



More Power to You

Scholarship Winners Represent Future of Rock Energy Co-op

By Shane L. Larson, Chief Executive Officer

The young people featured in this month's magazine represent the future of Rock Energy Cooperative, and I'm pleased to inform you that the co-op will be in good hands.

Each year, a committee of co-op members selects 10 graduating high school seniors to receive Rock Energy scholarships. Committee members will tell you that it's not an easy task because all applicants are outstanding in their own way. But these 10 young people have the skills and the determination necessary to achieve their higher education goals and become successful at whatever career path they choose.

This group aspires to be our future nurses, teachers, veterinarians, zoologists, legal assistants, engineers, and mechanical drafters. Their list of achievements at such a young age is amazing. They have participated in dozens of school clubs, competed in sports, performed in band and theater, worked on their 4-H projects, and joined church groups.

Even with all those extra-curricular activities, they still found time to do volunteer work at schools, nursing homes, and community organizations. They helped raise funds for important causes and completed mission work through their churches.

In addition, many are working on the family farm, babysitting, and doing other jobs to gain experience in their chosen field of study and to help fund their college education.

On top of everything, they are students, and not just ordinary students. Their school counselors describe them as responsible, dependable, hard-working, determined, confident, outstanding, excellent, amazing, trustworthy, and polite. They are leaders and role models for younger students.

When students apply for Rock Energy scholarships, we ask them the usual questions about activities, jobs, grades, and goals. But because we're a co-op, we also ask them to describe in their own words the functions of a cooperative and the advantages it offers members. While many of the students have not been involved in official

cooperatives, they definitely grasp the role co-ops play in society.

Jenna Boggs, a scholarship winner from Hononegah High School in Rockton, said: "Something as simple as a team or a youth group can be considered a cooperative. They have the same motives, and they both work together to accomplish the same goals."

Michael Jess of Parkview High School in Orfordville pointed out that his summer basketball team was a cooperative of sorts. "We had no coach, and the members of the team had to set rules of the team and make decisions."

Alexa Bradley of Brodhead High School perhaps described co-ops the best by saying: "Being owned and controlled by a democratic system, all of its members work together to make a better tomorrow."

With young people like this group of 10, Alexa is right: Rock Energy definitely has a bright future. Congratulations to our scholarship winners, and we wish them success in all their endeavors.

Climate Legislation

You probably have heard news reports about two bills in the Wisconsin Legislature that supporters are calling a "clean energy jobs act." We don't believe that the legislation will actually create jobs. In fact, it is more likely to increase energy costs for our members and ultimately result in job losses in the area.

Among the many troubling aspects of the legislation is a provision to increase the renewable portfolio standard from 10 percent to 25 percent. Because renewable energy output is intermittent, existing power plants will still need the capacity to provide all the power demanded. The fixed costs of operating those power plants unfortunately now are spread over fewer customers because businesses have closed or downsized. Our power supplier, Alliant Energy, is raising its wholesale rate due to substantial reductions in sales. There are simply fewer units of energy over which to spread the huge fixed costs associated with the power plants it operates.

(Continued on 16d) ▶



*Jenna Boggs
Hononegah High School*



*Alexa Bradley
Brodhead High School*



*Kate Grayless
Parkview High School*



*Marissa Hanlon
Milton High School*



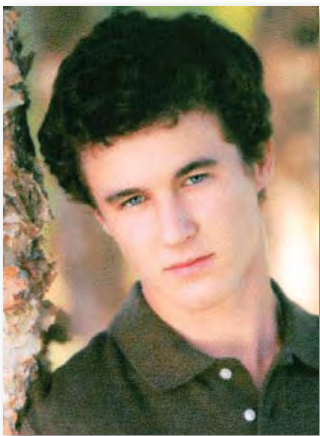
*Alyssa Hess
South Beloit High School*

Congratulations to Scholarship Winners

Rock Energy Cooperative is pleased to announce the 2010 scholarship winners. Each student will receive \$400 to assist with educational expenses at an accredited college or technical school. The co-op awards 10 scholarships each year to graduating seniors living in REC's service territory. Funds for the scholarships come from unclaimed capital credits.



*Michael Jess
Parkview High School*



*Joseph Miller-Maerz
Evansville High School*



*Donovan Nelson
Edgerton High School*



*Melissa Ryan
Clinton High School*



*Samantha Teske
Clinton High School*

Call 811 Before Every Digging Project

Now that the snow has melted and tulips are blossoming, it's time to start planning your outdoor spring to-do list.

Whether you're planting trees or shrubs, building a deck, installing a fence, or doing any project that requires digging, remember to reach for the phone before you pick up the shovel.

April is designated as National Safe Digging Month to stress the importance of calling 811 before all outdoor digging projects to avoid hitting buried utility lines. Across the nation, buried utilities are unintentionally hit more than 200,000 times each year, resulting in injuries and deaths, extensive outages, costly repairs, and fines.

"Every month really should be considered Safe Digging Month," said Randy Gant, natural gas superintendent at Rock Energy Cooperative. "Hitting a natural gas line is a real possibility whenever you dig, and that could lead to a deadly explosion."

A complex network of pipelines, wires, and cables exists underground to provide natural gas, electricity, and other services to people. In 2007, the phone number 811 was designated as the national call-before-you-dig number to ensure that buried utility lines are marked before any excavation begins.

If someone unintentionally hits an underground electric line with a shovel or backhoe, that person may receive a shock or even be electrocuted, said Lynn Maier, north operations manager for Rock Energy.

Homeowners sometimes assume that their project is too small to warrant a call to 811, but every digging job requires a call. Some utility lines are just a couple of feet below the surface.



Here's what happens when you call 811:

- Your call will be routed to your local One Call Center. That's Diggers Hotline is Wisconsin and JULIE (Joint Utility Locating Information for Excavators) in Illinois. Wisconsin requires the call to be made three business days before the start of the project, while Illinois law specifies two business days.
 - A representative will ask for the location and description of your digging project.
 - Utility companies servicing the area then will send a professional locator to the proposed area to mark any buried lines with flags: red for electric; yellow, gas or petroleum; orange, communications; blue or purple, water; and green, sewer or drainage.
 - Wait until your official project start date before beginning to dig to make sure all the underground utilities have been marked. If your planned work area is marked with underground utilities, do not dig in that area.
 - In Wisconsin, your project must begin within 10 days of your official start date. In Illinois, work must begin within 14 days of your locate request and is valid for 28 days.
- "This is a free service, and it only takes a minute to make the call that could save someone's life," said Rod Magnuson, south operations manager for Rock Energy. ■



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For More Information:

- Nationwide, visit www.call811.com or call 811.
- In Wisconsin, visit www.diggershotline.com or call (800) 242-8511.
- In Illinois, visit www.illinois1call.com or call (800) 892-0123.



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So we are writing our legislators asking them to provide assurances that the bills will result in a real increase in jobs and won't increase our members' energy bills. If they cannot provide these assurances, we are asking them to oppose the bills. I will keep you posted on their responses to our questions.

On a national level, the apparent failure of Congress to adopt comprehensive climate change legislation makes it more likely that the Environmental Protection Agency will begin to regulate carbon emissions from power plants. As part of the Our Energy, Our Future campaign, co-ops throughout the nation are asking members to contact their representatives to seek support for measures that would prohibit the EPA from enacting a greenhouse gas program that would regulate power plants. To learn more, please visit www.ourenergy.coop. If you do not have Internet access, give us a call and we'll help you contact your lawmakers.

REA's 75th Anniversary

The next time you flip the light switch on, imagine what it was like 75 years ago when only one in 10 rural American homes had electricity. This spring marks the 75th anniversary of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's creation of the Rural Electrification Administration, one of his New Deal agencies designed to stimulate the economy.

At the time, private electric companies said it was too expensive to run power lines across the countryside. But through the REA, electric cooperatives received federal assistance to electrify rural America. We're pleased to be one of the 900 electric co-ops that provide power to 40 million people throughout the United States—including you. Please let us know if we can do anything to improve our service. ■

Happy Easter!

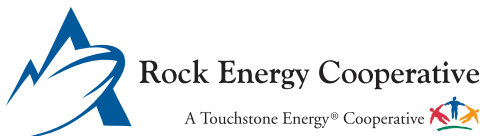
Rock Energy Cooperative offices will be closed on Friday, April 2, in observance of Good Friday. Even though our offices are closed, crews are always available 24 hours a day. If you need to report a power outage, please call (608) 752-4550 or toll-free (866) 752-4550.






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