



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



# Happy Holidays From Rock Energy!

The holidays are a time of year that many of us eagerly anticipate. The season is marked by special foods, seasonal decorations, and lots of festivities. We cherish carrying on old family traditions and enjoy creating new ones.

The holidays also can offer an opportunity to slow down and reflect. All of us at Rock Energy Cooperative are grateful for you, the members of the co-op. While our main focus is providing safe, reliable, and affordable energy, we also want to give back. We want to help our members and the communities they live in thrive.

## Energy Assistance

Rock Cooperative Care is one of the ways we help. We launched Rock Cooperative Care in 2010 to help members going through tough times. Since then, more than \$275,000 has been awarded to members whose incomes are too high to qualify for federal assistance, but too low to make ends meet. If you think you might qualify for assistance, details are on our web site at [www.rock.coop/assistance-programs](http://www.rock.coop/assistance-programs).

## Member Appreciation Day Is Back

This past August, Rock Energy brought back its Member Appreciation Day event after it was shelved for three years due to COVID. This year's event also took place at a new location—the Rock County Fairgrounds in Janesville, WI. Some of the highlights included a pancakes breakfast, kettle corn from vendor Pop'n DeLites, bucket truck rides, bounce houses, balloon artists from Funny Faces Family Entertainment, a prize wheel, and much more. Thank you to everyone who attended!

## Member Profile

This month we are highlighting one of our business members, Williams Tree Farm. What a tremendous experience for our members to take advantage of this holiday season. Check out the member profile and details on pages 16-17.

*We hope the special holiday season is filled with joy and happiness for you and your family. Thank you for allowing us to be your energy provider this year; we promise to give you the same great service in 2024. Please let us know if there's anything we can do to improve.*

*To All Our Members -  
Happy Holidays!*





# Williams Tree Farm

*"Creating memories is what we're known for..."*

Williams Tree Farm, a Rock Energy Cooperative member, has been family owned and operated for over 77 years. The farm was purchased in the 1940's by Carlton and Amelia Williams and their son Wayne. Originally a dairy and hog farm, timbers were harvested from the farm for what was known as The Wagon Wheel, a historic resort in Rockton, IL.

Located at 4661 Yale Bridge Road in Rockton, IL, today Williams Tree Farm offers cut-your-own and pre-cut trees, greens, horse-drawn wagon rides and much more. There is also a giftshop and café on site. Following the holiday season, during the rest of

the year, Williams Tree Farm is a popular venue for weddings and other events.

Williams Tree Farm co-owner Karen Williams said the tree farm today is a reflection of years learning from their customers and retaining a well-trained, responsive staff. In addition to a small café that serves family favorites like hot dogs and hot chocolate served in a cozy retreat with a fireplace, Williams Tree Farm has a variety of Christmas ornaments, crafts and gift items. Williams said most items are sourced from local providers.

*"We enjoyed the horse-drawn carriage ride so much! The horses were beautiful and the grounds were amazing! Definitely a must next year! Thank you Williams Tree Farm for memories and the Christmas tree tradition!"*

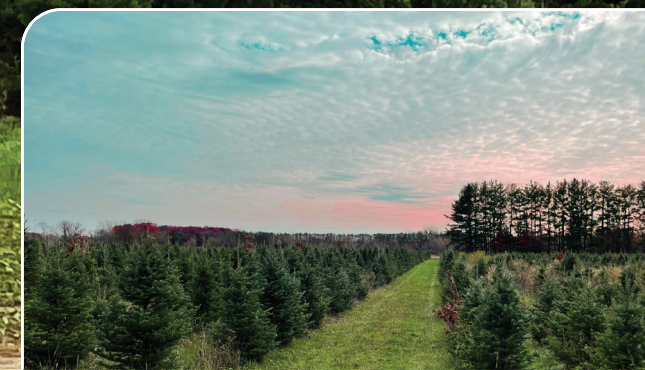
- Kelly, Williams Tree Farm visitor

## Giving Back To The Community

Cooperative Principle #7 is **Concern For Community**. In that spirit, the Williams family has worked with charitable organizations and local vendors throughout the years, including work with **Kids Around The World**, a Rockford-based organization that provides meals for children in need throughout the world. They have also sponsored children locally, getting gifts for them during the holiday season.



For more information about Williams Tree Farm, scan the QR code:



**BEFORE THE SNOW FLIES, A VIEW IN EARLY NOVEMBER** - Nestled under a radiant sky of vibrant colors and rippling clouds, pictured above/left is a picturesque landscape view of the Williams Tree Farm fields. Pictured above/right is the Williams Tree Farm sign and main building off of Yale Bridge Road that greets visitors at their rural Rockton, IL location.



From horse-drawn wagon rides and Santa Claus to hot chocolate and holiday crafts, there are a wide-range of activities and sites to see at Williams Tree Farm.

## WILLIAMS TREE FARM

Rock Energy Member  
4661 Yale Bridge Road, Rockton, IL  
815-624-7579  
WilliamsTreeFarm.com

- Cut-Your-Own & Pre-Cut Trees
- Wagon Rides
- Café, Santa & More!

*"Making memories is what we are all about!"*

- Karen Williams, Co-Owner of Williams Tree Farm



# Former Rock Energy General Manager Inducted Into Cooperative Hall of Fame

Sheldon C. Petersen, the retired CEO of the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corp. and a "relentless" advocate for electric cooperatives, was inducted into the Cooperative Hall of Fame in October by the Cooperative Development Foundation at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

The Iowa native began his career in 1976 as a staff assistant at Nishnabotna Valley Rural Electric Cooperative in Harlan, Iowa. Just four years later, he became general manager of Rock County Electric Cooperative Association—now known as Rock Energy Cooperative—in Janesville, WI.

Petersen joined CFC in 1983 as an area representative, providing financial management consultation to rural electric co-ops. He became CEO of CFC in 1995, leading them for more than 26 years, dramatically expanding its loan portfolio from about \$7 billion to \$27 billion and helping electric co-ops invest in their communities and adapt to changing times.

In addition to his co-op hall of fame induction, Petersen was the recipient of WECA's 2020 Special ACE Award, and in 2022, NRECA presented Petersen with the Clyde T. Ellis Award, which honors those who have made exemplary contributions that promote the principles and progress of rural electrification and the development and use of natural resources.

"I'm so grateful to have had the opportunity to work in an industry that has such an important purpose and to work with so many passionate people," said Petersen. "This is a nice way to cap off what has been such an incredible adventure."



In October, Sheldon Petersen was inducted into the Cooperative Hall of Fame by the Cooperative Development Foundation. Pictured above is Sheldon and his wife, Donita, when he received WECA's Special ACE Award in 2020.

Source: Erin Kelly, NRECA

## REC Expands Scholarship Program

Rock Energy Cooperative is excited to announce that it is expanding its scholarship program. The expansion gives scholarship recipients the opportunity to potentially earn a second-year scholarship. The expanded Rock Energy scholarship program will begin in 2024, meaning the 2024 scholarship recipients will be eligible to possibly earn a second \$1,000 scholarship if they meet certain criteria.

Scan the QR code to the right to access the on-line application. Applications must be completed on-line at [www.rock.coop](http://www.rock.coop).



Application Deadline: **January 10, 2024.**



Rock Energy Cooperative offices will be closed on Monday, Dec. 25, in observance of Christmas, and Monday, Jan. 2, for the New Year's holiday. 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 or natural gas incident, please call 866-752-4550.

**Shane Larson, CEO**

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**Jonas Berberich, Editor**





# DECK THE HALLS

For decades, electric cooperatives have been lighting up the homes of rural America for the holidays.

Season's greetings to you and yours with our wishes for a bright and beautiful future.



Rock Energy Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

