

## President's Report



William R. Dodds  
President/CEO

# The power of policy impacts our members

By Meghaan Evans

It seems you can't turn on a TV, listen to the radio or pick up a newspaper without hearing about ineffectiveness in government. It often seems that no matter what we do or who we vote for, we don't feel truly represented in either our state or national governments.

At Spoon River Electric, we understand how that feels, and we have been there ourselves. That feeling, along with a strong desire to take action, is the reason why we have dedicated staff that works to ensure our members' interests are represented, and heard, by elected officials.

Members of our government relations and policy teams work tirelessly to tackle complicated regulatory and policy issues. They apply these issues to the ever-changing energy market and then evaluate how those issues impact our communities. They have a deep understanding of the needs of the communities we serve, and they use that knowledge to ensure that your needs are represented in major legislative decision-making.

The ability to impact change is a huge part of being a member Spoon River Electric. We don't lobby elected officials on behalf of investors with the aim to increase profit margins. We work with elected officials to make sure that your interests are being considered to ensure that you will always be provided with safe, reliable and affordable

electric service. That is the cooperative difference.

But it isn't just our government relations team that helps us affect policy and legislative change. Your voice makes a huge difference in how quickly and effectively we can drive change. Through our grassroots advocacy programs we encourage you to bring your ideas to the table and to make your voice heard. This is how we show state and national officials that we are acting in your best interest. Your collective voice shows that we represent communities and families, not corporate interests.

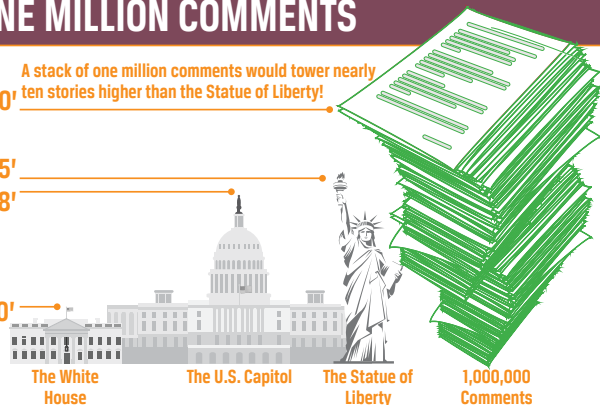
The next time you are feeling frustrated, the next time you want to be heard or the next time you want to make a change in your community, call Spoon River Electric. Find out what we are doing to represent your interests, and find out how you can help affect impactful change in our communities.

## THE POWER OF ONE MILLION COMMENTS

A stack of one million comments would tower nearly 400' ten stories higher than the Statue of Liberty!

305'  
288'

70'



VISIT ACTION.COOP TODAY!

## Spoon River Electric Cooperative

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## Spoon River Electric Cooperative – By the Numbers

Miles of line energized: 1,255

Number of members served: 4,808

Number of power poles  
in territory: 29,255

# Electric co-ops effectively respond to disasters

In the summer of 2012, the derecho that swept hurricane-force winds from the Great Plains to the Atlantic seaboard knocked out power to more than four million people. The damage caused by this devastating storm cost the nation \$2.9 billion.

Disasters, whether caused by nature, accidents or hostile acts, exact an enormous cost, both in economic and human terms. Electric cooperatives, like Spoon River Electric, have a unique and effective approach to emergency management and disaster recovery: mutual assistance. Following a disaster, co-ops will rapidly deploy support staff and equipment to emergency and recovery zones to assist sister co-ops.

Because the national network of transmission and distribution infrastructure owned by electric cooperatives has been built to federal standards, line crews from any co-op in America can arrive on the scene ready to provide emergency support, secure in their knowledge of the system's engineering.

We work closely with other first responders, state and local government and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to ensure an effective and coordinated response in the event of an emergency.

Since cooperatives are not-for-profit organizations, we are eligible for financial assistance from FEMA, which can fund a major portion

of the cost of emergency work to restore power and the cost of repairing, restoring, rebuilding or replacing damaged facilities.

This system gives electric cooperatives the ability to respond effectively and quickly in times of crisis and protects the financial interests of the cooperative members at the same time.

Unfortunately, with tighter budgets, securing FEMA reimbursements after a disaster has become more difficult. Following Superstorm Sandy, Congress changed the rules: FEMA now allocates funds for rebuilding based on an estimate of costs, not on the actual cost. If the estimate is higher than the actual cost, the excess funds must be used for FEMA-approved projects. But if the estimate is low, the co-op must pay the difference.

Electric cooperatives across the country learn from disasters. We learn how to protect our systems better, and we learn how to become more resilient. When it comes to resiliency, we have a good story to tell. We serve our member-consumers in the most rugged, remote terrain in the country. And we have learned how to restore power in extremely difficult circumstances.

While I know better than to make any predictions about what Mother Nature has in store for us, I believe these lessons will help us the next time disaster strikes.



2005 Hurricane Rita Aftermath. Photo by Claude Ledet, Southwest Louisiana EMC.

# Fight the winter chills

By: April Lollar, APR, CCC

Another colder-than-normal winter is predicted for much of the country this year. Frigid temperatures can cause heating systems to work over time, and since heating and cooling can make up nearly half of your electric bill, you may experience sticker shock when you open that bill. Instead of waiting until after a potentially high bill is in your mailbox, be proactive. There are things you can do now to help ensure you are managing your energy use and spending less.

These simple steps can help you manage your use:

- Wrap exposed pipes and water heaters that are in unconditioned spaces.
- Make sure to change your air filter once a month.
- Keep drapes closed at night and keep those that don't get direct sunlight closed during the day, too.
- Keep the fireplace damper closed when it is not in use. Keeping it open can bring cold air into the room.
- Caulk around the fireplace hearth, and caulk or weather strip around doors and windows.
- Call Spoon River Electric to inquire about your electric usage.



If we've had a few days of frigid temperatures, see how you can try to save on days that are milder.

- Dress for the weather, even if you are inside. Wearing proper clothing like long sleeves and pants, or wrapping up in a cozy blanket will help combat the temptation of bumping up the thermostat.

So, when temperatures fall this winter and you hear your weatherman talking about bringing in pets and plants, take the steps above to help manage your use.

Using the tips above can certainly help you manage your energy use, but your bill may still be higher than

normal in winter months. Why?

- The weather makes a big impact on electric bills, accounting for nearly half of your bill.
- Even those with the most efficient HVAC systems will see more use in extreme weather.
- When extreme cold temperatures hit, our heaters work overtime.
- For example, even if you set your thermostat to our recommended 68 degrees in the winter, when it is 19 degrees outside, your system has to work hard to make up that 49-degree difference.
- Your heater works harder and cycles on and off more often, making your use much higher. That means your bill will be much higher.
- Remember, there is value in comfort. For us to be comfortable in our homes, our heaters are going to work harder, but it may be worth the additional cost to you.

## Additional tips:

- Call Spoon River Electric and see what kinds of options might be right for you.
- Speak to one of our energy efficiency experts. They can help you understand how weather and your use patterns affect your bill.

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



They're out of sight, but don't forget about your air ducts. Taking care of them can save money and energy. Check ducts for air leaks. Take care of minor sealing jobs with heat-approved tape, especially in attics and in vented crawl spaces. Call the pros for major ductwork repairs.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy



## You're not alone in the dark

Nearly everything we do depends on electricity and we understand how frustrating it is when you are left in the dark. When your power goes out, we are out there in all kinds of weather working to restore your electricity as quickly and efficiently as possible.

The next time you lose power, please remember to be patient because your cooperative's linemen are on their way risking their lives to make yours more comfortable.

That's what we're here for, and you are our most important priority!

*This message is brought to you by the  
Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of Illinois.*



Touchstone Energy®  
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**TOGETHER WE SAVE**