

IT CAN WAIT

AVOID ALL DISTRACTIONS WHILE DRIVING


Our crews often work roadside. Because of that, we ask you to pay attention when approaching a work zone. Please respect and obey orange work zone signs. **Slow down, move over, and follow any other instructions** when approaching and moving through a **work zone**.

According to the **U.S. DOT's National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration**:

- **Nine percent of fatal crashes** in 2017 were reported as distraction-affected crashes.
- In 2017, there were **3,166 people killed** in motor vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers.
- **Six percent** of all drivers involved in fatal crashes were reported as distracted at the time of the crashes.
- **Drivers age 15 to 19** have the largest proportion of drivers who were distracted at the time of the fatal crashes.
- In 2017, there were **599 pedestrians, bicyclists, and others killed** in distraction-affected crashes.

 Safe
Electricity.org



Rock Energy Cooperative
Your Touchstone Energy Cooperative 

More Power to You

WE'LL GET THROUGH THIS CRISIS TOGETHER



Shane L. Larson,
Chief Executive Officer

The coronavirus pandemic has temporarily changed life as we know it. Our children aren't in school. Many of us are working from home. Communication with extended family and friends is limited to a phone call, video chat, or a letter.

As we all deal with the new realities brought on by this pandemic, I want to assure you that Rock Energy Cooperative will continue to provide you with safe and reliable energy at an affordable cost. After a sufficient supply of food and water, energy is the No. 1 thing you need to maintain some sense of normalcy during this uncertain time.

We thought you might want to know some of the steps we've taken to keep energy flowing to your homes and businesses while maintaining the health and well-being of our employees and our members. We have:

- Postponed the annual meeting that was scheduled for March 30. Details about the rescheduled meeting are in the planning stages and will be announced when finalized.
- Closed our lobbies to prevent the spread of germs. Instead of paying your bill in person, we're encouraging you to use our drop boxes, online and phone payment options, kiosk, and the mail.
- Limited face-to-face contact by having some office employees work from their homes.
- Staggered the shifts of outside workers so they're not all in the warehouse at the same time.
- Required crew members to ride in individual trucks to maintain the 6-foot social distancing rule.
- Provided lineworkers and gas technicians with safety masks to wear if they need to enter members' homes or businesses.
- Upgraded our cleaning and disinfecting routines.
- Made better use of technology to communicate with each other.
- Ensured that we have the needed materials and equipment by constantly monitoring the supply chain.



Concern for Community is one of the seven cooperative principles that guide all co-ops, and we believe these actions will help keep everyone safe during this pandemic. We're dedicated to doing what we can to fulfill our civic duty and live up to the trust that our members place in us to bring energy to their homes, businesses, and farms.

Because our members also are facing financial concerns during this crisis, we will not charge penalties for late payments or disconnect service for nonpayment or low funds until further notice. Your energy usage will be metered as usual, and statements will continue to include accumulated amounts



owed. Even though service will not be disconnected, members are encouraged to pay their energy bill as they can to avoid a larger balance in the future.

Rock Energy is committed to helping members who truly need assistance. If you're having financial difficulty, please call us at 866-752-4550 so we are aware of your circumstances and can make payment arrangements with you.

If you'd like to help your neighbors who are having financial difficulty during this crisis, please consider donating to Project Lift Up, the co-op's voluntary member donation program. Money given to Project Lift Up helps fund Rock Cooperative Care, the program that assists Rock Energy members with their energy bills. Details and sign-up information are available on page 20B.

Even though our lives have changed considerably in the past couple months, one thing is certain. Rock Energy will continue to provide you with the excellent service that you deserve and have come to expect. We continue responding to power outages and natural gas emergencies on a timely basis while also maintaining our energy distribution system. Payments to your accounts are posted on a timely basis, and we're available to answer your energy-related questions.

Our focus here is on doing our part to keep your life as normal as possible through this situation and beyond. The cooperative way of doing business has brought us this far, and the cooperative way will help us through this crisis.

Please visit www.rock.coop regularly for news about the co-op related to the pandemic. You also can stay informed by registering to receive important email messages from Rock Energy by clicking on "Sign Up for Our Emails" at the top of the website.

We wish all the best to everyone. Stay healthy, and we will get through this together the cooperative way! Please let us know if we can do anything to improve our service to you.



CO-OP MEMBERS NEED YOUR HELP DURING PANDEMIC

COVID-19 has affected the lives of thousands of Rock Energy Cooperative members, and many are suffering financially. They've lost their jobs or had their incomes significantly reduced as businesses close temporarily and, in some cases, permanently.

Members are having difficulty making their rent or mortgage payments, providing food for their families, and paying their energy bills. They need assistance, and you can help!

To help them get through this temporary hardship, please consider donating to Project Lift Up, the co-op's voluntary member donation program that helps your neighbors in need. Money given to Project Lift Up helps fund Rock Cooperative Care, our program that assists Rock Energy members with their energy bills. All money donated stays right here in the community.

Project Lift Up was designed as an easy way for members to make small monthly donations by rounding up their energy bill to the nearest dollar.

Just as the name suggests, Project Lift Up helps give people a financial lift. In the process of giving, your spirit also will be lifted. "Neighbors Helping Neighbors" is how we describe the program.

Project Lift Up was designed as an easy way for members to make small monthly donations by rounding up their energy bill to the nearest dollar. Members also can choose to add a set monthly amount to their bill or make a one-time dona-

tion. Most contributions come in the form of pennies, nickels, dimes, and quarters when co-op members round up the amount they pay. Considered separately, that spare change might seem insignificant. But when combined with other donations, that small amount of money can make a big difference in people's lives.

Participating is easy with four options available:

- Round your energy bill up to the nearest whole dollar amount. If your bill is \$83.23, you would pay \$84, contributing 77 cents. The most you could donate would be \$11.88 per year.
- Add \$1 each month to your budget billing plan. If you choose this option, your annual donation would be \$12.
- Add a set contribution each month. For example, \$5 could be added to your monthly statement for an annual contribution of \$60.
- Make a one-time only donation. The amount you select will be added to your next statement.

If you already participate in the program, you can help members get through this current crisis by adding a one-time donation to your generous contribution.

Please show your generosity to members who are financially affected by the pandemic by including the form on this page with your payment or submitting it electronically at www.rock.coop/ProjectLiftUpForm. You can cancel at any time by calling our office at 866-752-4550.

Yes, I want to make a gift to Project Lift Up!

(Choose only one option.)

- Round up my monthly energy bill to the nearest whole dollar.
- Add \$1 each month to my budget billing plan.
- Add a monthly donation of \$_____ to my energy bill. (Please enter dollar amount.)
- Add a one-time donation of \$_____ to my next energy bill.
- I already am enrolled in Project Lift Up but want to add a one-time donation of \$_____ to my next energy bill.



Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email Address: _____

Signature: _____

Account Number: _____ Date: _____

You can mail this form with your payment or put it in the drive-through drop box at our office.



SIX WAYS TO MAKE YOUR HOME OFFICE ENERGY EFFICIENT

Working from home, even on a temporary basis, may increase your energy use. It means that you're spending more time using a computer, lights, and other appliances at home instead of in your workplace.

But by improving the energy efficiency of your home office equipment, you can save on energy costs without hampering your productivity.

1. Make sure computers and other office equipment are turned off when they're not in use for an extended period.
2. Many electronic devices continue to use standby power even after they're turned off. Connect your office equipment to an advanced power strip, which will automatically shut off power to unused devices.
3. Set office equipment, such as printers and scanners, to automatically switch to sleep mode when not in use. In addition to saving energy, the equipment will stay cooler, which will help to extend its useful life.
4. Use a laptop computer instead of a desktop. Laptops use less than one-third the energy of a typical desktop computer.
5. Adjust the thermostat to the unoccupied setting. This avoids wasting energy by conditioning the entire house while you're occupying only a small portion of it.
6. Use task lighting with energy-efficient lamps. A desk lamp uses less energy than whole-room lighting.

When purchasing new office equipment, make sure it's ENERGY STAR qualified. ENERGY STAR-certified products use less energy than standard models.

If every home office product purchased in the United States were ENERGY STAR qualified, Americans would save an estimated \$75 million a year in energy costs, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

CO-OP EMPLOYEES SOMETIMES WORK ON MEMBERS' PROPERTY

Rock Energy Cooperative employees and contractors work throughout our service territory, including on the rights-of-way and easements, and across your private property and driveways.

Our efforts to ensure reliable energy for you and your neighbors mean we sometimes must work on your property. You may see us:

- Making routine repairs.
- Restoring power after outages.
- Updating our electric and natural gas distribution system.
- Replacing meters.
- Maintaining vegetation in rights-of-way.
- Locating buried utilities for construction and digging projects.
- Working to upgrade poles, wires, transformers, and equipment.
- Inspecting lines, power poles, transformer boxes, and equipment.

Field work, except emergency power restoration, is conducted during normal working hours, 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Every effort is made to avoid damage and unnecessary intrusion.

If you have concerns about our work on your property, call Rock Energy at 866-752-4550.

We appreciate your cooperation!

LISTEN TO ALL PHONE MENU OPTIONS

When calling Rock Energy Cooperative, please listen to all the menu options before making your selection.

Here are the options:

- **Press 1** ONLY to report a natural gas emergency. If you select this option for power outages, billing questions, or other co-op business, it may delay having a natural gas technician dispatched to a real emergency.
- **Press 2** if you want to make an electronic payment or obtain your account balance.
- **Press 3** to report a power outage, ask questions about your account, or talk to a co-op employee.
- **Press 4** to repeat the options.

We appreciate your cooperation in helping us keep everyone safe.





PLUG INTO SAFETY



During National Electrical Safety Month

Every day, we rely on electricity to power our homes and offices. But it's important to always be safe around electric appliances, equipment, and power lines.

May is National Electrical Safety Month, and it's a great time to raise awareness on how to avoid potential electrical hazards. By taking simple precautions, everyone can avoid electrically related fires, fatalities, injuries, and property loss. Follow these safety tips.

Indoors

- Check electric cords for fraying or cracking. Replace cords that may be damaged, and don't overload electric outlets.
- Remember extension cords are intended to be temporary. They are not intended as permanent household wiring.
- Don't run cords under carpets or rugs and don't tack or nail cords to walls or floors.
- Keep electric appliances and tools away from water. Never

reach for or unplug an appliance that has fallen into water. Instead, turn the power off at the breaker before you unplug the appliance or remove it from the water.

- Never put anything other than an electrical plug in an outlet. Use outlet covers or caps to protect children.
- Keep your home's electrical system in good repair. Contact a licensed electrical contractor if you have flickering lights, sparks, non-functioning outlets, or need wiring repairs or upgrades.

Outdoors

- Never touch downed power lines!
- Always call your local utility or 911 if you see lines down.
- Watch for overhead lines every time you use a ladder, work on roofs, trees, or carry long tools or loads. Keep kites, model airplanes, and metallic balloons away from power lines.
- Know what's below before you dig. At least three days before starting any digging or excavating project, call 811, the National One Call Center, to have underground utility lines, pipes, and cables marked for free.
- Avoid planting trees underneath power lines or near utility equipment.

Through electrical safety awareness, we can all play a part in preventing electrical hazards and injuries in the future. Together, let's plug into safety this May.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

When the weather is nice, put your grill to use! During warmer months, cooking outdoors is a great way to save energy and eliminate unwanted heat from cooking indoors.



Have a Safe and Happy Memorial Day!

Rock Energy Cooperative offices will be closed on Monday, May 25, in observance of Memorial Day. We will reopen at 7:30 a.m. Tuesday, May 26. Members can make payments in the drop boxes at both offices throughout the holiday weekend and at the new payment kiosk outside our South Beloit office, 15229 Willowbrook Road. 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 866-752-4550.

Shane Larson, CEO

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ROCK ENERGY COOPERATIVE
Empowering Members Since 1936