



A MESSAGE FROM:  
**Shane L. Larson,**  
Chief Executive Officer



# LOOKING BACK

# MOVING FORWARD

*Happy New Year to all of our members, and welcome to 2024! I love this time of year because it represents optimism with all sorts of possibilities ahead. The new year also affords us the opportunity to look back at the year that was. With that, let's take a quick look at what happened over the past year (or so) at the co-op, and then glance at 2024.*

- **NOVEMBER 2022** - Yes, I realize this was in 2022, but I want to recognize, once again, Rock Energy Board Member Marian Trescher who was awarded the coveted ACE Award. The ACE Award is the highest honor presented annually by the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association. The award recognizes individuals who have demonstrated outstanding support and service to the industry on behalf of Wisconsin electric co-ops and the members they serve.
- **FEBRUARY 2023** - On February 22, significant freezing rain/icing blanketed southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois, leaving some of our members temporarily without power. Rock Energy crews, however, worked around the clock to get power back up & running quickly.
- **APRIL 2023** - Rock Energy scholarship winners were recognized (in person) at the 87th Annual Meeting—a tradition that had to be halted from 2020-22 due to COVID.
- **JULY 2023** - Rock Energy youth members, Samantha Hopkins and Emma Steinke (Alternate), were elected to the 2023 Youth Leadership Conference board.
- **AUGUST 2023** - Rock Energy brought back Member Appreciation Day on August 5 after a 3-year hiatus due to COVID. Rock Energy members enjoyed a pancake breakfast and activities at the Rock County Fairgrounds.
- **OCTOBER 2023** - Rock Energy was on-hand at the Harlem-Roscoe Fire Protection District Open House. Rock Energy also participated in this year's South Beloit Trunk-or-Treat event. (See pictures on page 18D)

- **APRIL 2024** - Rock Energy's 88th Annual Meeting will be held on Monday, April 8. We are very excited to announce that at this year's meeting, we are bringing back the full-service, sit-down dinner for our members. Look for more details about the annual meeting in the February and March magazines, as well our newsletter (bill stuffer) and e-news correspondence.
- **JULY 2024** - Two Rock Energy youth members, Thomas Peters and Jayden Mosley, have been elected to the 2023-2024 Youth Board. Those elected to the Youth Board serve in a leadership position working to engage more young people with electric cooperatives. They lead the planning of the 2024 Youth Leadership Conference and they have the opportunity to participate in the 2024 Youth Tour of Washington, D.C.
- **OCTOBER 2024** - Member Appreciation Day will take place on Saturday, Oct. 19. Rock Energy will once again serve up delicious pancakes for our members. There will also be bucket truck rides, a prize wheel, and a lot of other activities for the whole family. Like last year, the event will be held at the Rock County Fairgrounds in Janesville, WI.
- **SCHOLARSHIPS 2024** - NEW in 2024, Rock Energy scholarship recipients are eligible to possibly receive a second-year \$1,000 scholarship if they meet certain criteria. The second-year scholarship information and eligibility criteria will be provided to 2024 scholarship winners after they are selected.
- **OTHER 2024 EVENTS** - In addition to the annual meeting in April and Member Appreciation Day in October, Rock Energy will be participating in other community and school events throughout our service areas in 2024.

*As we head into 2024, the co-op's 88th year, we look forward to continuing to provide you with safe and reliable energy at an affordable cost. If there's anything we can do to improve our service, please don't hesitate to let us know.*

## SPACE HEATERS - What To Consider

If your home heating system does not deliver the toasty warmth you want, or perhaps you would like to dial down your thermostat to save on your energy bill, a space heater can help make up the difference. Multiple types exist on the market, but the most important thing to remember is to buy one that you can operate safely.

Dispose of old space heaters with exposed coils, those that are dangerous to use (e.g., worn or cracked cords), or those that operate inefficiently. Many that are available today have safety features that older versions do not, such as timers, tip-over prevention, and auto shut-off.

Before you purchase an electric heater, determine the square footage of the space you want to warm and whether you have a safe spot to place it. Inefficient or excessively large options will only run up your electric bill without much benefit to you or your family.

### Space Heater Safety Tips

- Use a space heater with a minimum of three feet of clearance on all sides.
- Do not put a heater in a doorway or high-traffic area in the home.
- Place the heater on a flat, safe surface.
- Consider using one with built-in safety features.
- Do not plug one into an extension cord.
- Unplug it and put it away when not in use.



Source: SafeElectricity.org

## Contact Rock Energy BEFORE Increasing Electric Load



If you're planning to increase your electric load, please call Rock Energy's Operations Department at 866-752-4550. Our team will gather the needed information and determine whether the capacity of the present equipment is adequate. In situations where a significant amount of new load will be added, such as adding an electric vehicle charger for instance, we might need to install larger service equipment or make other changes.

### WHY SHOULD YOU CONTACT ROCK ENERGY?

Co-op facilities are designed to meet an individual member's initial load requirement at the time service is started. If that load is increased, the capacity of the present system might not be sufficient to handle it. When that happens, the system becomes overloaded and there's a power outage. An overloaded system also can damage the co-op's transformers or your electrical equipment, which might lead to expensive repairs. Our equipment often can handle an overload for a while, but its life span will decrease significantly when the rated capacity is exceeded over an extended period of time. That means additional costs for the co-op and may result in the member paying for the damaged co-op equipment.

# Protect Your Equipment From **POWER SURGES**

As its name suggests, a "power surge" is a surge or increase of power. The brief jolts of electrical voltage range from minor to severe and can leave their mark. Major surges can outright damage or fry your computer or TV, and even though it may not seem like minor surges cause any damage, they can take their toll on devices over time.

Devices that require a lot of power in order to switch compressors or turn motors on or off (air conditioners, refrigerators and space heaters, for example) call for sudden, brief draws on power. These power demands upset the steady flow of volts in the electrical system. While the surges caused by these items are far less intense than a lightning strike, they can still cause damage. Other causes of power surges include faulty wiring and overloaded outlets or circuits.

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*"Power surges can be extremely damaging to your electronic devices, potentially leading to expensive repairs or replacements," said Rock Energy Distributed Energy Technician Jason Grenawalt. "However, there are devices, such as surge protectors, that can make a big difference in protecting your valuable electronics."*

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## Options To Protect Appliances & Electronics:

- Use **surge protector strips** or devices to protect your electronics from power surges. However, during severe storms when lightning is present, it is best to unplug your computer, televisions, and other electronics.
- For electronics, consider investing in the surge protector's big brother: **uninterruptible power supply devices**. They work like a surge protector but have battery backup to keep them running during surges, power reductions or brief outages.
- Consider having a **whole-house surge protector** installed by a qualified electrician. Typically installed to the electric service box, it offers greater protection for your appliances than individual surge-protecting devices.
- If you do not have them already, consider updating outlets with those that feature **ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs)**. Today's electrical code requires them near a water source for new or remodeled homes. They help prevent electrical shock and fire, and they are reset with the push of a button after they have been tripped.

Source: SafeElectricity.org



Using surge protector strips (above) can help keep your electronics from being damaged in the event of a power surge. Below is a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI), which helps to prevent electric shock and fire near sources of water.



# Rock Energy Scholarships

## Last Chance To Apply / DEADLINE: JAN. 10

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 Rock Energy are eligible.

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

Since 1989, Rock Energy has awarded more than \$167,000 in financial aid to deserving students.

Scholarship recipients are also eligible to possibly receive a second-year \$1,000 scholarship if they meet certain criteria. The second-year scholarship information and eligibility criteria will be provided to 2024 scholarship winners after they are selected.

The on-line application is available at [www.rock.coop](http://www.rock.coop). Just go to the Community & Youth tab and click on Scholarships. Or, you can just click on the QR code (at right). The deadline for submitting applications is **Jan. 10, 2024**.

Applications must be completed on-line at [www.rock.coop](http://www.rock.coop).

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

# CLASS OF 2024

## APPLY TODAY!

- 15 Scholarships Available
- \$1,000 Per Scholarship
- For High School Seniors



*Scan the QR code for  
2024 Rock Energy  
Scholarship Information.*



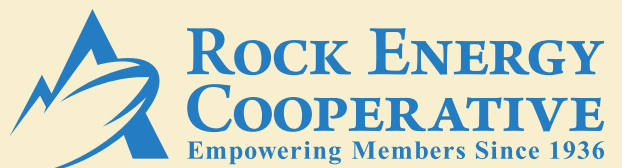
**COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**  
Pictured left, Rock Energy participates in South Beloit's Trunk-or-Treat event, which was held at City Park on Oct. 28. Pictured right, Rock Energy was on-hand at the Harlem-Roscoe Fire Protection District (HRFD) Open House, which was held Oct. 14.



**Shane Larson, CEO**

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**Jonas Berberich, Editor**



# When It Comes To **NATURAL GAS** Remember To Keep **SAFETY In Mind**

## How To Recognize A Natural Gas leak?

**SOUND** - An unusual hissing, roaring, or whistling sound along a natural gas line or coming from an appliance might signify a leak.

**SMELL** - Gas providers add a chemical that makes natural gas smell like rotten eggs so any leaks can be easily detected.

**SIGHT** - Unexplained dead grass, bubbling water, and blowing dirt near a meter or along the pipeline route are signs of a leak.

If you suspect a leak in your home, leave the building/ area immediately. Go to a safe place, outside the smell of gas (certainly not downwind of it).

Do not use a phone until you're safely away from the suspected leak. Then call Rock Energy Cooperative at 866-752-4550 or contact your gas provider.

### Natural Gas Detection & Safety - VIDEO

Check out Rock Energy's "Natural Gas Safety at Home" video and know what to do if you detect a natural gas leak. To view the video, scan the QR code to the right. ▶ ▶ ▶ ▶ ▶ ▶ ▶ ▶



### FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you have any questions about natural gas safety, we would be happy to provide you with further information. Just call us at 866-752-4550. We also encourage you to visit the web sites below to get more information about pipeline safety.

Rock Energy: [www.rock.coop](http://www.rock.coop)

Call 811: [www.call811.com](http://www.call811.com)

Diggers Hotline: [www.diggershotline.com](http://www.diggershotline.com)

JULIE (Joint Utility Locating Information for Excavators): [www.illinois1call.com](http://www.illinois1call.com)

National Pipeline Mapping System: [www.npms.phmsa.dot.gov](http://www.npms.phmsa.dot.gov)



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