



**ROCK ENERGY  
COOPERATIVE**  
Empowering Members Since 1936



# 89th Annual Meeting



## **MONDAY, APRIL 7** **Eclipse Center, Beloit, WI**

Rock Energy's 89th Annual Meeting will be held on Monday, April 7, at the Eclipse Center in Beloit, WI. We will be serving a full-service meal again this year for our members. In addition, the 2025 Rock Energy scholarship recipients will be announced. Look for full details about the annual meeting in the March magazine. We hope to see you there!





# Yahara Elementary Receives Rock Energy Grant

**R**ock Energy Cooperative is very excited to announce that it recently presented Yahara Valley Elementary School (Edgerton School District) with a community/education grant to support their "Building Literacy, One Book At A Time" project. According to Yahara Valley Elementary Principal Andrea Johnson, the grant is being used "to support literacy development in the school's kindergarten through fifth-grade classrooms by enhancing classroom libraries, strengthening the phonics program, and promoting summer reading."

The school initiative, says Johnson, focuses on three primary areas, including:

- **Decodable texts for phonics instruction.**
- **Increasing classroom library collections.**
- **Providing students with summer reading materials.**

"Securing this grant will have a huge impact on our school community by enhancing literacy resources both in the classroom and at home," says Johnson. "The grant fits in perfectly with our overall initiative, which is to help maintain reading engagement, prevent summer learning loss, and encourage students to continue developing their literacy skill outside the classroom."

Some of the book titles acquired with the assistance of the grant include (among others):

- **Pete the Cat (K-2)**
- **Unicorns & Friends (K-2)**
- **Puppy Place (3-5)**
- **Lola Levine (3-5)**
- **Decodable Reader Sets (Stages 1-9)**



*Pictured above, Rock Energy board member and board vice chair Barbara Miller (right), presents Yahara Valley Elementary School Principal Andrea Johnson (left) with the grant check.*

## Space Heater Safety



Space heaters are a great option for that stubborn corner of your home that just won't get warm, and as long as they're properly used, shouldn't pose a safety issue. However, if not used correctly, space heaters can be dangerous. With that in mind, here are some important safety items to think about when using a space heater:

- Check the space heater's cord for cracks and make sure the plug isn't broken. When plugging in, make sure the connection is secure.
- Don't leave a space heater unattended. When leaving a room, turn the space heater off. Also, turn the heater off when sleeping.
- Keep your space heater in a corner or an area of the room where people aren't walking so that nobody trips on it.
- Space heaters draw considerable electric current, which can shock you and overheat extension cords and power strips.
- Keep them at least three feet away from anything that can burn (rugs, clothing, bedding and paper). Use on a flat, uncovered floor without carpeting. Don't run the cord under a rug, either.
- An easy way to increase space heater safety is to look for a space heater with built-in safety features like a tip-over switch, overheat sensor and touch sensor. These features can help prevent overheating, which can result in a fire.

# Have A Backup Plan For Home Medical Devices



**E**lectricity is something we take for granted. When you depend on electricity to power medical equipment and medicine at home, then it comes as an unpleasant surprise when storms (tornadoes, ice storms, etc.) or extreme weather overloads power grids leading to a power outage. For these times, it's essential to think ahead and not wait until you are facing a crisis. If you or another person in your home relies on medical equipment, plan ahead for a power outage. Below are some important factors that you should consider.

- **CHARGE IT UP:** Fully charge your cellphone, battery-powered medical devices, and backup power sources if you know a big storm is coming.
- **KEEP TRACK OF YOUR DEVICES:** Make a list of all the different medical devices in your home that are operated with electricity. This could include breathing machines (CPAP, respirators, ventilators), power wheelchairs and scooters, oxygen, suction, or home dialysis equipment, and even a refrigerator to store medicine, such as insulin.
- **PLAN AHEAD:** Plan for how you will power/manage each item in the event of a power outage. Your plan may include backup batteries, a generator, and even asking local authorities (such as a hospital, fire station,

and energy provider) for assistance. It's best to reach out to these sources in advance of a power outage to ask how and if they can help.

- **BATTERIES:** If you use hearing aids, keep a supply of hearing aid batteries on hand. Create a plan for how to recharge batteries when the electricity is out. Check with your vendor/supplier to find alternative ways to charge batteries.
- **EMERGENCY LIST:** Create an emergency power checklist that includes model and serial numbers for your medical devices, emergency contact information, power backup sources, etc.
- **INSTRUCTION MANUALS:** Have all equipment instruction manuals located in one easy place to find in the event of a power outage. Read the user manual or contact the manufacturer to find out if your medical device is compatible with batteries or a generator.
- **NON-ELECTRIC OPTIONS:** Get manual alternatives for your electric devices that are portable, dependable, and durable. For example, a manual wheelchair, walker, or cane as a backup for an electric scooter.



# Insurance Policies & Power Outages



**R**ock Energy Cooperative works diligently to make sure your electricity and natural gas are there when you need it. But like most 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. If an outage occurs due to an act that is out of Rock Energy's control (such as those events mentioned in the previous sentence), you won't be compensated for any damaged equipment.

However, most homeowners 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 own equipment by unplugging it during a power outage and by installing surge protection.

#### **IMPORTANT NOTE:**

*Rock Energy will do everything it can to provide continuous service for members, but the co-op does not guarantee an uninterrupted or undisturbed supply of service. The co-op will not be responsible for any loss or damage resulting from an interruption or disturbance of service.*

## Check Your Thermostat And Save Energy And Money



Your thermostat plays a vital role in controlling your heating system. If it's not working properly, your heating system may run inefficiently, resulting in higher energy bills.

#### **Tips for Thermostat Maintenance:**

- Replace batteries at least once a year.
- Ensure your thermostat is set to the correct temperature and mode.
- For optimal energy savings, set your thermostat to 68°F when you're home and lower when you're away.
- Consider upgrading to a programmable or smart thermostat for more precise temperature control.

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## Natural Gas Q&A

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.

### What is natural gas?

Natural gas is an economical and reliable source of energy that is completely safe when used properly. It is formed when layers of buried plants and animals are exposed to intense heat and pressure over millions of years. Because natural gas is lighter than air, it rises and dissipates into the atmosphere if it escapes from a pipeline. Underground, however, it may follow the path of least resistance, accumulating in a confined space or traveling to an ignition source. Natural gas is easily ignited by heat, sparks, or flames and can cause explosions.

### How is it transported?

Pipelines are the safest and most economical method of transporting natural gas, according to the National Transportation Safety Board. Because pipelines are buried underground, warning signs are used to indicate their presence along the right-of-way. The signs are clearly marked with the operator's name and emergency phone number. The pipeline right-of-way must remain free of structures, vegetation, and any other obstructions. Maintaining a right-of-way free of encroachments is essential to ensuring the safety and integrity of pipelines.

### How can I prevent pipeline damage?

Damage from digging is the most common cause of underground natural gas leaks. Even a small scratch in the pipeline coating may result in corrosion that could lead to a leak. Always call 8-1-1 before you dig or excavate to avoid hitting a natural gas pipeline or other buried utility line. Illinois law requires people to call at least two business days before any digging project. Utilities then will send a representative to the site so all underground lines can be marked. The call and service are absolutely free. Remember that Rock Energy maintains buried gas pipes up to your meter. All pipes beyond that are the member's responsibility and should be periodically inspected for corrosion and leaks.



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.

Rock Energy: [www.rock.coop](http://www.rock.coop) Call 811: [www.call811.com](http://www.call811.com)

Diggers Hotline: [www.diggershotline.com](http://www.diggershotline.com)

JULIE (Joint Utility Locating Information for Excavators): [www.illinois1call.com](http://www.illinois1call.com)

National Pipeline Mapping System: [www.npms.phmsa.dot.gov](http://www.npms.phmsa.dot.gov)

