

President's Report



William R. Dodds
President/CEO

Our history, our future

Looking back provides the path forward

By Adam Schwartz

One of my favorite quotes has always been, “Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” Yet sometimes remembering our history with the goal of repeating it can actually be a good thing. As the nation’s 30,000 cooperatives celebrate National Co-op Month this October, it is a great time to take a look back – and a look forward.

Take the history of your electric co-op. Spoon River Electric was founded when neighbors worked together to bring electricity to our rural community. Big investor-owned power companies thought they couldn’t generate enough profit so they bypassed rural areas. Back then, there were frequent meetings among neighbors to discuss the formation of the cooperative. Once established, annual meetings were the “must attend” event of the year. The co-op – on behalf of the member-owners – committed to provide

the community with electricity.

Fast forward to today – and tomorrow. Spoon River Electric currently serves 5,022. We have returned \$1.1 million in capital credits to our members.

We understand the spirit that helped create this co-op must be continually nurtured. While times and technology will continue to change, our commitment to you will not.

Although we started out to provide electricity, our impact (with your support) has grown.

As we continue to look toward the future, you can be confident that Spoon River Electric will commit to explore new ways to help our members and our community.

Over the years, as we’ve listened to you and your fellow co-op member-owners, we know that we have to keep pace as technology and consumer tastes evolve. As always, we welcome your participation as we plan for the future.



Spoon River Electric Cooperative

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Spoon River Electric Cooperative – By the Numbers

Miles of line energized: 1,272
Number of members served: 5,022
Number of power poles
in territory: 29,361

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Fall/Winter Energy Tip: When you are asleep or out of the house, turn your thermostat back 10° to 15° for eight hours and save around 10 percent a year on your heating and cooling bills. A programmable thermostat can make it easy to set back your temperature – set it and forget it!

Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy



Solar Panel Safety Precautions for Emergency Responders

Emergency responders are facing unexpected challenges as the use of residential PV (solar energy) systems increases. Rooftop solar panels can present significant hazards for emergency responders if a fire occurs.

Basic safety precautions should be taken into account by all firefighters and other emergency personnel when responding to a fire at a home with a PV system:

- Note the time of day. Fires that occur during the daytime present greater danger because the PV system is generating electricity.
- Inform the IC (incident commander) that a PV system is present.
- Note that securing the main electrical does not necessarily shut down solar modules. If a battery system is present, the home may still be energized even if the main electric service is disconnected.
- Carefully cover all solar modules with 100 percent light-blocking materials to stop electrical generation.
- Never break, remove or walk on solar panels. Treat all wiring and components as energized.



AMERICA'S ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVES

Source: The Fire Protection Research Foundation

*These are basic solar panel safety tips for emergency responders. Emergency personnel should contact the local electric utility for more information.

The dreaded vampire loads

By Tom Tate

Perhaps you are familiar with an undesirable aspect of the electronic and IOT (Internet of Things) revolution: vampire loads. Vampire loads come from devices that use electricity even when they appear to be off. The primary culprits are chargers, set-top television boxes, instant-on televisions and gaming systems. There are others, but these four represent the major offenders.

Let's look at how these vampire loads occur and why they are approaching 10 percent of average household electric use according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

Chargers take the 120 VAC (volts alternating current) power at the outlet and reduce it down to the voltage required by the connected device, usually 5 to 12 VDC (volts direct current). Obviously, when your device is charging, the charger is using electricity, but you might be surprised to learn that chargers are still using small amounts of energy even when they're not connected to a device.

Television set-top boxes also consume energy when they appear to be inactive. Anytime the set-top box's lights are on, it is using power. Like chargers, they use more when the television is on, but they are always working – even when the TV is off. This is especially true for those devices with a DVR function that records your favorite TV shows.

The instant-on television is another culprit. The intention of the “instant-on” feature is instant gratification for the viewer, meaning no waiting for the TV to turn on and warm up. Unfortunately, for that convenience, the TV must be on at nearly full power. So, in this mode, it can be a real energy drain.

The typical gaming console can use as much energy as a regular refrigerator even when it's not

being used. Make sure to check the console settings and disable automatic updates, which is where the energy drain comes from. Games on the console are frequently updated, which requires a lot of electricity.

So how does the average family combat these dreaded vampire loads? Garlic garlands? Silver bullets?

Fortunately, none of the remedies of fable are necessary. You just need to change how you handle these energy-sucking electronics. Here are a few suggestions.

- Unplug chargers when not in use.
- Invest in smart power strips. These look like normal power strips but have a twist; one of the outlets is the “master” that receives power all the time. The

others are off. When the device connected to the master outlet turns on, the rest of the outlets receive power too. Ingenious and perfect for entertainment set ups. Have the television in the master outlet and when you turn it on, the set-top box, speakers, streaming devices, etc. will turn on too. They are also ideal for PCs and their peripherals.

- Turn off the instant-on function on your TV. Turn off set-top boxes that do not contain the DVR functionality or use a smart power strip.
- Disable automatic updates in gaming consoles and turn the console completely off when you finish using it.
- When replacing any device or appliance, look for an EnergyStar rated product.

Vampire loads are a real problem that will only continue to grow as the digital age advances. But you can fight the vampires with vigilance and application of the recommendations above.

Is Vampire Power Sucking the Contents Out of Your Wallet Every Month?



Are you secure?

October is National Cybersecurity Awareness Month

By Alison Kennedy

Sony, Target, Home Depot, Yahoo and even the U.S. Office of Personnel Management have all been attacked by cybercriminals. Let's face it: In today's world, the cybersecurity threats facing our nation can seem overwhelming – and downright scary. Cybersecurity, specifically the protection and security of consumer-members' assets and the nation's complex, interconnected network of power plants, transmission lines and distribution facilities is a top priority for electric cooperatives and other segments of the electric power industry.

This October, Spoon River Electric is participating in National Cybersecurity Awareness Month (NCSAM). Since its inception under leadership from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the National Cyber

Security Alliance, NCSAM has grown exponentially, reaching consumers, small and medium-sized businesses, corporations, educational institutions and young people across the nation.

By raising awareness and understanding of basic cybersecurity practices, we can all work together to combat cyberthreats.

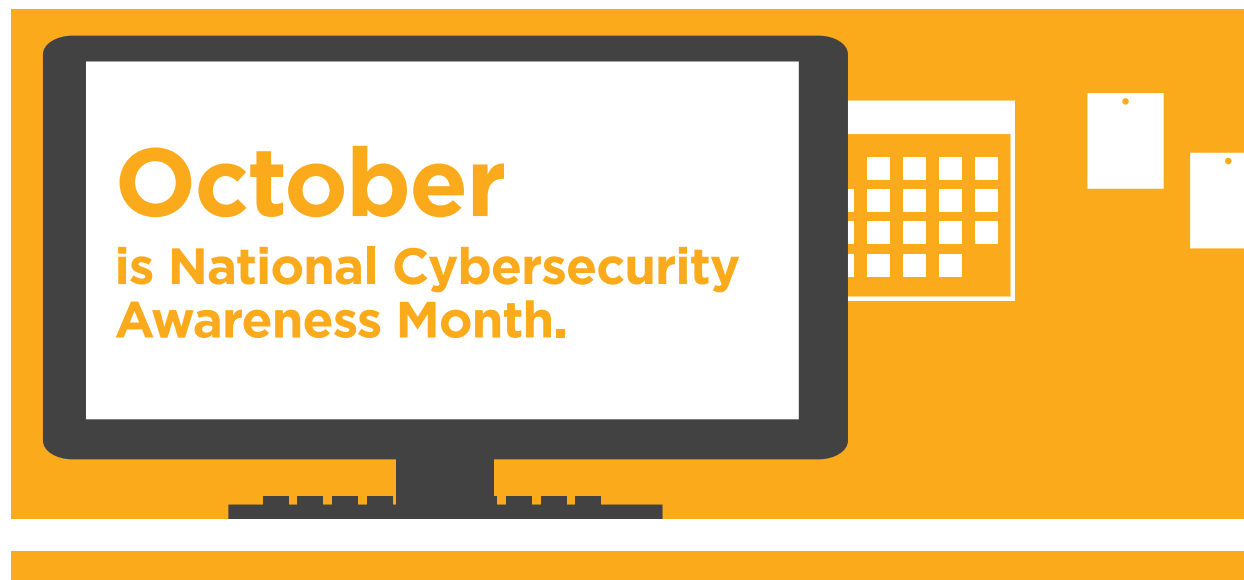
You have a role to play in ensuring the security of your personal and professional data. Use the tips below to safeguard your computer:

- ◆ Keep all software on internet-connected devices – including PCs, tablets and smartphones – up to date to reduce risk of infection from malware.
- ◆ Create long passwords that only you will remember, and change them every six months. Remember, a strong password is

at least 12 characters long.

- ◆ Avoid the use of thumb drives and other portable memory devices.
- ◆ Don't click on weblinks or attached files in emails when you're not certain of who the sender is.
- ◆ Keep pace with new ways to stay safe online. Check trusted websites for the latest information. Share security tips with friends, family and colleagues, and encourage them to be web wise.

We hope you will join us in raising cybersecurity awareness. Use and follow #cyberaware on social media to show and share your support. To learn more about NCSAM, visit www.staysafeonline.org.



Cybersecurity Tip

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