

2023

D.C. YOUTH TOUR



Rock Energy Youth Represent Co-op In Washington D.C.

The Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association (WECA) led a group of 12 total youth delegates on a tour of the nation's capital this June 14-18. Among the group of 12 were two Rock Energy delegates, Samantha Hopkins and Emma Steinke. The group, led by Youth Coordinator Tina Walden, represented a total of 10 Wisconsin electric cooperatives as they embarked on NRECA's Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. The Wisconsin group was up from the nine attendees who made the trip last year.

According to NRECA, the attendance is up nationally as well. More than 1,800 youth delegates and chaperons are attending at staggered times over the two-week period, which runs from June 13 to 23, up from 1,300 attendees last year. In 2019, before the pandemic hit, 2,000 young people made the trip. This year's attendees represent 44 states, up significantly from the 28 states that sent youth in 2022.

"We are still feeling the effects of the pandemic," said Beth Knudson, NRECA's youth programs and training manager. "Not having our in-person program in 2020 or 2021 put a dent in our applications simply because we don't have those recent attendees in our pipeline to promote the program at school. But we're getting there!"

The formal Youth Day program included presentations from Mat Kilgore, Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative line foreman and NRECA International volunteer, and Mike Schlappi, a motivational speaker and wheelchair basketball player who has appeared in four consecutive summer Paralympic Games.

Pictured here are the 12 Wisconsin youth delegates on the Washington DC Youth Tour, which took place in June. Rock Energy delegates Samantha Hopkins (2nd row, middle) and Emma Steinke (front row, right) participated in the tour.

TREE TRIMMING IS CRITICAL WHEN IT COMES TO SAFETY

Rock Energy Cooperative (REC) dedicates a significant amount of time for tree trimming, because it's a priority for us. Tree trimmers traverse our 1,200 miles of line to remove tree branches and other vegetation growing too close to power lines in the right-of-way. REC's tree-trimming program focuses on two things: safety and reliability.

Most everyone can agree that trees are beautiful and an important part of our landscape. However, they can become deadly for kids playing in the neighborhood if the branches grow too close to power lines and become energized.

Trees also can be a power line's worst enemy. Strong winds, heavy snow and ice can cause trees and their branches to snap, pulling down power lines and causing outages.

Line maintenance though involves more than just tree trimming. A complete pole and line inspection of REC's northern system was completed recently, and REC has a schedule that calls for one-tenth of all equipment on our lines — poles, wires, transformers — to be inspected every year. If serious hazards are discovered, repairs are made immediately.

Working to minimize and prevent outages is a year-round effort. REC's crews work diligently to clear branches away from power lines, and we make sure our equipment is in top-notch shape. REC maintains proper engineering and an adequate inventory of parts, as well as continually train REC employees. Everything we do focuses on providing REC members with reliable electricity.

Pictured here and in the images on page 17, a crew trims trees along Roherty Road in Janesville to clear branches that away from power lines.



RIGHT-OF-WAYS
Our members and regulators expect us to provide safe, reliable service. To meet that expectation, we must properly maintain our right-of-ways. Our easements on properties along the power line route give us specific rights to maintain those right-of-ways and keep them clear of trees and brush.



WHERE WE TRIM
Rock Energy is responsible for trimming trees and vegetation contacting or having the potential to cause an outage on electric lines. Often, there are other utility lines, such as cable television or telephone lines, located below the electric lines on a pole. Rock Energy does not maintain those lines.



NOTIFICATION
Rock Energy makes every effort to notify customers through personal contact, letter, or by leaving a door hanger at the location prior to vegetation maintenance activities. In the case of restoring power due to a tree-related outage or when a potential safety hazard exists, time is critical and crews may prune or remove a tree before notifying the property owner.

Rock Energy Tree Trimming Video
Scan the QR code to watch Rock Energy's Tree Trimming video.

Rock Energy Gas Rate Adjustment

For the first time since 2018, natural gas base rates will be modified, effective with gas billings after August 15, 2023.

Due to increased inflationary costs, residential members will see their monthly facilities charge increase by \$3, with a slight decrease in their delivery charge per therm. For residential accounts, this equates to a 0.5% annual increase over the five-year period. For commercial/industrial accounts, rate modifications will equate to a 0.25% annual increase over the five-year period.

The cooperative remains cost competitive, while maintaining and upgrading the system to accommodate the needs of our current and future members. Please contact the office if you have any questions.

JOIN US!

MEMBER APPRECIATION DAY

Saturday, Aug. 5 / 8:30 to 10:30 a.m.

NEW LOCATION:

Rock County Fairgrounds (Craig Center)
1301 Craig Ave. / Janesville, WI

Pancake Breakfast, Bucket Truck Rides,
Face Painting, Jump House, & Much More!

REC OFFICES CLOSED SEPTEMBER 4

Rock Energy Cooperative offices will be closed on Monday, Sept. 4, in observance of Labor Day. We will reopen at 7:30 a.m., Tues., Sept. 5. Members can make payments in the drop boxes at both offices on Sept. 4. Even though our offices are closed, crews are always available 24 hours a day. If you need to report a power outage or natural gas incident, please call 866-752-4550.

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

If you feel a **SHOCK**,
swim **AWAY** from the **DOCK!**



Did you know?

Electricity can enter water from energized boats and docks.



If you are in the water and feel electric current:

- 1 **SHOUT** to let others know. 
- 2 **TUCK** your legs up to make yourself smaller.
- 3 Try to go out **AWAY** from anything that could be energized. 
- 4 Do **NOT** head to boat or dock ladders to get out. 



If you are on the dock or shore when a swimmer feels electrical current:

- 1 Do **NOT** jump in. 
- 2 **Throw** them a float.
- 3 Eliminate or **turn off** the source of electricity as quickly as possible. 
- 4 Then **call** for help. 

Source: SafeElectricity.org



**ROCK ENERGY
COOPERATIVE**
Empowering Members Since 1936

A MESSAGE ABOUT NATURAL GAS SAFETY

How can I recognize a Natural Gas leak?



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 don't touch any electrical switches (don't 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 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.

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. Please review this safety information so you can help us prevent pipeline damage, learn how to recognize a natural gas emergency, and take the appropriate action if an accident occurs.

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 Call 811: www.call811.com

Diggers Hotline: www.diggershotline.com

JULIE (Joint Utility Locating Information for Excavators): www.illinois1call.com

National Pipeline Mapping System: www.npms.phmsa.dot.gov

