



A MESSAGE FROM:
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Chief Executive Officer



REMINDER: Call 811 Before You Dig

Every year, homeowners, contractors, and landscapers take on projects that require digging—whether it's planting a tree, installing a fence, or building an addition. However, before breaking ground, there's a critical step that must not be overlooked: calling 811.

April is National Safe Digging Month, so Rock Energy wants to take this opportunity to remind you that before you use that post hole digger or other unearthing tools, STOP and call 811 to request that buried electric, gas, cable and other live lines in or near your yard be marked.

Why Call 811? 811 is the national "Call Before You Dig" number that connects individuals to their local utility marking service. Underground utility lines, including gas, water, electric, sewer, and telecommunications cables, run beneath properties, often in places people wouldn't expect. Accidentally striking one of these lines can cause serious injuries, service outages, or even explosions.

How Does It Work? Calling 811 is simple and free. Here's how it works: You contact 811 at least a few business days before your planned digging project. The 811 operator will ask for your location and project details to ensure accurate marking. Utility companies send representatives to mark the locations of underground lines with paint or flags. Once the area is marked, you can proceed with caution, ensuring you stay clear of identified utility lines.

Not calling 811 can potentially lead to dire consequences, such as:

- Personal injury from hitting gas or electric lines
- Costly repairs and liability for damage
- Legal penalties for negligence
- Service disruptions to your neighborhood

Who Needs to Call 811? Whether you're a homeowner installing a mailbox or a professional contractor working on a large-scale project, calling 811 is required by law before any excavation. Even if you believe you know where the lines are, it's always best to verify to prevent costly and dangerous mistakes.

When it comes down to it, remember that taking a few minutes to call 811 before digging can save lives, prevent damage, and ensure your project proceeds smoothly. Don't take chances—always know what's below before you dig!

See page 17 for more information about contacting 811 in Wisconsin and Illinois.



Spring Energy-Saving Tips

Programmable Thermostat

Having a programmable thermostat in your home can reduce your annual heating and cooling costs. Set the temperature slightly higher when you're not home to prevent your air conditioner from cooling an empty space.

Power Strips

Using a power strip to plug in several pieces of electronic equipment helps reduce phantom loads—that is, the energy use that occurs when a device is turned off but still plugged into an outlet. Remember to turn the power strip off when it is not in use.

Water-Heating Energy

Your water heater consumes about 18% of your home's total energy. Lower your water heater's temperature by adjusting the dial on the heater to reduce the amount of energy your water heater uses. Setting your water heater at a maximum of 120 degrees Fahrenheit saves money and provides comfortable water out of your faucets.

Ceiling Fan

Make sure your ceiling fans turn in the correct direction for the season. A counterclockwise rotation will push cool air down to the floor level, whereas a clockwise rotation will push hot air down. When the weather is warmer, at the end of spring, reverse the direction to keep cool without turning on the air conditioning. As a result of this simple adjustment, you can raise the thermostat temperature and ultimately lower your energy bills over time.

Home Weatherproofing

You can increase your home's energy efficiency by weatherproofing your windows, exterior doors, and garage door with weatherstripping. Your garage, especially, is one of the main points where heat or cold air escapes from your home, so add weatherstripping to help keep your home cozy and comfortable even in extreme temperatures. Use caulk to seal the gaps in your doors and windows and prevent warm air leaks from coming into your home. This low-cost solution can make a big difference.

Refrigerator

As the spring weather gets warmer and you start thinking about picnics and potlucks, you may be opening your refrigerator door more frequently. Keep in mind that a refrigerator makes up a significant amount of your home's energy bill. As you do your spring cleaning, don't forget about your refrigerator's condenser coils—the metal coils located either on the back or the bottom of your refrigerator. If these coils get dirty, your refrigerator has to work harder to keep your food cool, so it requires extra energy. While you're at it, make sure the rubber seals on your refrigerator door are firm and tight to keep the cold air inside.

Furnace Filter

Replacing your furnace filter on a regular basis (every 60 to 90 days) will not only help you save money on energy bills, but it also plays a crucial role in improving home air quality, optimizing your HVAC system's performance.

For more tips, check out Rock Energy's "Spring & Summer Energy-saving Tips" video by scanning the QR code to the right.



Do You Have A Digging Project Coming Up?

Make Sure To Call 811 First!

Remember, call 811, even before small projects. It doesn't matter how modest the project is, accidentally hitting an underground utility line or other facility can cause harm to you and those around you.

Our land is made up of a complex underground infrastructure of pipelines, wires, and cables. Dig-ins can cause injuries, disrupt service to an entire neighborhood, and

result in fines and repair costs. So before you reach for the shovel, remember to call 811, the national "Call Before You Dig" number, to ensure that buried utility lines are marked.

A call to 811 must be placed before EVERY digging project, from simple landscaping projects like planting trees or shrubs, to building a deck or installing a mailbox.

STEP-BY-STEP

Here's what happens when you call 811:

1

Your call will be routed to your local Call Center. That's Diggers Hotline in Wisconsin and JULIE (Joint Utility Locating Information for Excavators) in Illinois. *NOTE: A reference # will be assigned to your digging project. Keep the # in case you need to call the Diggers Hotline back for any reason. This will help them to find your project in their system.*

A representative will ask for the location and description of your digging project.

2

Utility companies servicing the area then will send a professional locator to the proposed area to mark any buried lines with flags: red, electric; yellow, gas or petroleum; orange, communications; blue or purple, water; and green, sewer or drainage.

3

Wait until your official project start date before beginning to dig to make sure all the utilities have been marked.

4



PLAN AHEAD

Wisconsin requires the call to be made three business days before the start of the project, and **Illinois** law specifies two business days. In **Wisconsin**, your project must begin within 10 days of your official start date. In **Illinois**, work must begin within 14 days of your locate request and is valid for 28 days.

ROCK ENERGY VIDEO

Scan the QR code to the right and check out Rock Energy's video: "Call Before You Dig"



811 Contact Information:

NATIONWIDE:

www.call811.com or call 8-1-1

WISCONSIN:

www.diggershotline.com or 800-242-8511

ILLINOIS:

www.illinois1call.com or 800-892-0123

April 18 Is Lineman Appreciation Day

Everyday there are men and women who face danger in order to protect our lives and bring us all the conveniences of modern living. National Lineman Appreciation Day celebrates those men and women who put their lives at risk to keep the power flowing through our communities.

SAFETY TIP

Only use a gas or charcoal grill outdoors. Grills are designed to be used outside where there is plenty of ventilation. Using one in a closed or partially enclosed space can cause carbon monoxide (CO) to build up and cause CO poisoning. Grill in the great outdoors.



 Safe
Electricity.org®

Capital Credits Generally Not Taxable

As tax time is 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. In addition, through your SmartHub account, you can access and review the capital credit retirement information on your billing statement (typically your May statement). Rock Energy suggests that members with specific questions should consult a tax adviser.

OFFICES CLOSED FOR GOOD FRIDAY

Rock Energy Cooperative offices will be closed on Friday, April 18, in observance of Good Friday. We will reopen at 7:30 a.m., Monday, April 21. Members can still make payments in the drop boxes at both offices throughout the holiday weekend. Even though our offices are closed, crews are always available 24 hours a day. If you need to report a power outage or a natural gas incident, please call 866-752-4550.

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Empowering Members Since 1936



POWERING YOUR LIFE

It's good to know your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative is always there. For generations we've powered the growth of our neighborhoods, businesses, and everything in between. Today our commitment is stronger than ever to provide affordable and reliable energy on which you can depend.

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