

Let Nature Heat and Cool Your Home

If you're looking for a more affordable way to heat and cool your home, you might give nature a chance – with a little help from a geothermal system.

You see, just a few feet under your yard, the temperature stays very steady all year long – right around 55 degrees. Geothermal systems take advantage of that ground temperature by using underground pipes and an environmentally friendly liquid to transfer heat between your home and yard. It's an efficient, durable approach that eliminates the need for a separate furnace and air conditioner.

During the wintertime, the geothermal system circulates its liquid through your pipes, soaking up the warmer underground temperatures and transferring them to your home's ductwork through a heat exchanger and electric air handler.

When summer gets hot, the system reverses the processes and takes heat out of your home's air and transfers it into the ground, where it dissipates with no effect on plants or animals. As the cooler liquid returns to your house, the heat exchanger and air handler repeat the process, lowering your home's temperature. Best of all, you don't have to put up with noisy equipment in your yard.

While geothermal systems can keep you every bit as comfortable as more familiar heating and cooling methods, they're several times more efficient than equipment like gas furnaces. In addition, they allow you to take advantage of the limitless resource of the ground's natural temperature. So even though it may cost more to install a geothermal system, they typically pay for themselves through energy savings in just five to 10 years, and keep saving you money for years after that!



Higher efficiency means you'll use less energy, which is good for the environment, too. Plus, because they do not produce heat through combustion, geothermal systems do not produce dangerous gases such as carbon monoxide. They provide safe, clean heating and cooling for your family. There are few moving parts, so geothermal systems are more reliable and last longer than furnaces. Some systems can even use excess heat from the compressor to warm your home's hot water tank.

During the summer, they can generate enough heat to meet many homes' hot water needs, and can cut wintertime water heating costs by as much as half.

Wondering whether a geothermal system might be the best choice for your home, or thinking about building one into your next home? A great way to start is to talk with Lynn Maier at 608-752-4550, Ext 1005. That's just one more way we provide free advice when you want it, and help when you need it.



Rock Energy Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



By Shane L. Larson,
Chief Executive Officer

More Power To You

Merriam-Webster defines the word cooperative as a willingness to work with others. That's just what energy cooperatives and Congress must do to keep electric bills affordable.

I have talked previously about the Our Energy, Our Future campaign. The movement engages co-op members in a conversation with elected officials about how the country can meet climate change goals while keeping electricity reliable and affordable. I am pleased to report that Rock Energy Cooperative members are talking. Let's hope our national leaders are listening.

A total of 185 members submitted Our Energy, Our Future cards at the April 6 annual meeting. The cards authorized co-op employees to contact U.S. senators and representatives on behalf of members regarding climate change legislation. One plan, commonly called cap-and-trade, is getting the most air time. Since the campaign started in February 2008, Rock Energy members have sent more than 800 messages to lawmakers. Nationally, more than 267,000 members have made their voices heard.

In a nutshell, here's how the cap-and-trade program works. The government establishes a desired level of greenhouse gas for the country (the cap). Emitters of greenhouse gases then would buy emissions permits for every ton of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere. These permits would be purchased through an auction process (the trade).

As I write this, the House Energy and Commerce Committee is busy negotiating proposals and counter-proposals on both the cap and the trade. Committee leaders hope to have the bill out of committee by Memorial Day and on the House floor by the August recess.

The trade is expected to generate about \$650 billion. That's a big chunk of change, and who will get that money is the \$650 billion question. President Barack Obama's budget assumes that some of the revenue will help consumers pay for higher energy costs. One committee proposal doesn't specify how the money should be distributed.

When Glenn English, CEO of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, testified April 23 before the House Energy and Commerce Committee and the Subcommittee on Energy and the Environment, he voiced strong opposition to auctioning all emission allowances on the open market.

"The only reason to auction emission allowances is to raise revenue for the government—the very definition of a tax," English told the committee. "NRECA does not believe that climate change legislation should be used as a method to enhance the government's revenues. Such a scheme would only serve to establish a variable tax to fund government programs."

Should climate change legislation become law, the consensus is that power bills will increase. No matter

what the final legislation looks like, it's clear that changing our energy supply and addressing climate change will be expensive. The average household could pay an extra \$98 to \$140 a year to achieve emissions reductions called for in the original version of the bill, according to an analysis by the Environmental Protection Agency.

That estimate assumes that 40 percent of the money collected from auctioning off emissions credits would be returned to consumers to help pay energy bills.

By working together, cooperatives and Congress can help make the apparent cost increases as painless as possible. As a member-owned, not-for-profit organization, Rock Energy is joining other cooperatives around the nation to:

- Educate members about affordability, reliability, and energy policy.
- Work to manage costs and ensure reliability.
- Help our members save money and energy with efficiency and conservation.
- Work with government to develop technology needed to meet climate change goals.

For its part, government must:

- Work with electric co-ops to develop least-cost solutions.
- Be honest with consumers about the costs and who will pay—no backdoor taxes or hidden agendas. ▶





- Invest in technology necessary to meet climate change goals.

It's not too late for you to join the conversation. Go to www.ourenegy.coop and complete the simple form. Rock Energy members who live in Illinois should select Wisconsin as the location of the cooperative because that's where our headquarters is located. E-mails and letters will be sent to legislators based on your home address. If you don't have access to the Internet, just call the office and we'll fill out the online form for you.

As always, it's a privilege to serve your energy needs. Please let us know if we can do anything to improve our service to you. ■

REC Board Reorganization Complete

Darrel Weber of rural Milton is the new chairman of the board of directors for Rock Energy Cooperative. The board elected new officers at its April reorganization meeting. Weber has represented Bradford, Darien, and Johnstown townships on the board since 1991. He previously served as first vice chairman. Other directors elected to leadership positions include:

William Dietsch, first vice chairman, has represented Newark and Plymouth townships on the board since 1999. He previously served as second vice chairman.

William Fischer, second vice chairman, has represented Alden, Chemung, Clinton, Hebron, Leroy, Manchester, Roscoe, and Turtle townships since 2003.

Marian Trescher, treasurer, has represented Lima and Milton townships since 2005.

Robert Crave was re-elected as secretary. He has represented Beloit, Rock, and Rockton townships since 1983.

The board expressed gratitude to Stan Dybevik, who had served as chairman since 1995, and James Quade, treasurer since 1996. ■

Rock Energy Family Night at the Ballpark

Saturday, June 20

Beloit Snappers take on the Quad Cities River Bandits
Gametime 7:00 p.m. • Pohlman Field at Telfer Park, Beloit, WI

Special "member-only" food pricing

The first 30 "member kids" (w/parent or guardian) purchasing food vouchers receive a special gift!

Come early for autographs from 6:15 – 6:45 p.m.—you never know who the next major leaguer will be! Stay for the spectacular fireworks show immediately following the game.

All summer long, get Snapper tickets for any home game. Purchase vouchers in advance at either REC office location—just \$2.00 for each voucher (\$6.50 value).



Summer brings to mind a cool dip in the pool, a refreshing day at the lake or fishing on the bank of a trickling stream. Don't let a safety hazard dampen your summer fun. Here at Rock Energy, we want to remind everyone once again of the obvious—water and electricity are a dangerous combination. Assessing electrical hazards near areas of water is a wise investment of time and personal energy.

The result of contact between water and electricity can be serious, or even deadly. And in most instances, if potential safety hazards are taken into consideration and handled proactively, accidents and deaths could certainly be avoided.

Electrical equipment around swimming pools can pose a real hazard; indeed, deaths and serious shocks occur in and around swimming pools each year. Keep these tips in mind to stay safe in or around swimming pools:

- Do not put any electrical appliances within 5 feet of a swimming pool.
- Any electrical outlets within 20 feet of a pool should be equipped with a Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI).
- Pools and decks should be built at least 5 feet away from all underground electrical lines, and at least 25 feet away from overhead electrical lines.
- Never swim during a thunderstorm.
- Use battery operated, rather than electrical, appliances near swimming pools.

- If a swimmer is electrocuted or shocked, don't dive in yourself or you could be electrocuted as well. Turn off the power, and then use a fiberglass shepherd's hook to pull the victim out of the water.

When you leave the pool, don't change the radio station or touch any electrical appliances until you are dry—never touch any electrical appliances when you are wet or standing in water. If children wish to play with sprinklers or hoses, emphasize that they should be set up well away from any electrical outlets or appliances.

Larger bodies of water pose dangers as well. If you plan to go boating or fishing this summer, be aware of your surroundings and potential electrical hazards.

Always check the location of nearby power lines before boating or fishing. Contact between your boat and a power line could be devastating. Maintain a distance of at least 10 feet between your boat and nearby power lines to be safe.

If your boat does come in contact with a power line, never jump out of the boat into the water—the water could be energized. Instead, stay in the boat and avoid touching anything metal until help arrives or until your boat is no longer in contact with the line.

Be sure dockside outlets have GFCI protection and check cords that are plugged into them to make sure there is no broken casing or exposed wires.

Check for the location of power lines before fishing. Make sure you are casting the line away from power lines to avoid potential contact. ■

Get Connected

Check out these great deals offered with your Co-op Connections Card



Vibrational Energy Solutions – Edgerton, WI – 608-359-1613



Providing the body with stress reduction and relaxation services naturally increasing awareness, including biofeedback, hypnosis and Erdsal Zone Therapy – an advanced form of reflexology. At Vibrational Energy Solutions, we believe that healing begins from within.

20% Off Stress Reduction Services

The Red Rooster – Milton, WI – 608-868-5555

Unique country gifts and home décor... The Red Rooster is a warm, cozy, primitive shop. We specialize in providing unique and different furnishings for your home and gift giving. Whether it be in accent lighting, seasonal items, candles and accessories, linens, or rugs, we are here to help you make the perfect look for your family home and to give a gift that sends a message to the person that they are special. We also serve 16 tantalizing flavors of ice cream along with refreshing smoothies, shakes, and root beer floats. Stop by for a visit and make yourself at home with our comforting scents and relaxed atmosphere.



20% Off Cheerful Giver Candles

National Flag Store – Roscoe, IL – 815-623-8022



Flags & flag poles; custom flags; retractable awnings, Italian charms & bracelets; garden flags & poles and banners. We deal in only the highest quality and "Made In The USA" when it comes to our flags. We offer the complete line of

TopFlight™ flagpoles. Pro Motorized Awnings are available from dealers only. Awnings from SunSetter® let you take control of the weather on your deck or patio - in seconds. We offer manually operated awnings and electric motorized awnings to fit every home.

10% Discount

Huber Haus Handmades – Durand, IL – 815-248-2300

Offering handmade gifts to order – dolls, toys, quilts, afghans, dishtowels, shirts, hats & scarves... Grandma Huber knits, crochets, quilts, sews & embroiders.



10% Discount

Knight's Inn – South Beloit, IL – 815-389-2281

37 newly renovated rooms; all ground floor, free parking at your door, exterior corridors; 4 HBO channels; free lobby coffee; near restaurants and shopping; small pets allowed; AM/FM Alarm Clock; No Smoking Rooms; small pets allowed; RV/Bus/Truck Parking; guest laundry facilities with free detergent.



Every Knight, Just Right®

10% Off Rack Rate

For a complete listing of current "deals" visit www.rock.coop; terms and conditions of "deals" subject to change as desired by individual participating businesses.



Tyler Long



Matt Valenti

"Youth to Washington Tour" Winners Selected

Congratulations to Tyler Long of Orfordville, Wisconsin, and Matt Valenti of Rockton, Illinois. Tyler is a sophomore at Orfordville Parkview High School. He has been active in 4-H for 10 years in many different capacities, a marching member of Janesville Fife & Drum, and a performer in his high school show choir, Heatwave. He's even got a second degree black belt in karate.

Matt, a junior at Hononegah High School, is a member of the National Honor Society, the Key Club, and president of the Renaissance Club. He is a Life Scout, working toward Eagle Scout status. He's also helped out at the local food pantry and Rockford Rescue Mission.

Both are off to Washington, D.C., this month with high schoolers from all across the country for a week of fun and education... perhaps even life-changing experiences. Great job, boys! ■

REC Closed for Business on July 4

REC will be closed on Friday, July 3, in observance of the July 4th holiday. The office(s) will reopen at 7:30 a.m. on Monday, July 6. Payments may still be made at drop boxes throughout that period.



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