



More Power to You

LET'S ALL HAVE A SAFE 2017



Shane L. Larson,
Chief Executive Officer

Many folks start the new year by making resolutions to lose weight, exercise more, get organized, stop bad habits, or improve their lives in a

variety of other ways. But by the middle of January we usually break those promises to ourselves and return to our old ways. But here's one resolution you can make that will take you through 2017 and last for a lifetime: Become more aware of electrical dangers around you. You should consider this even if you don't traditionally make resolutions.

At Rock Energy Cooperative, we take safety very seriously. We have regular safety meetings, daily safety checks of equipment, and the extensive evaluation process of the Rural Electric Safety Accreditation Program. This national program involves a third-party evaluation of everything from safety policies and procedures to our facilities and equipment.

Co-op employees receive regular safety training to make sure they do their jobs as safely as possible. But safety awareness doesn't stop when they're off the clock. We want them to practice electrical safety in everything they do.

We want the same for you—our members. Our safety team wouldn't be complete without you. You are the co-op's eyes and ears at your home, workplace, and throughout our communities. By being more aware of your surroundings and the electrical hazards in your daily lives, you can protect yourself and your loved ones.

I received a report the other day from Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange, which insures many energy co-ops nationwide including Rock Energy, about electrical accidents that occurred in October:

- The driver of a dump truck raised his bed into overhead lines.
- Painters contacted lines after losing control of their ladder.
- A co-op member raised a ladder into overhead lines.
- A member grabbed a downed line believing it was a harmless cable.
- A cement truck driver raised his boom into overhead lines.
- A contractor contacted lines while tying a neutral line.
- A member contacted a line that was downed by an extended auger on a grain cart.

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Always keep metal ladders a safe distance from power lines.

Tips from Safe Electricity:

- Use caution when using long tools like ladders, pool skimmers, and pruning poles to keep them away from power lines.
- Keep equipment and yourself at least 10 feet from power lines.
- Never trim trees near power lines. Leave that to the professionals.
- Never use water or blower extensions to clean gutters near electric lines.
- If it is raining or the ground is wet, do not use electric power or yard tools.
- Inspect the height of farm equipment to determine clearance.
- Use a spotter when operating large equipment near power lines.
- Look up and use care when moving any equipment, such as extending augers or raising the bed of grain trucks around power lines.
- Always set extensions to the lowest setting when moving loads to prevent contact with overhead power lines. Grain augers should always be positioned horizontally before moving.
- Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.





CHECK OUT OUR NEW WEBSITE!

Rock Energy Cooperative is excited to announce the launch of our new website with a fresh look and easy navigation.

The new user-friendly layout allows you to easily access the information you need from your desktop computer or mobile device. The website uses responsive design, which adapts the content to the size of the screen you're using. It will be just as easy to see content on your smartphone as your

desktop computer. That's important because more than half of our web visits come from mobile devices.

Another new feature allows members to log into their Smart Hub account by filling in their user name and password at the top of the home page rather than going to a separate login page.

When you have time, go to www.rock.coop and explore all the new features. The Search box at the top of

the home page will help you find what you need. If you can't locate something, just click the Contact Us button. You can e-mail, call, or stop in with questions. Our staff is always willing to help.

Some members are still using our old address, www.rceca.com, to access the website. That address will not be available starting in 2017. Now is a good time to bookmark www.rock.coop in your favorites and delete the old address.



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Fortunately, these accidents didn't result in any deaths, but they certainly could have. On average, 400 people in the United States die each year from electrocution and 4,400 are injured because of electrical hazards.

The most important part of safety around electricity is awareness. Whether you're using a metal ladder to clean your gutters or operating large farm machinery, always survey the area first so you know where power lines and other potential hazards are. A large piece of machinery is vulnerable to hitting power lines because of its size, height, and extensions. Being aware of the location of overhead power lines and planning a safe equipment route is essential to help reduce accidents.

Remember that you are part of our safety team. We count on you to let us know if you see a sagging power line that might cause a problem or any other potential hazards.

On another topic, we're excited to announce the launch of our new website with a fresh look, easy navigation, and greater focus on members' needs. The website uses responsive web design, which adapts the content to the size of the screen on which it's being viewed. It will be just as easy to see content on your smartphone as your desktop computer. Read more about the new website elsewhere on this page.

As 2017 begins, we look forward to another year of providing 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.

WANTED!

Students Interested in Cooperatives

Reward: Trip to Washington, D.C.

Do you know any high school juniors who are curious about how government works and want to learn more about cooperatives and the democratic process?

If so, encourage them to apply for the 2017 Youth Tour, an annual trip to Washington, D.C., sponsored by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. Rock Energy Cooperative will pay for two high school juniors to go on the June 10–16 trip.

Leah Knaul, Nathan Stevens, and Seth Trickel represented Rock Energy Cooperative on the 2016 trip. They visited national landmarks with more than 1,600 young leaders from across the country, returning with a greater appreciation of the political process and a better understanding of cooperative business principles.

Stevens, who is a senior at Stevens Academy in Rockton and attends Rock Valley College in Rockford, plans to become a U.S. Marine Corps officer. His favorite part of the trip was going to the Marine Corps War Memorial, a national monument located in Arlington Cemetery.

Trickel, a senior at Parkview High School in Orfordville, was interesting in finding out more about how government affects local businesses.

Knaul, a senior at Thunder Valley Schools in Roscoe, said the trip was



Representing Rock Energy Cooperative during the 2016 Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., were, from left, Seth Trickel, Leah Knaul, and Nathan Stevens.

important to see how members of the government shape the nation's future.

Rock Energy is taking online applications for the 2017 Youth Tour. Applicants must be children of Rock Energy members and reside in the co-op's service territory. The all-expense-paid trip includes transportation, lodging, meals, and admissions to events. Round-trip travel is by motor coach from Springfield, Ill. Travel to Springfield is not included.

Current high school juniors who would like to be considered can apply online at www.rock.coop. Applications must be submitted by Feb. 28. If you have questions, please call Barbara Uebelacker, communications specialist, at 608-752-4550 or 866-752-4550. You can also e-mail her at BarbU@rock.coop.



Co-op Trucks on Parade in Rockton!

Above left: Rock Energy Cooperative employees and their families joined Rockton's annual Christmas Walk parade on Saturday, Dec. 3.

Above right: The co-op's natural gas survey vehicle made its debut in the parade.

Left: Nathan Stevens, one of the co-op's 2016 Youth Tour representatives, greets parade-goers from the bucket truck.



Get Connected

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



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Three Blind Mice Computers, 20 W. Fulton St., Edgerton – 608-884-6891 – www.threeblindmicecomputers.com
Specializing in new and used computers; sales, service, and repair.
\$25 Off (any computer repair)

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Providing professional computer services to south central Wisconsin and north central Illinois. We focus on small



businesses and can set up an individual PC, home network, or total business computer solution. We have invested in the resources to make us the best choice for knowledgeable professional technicians with on-demand repair service and complete IT outsourcing solutions. We also have a full line of leading computer products and a full-service repair facility. No job is too small or too large. Ensure less down time and increase your productivity and efficiency. See why hundreds of satisfied clients have chosen Premier Technologies to support their business.

15% Off Carry-in (labor only)

For a complete listing of current deals, visit www.rock.coop and click on the Co-op Connections Card. You also can use the card for discounts on prescriptions as well as dental, vision, hearing, chiropractic, lab, and imaging services. To locate providers, call 800-800-7616.



Add Up Your Savings!

Tell us how much you have saved by using your Co-op Connections Card. If you have a story you'd like to share, e-mail Barbara Uebelacker at BarbU@rock.coop or call her at 866-752-4550.

LAST CHANCE...

Jan. 11 is the deadline to apply for Rock Energy Cooperative scholarships for 2017. Go to www.rock.coop for details or call 866-752-4550.



VISIT WEBSITE BEFORE INSTALLING SOLAR

If you're thinking about installing a solar generation system on your property, make sure to learn all the facts before signing a contract.

To get started, go to www.rock.coop/content/distributed-generation. There you will find a list of frequently asked questions, guidelines for technical requirements, our inter-connection agreement, and details about our Small Distributed Generation Rate. This information can be provided to potential vendors so they are aware of the cooperative's technical requirements.

If you have any questions after reviewing the information, please call us at 866-752-4550 or e-mail questions@rock.coop.

RATES MODIFIED

The Rock Energy Cooperative Board of Directors has authorized availability modifications to several rates. For further details, please visit our website at www.rock.coop/content/rates-modified.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



According to the Consumer Electronics Association, the average household owns 24 consumer electronics products, which are responsible for 12 percent of household electricity use. ENERGY STAR-certified audio/video equipment is up to 50 percent more efficient than conventional models.

Source: energy.gov

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Empowering Members Since 1936