

President's Report



William R. Dodds
President/CEO

Appreciating electricity a penny at a time

Electricity is about the only thing you can buy and still get value for just a penny's worth

By Curtis Condon, editor of *Ruralite* magazine in Hillsboro, Oregon

I'm old enough to remember when penny candy actually cost a penny. For a nickel, you could buy enough candy to rot your teeth out, as my mother used to say.

But what does a penny buy these days? Not much. The government can't even make a penny for a penny anymore. According to the U.S. Mint, it now costs 1.5 cents to produce one.

About the only thing of value you can still get for a penny is electricity. You might call it "penny electricity."

No, I'm not kidding. Think about it.

To make the math easier, let's say the average rate for a kilowatt-hour of electricity is 10 cents. That is 60 minutes of 1,000 watts of electricity for a dime, so a penny of electricity equates to 100 watts. It's enough to power a 9-watt LED lightbulb—the equivalent of a 60-watt incandescent bulb—for 11 hours, all for only a penny.

Where else can you get that kind of value?

How many eggs will a penny buy? How much milk, bread, coffee, medicine or gasoline?

Gas has come down from its stratospheric levels of several years ago, but there is still no comparison to the value of electricity. For example, if a gallon of gas costs \$2.50 and your car gets 25 miles to the gallon, you can drive 176 yards—about two blocks—on a penny's worth of gas.

I will take 11 hours of lighting for a penny over a two-block drive any day.

The value is just as evident when powering things other than lighting. Take, for instance, your smartphone. Using the same 10 cents per kWh price, penny electricity allows you to fully charge your iPhone more than 18 times for a penny. You can charge it once every day of the year for about 20 cents total.

Not impressed? Well, how about these other examples of what you can do with just a penny's worth of electricity: power a 1,000-watt microwave on high for 6 minutes; run a 200-watt desktop computer for 30 minutes; watch 2.5 hours of your favorite shows on a 40-watt, 32-inch, LED television or 1.3 hours on a 75-watt, 75-inch mega TV.

The examples are endless.

We are fortunate electricity is such an excellent value because we have a huge appetite for it. We tend to forget that.

Electricity is not expensive. It's that we use it for so many different

things: lighting, heating, cooking, cooling, refrigeration, cleaning, washing, pumping, entertainment, communications—even transportation these days.

Few corners of our lives are left untouched by electricity.

Unfortunately, we don't always appreciate it. When our monthly electric bill comes, we open it and may complain about the cost. It's a knee-jerk reaction ingrained in us as consumers. We don't stop to think about the value we received for the money.

Early in my career, I had the pleasure to interview an elderly woman who vividly remembered the day electricity came to her farm. Her name escapes me, but I do remember she proudly showed me the worn, dog-eared membership certificate the co-op issued to her husband.

"You young people will never know what it was like to have electricity for the very first time," she said. "It was glorious. Nowadays, you take it for granted."

Her farm was energized in 1940. She said the price of electricity at the time was slightly less than a penny a kilowatt-hour—true penny electricity.

A lot has changed since then. Wages and the cost of living today are a far cry from 1940, when the average annual wage was less than \$150 a month and the average cost of a house was \$3,920.

But one thing that hasn't changed is the value of electricity. In 77 years, its price has risen much slower than the rate of inflation.

A penny in 1940 had as much buying power as 17 cents today, which means the residential price of electricity—which now averages 12 cents a kWh nationally and less than 10 cents in the Pacific Northwest—is actually a better deal today than it was in 1940.

So to my way of thinking, the value of electricity is like the bygone days of penny candy, and it's okay to indulge yourself a little. But, unlike penny candy, penny electricity won't rot your teeth out.



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Spoon River Electric Cooperative – By the Numbers

Miles of line energized: 1,271
Number of members served: 4,808
Number of power poles
in territory: 29,255

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



Let the sun work for you! Consider solar lights for outdoor lighting. Solar cells convert sunlight into electricity that can be stored in a battery and tapped at night to make light. Check manufacturers' instructions to make sure your solar lights are situated to receive sufficient sunlight to recharge during the day.

Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy

SWIMMING POOL SAFETY

Make sure that any lighting equipment in your pool is up to code and regularly examined by a professional. To change or repair a light, ensure the electricity to the pool is first turned off at the circuit breaker.

If you are in the water and feel electric current, which can cause a tingling sensation, shout to let others know, try to stay upright, tuck your legs up to make yourself smaller, and swim away from anything that could be energized. Do not use a metal ladder to exit the pool.

Remember, water and electricity are a dangerous mix, even outside the pool. Never touch any electrical appliances or outlets when you are wet or standing in water.

Learn more at

SafeElectricity.org

Please make room for roadside crews

By Abby Berry

When the power goes out, so do Spoon River Electric's line crews. Lineworkers are the first to respond after an outage occurs, and they work tirelessly to restore power to the communities we serve.

If you're traveling and see one of our crews on the side of the road, we kindly ask that you move over, if possible, and give them a little extra space to work. We deeply care about the safety of all, and this extra precaution ensures just that.

If you approach a crew while traveling on a two-lane road, moving over to the next lane might not be an option. In this case, we simply ask that you slow down

when approaching roadside crews. If you approach a crew while traveling on a four-lane road, and safety and traffic conditions allow, we ask that you move over into the far lane.

Scott's Law, the "Mover Over" law, mandates that when approaching any police or other emergency vehicle stopped along the roadway, you must:

- Reduce your speed
- Change lanes if possible
- Proceed with due caution

An authorized vehicle, under Scott's Law, includes ANY vehicle equipped with oscillating, rotating

or flashing lights under Section 12-215 of this code, while the owner/operator of the vehicle is engaged in his or her official duties.

Utility crews aren't the only ones who could use the extra space. Emergency responders, such as police officers, firefighters and emergency medical technicians, often find themselves responding to emergency situations near busy roadways. We ask that you follow the same procedures mentioned above to help keep these crews safe.

There's plenty of room for all. Let's work together to keep everyone safe on our local roadways.

PLEASE MOVE OVER FOR EMERGENCY AND UTILITY CREWS

If you see police, firefighters, utility crews or other emergency personnel on the side of the road, please slow down and move over when possible.

Together, we can keep our crews safe.



2017 Fulton County Fair Grandstand Schedule

Lewistown, Illinois

Monday, July 24

Alexander Kay & Guitarist • 6-7 p.m.

Queen Contest • 7 p.m. - \$5

Troy Roark: Juggling & Fun • 8 p.m.

Tuesday, July 25

Harness Races • 5 p.m. - \$5

Illinois Winery's - Wine Tasting • 3 p.m.

Dairyland Donkey Races • 7:30 p.m.

Beer Tent • 8 p.m. - Karaoke with Ted Martin

Wednesday, July 26

Motocross Races: Grandstand \$6, Pit Pass \$10

Gates Open • noon, Practice • 1-4:30 p.m. - Entry Fee \$15

Sign-up • 5 p.m., Practice • 6 p.m., Races Start • 7 p.m.

- Entry Fee \$25-\$30

Beer Tent • 8 p.m. - Karaoke with Ted Martin

Thursday, July 27

Kids Day • Rides 1-4 p.m. - Armbands \$13

Livestock Auction • 3 p.m.

Candy Scramble - 5:30 p.m. • Scrambles - 6 p.m.

• Team Penning - 7:30 p.m. - Grandstand \$5

Beer Tent • 8 p.m. - Karaoke with Ted Martin

Friday, July 28

Kids Tractor Pull • 2:30 p.m.

Kids Rides Friday Evening • 6-11 p.m. - Armbands \$16

Tractor Pulls • 6 p.m. - Grandstand \$6 • Pit Pass \$10

Garden Tractor Pulls • 6 p.m. - Grandstand

Beer Tent • 8 p.m. - Cluster Truck

Saturday, July 29

Pork Cook-Off Contest • Judging at 11 a.m.

Demo Derby • 6:30 p.m. - \$6 • Pit Pass \$10

Buddy Day - Buy a Ticket and Your Buddy Rides FREE - 1-4 p.m.

Beer Tent • 8 p.m. - Erich Thompson & The Stone Cold Cowboys

CARNIVAL - BODEN AMUSEMENTS

Rides begin each night @ 6 p.m. • 1 p.m. on Saturday

Tickets - \$2.50 each or 10 for \$22

