medical equipment that requires a consistent source of power. For these people, a power outage is much more than an inconvenience. It could be deadly.

If your health depends on power that is never interrupted, we recommend having a battery backup or standby generator to keep the equipment operating in the event of an outage. Alternatively, families can devise a plan so the person who relies on critical-care medical devices will have somewhere to stay until power is restored.

Backup generators come in a variety of sizes. You can talk

to a local electrician or generator supplier to determine how much wattage you need to run your necessities. It's important to follow all safety guidelines and have a licensed electrician install the equipment necessary to safely connect emergency generators. Otherwise, the generator's power backfeeding onto our electric lines could endanger our lineworkers' lives.

Brochures that detail how to operate a portable generator safely are available in our offices or you can download a copy on our website, www.rock.coop. Just go to the “Electric” tab and click on “Generator Safety.”

Rock Energy will be bidding a happy farewell to Lynn Maier, operations manager of our northern territory, on Sept. 11 when he retires after more than 40 years of service to the co-op. He always thought about what's best for the co-op and did everything he could to make sure members were satisfied.

See story on page 18B.

I'm going to miss Lynn's expertise and dedication to the co-op, and I'm going to miss him walking past my office every morning and saying, “Hi, Shane.” We wish Lynn and his wife, Vicki, all the best in their retirement.

Please join us from 8 to 10:30 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 9, for the annual Member Appreciation Day Pancake Breakfast at our co-op headquarters, 2815 Kennedy Road, Janesville. We'll have a health fair, prize wheel, bucket truck rides, and lots of activities for kids.

This year we're moving electronics recycling and document shredding to a new location to provide a safer environment for co-op members and employees. Members can bring their items to Universal Recycling Technologies, 2535 Beloit Ave., Janesville, between 8 and 11 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 9. All the details are posted on our website.

Member Appreciation Day gives Rock Energy's directors and employees an opportunity to show you how thankful we are to be your energy provider. If we can do anything to improve our service to you, please let us know.





'40 Years Just Flew By' Operations Manager Heads for Retirement

One of the most memorable moments in Lynn Maier's 40-year career at Rock Energy Cooperative happened shortly after he presented a power line safety demonstration to a group of elementary school students.

Part of Maier's presentation focused on what they should do if they're in an auto accident involving power lines. He told students that everyone should stay inside the vehicle until workers arrive to make sure the lines aren't energized. Coming into contact with a downed power line that still has electricity flowing through it could be deadly, he explained.

Maier learned later that at least one student took his advice. When she and her mother were involved in an accident with a power pole, the girl's mother started to panic. But the girl told her that she had learned in school to keep calm, stay in the car, and wait for help to come. That's what they did, and they stayed safe. The woman came to the office later and thanked the co-op for teaching her daughter that lesson.

"It's a very important tool," Maier said of the demos. "I think it touched

a lot of people over the years. This one time it did. We know that for sure."

That's just one of many memories Maier will take with him when he retires on Sept. 11. He started at the co-op testing and recalibrating meters, advanced to lineman, and has been operations manager of the co-op's northern territory for the past 15 years.

"It's been an adventure here. That's for sure. It was a fun adventure," he said. "The 40 years just flew by. I've always enjoyed coming to work so much. I always had a great bunch of guys to work with, board of directors, management. It's all been good. I wouldn't trade it for anything."

Neither would others at the co-op.

"There is a man that comes in every day and wants to do a great job for the co-op," said Shane Larson, chief executive officer. "He made the transition from lineman to operations manager with a lot of hard work and earned the respect of

Technology has changed considerably in Lynn Maier's 40 years at the co-op. He can now see the entire system on his computer screen. In the old days, everything was handwritten in three-ring binders.

myself and all the workers."

Denny Schultz, director of utility operations, started working at the co-op about four years before Maier and they worked together as linemen for several years. "The co-op was lucky to have him," Schultz said. "He's always been a good person, a good lineman. We had a lot of good years together. You could always depend on him."

Maier said he always realized how dangerous a lineworker's job is, but he tried not to think about it. "Everybody did that for me," he said. "My wife and kids—they're the ones that always worried."

Technology has changed considerably in Maier's four decades at the co-op.

"It's mind-boggling when you think about it today how we got outage calls at home," he said. "We didn't have cell phones. It was all land lines. When you were on call, you were stuck at home."

At the time, members would call directors at home to report outages. If Maier was on call, his home phone would ring and he'd soon be out the door. If another outage happened while

he was responding, his wife, Vicki, would take the call and write down the information. When he finished with one outage, he would go to the nearest pay phone and call his wife—even if it was 3 or 4 a.m.—to see if he had another job. Fortunately, Maier said, that changed with the use of answering services and cell phones.

Storms are always memorable to lineworkers, and Maier has plenty of stories to tell. Snow-

drifts were exceptionally high during one winter storm when he was searching the right-of-way for the cause of an outage.

"I was walking across where it was drifted and broke through to about here (motioning to his belly) and I was

(Continued on page 18D)



"It was a fun adventure," Lynn Maier says of his 40 years at the co-op.

Member Appreciation Day

NEW LOCATION
for Electronics
Recycling, Document
Shredding

ROCK ENERGY MEMBERS ONLY!

Electronics recycling and document shredding have become so popular at Member Appreciation Day that we don't have space to accommodate the increasing traffic. We're moving those two services to a new location to provide a safer environment for co-op members and employees.

Members can bring their items to Universal Recycling Technologies, 2535 Beloit Ave., Janesville, between 8 and 11 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 9.

The pancake breakfast and all other activities associated with Member Appreciation Day will continue to be at our Janesville headquarters from 8 to 10:30 a.m. the same day.

We hope to see you on Sept. 9!

Maps and directions at
www.rock.coop/MemberAppreciation

Pancake Breakfast

- 8-10:30 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 9
- Rock Energy headquarters, 2815 Kennedy Road, Janesville
- Activities: Health fair, LED Lucy, bucket truck rides, spin-to-win prize wheel, bounce house, and lots more!

Electronics Recycling, Document Shredding

- 8-11 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 9
- Universal Recycling Technologies, 2535 Beloit Ave., Janesville (enter through south driveway)



Accepted electronics

- 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.

Shredding procedure

- Each member can bring four boxes or bags of material, including CDs and credit cards.
- All material will be shredded on site.
- You do not need to remove staples, paper clips, hanging files, or black binder clips from materials.





40 years (Continued from page 18B)

stuck,” he said. “I remember being this penguin trying to wiggle my way out so I could get up onto the hard crust again. I was literally stuck. Finally I got out, and I’m just laying there laughing and freezing. It’s cold, but it still made you laugh.”

Maier loved working outdoors but admitted it’s not for everyone. “You gotta like the outdoors. You gotta like the weather. You gotta like the elements, the bugs, the poison ivy, the frostbite. Like they say, ‘A bad day here is better than any day working in a factory.’”

Some of Maier’s stories were about storms outside Rock’s territory because co-ops often send workers to help others dealing with widespread outages. He remembered the Halloween ice storm of 1991 when he and a co-worker were sent to St. Ansgar, Iowa. On their way, icy conditions forced the closing of roads near La Crosse, so they spent the first night in the truck.

They worked for seven days helping a small rural co-op where every member had lost power. Residents were so appreciative that they took good care of the workers, bringing fresh rolls and coffee in the mornings, feeding them big meals in the evenings, and helping in other ways. One day the wives of the local co-op workers brought shopping bags of clothes for the out-of-town crews who might need them. The women even offered to do their laundry.

“The hospitality of all the members there was unbelievable,” Maier said.

The crew from Rock stayed in a small mom-and-pop motel about 20 miles away and were lucky because it was the only one in the area that had power. Other crews stayed in fancier motels but didn’t have the luxury of a warm bed, hot water, and lights after a long day’s work, Maier said.



Co-op members at Member Appreciation Day usually could find Lynn Maier at the popcorn machine.

“That made up for the night we had to sleep in the truck,” he added with a laugh.

Maier said he loved working for the co-op and didn’t plan to retire until he saw how happy and stress-free his wife, Vicki, was after she retired in January. But it won’t be all rest and relaxation. They plan to stay busy with their nine grandkids and one great-grandson.

Even so, he’ll miss the co-op, especially events like Member Appreciation Day. On Saturday, Sept. 9, he’ll be operating the popcorn machine like he has for several years, but this will be his last Member Appreciation Day. Stop by and wish him a happy retirement!

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



Cooler temps will be here soon! No matter what kind of heating system you have in your home, you can save money and increase your comfort by properly maintaining and upgrading your equipment. Contact a licensed professional to inspect your system before the winter chill arrives.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

HAVE A SAFE AND HAPPY LABOR DAY!

Rock Energy Cooperative offices will be closed on Monday, Sept. 4, in observance of Labor Day. We will reopen at 7:30 a.m. Tuesday, Sept. 5. 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

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Barbara Uebelacker, Editor



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Empowering Members Since 1936