



Shane L. Larson,
Chief Executive Officer

More Power to You

IS IT SPRING YET?

Yes, spring is on the way, but for now, don't forget to make 'winter safety' a priority



The trials and tribulations of winter aren't quite over just yet. The month of February can be rough—often cold, snowy, and icy. Just look back to last year, when in early February there was a deep freeze that gripped a large portion of our nation as bitter cold temperatures stretched from Wisconsin all the way down to Texas, causing all kinds of havoc.

So, as winter continues to churn and cause mischief, you may see our line crews on the road as they look out for damage or potential problems with overhead lines. This is part of our normal routine to ensure that our distribution lines are in good working order. If you see our crews on the roadway, please slow down and keep a safe distance while passing them. They are working to keep our electric distribution system safe and reliable.

Also, as a reminder I ask each of you to make the necessary preparations to stay safe. Listen for emergency weather information and alerts and prepare your home for the possibility of blizzard conditions. Gather up the necessary supplies in case of a prolonged outage. Extra batteries, blankets, bottled water, and nonperishable food are essential emergency supplies. And keep an emergency supply kit in your car in case you become stranded on the road. Having jumper cables, sand or kitty litter, a flashlight, blankets, bottled water, and snacks in your car during the winter is a smart way to travel.

And, of course, please always remember to be attentive on the road as you are driving, especially in icy/snowy conditions. On page 18 in this issue, you will find an article about what do

to if you run into a power pole. Knowing what to do in a critical situation such as this could ultimately save your life.

Looking forward just a bit (no, winter won't last forever), as the construction and maintenance of our system begins in the spring, I would again encourage all of our members to be courteous and respectful to our line crews and contractors as they work on our system.

If you have any questions about the work being done, do not hesitate to contact our office to get answers. We remain dedicated to working on programs and services that offer the best value to the membership.

As always, Rock Energy appreciates the privilege of serving you, our members. We will continue to focus our efforts on the needs of our membership and we hope that each of you stays healthy and safe. We look forward to serving you.



Pictured above, a Rock Energy crew works on a power line following a winter storm in Rockton, IL.



ENERGY THEFT/TAMPERING IS A CRIME

IT'S NOT WORTH THE RISK

Someone illegally hooks into a power supply, hooks up a line that has been disconnected, or tampers with a meter to avoid recording electricity usage. Legitimate electricity consumers do not engage in these behaviors; however, even though the impact of electricity theft is often unrecognized, these illegal activities do occur.

Most electrical theft crimes occur through meter tampering, bypassing meters, and tapping power lines. Other less frequent crimes include tapping into neighboring premises, using illegal lines after disconnection, self-reconnection without consent, and electrifying fences. Electricity theft is a crime and is punishable by law.

Meter tampering, mentioned above, is also dangerous and puts our members and Rock Energy employees at great risk.

What constitutes meter tampering?

- Adjusting anything on the meter
- Obstructing the meter
- Damaging the meter pedestal
- Repositioning the meter
- Breaking the meter seal
- Cutting a meter lock
- Flipping the Rock Energy breaker switch on (if it is off)
- Removing the meter from its mount for any purpose
- Bypassing a meter through any means

**Do NOT
remove the
meter tag.**



If you suspect there is anything wrong with your Rock Energy meter or someone is attempting to steal electricity in any way, please call us immediately at (866) 752-4550.

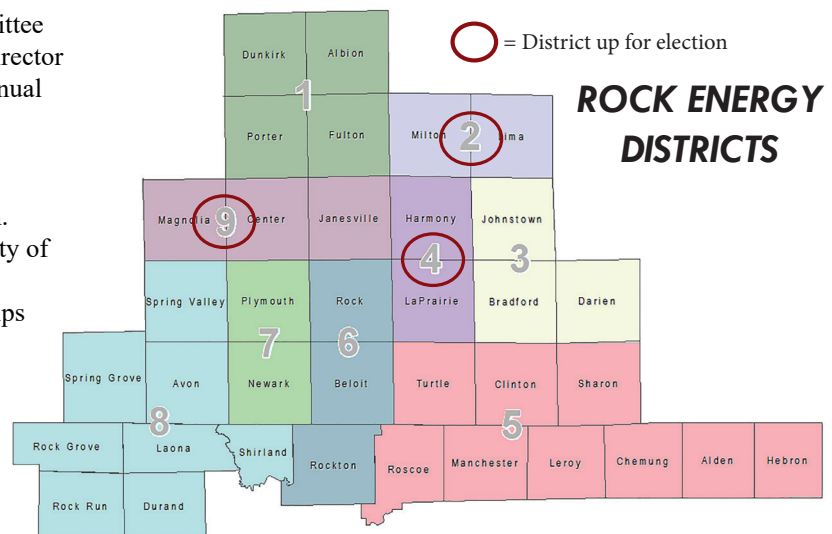
REC DIRECTOR NOMINATIONS OPEN

The Rock Energy Cooperative Nominating Committee will be selecting candidates to run for board of director positions that will be on the ballot at the 2022 annual meeting, to be held Sept. 19, 2022.

DISTRICTS UP FOR ELECTION:

- **District 2:** Lima and Milton townships in Wisconsin.
- **District 4:** Harmony and LaPrairie townships and city of Janesville in Wisconsin.
- **District 9:** Center, Janesville, and Magnolia townships in Wisconsin.

Active members who are interested in running for a position on the REC Board of Directors must permanently reside in one of the areas up for election and meet all other qualifications. For more information, please contact the co-op at 866-752-4550, or send an e-mail to questions@rock.coop.



Candidate Submission Deadline: APRIL 1, 2022

THE FUTURE LOOKS BRIGHT!

Rock Energy recently caught up with Megan Kreier (a 2018 Milton High School graduate and a Rock Energy Scholarship winner) to see what she's up to now and what she has planned for the future.

MEGAN KREIER

2018 REC Scholarship Winner

HOMETOWN: Milton, WI

COLLEGE: Marquette University Law School



Megan Kreier graduated from Milton High School in 2018, where she excelled in academics and music. Megan was also a recipient of the Rock Energy scholarship that year.

Rock Energy recently caught up with Megan to see how things were coming along for her post high school.

Megan is currently attending Marquette University Law School in Milwaukee, WI. She plans on graduating law school in May of 2024. Megan has already earned a bachelor's degree, and is currently working part-time at Marquette University Law School in the Office of Public Service. She said that after graduating, she would like to clerk for a federal judge, or attain a position in a private law firm.

ABOUT THE REC SCHOLARSHIP

Rock Energy Cooperative has been offering scholarships to graduating high school seniors who enroll at an accredited school since 1989. Students whose parents or guardians are active members of REC are eligible. In other words, students can apply if their household receives electricity or natural gas from the co-op. Over the years, Rock Energy has awarded more than \$142,000 in financial aid to deserving students.



2018 Rock Energy Scholarship recipient Megan Kreier is currently pursuing a degree at Marquette University Law School. Eckstein Hall (pictured above) is known as one of the top law school facilities in the nation.

Megan's advice to HS students considering college after graduation:

"Dream big and don't be scared! You may not have an answer for everything and you may change your mind several times, that's okay. There are so many resources available to students, so don't be afraid to use them. Also, get involved and try new things. You may surprise yourself on what you become passionate about."

GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY

"I definitely think I will be helping members of the community in my profession. A career in law will allow me to fight for the individual rights of every citizen, ensuring that their voices and concerns are heard. As I am experiencing with my pro bono work, it is extremely satisfying to be able to help people in the community who otherwise may not have access to a lawyer to assist them"

THE COLLEGE EXPERIENCE

"My college experience has been amazing. I believe WLC prepared me to take on law school, especially Dr. Jason Badura," Megan said. "I believe Marquette University Law School is and will continue to prepare me for the future as a lawyer. One of the most valuable things I learned in college is to never give up. There will be days that are harder than others and times when you feel completely overwhelmed, but you have to believe in yourself and push through the tough times to reach your dreams. It is also really important to reach out to your professors. They want you to succeed!"

LOOKING AHEAD

"I would like to either have my own law firm, be a partner in an existing law firm, or work for the state or federal government," Megan said. "Through Marquette Law School, I have the opportunity to participate in pro bono, where I work with licensed attorneys who offer their services to members of the community at no charge. This experience allows me to use the skills and knowledge I am learning, and see how it applies to real people and real situations."

IF YOU CRASH INTO A POWER POLE... DO YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO?

**1**

Stay in the car if you're in an accident with a power pole.

2

Warn those who try to come near your car to help that they must stay far away.

3

Call 911 for help, and wait until a professional from the electric utility tells you it is safe to leave the car.

The exception to the above rules is if your car is on fire. In that case, jump clear of the vehicle without touching it and the ground at the same time. Then hop away with feet together. This way there will not be a voltage difference between your two feet, which would give electricity the chance to flow through your body.

PREPARE A BACKUP PLAN IF YOUR HEALTH RELIES ON ELECTRICITY

Power outages can turn deadly for people who use life sustaining medical equipment that requires a consistent source of electricity. Rock Energy is committed to providing members with reliable energy service, but it's impossible for us to guarantee uninterrupted power at all times. Outages caused by severe storms, vehicle accidents, tree limbs, animals, equipment failure, or other problems could leave you without power for hours or, in rare cases, days.

If someone in your household depends on a respirator, oxygen concentrator, ventilator, or other life-support equipment, make sure you have an emergency backup plan.



Be prepared in case of an emergency:

- Obtain a backup source of power recommended by the manufacturer of any critical care equipment you have in your home. For example, battery backups or portable generators can provide you with the electricity you need until power is restored.
- Keep a full charge on battery-operated devices or have extra batteries available. Check your backup batteries periodically. Unused rechargeable batteries may need charging.
- Consider buying a portable battery pack that can supply hours of backup power.
- Keep your cell phone charged so you can call for help and be reached by family/friends concerned about your well-being.
- Have a plan. Talk to relatives or friends about places you can go in the event of a long-term outage.

Shane Larson, CEO

P.O. Box 1758, 2815 Kennedy Rd., Janesville, WI 53547
P.O. Box 126, 15229 Willowbrook Rd., South Beloit, IL 61080
866-752-4550

Jonas Berberich, Editor



**ROCK ENERGY
COOPERATIVE**
Empowering Members Since 1936

Natural Gas Safety

Smell Gas → Leave Fast

How can I recognize a Natural Gas leak?

Rock Energy Cooperative operates about 180 miles of natural gas pipeline in northern Illinois with nearly 9,000 services. Our distribution system is regularly monitored and inspected for corrosion and leaks to ensure safe and reliable service. Please review this safety information so you can learn how to recognize a natural gas emergency, and take the appropriate action if an accident occurs.



SOUND

An unusual hissing, roaring, or whistling sound along a natural gas line or coming from an appliance might signify a leak.



SMELL

Gas providers add a chemical that makes natural gas smell like rotten eggs so any leaks can be easily detected.



SIGHT

Unexplained dead grass, bubbling water, and blowing dirt near a meter or along the pipeline route are signs of a leak.

What should I do if I suspect a leak?

If you suspect that natural gas (or any combustible gas) is present, do not do anything that'll cause a spark. Natural gas is ignitable, and the tiniest spark can trigger an explosion. In this case:

- ❖ Please do not touch any electrical switches (do not turn them on or off).
- ❖ Do not use any electrical appliances or devices, including doorbells, garage door openers, telephones, elevators; do not even use your cell phone near a suspected leak).
- ❖ Do not light a match. Please stay away from any ignition sources or open flames (do not attempt to blow it out).
- ❖ Do not start any motor vehicle engines or electrical equipment.
- ❖ Do not attempt to repair a gas leak.

NOTE: Rock Energy provides natural gas to your home or business, but does not have a service department that repairs malfunctioning appliances.

Leave the building/area immediately. Go to a safe place, outside the smell of gas (certainly not downwind of it).

Do not use a phone until you're safely away from the suspected leak. Then call Rock Energy Cooperative at 866-752-4550 or contact your gas provider.

CARBON MONOXIDE EMERGENCIES: Please do NOT contact Rock Energy as the initial responder to a carbon monoxide emergency. Instead of contacting Rock Energy, you should contact first responders if faced with a carbon monoxide emergency, especially if medical attention is needed. In cases when Rock Energy is contacted by a member for a carbon monoxide emergency, they are referred to local emergency responders. If a member insists that Rock Energy responds, a gas technician will be dispatched, but a fee will be incurred by the member.

How can I get more information?

If you have any questions about natural gas safety, we would be happy to provide you with further information. Just call us at 866-752-4550. We also encourage you to visit the web sites below to get more information about pipeline safety.