



More Power to You

FOCUSED ON RELIABILITY



Midwest Remains Resilient During Extreme Cold Event

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Chief Executive Officer

We expect the lights to turn on whenever we need them, and most people never give the reliability of our electric grid a second thought. However, “reliability” (as it relates to our electric system) takes on a whole new meaning during winters in the Midwest when phrases like “polar vortex,” “freezing rain,” and “deep freeze” are used frequently in weather reports; when subzero temperatures reflect the “high” temperature of the day; or when dangerous wind-chill warnings are part of the forecast, which was the case in February in Illinois and Wisconsin. These are exactly the kinds of weather factors that put a spotlight on the importance of “reliability” in our electric grid.

Fortunately, in our area we have a strong electric grid and a diverse energy resource mix that provides the safety net we need during such weather extremes.

The recipe for success is to balance generation resources with a robust transmission system, which will deliver the reliability we all count on. Variety is the key when it comes to maintaining the reliability of our electric grid. A variety of generation resources ensures we’re being cost efficient while meeting demand at the same time.

For example, the polar vortex of 2019, much like the extreme cold we experienced earlier this year, also included frozen piles of coal, snow on solar panels, low wind speeds, natural gas fuel shortages, and mechanical problems. However, because of the Midwest’s network of transmission lines and an integrated regional electric system, residents and businesses were able to receive electricity from other regional transmission organizations (RTOs) to avoid widespread blackouts.

Prepared for the Deep Freeze

In mid-February, demand for natural gas increased dramatically amid the extremely cold weather, which is nothing new for us northerners. The Midwest expects cold weather and utility companies were prepared for it, as they are every winter. Facilities in Illinois and Wisconsin are insulated and enclosed,



Unlike many locations in Texas, Illinois and Wisconsin did not have to endure a massive wave of power outages during the deep freeze that took place in February.

and infrastructure and equipment are built to withstand numerous days of temperatures that reach well below zero. In colder parts of the country, it’s easier to plan for high demand in winter, even though northern states aren’t immune to natural gas shortages. It’s also practical to invest in the type of infrastructure that allows generators to continue producing energy on frigid days.

Down south, however, is a different story. In southern states, air conditioning is a must in the summer and temperatures rarely drop below freezing. The expensive upgrades needed for northern utility companies are harder to justify in southern states. In fact, power plants in the south may even schedule maintenance during the winter months when they expect cooler temperatures and some down-time.

While the Midwest grid has certainly been challenged by extreme cold, the biggest threat is usually an ice storm that would take out power lines, not generators. While not invincible, the grids in Illinois and Wisconsin are built to withstand most of what nature can dish out.

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When the record-breaking cold swept across some southern states in February, many states weren't prepared to handle the cold. Millions of people were left shivering in the dark as the state's power grid failed to meet the surging demand for electricity, crippled by temperatures in the single digits. Some plants simply froze because they were not designed to protect against this type of cold.

So why does the power continue to work in places like Illinois and Wisconsin where bitter cold is a way of life? Because generators in the Upper Midwest are designed to work in frigid conditions, unlike those in the south. Also, wind turbines are equipped with winter weather packages such as heating elements to keep ice off the blades and insulated gearboxes, allowing them to work at temperatures well below zero.

Your Rock Energy Bill

Due to the extreme cold event and the natural gas shortage in February, you will notice that your bill went up. Rock Energy has been and continues to work with members to identify ways to minimize the impact of high bills.

If you need assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us. We will review payment assistance resources and discuss payment options with you. We have also reduced the number of days in billing cycles for some members to lower their bill that was affected by the gas shortage — some days will be deferred over the next few months.

If you are concerned about your energy use, we have a number of energy efficiency resources to help you use energy wisely.

Remember, if you have any questions about your bill, or if we can do anything to improve our service to you, please contact us and let us know.



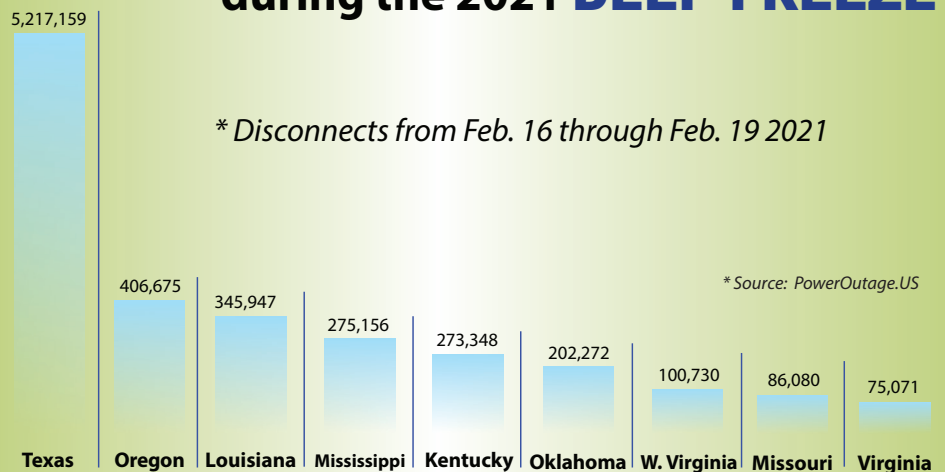
WHAT EXACTLY HAPPENED IN TEXAS?

Natural gas wells and pipes ill-equipped for cold weather are a big reason why millions of Texans lost power during frigid temperatures this week. As temperatures dropped to record lows across some parts of the state in February, liquid inside wells, pipes, and valves froze solid.

Ice can block gas flow, clogging pipes. It's a phenomenon called a "freeze-off" that disrupts gas production. Texas is a huge natural gas producer — and it doesn't usually have to deal with such cold weather.

While the frigid cold slashed fuel supplies of all sorts, it also drove up demand for natural gas to heat homes, which caused the blackouts to happen. There simply wasn't enough fuel on hand to power the state's electricity needs. Natural gas production was pretty much halved in Texas during the cold and stormy weather.

Customers Disconnected from Electricity during the 2021 DEEP FREEZE



INSURANCE POLICIES COVER LOSSES FROM POWER OUTAGES

Rock Energy Cooperative works diligently to make sure your electricity and natural gas are there when you need it. But like all things, nothing is 100 percent guaranteed. Outages or voltage issues—whether triggered by a storm, lightning, trees, equipment failure, animals, or vehicles hitting power poles—can damage computer equipment, TVs, and other appliances in your home.

These events are out of our control, and Rock Energy Cooperative does not compensate for any damaged equipment.

However, most homeowner's and business insurance policies cover losses from interruptions caused by lightning, windstorms, and other sources. Make sure you're familiar with your policy and what is covered.

Call your agent if you're not sure about your specific coverage.

You can help protect your equipment by unplugging items during a power outage and by installing surge protection.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Some manufacturers set water heater thermostats at 140 degrees, but most households usually only require them to be set at 120 degrees.

Consider lowering your water heater's temperature to save energy and slow mineral buildup in the heater and pipes.

Source: www.energy.gov

LINEMAN APPRECIATION DAY

APRIL 18, 2021

Committed to the job
Committed to safety
Committed to you,
OUR MEMBERS!



MY CO-OP

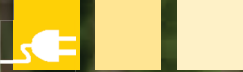
CAPITAL CREDITS GENERALLY NOT TAXABLE

With the tax deadline approaching, Rock Energy Cooperative members might be wondering if the capital credits they receive are taxable.

Capital credits generally are not taxable for individual members. Whether your capital credit refund is taxable generally depends on whether or not you claimed your energy bills as a business expense.

For example, a farm or other business claiming 75 percent business use of their energy costs would have to include 75 percent of the cash payment for the capital credits when received as income. The non-business portion is not subject to taxation. Members with specific questions should consult a tax adviser.

As a cost-of-service energy provider, Rock Energy doesn't earn profits. Instead, co-ops use the term margins, which is any revenue remaining at the end of the year after all bills are paid. Capital credits reflect each member's equity in, and contribution of capital to, the cooperative. This differs from dividends that investor-owned utilities pay shareholders, who may or may not receive service from the utility.



CALL 8-1-1 TO KNOW WHAT'S BELOW!

April is National Safe Digging Month

As part of National Safe Digging Month, Rock Energy Cooperative encourages homeowners to take the following steps when planning a digging project this spring:

- Always call 811 a few days before digging, regardless of the depth or familiarity with the property.
- Plan ahead. Call on Monday or Tuesday for work planned for an upcoming weekend, providing ample time for the approximate location of lines to be marked.
- Confirm that all lines have been marked.
- Consider moving the location of your project if it is near utility line markings.
- If a contractor has been hired, confirm that a call to 811 has been made. Don't allow work to begin if the lines aren't marked.
- Visit www.call811.com for more information.



Go to www.rock.coop/videos/info-videos and check out Rock Energy's newest informational video - **Call Before You Dig!**

Learn More:
NATIONWIDE: www.call811.com or call 811
WISCONSIN: www.diggershotline.com
 or call 800-242-8511
ILLINOIS: www.illinois1call.com or 800-892-0123

IN OBSERVANCE OF GOOD FRIDAY ON APRIL 2

Rock Energy offices will remain closed and REC personnel will be out on Friday, April 2, in observance of Good Friday. Members can make payments in the drop boxes at both offices throughout the holiday weekend and at the payment kiosk outside our South Beloit office, 15229 Willowbrook Road. Even though our offices are closed, standby crews are available. If you need to report a power outage, please call 866-752-4550.



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Jonas Berberich, Editor



**ROCK ENERGY
 COOPERATIVE**
 Empowering Members Since 1936



Spring *into action and save*

Spring has sprung, and it is a good time to think about landscaping. Strategically placed landscaping can improve your home's appearance and reduce heating and cooling costs.

In winter, windbreaks block frigid winds. In summer, shading south and west windows and walls can reduce excessive heat.

For more information about energy-saving landscape planning, contact your local electric co-op, or visit <https://www.energy.gov/energysaver/design/landscaping>

Brought to you by your Touchstone Energy Cooperative

