



Shane L. Larson,
Chief Executive Officer

More Power to You

COMMITTED TO OUR MEMBERS, COMMUNITY

Happy Holidays from Rock Energy!

First and foremost, from all of us at Rock Energy Cooperative, we wish you Happy Holidays! We sincerely hope that you and your family stay safe during this holiday season, and your special time with family and friends is filled with joy and happiness.

COMMUNITY FIRST

As the electric utility industry continues to evolve, face continual change, and explore different ways to serve members, we can all be proud that we are part of the electric cooperative program. Electric cooperatives have a very unique business model that has proven to benefit cooperative members and it has stood the test of time.

One of the seven cooperative principles (a very critical principle) that guides all co-ops is the principle "Concern for Community." Here at Rock Energy, we try to follow that principle in everything we do—from how we run the co-op to how we connect with our local communities. We value this principle year-round, but its significance increases greatly during the holiday season.

Rock Energy has a proud history of giving back to members and the communities we serve. For instance, among other things, Rock Energy sponsors school supplies drives for needy families; awards scholarships to deserving students; and distributes capital credits to members.

Rock Energy would also like to take this opportunity to inform our members of the energy assistance that is available through state and federal programs. On page 17 you will find information about the LIHEAP program, including income guidelines for the 2021-2022 heating season.

We anticipate that energy assistance programs will be very helpful for many of our members this winter as natural gas prices have gone up significantly over the past year and are expected to continue to rise. Unfortunately, the rising gas prices will result in larger winter heating bills and higher costs for electric utilities for some members. If you think you might qualify for assistance, check out the income guidelines on page 17.

If you have any questions about energy assistance, please feel free to contact us at 866-752-4550.



Pictured above are images from Rock Energy's 85th Annual Meeting. Top: board members recognize Darrel Weber for 30 years of service as a Rock Energy Director; Bottom left: Darrel Weber receives his award; Bottom right: Rock Energy CEO Shane Larson addresses members.

ROCK ENERGY 85th ANNUAL MEETING

Rock Energy recently held its 85th Annual Meeting at the Eclipse Center in Beloit, WI. Thank you to everyone who joined us! I mentioned in my address at the meeting that despite seeing massive price increases on goods and services, including utilities, over the last year, our commitment to our members is unchanged. As we have done for the past 85 years, the entire organization is here to do what's best for our members.

Also during my address, I recognized and thanked retiring board member Darrel Weber for his leadership and kindness. Darrel had been a Rock Energy Director for the past 30 years. Darrel and his wife Patsy have been a wonderful part of the co-op for the past three decades and they will both be missed. For more on Darrel's retirement and his time with Rock Energy, see the story on page 16.

Just as Darrel believed during his 30 years at Rock Energy, everyone here truly believes it's a privilege to serve your energy needs. Thank you for allowing us to be your energy provide during the past year. If we can do anything to improve, please let us know.



Thank You Darrel!

30 Years of Dedicated Service

After 30 years of dedicated service, Darrel Weber has officially stepped down as Rock Energy's District 3 Director.

Darrel has not only been a Director for 30 years, but the Webers have been Rock Energy members ever since the co-op was formed 85 years ago.

"I farmed all my life," said Darrel. "I grew up on the family farm here in rural Milton. We used to consist of all phases (Crops, Dairy, Beef, Pigs, Sheep, & Goats), but the farmland is now cropped and is rented out. It's now a Century Farm, and I hope to pass it on to my kids."

Darrel has been married to his wife Patsy for 54 years and they have three children (Gary, Cindy and Steve) and two grandchildren (Lily and Ava).

Pictured here are Darrel and Patsy Weber with Darrel's 30 Years of Service Award at the co-op's 85th Annual Meeting.



Pictured above is the Weber family on their farm in rural Milton, WI. Left to right: Patsy, Darrel, Cindy, Steve and Gary.

Darrel received his Auctioneers training and license in 1960 from the Reish Auction School in Mason City, Iowa. He has been a member of the Johnstown Cemetery Association and the Rock County and Walworth County 4-H Fur and Feather Auction. He is also a lifetime member of the FFA Alumni.

Darrel started his business, Weber Auction Service, in 1960. A family owned and run business, he was soon joined by Patsy, at which time she took over the cashing of the auctions. In 1997, their son Gary followed in his footsteps and went to auctioneers school and has been an integral part of the business since. Their daughter Cindy and youngest son Steve grew up helping out the family business as well.

Darrel began as a Rock Energy Director in April 1991 and he officially retired on Sept. 27, 2021.

"It was a surprise when Jean Kidd (who used to work for Rock Energy), called me and asked if I would run for director," Darrel recalls. "I didn't have any experience, but our family had been members since the co-op was organized, so I told her, 'Sure, I'll try.' I WON! Wow!"

"Everything involved with Rock Energy has been rewarding and a great learning experience, along with all the wonderful people I have met from all over the U.S. and other countries," said Darrel. "I have enjoyed working with all the members, staff at the co-op offices, and all the wonderful directors for all these years. It has been a wonderful experience that I will cherish and never forget all my life."

Scholarships Offered to High School Seniors

Rock Energy Cooperative again is offering scholarships of \$1,000 to graduating high school seniors who enroll at an accredited school. Students whose parents or guardians are active members of REC are eligible.

Our scholarship committee will judge applicants based on general merit, cooperation, leadership abilities, financial need, and class ranking. Since 1989, Rock Energy has awarded more than \$137,000 in financial aid to deserving students.

Online applications are available at www.rock.coop. Just go to the Community & Youth tab and click on Scholarships. The deadline for submitting applications is **Jan. 10, 2022**.

If you have any questions, please contact Jonas Berberich at 866-752-4550, or jonasb@rock.coop.

In addition, scholarships of \$2,000 will be awarded through the Thomas H. Moore Illinois Electric Cooperatives (IEC) Memorial Scholarship Program.

These scholarships are available to high school seniors who are the sons or daughters of an Illinois electric cooperative member receiving service from the co-op. Applications must be completed on-line at www.rock.coop. Go to the Community & Youth tab and click on Scholarships. The deadline is Dec. 31.



MY CO-OP

ILLINOIS (LIHEAP) PROGRAM OFFERS ASSISTANCE

Income Eligibility:

If your household's combined income for the 30 days prior to application (gross income, before taxes are deducted) is at or below 200% of the federal poverty level*, as shown in the chart below, you may be eligible to receive assistance. If you rent, and your heat and/or electric is included in the rent, your rent must be greater than 30% of your income in order to be eligible to receive assistance.

2020 Federal Poverty Guidelines for 200% of Poverty for 2021 Program Year:

Family Size	30 Day Income	Annual Income
1	\$2,147	\$25,760
2	\$2,903	\$34,840
3	\$3,660	\$43,920
4	\$4,417	\$53,000
5	\$5,173	\$62,080
6	\$5,930	\$71,160
7	\$6,590	\$79,081
8	\$6,737	\$80,838

* Program Year 2022 Income Guidelines are based on Federal Poverty Guidelines and State Median Income. The state reserves the right to adjust these levels based on the availability of federal appropriations.

LIHEAP heat and electric assistance is a one-time benefit payment per heating season that is intended to help pay a portion of a household's heat and electric costs. The benefit amount depends on household size, income, and energy costs.

You are eligible for heating assistance if your household's combined income is at or below the levels shown on this chart seen here.

TO APPLY

For more information and application details, please call your local office:










- **Winnebago County** (South Beloit, Rockton, and Roscoe residents only): 815-389-0914 or 815-624-7788, Rockton Township, 1315 N. Blackhawk Blvd., Rockton.
- **Boone County**: 815-544-3144, United Way of Boone County, 220 W. Locust St., Belvidere.
- **Stephenson County**: 815-232-3141 or 800-883-1111, Northwestern Illinois Community Action Agency, 27 S. State Ave., Freeport.
- **McHenry County**: 815-338-7752, McHenry County Housing Authority, 1108 N. Seminary Ave., Woodstock.



WINTER ENERGY SAVING TIPS

As winter draws closer (winter officially begins Dec. 21), Rock Energy would like to pass along some cold weather energy saving suggestions as members try to stay warm during the winter season.

While climbing energy costs will likely hike heating bills significantly this upcoming winter, colder temperatures can also make heating systems and water heaters work harder, which ultimately will impact your monthly energy bill. There are, however, some measures you can take to help keep your energy costs down. Here are some energy saving tips that you should consider this winter:

-  **Set the thermostat a little lower during winter months. Changing the temperature from 72°F to 68°F can lower an energy bill.**
-  **Change or clean the furnace filter once a month. Dust and dirt can quickly clog vital parts, making the furnace run harder and eventually break down.**
-  **Have the heating system inspected regularly. A \$50-\$100 annual tune-up can help reduce heating costs.**
-  **Safely repair and/or apply weather stripping to air leaks in the home. A significant amount of energy used to heat/cool homes escapes via air leaks. Areas to check include dropped ceilings, recessed lighting, attic entrances, ducts, door frames, electrical outlets and switches, window frames and plumbing/utility access.**
-  **Check the outside of a home or building for air leaks. Look for leaks at the openings for water spigots, air conditioner hoses, dryer vents and gas pipes. Use caulk or expanding foam to seal spaces.**
-  **If drafts sneak in under exterior doors, replace the threshold. If that's not practical, block the drafts with a rolled-up towel or blanket.**
-  **If a home or building has electric baseboard heating, keep furniture and draperies away from the heaters. It's advised to leave at least a three-inch clearance under the heating unit.**
-  **For a wood-burning fireplace, have the chimney cleaned and inspected regularly. Burn only fully dried hardwoods to produce the most heat output.**
-  **Take extreme care when using a space heater. Place it at least three feet away from anything that can burn, including walls, and unplug it before leaving a room.**

ARE YOU WORRIED ABOUT MAILING IN YOUR PAYMENT?

SMARTHUB MIGHT BE THE SOLUTION!

You may have heard or noticed lately that USPS deliveries are slowing down, and with the holiday season upon us, getting mail (like your utility bill if mailed) from here to there can be a very untimely task.

If you're worried about getting your bill and paying your bill in a timely manner through the mail, there is a solution you should consider (if you haven't already)—SmartHub! You can sign up for SmartHub to make sure you receive your bill and plan your payments without having to rely on the postal service when paying by check.

SmartHub is Rock Energy's on-line account management system. The free app for computers and mobile devices is easy to use and offers many features to provide members with secure account management right at their fingertips. With SmartHub, you can:

- Check your usage.
- Contact our office.
- Pay your bill.
- Receive account notifications.
- Sign up for paperless billing.
- Set-up auto-draft (EFT) (no convenience fee)

If you are new to on-line account management, go to www.rock.coop and click on the red SMARTHUB button at the top of the page to sign up. You can register as a new user with your account number, account holder's last name, and email address.

REC HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS

Rock Energy Cooperative offices will be closed on Thursday, Dec. 23 and Friday, Dec. 24, in observance of Christmas, and Thursday, Dec.

30, and Friday, Dec. 31, 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, please call 866-752-4550.



Shane Larson, CEO

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Jonas Berberich, Editor



ROCK ENERGY COOPERATIVE
Empowering Members Since 1936



Use LED holiday lights to save energy.

According to the Alliance to Save Energy, LED holiday lights use up to 90 percent less energy and can last up to 40 holiday seasons. The cost to operate LED lights make traditional bulbs look like energy hogs. At 12 hours a day for 40 days, a string of incandescent lights adds \$10 to your energy bill, while a string of LED lights adds just over \$0.25.

For more energy efficiency ideas, visit touchstoneenergy.com/energysolutions or contact your local Touchstone Energy co-op.

