



Taking the Big Step?

When you take that big step and remodel or build your new home, spend as much time thinking about your home's energy source as you did your China and crystal, the floor plans, and the carpet pattern.

When you choose electricity, you choose the safe, dependable, low-cost alternative. No flames. No fumes. No fuel tanks to fill.



Good for *all* Illinois.

An affirmative action, equal opportunity employer



Spoon River Electric News

SPOON RIVER ELECTRIC CO-OPERATIVE, INC 309-647-2700 CANTON, ILLINOIS

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:
SPOON RIVER ELECTRIC CO-OPERATIVE INC.
 930 SOUTH FIFTH AVENUE - P.O. BOX 346
 CANTON, ILLINOIS 61520
 PHONE: (309) 647-2700
 KEEP THIS PORTION FOR YOUR RECORDS

DATE OF SERVICE	PREV.	PRES.	MULT.	KWH USED	CODE
11/30/97 - 12/31/97	20933	22024	1	1091	

FACILITIES CHARGE 12.00 ENERGY CHARGES 58.75 500 KWH @ .1175 500 KWH @ .0975 48.75 91 KWH @ .0925 8.42 SECURITY LITES 7.50 1 MERC @ 7.50 STATE PUBLIC UTILITY TAX 3.49 ENERGY ASSISTANCE CHARGE 0.40 ENVIRONMENTAL CHARGE 0.05 TOTAL BILL FOR DECEMBER 1997 USAGE ----- 139.36	RETURN THIS PORTION <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">DUE DATE</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">01/25/98</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">ACCOUNT NO.</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">08102-062</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">CURRENT BILL</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">139.36</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">AFTER DUE DATE</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">151.33</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">TOTAL BALANCE</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">139.36</td></tr> </table>	DUE DATE	01/25/98	ACCOUNT NO.	08102-062	CURRENT BILL	139.36	AFTER DUE DATE	151.33	TOTAL BALANCE	139.36
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WILLIE WIREHAND
 930 SOUTH FIFTH AVE.
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Watch for these services coming your way from Spoon River Electric Cooperative in the month of June 1998.

New billing format

A new billing format is being designed to provide you with a break down of charges and services each month. This new format will also give you confidentiality of your bill by enclosing it inside along with a return envelope. Spoon River will not be mailing out late notices with this new billing format. This late amount is indicated on the new bill. The next notice you will receive from Spoon river will be final disconnect notice of Electric service.

Budget billing

If you have a 12-month billing history and are in good standing, you can qualify for budget billing.

Auto debit payment

Pay your bill "Worry Free" with an auto debit to your checking or savings account. This is a great way to pay your bill while away from home or a busy schedule while saving postage at the same time. This is a good way to make sure your payment is received on time avoiding late penalties. All you need to do is sign up for our "Worry Free Auto Debit" and we take care of the rest. You will still receive your notice by mail to notify you of the amount and date charged to your account.

Spoon River Electric would like to thank all the participants who attended the District Meetings on Deregulation. We hope this brought more insight into the Deregulation Bill and answered any questions you may have had. If you have any other questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the office.

A new household service is being offered by SREC. It is called I-Care. I-Care is a personal emergency response system that when activated, an emergency team will answer to help you. Since an emergency is different to every individual, this system allows you the caller to have the option just to call a neighbor, friend, or relative for minor problems. Contact our office today at (309) 647-2700 for a free in-home demonstration of these features and more.

Worry Free Auto Debit Payment Plan *Fill out below or attach a Voided Blank Check*

Bank Name: _____ Location: _____

Savings

Checking

Account Number _____ Bank Route Number: _____

I agree to have Spoon River Electric deduct from my account specified above.

Sign Here _____

Avoid a shock-call before you 'disturb the earth'!

Experts tell us that the shorter winter days, with their drabness and scarcity of sunlight, give many people S.A.D., or Seasonal Affective Disorder. Regular people call this phenomenon "the winter blahs."

The situation is made worse by another condition health wonks refer to as "cabin fever," which is what happens to people when lousy weather keeps them from getting to the mall. Anyway, as spring approaches and days lengthen, that brings out another condition known as (pardon the scientific jargon) spring fever.

When spring fever hormones collide with the winter blues germs inside the human body, that causes perfectly normal people to do strange things. Some have the burning desire to head for the nearest mall, while others forsake their perfectly good kitchens and go outside to burn their food.

Still others get the uncontrollable urge to dig in the yard or its environs. If you're one of these unfortunates, please dig carefully. You see, many utilities, such as gas, water, telephone and electricity, are buried underground now. There's a very real danger that you may dig into a buried underground power line while burrowing in your yard, or along a roadside. Such an event could spoil your entire day and maybe the rest of your life.

Seriously, we urge you to be very careful when getting ready to dig. Unless you are absolutely sure there are no underground pipes or cables around, call first. Not to be terribly picky, but the law actually requires you to be sure you aren't going to have what's known as a "dig-in." The law is not intended to keep you from planting a tree or digging a hole for a new basement. Its main purpose is to assign finan-

cial responsibility, and it states that the one who digs into a utility line is the one who's going to pay for any damage and repairs that such a dig-in causes. If that won't motivate you to pick up the phone and dial the toll-free number, nothing will.

Fortunately, there are two easy ways to avoid such problems, and, as mentioned, both involve simple phone calls. Several of the electric cooperatives in Illinois are members of JULIE, or Joint Utility Locating Information for Excavators.

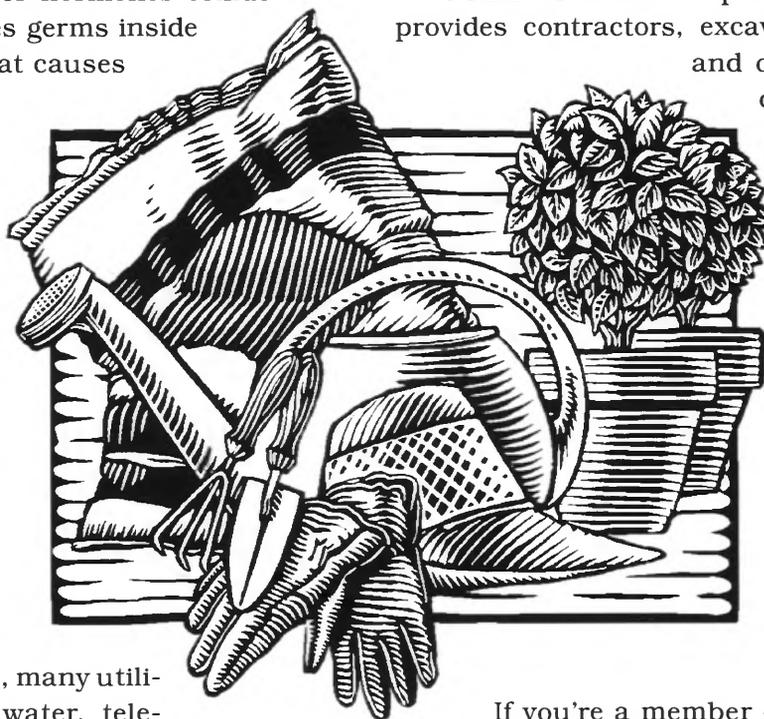
JULIE is a not-for-profit corporation that provides contractors, excavators, homeowners and others "who may be disturbing the earth," as they put it, with a free locating service through a toll-free phone call.

Also known as the "Illinois One Call System," JULIE was formed in 1974 by owners and operators of underground utility facilities to reduce damage to their pipes, cables and wires.

If you're a member of one of the co-ops served by JULIE, call (800) 892-0123, at least two days before the urge to dig overpowers you.

JULIE co-ops in Illinois are: Jo-Carroll Electric, Elizabeth; Corn Belt Electric, Bloomington; Shelby Electric, Shelbyville; Coles-Moultrie Electric, Mattoon; Southwestern Electric, Greenville; Clinton County Electric, Breese; Tri-County Electric, Mt. Vernon; and Monroe County Electric; Waterloo.

If you're a member of any of the other electric co-ops, you'll need to call their office before digging, and they'll send someone out to locate any of their lines. Be sure to allow them some time. They'll be glad to help you, and they'll appreciate your thoughtfulness.





DON'T LET YOUR GUARD DOWN

As the planting season winds down, details weigh on your mind . . . money, weather, factors vital to your livelihood. The most important concern, though, is safety. Tragedy can occur in that flash of an instant when you let your guard down — taking a short cut, overlooking basic safety rules. To ensure future planting seasons, always work the safe way.

- Watch out for overhead power lines.
- Wear appropriate protective equipment.
- make sure helpers are familiar with equipment they are using.
- Shut off power before fixing or unclogging machines.
- Keep extended machinery away from power pole guy wires.
- Keep shields in place.



ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES OF ILLINOIS



Spoon River Electric News

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Open House

Spoon River Electric will be hosting an Open House on June 5, 1998 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. There will be a Canton Chamber of Commerce Ribbon Cutting Ceremony held at 9 a.m. at the cooperative. Come see our new addition and enjoy refreshments and prize drawings throughout the day. We will be offering information on our different services such as Geothermal Technology, I-Care Protection System, Paging Services, Storage Services, and Web Page Design.

BUILDING A NEW HOUSE? Contact us today for information on how you could save money in your heating and cooling bills. Be sure to ask about our Geothermal Technology and our "Free" Water Heater Program.

Watch for these new services!

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GET READY for this year's stormy season with a Whole House Surge Protector. Help stop costly damage to your electrical appliances at the meter with our Storm Trapper. For \$168.55 a Storm Trapper can be installed on your meter and help you prepare for the summer.

IF YOU LIKE the feeling of being safe and sound, you'll love what Interactive Care can do for you. I-Care lets you maintain your independence and well-being in the comfort of your own home. Unlike other Emergency Response Systems, I-Care lets you decide who to call (a neighbor, friend, relative, etc.). The response team is there for your needs in a true emergency or if you just want to hear a friendly voice. They will contact the appropriate assistance for your needs. Call us today at (309) 647-2700 for a free in-home demonstration.

Worry Free Auto Debit Payment Plan Fill out below or attach a Voided Blank Check

Bank Name: _____

Location: _____

Saving Checking

Account Number (bank): _____

Bank Route Number: _____

SREC account number: _____

I agree to have Spoon River Electric deduct from my account specified above.

Sign Here _____

As June rolls around, we need to think safety

June is Safety Month, and while we should practice safety the year around, we might be wise to use the month to re-commit ourselves to safe practices in and around the home, much as we use the beginning of a new year to work on self-improvement.

Let us hope we are more successful with safety than with New Year's resolutions.

While we tend to deal with electrical safety most often on this page, it is important to review all kinds of home safety occasionally, and these tips are intended to remind you of the many hazards in the modern household. You may be able to think of more.

Do you have smoke detectors? If not, run out and get some. They're your first line of defense in saving you and your family from fire, and they're very inexpensive. Make it a point to check your batteries twice a year, when you change your clocks back and forth for daylight-saving time.

While not very common, carbon monoxide detectors are being installed in more and more homes, and you should get one if you have any fuel-burning appliances. They are more important now than they were in the past, because homes tend to be tighter, and the natural ventilation that used to provide air exchanges is no longer there.

Ground-Fault Circuit Interrupters, or GFCIs, are also an important part of home safety. Like smoke detectors, they are recognized as being so important that they're now required by law in new construction, in kitchens, bathrooms and for outdoor electrical outlets. Unfortunately, they're uncommon in even fairly new homes, and they offer enough protection that you might want to talk to an electrician about having some put in your home. They're

intended to protect you from shock or electrocution if you come in contact with a faulty circuit or appliance.

There are some on the market that can be used with existing wiring, and you'd be wise to invest in some of them until you can get your home wired. Some extension cords intended for outdoor use have them built into one end, and you can buy plug-in units to use in kitchen and bathroom receptacles.

Be sure to have an emergency evacuation plan, so all family members can escape in the event of a fire. Have a designated place to meet outside, so nobody goes back in to look for someone who may be perfectly safe but out of view. Practice your plan, especially if you have children.

It's a good idea to have fire extinguishers where you can get at them, and near an exit. If firefighting efforts fail, it's important to be able to get away from smoke and flames. A multipurpose dry chemical ABC extinguisher is best for general home use.

Keep a well-stocked first-aid kit handy, and be sure the contents are up-to-date, since some medications have expiration dates. Make sure family members know how to use the kit. First aid kits should be checked periodically for expiration dates and to restock those items which are missing from prior use.

It's important to get help quickly in an emergency, and one good way to do that is to have a list of emergency telephone numbers posted near every phone in your home. If you have children, teach them to dial emergency numbers. And stress that they should not dial emergency numbers unless there's a real emergency!

While it's nearly impossible, make a special effort to keep flashlights handy, and try to

keep the batteries current. You may want to change them out when you check your smoke detector batteries. It's a good idea to have at least one flashlight for each bedroom. Since kids tend to find flashlights terribly fascinating, get toy ones for them, and tell them they can use them any way they want to, but that the real flashlights are off limits. That doesn't always work, but it's worth a try.

Know how to shut off all the energy sources coming into your home. Put a tag on the valves for gas, oil, water and electricity, and know how to shut them off safely. Some valves take a special wrench, and it's a good idea to have one taped to the pipe leading to the house, or kept in a similarly handy location. Know how to use them.

An emergency kit is essential in Illinois homes, because of the danger, nearly any time of the year, that the weather will do something very unpleasant. Tornadoes can strike at any time, and lesser windstorms can also cause prolonged power outages. Winter storms can do the same thing, and cold weather may be life-threatening. And there's always the possibility, however remote, of a flood or earthquake.

Your emergency kit should include a battery-powered radio (keep fresh batteries, too), a flashlight, clothing and bedding, non-perishable food that needs minimal preparation, containers of water and a first-aid kit. During winter time, you may want to have a portable space heater that burns kerosene, butane or propane, just to be on the safe side.

We're sure you can think of more, but the main thing is to get started planning now — don't wait for New Year's day!

Avoid the shock of your life!

During summer's sometimes violent thunderstorms, it's possible you might come across downed power lines. *Never touch them!* If you are in a car accident in which power lines topple onto the car, *stay in the car.* The car will protect you. If you have a mobile phone, call your local electric cooperative, or have someone else call. Wait for qualified linemen. They're specially trained to safely defuse the situation.



Electric Cooperatives of Illinois

Good for all Illinois

Affirmative action, equal opportunity employers



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Office closing

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Location: _____

Saving Checking

Account Number (bank): _____

Bank Route Number: _____

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Sign Here _____

Policy change

Disconnect for non-payment of bill

If bill is not paid by end of month, a final disconnect notice will be sent.

If full payment or arrangements are not made within five days of receipt of final disconnect notice, an employee will be dispatched to collect payment or disconnect the service.

If service is disconnected, arrangements for reconnection will have to be made in the office.

Members who default on a deferred payment agreement plan are subject to immediate termination of service.

Be alert! 'Tis the season to be tornadoed!

The weather this year has been odd, to say the least, and it's not unreasonable to expect the tornado season to be odd, too. In Illinois, the towns of Mattoon and Bath have already experienced severe damage. While we hope the worst is over, it still makes good sense to prepare.

Although peak storm activity occurs during April, May and June — in a normal year — tornadoes can blow in any time. And while most take place between 3 p.m. and 8 p.m., they can form at any time; late night storms seem to be the norm this year.

There are two different kinds of warnings involving tornadoes. A tornado watch simply means that the weather is getting rotten and that a tornado may develop if things get worse. You can go about your normal business if you keep an eye on the weather.

This might be the time to stash a few items in the safest place in your house, such as a flashlight, battery-powered radio and blankets and pillows to cover yourself, for protection.

A tornado warning means that the weather has gotten dangerous, and that it's time to seek shelter in that safe (relatively) little nest you prepared earlier. Warnings aren't issued unless a tornado shows up on radar, or one has actually been sighted.

If you hear a warning, go to your basement. That's by far the safest place. In many homes, a stairwell or inside hallway on the lowest floor will be the safest place. Get into a closet, if you need to.

If you're in a public building, look for a designated shelter. Normally, there'll be one in an interior area on the lowest floor. Stay away from outside walls, doors and windows. Stay out of large rooms, such as gyms, and avoid parked vehicles.

If you're outside when a tornado comes, head for the nearest shelter. If you're caught out in the open, lie down in the nearest ditch or depression, preferably away from trees and power lines. Since flying debris is a major cause of

tornado deaths and injuries, cover your head as well as you can.

If you're in your car, get out and find shelter, if there is any at all. Otherwise, lie flat in a depression. Don't try to outrun a tornado in your car.

One of the worst possible places to be in the event of a tornado is in a mobile home. You're well advised to leave one immediately if you hear a tornado warning and take your chances in the best shelter you can find. Experts agree that you're better off in a ditch or small depression than in a mobile home.

Incidentally, some areas require that you have tie-downs on your mobile home. You might be wise to check into the pos-

sibility of having a tie down kit installed. But remember: While they'll help against severe windstorms, they still won't keep a full-blown tornado from shredding your mobile home.

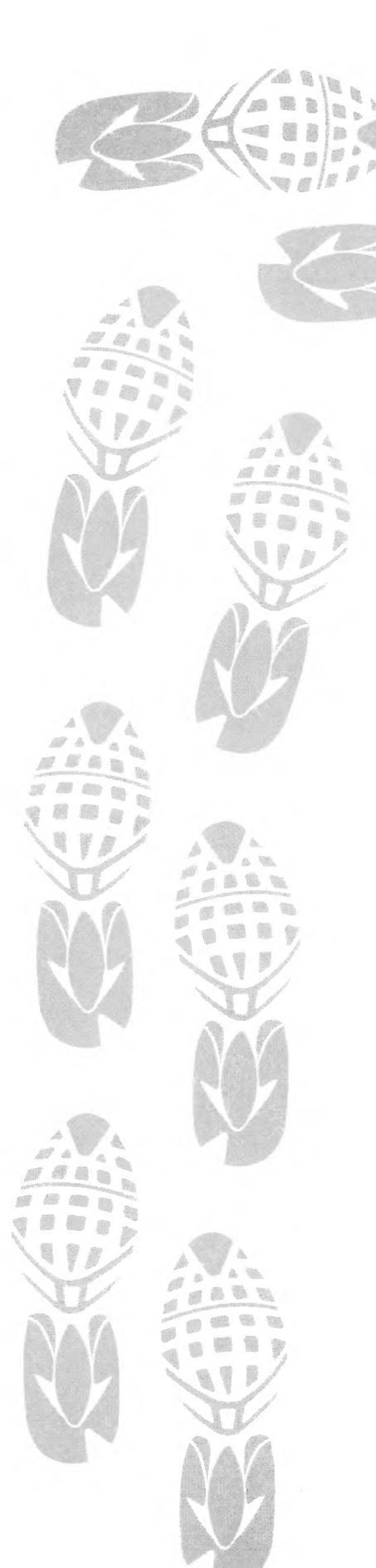
If you're stuck in a tornado-prone area and a house without a basement, there is an option you may look into. Years ago, it was common practice to have a small storm shelter out in the yard, usually about half underground and mounded over. As more and more homes were built with basements, they fell out of favor.

And some weather watchers tell us that the weather between the end of World War II and about 1990 was more stable than we had any right to expect. It was, in short, an aberration. Perhaps the odd weather we've been having the last few years isn't odd at all, but the norm. If that's the case, more people may well need some form of storm shelter, and if a basement isn't a viable option, maybe one of the little outside shelters would be a life saver.

If you have a mobile home, and no access to a better form of protection, you may want to give some thought to building a shelter.

Whatever the case, with the weather the way it's been lately, you'll be wise to keep a special eye out for watches and warnings. We may have a lot of them yet this year.





DO YOU KNOW THE 10-FOOT RULE?

No, it's not a new dance step, and it's not a giant measuring stick.

The rule refers to the distance extending ten feet in every direction from any power line. It's the distance you should observe when you're working outdoors with equipment or machinery, such as a crane, forklift, backhoe, dump truck, TV antenna, drilling rig or block loader.

So play it safe, and remind your co-workers and neighbors to practice the "10-foot rule" too.



***A safety message
from your electric
cooperative***



Spoon River Electric News

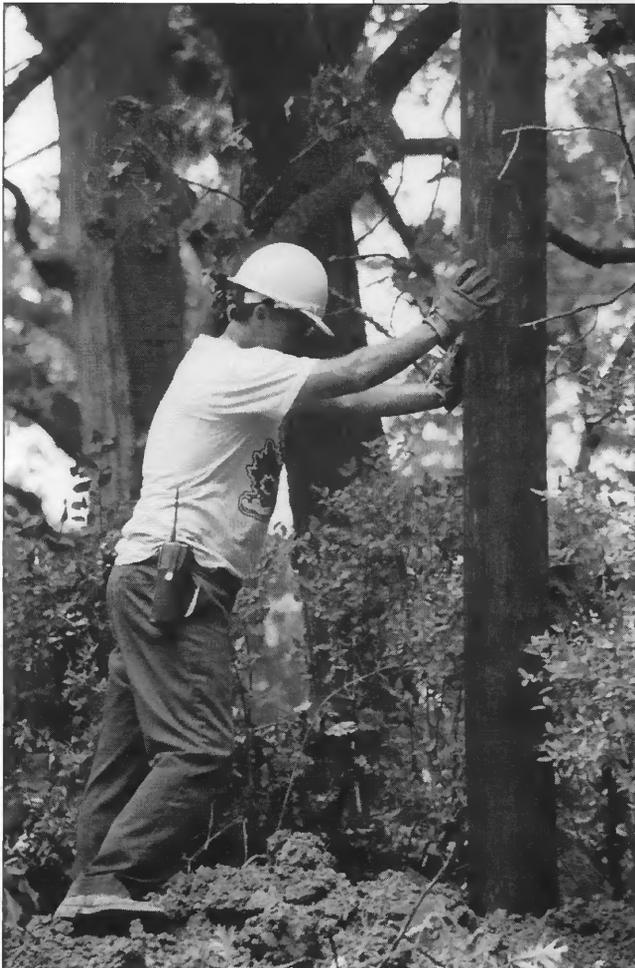
SPOON RIVER ELECTRIC CO-OPERATIVE, INC

309-647-2700

CANTON, ILLINOIS

June 29 storm flattens part of SREC's service area

The storm took down several of these transmission towers. Since transmission lines feed substations, and substations provide power to large areas, such damage guarantees that many members will be out of power.



A small step on the way back: A new pole replaces a broken one.

It is not news to many of you that Spoon River Electric was hit hard by a storm on the evening of June 29. In fact, many of you almost certainly remember it vividly. We do.

As the storm moved in, we kept a wary eye on it, hoping it'd pass without doing any damage. Often, we "dodge the bullet," so to speak.

This time, it was not to be. By late evening, we knew we were in trouble. Our phones were ringing off the hook, and we were quickly running out of crews to send out.

As soon as we realized how much damage we had, we called the Association Of Illinois Electric Cooperatives in Springfield and asked them to activate the Illinois Electric Cooperatives Emergency Work Plan, which enables stricken co-ops to seek help from the nearest co-ops that don't themselves have damage. We spelled out what our problems were, and what kind of help we'd need. Before long, help was on its way, and crews from neighboring co-ops

were pitching in alongside our men, to get the damage repaired as quickly as possible.

And there was a lot of damage. We had some 2,100 members out of service. That's nearly half our entire membership. In all, we replaced some 35 broken poles, 15 transformers, and three miles of primary line. Thanks to the diligence of our crews, and that of the borrowed crews who came to help, we had all our members back in service by 10:30 p.m. on July 2.

A crew member takes a chain saw to clean up a fallen tree, before replacing a broken pole.



63



These photos graphically explains why electric utilities don't like trees anywhere near their lines. When they blow over, they always take a line with them, and there's always a large amount of cleanup involved.

Youths Tour Washington

The week of June 12-19 was a memorable one for two area youths. The students spent a week exploring Washington, D.C., meeting with Illinois congressional leaders and learning about government during the annual "Youth to Washington" tour, sponsored by the electric and telephone cooperatives of Illinois. Amber Baldry of Lewistown and Bailee O'Brien of Canton represented Spoon River Electric Co-operative, Canton. They met with Congressman Lane Evans on Capitol Hill and were among 62 rural youth leaders selected for the trip. In addition to the Capitol, students also explored Arlington National Cemetery, the Smithsonian Museums, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial, the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia and a number of other historical sites. pictured are (l-r): Congressman Evans, O'Brien and Baldry.



Fried appliances

Why you need surge protection for your home

Some things are good fried. Others are not. Household appliances are a case in point. "What is a fried appliance?" you ask. It's one that has been zapped by a power surge.

If you're like most of us, you have a fair amount of money invested in computers, TVs, stereos, refrigerators, washers, clothes dryers and more. But are you protecting your equipment from power surges?

Years ago, clocks and the like were sturdy and robust. If the power went off, they just quit, and resumed when the power came back on. How much time was "missing" on your electric clock told you how long an outage had lasted. Momentary glitches, for the most part, went unnoticed.

But today's electronics and appliances are very sensitive — digital clocks, for example, will stop at the slightest provocation, and won't restart until you reset them.

And remember that *anything* you plug in can be damaged or destroyed by a power surge. A power surge is a brief, unpredictable increase in voltage that can enter your home through the power, telephone or cable television lines.

Your electric co-op is always working to maintain a high-quality supply of power to your home. However, there are several things that can cause power surges in the very best of electric utility systems. The most common one is lightning, but there are other

causes, too. These include an object coming in contact with a power line as well as electric-powered equipment suddenly starting

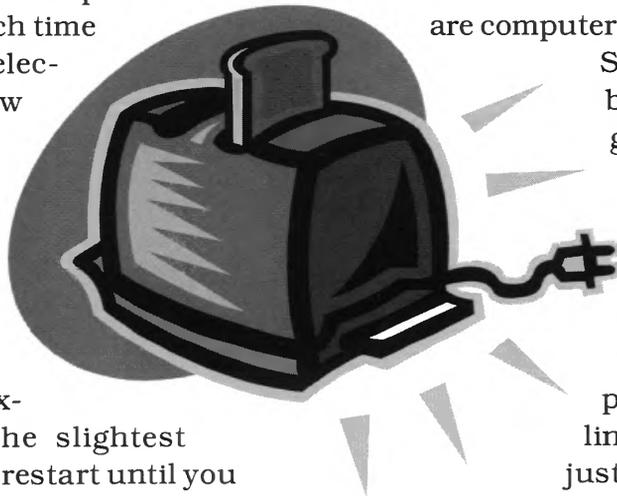
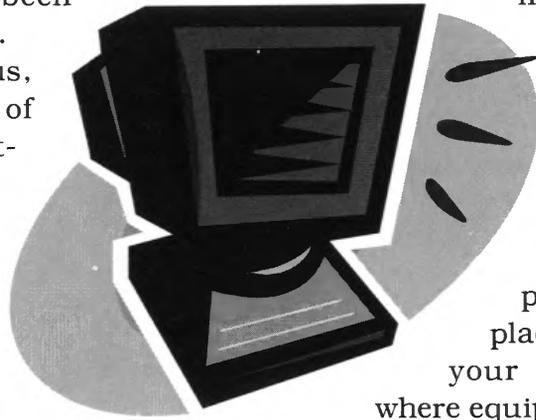
or taking extra power. If you have an appliance that causes lights to dim every time the motor starts, you've got power quality problems in your home.

Good surge protection puts up guards in several places: where electricity enters your home; inside your home where equipment is connected to electricity through outlets; on your incoming phone lines; and on your television lead-in. Two of the most often damaged items are computer modems and televisions.

Sometimes this is caused by the lack of a common ground for telephone, cable TV and electrical services. Also, computer modems and televisions are often left unprotected from surges coming through phone lines and cable lines. Surge protection at just the electrical outlet is not enough.

A meter-based surge protector guards your home from power surges at the electrical service entrance. Plug-in devices for surge protection inside the home protect your equipment at the outlet stage, and at your telephone and antenna or cable TV lead-in.

Don't wait for a power surge to hit your home. Call your electric co-op today for information about power surge protection — they will be happy to help.





Farm Safety Week is Sept. 20-26

More than 30,000 collisions on public roads each year involve agricultural equipment. A motorist driving 50 mph has less than 10 seconds to react to a tractor 400 feet ahead that is traveling 15 mph. Watch for the triangular slow moving vehicle emblem. Farmers, be sure that faded emblems are replaced, positioned with the point up and clearly visible from the rear.

We urge farmers to renew their commitment to safety, and be extra careful when working around electric lines.



Electric Cooperatives of Illinois
Good for all Illinois

Affirmative action, equal opportunity employers



Spoon River Electric News

SPoon RIVER ELECTRIC CO-OPERATIVE, INC 309-647-2700 CANTON, ILLINOIS

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:
SPoon RIVER ELECTRIC CO-OPERATIVE INC.
 930 SOUTH FIFTH AVENUE - P.O. BOX 146
 CANTON, ILLINOIS 61520
 PHONE: (309) 647-2700
 KEEP THIS PORTION FOR YOUR RECORDS

(A) DATE OF SERVICE: 11/30/97 - 12/31/97

(B) PREV. METER READING: 20933

(C) PRESENT METER READING: 22024

(D) MULT. FACTOR: 1

(E) KW/H USED: 1091

(F) CODE

FACILITIES CHARGE		12.00
ENERGY CHARGES	500 KWH @ .1175	58.75
	500 KWH @ .0975	48.75
	91 KWH @ .0925	8.42
SECURITY LITES	1 MERC @ 7.50	7.50
STATE PUBLIC UTILITY TAX		3.49
ENERGY ASSISTANCE CHARGE		0.40
ENVIRONMENTAL CHARGE		0.05
TOTAL BILL FOR DECEMBER 1997 USAGE		139.36

(G)

ACCOUNT NO	RATE CODE	DUE DATE	CURRENT BILL	AFTER DUE DATE	TOTAL BALANCE
08102-062	A	01/25/98	139.36	151.33	139.36

(H) ACCOUNT NO: 08102-062

(I) RATE CODE: A

(J) DUE DATE: 01/25/98

(K) CURRENT BILL: 139.36

(L) AFTER DUE DATE: 151.33

(M) TOTAL BALANCE: 139.36

(N) WILLIE WIREHAND
 930 SOUTH FIFTH AVE.
 CANTON, IL 61520

RETURN THIS PORTION

DUE DATE	01/25/98
ACCOUNT NO.	08102-062
CURRENT BILL	139.36
AFTER DUE DATE	151.33
TOTAL BALANCE	139.36

- A - Billing period covered
- B - Previous meter reading
- C - Present meter reading
- D - This is the multiplier factor used for the difference between item B and C
- E - Kilowatt hours used in this billing period
- F - MC in this column indicates there was a meter change during this period
- G - This area will show a breakdown of the charges for Facility, Energy, Fuel Adjustment, Security Lights, Public Utility Tax, Total Bill, etc.
- H - Your account number
- I - Rate schedule and Billing Codes
- J - Date current bill is due
- K - Current bill for this period
- L - This is the amount payment if paying after Due Date
- M - Total balance of account
- N - Customer billing address



Office closing

We will be closed
 Monday, Sept. 7, in observance of Labor Day.



Take advantage of these new services!

OUR NEW BILLING FORMAT is designed to provide you with a breakdown of charges and services each month. This new format will also give you confidentiality of your bill by enclosing it inside along with a return envelope. We will not be mailing out late notices with this new billing format. This late amount is indicated on the new bill. The next notice you will receive from Spoon River will be final disconnect notice of electric service.

BUDGET BILLING: If you have a 12-month billing history and are in good standing, you can qualify for budget billing.

AUTO DEBIT PAYMENT: Pay your bill "Worry Free" with an auto debit to your checking or savings account. This is a great way to pay your bill while away from home or a busy schedule while saving postage at the same time. This is a good way to make sure your payment is received on time, avoiding late penalties. All you need to do is sign up, and we take care of the rest. You will still receive your notice by mail to notify you of the amount and date charged to your account.

We would like to thank those who attended the District Meetings on deregulation. We hope this brought more insight into the Deregulation Bill and answered any questions you may have had. If you have any other questions or concerns, please contact the office.

GET READY for this year's stormy season with a Whole House Surge Protector. Help stop costly damage to your electrical appliances at the meter with our Storm Trapper. For \$168.55 a Storm Trapper can be installed on your meter and help you prepare for the summer.

IF YOU LIKE the feeling of being safe and sound, you'll love what Interactive Care can do for you. I-Care lets you maintain your independence and well-being in the comfort of your own home. Unlike other Emergency Response Systems, I-Care lets you decide who to call (a neighbor, friend, relative, etc.). The response team is there for your needs in a true emergency or if you just want to hear a friendly voice. They will contact the appropriate assistance for your needs. Call us today at (309) 647-2700 for a free in-home demonstration.

Worry Free AutoDebit Payment Plan Fill out below or attach a Voided Blank Check

Name: _____

Location: _____

Saving Checking

Account Number (bank): _____

Bank Route Number: _____

SREC account number: _____

I agree to have Spoon River Electric deduct from my account specified above.

Sign Here _____

Be sure to attend your annual meeting

Thursday, Sept. 3,

at the Canton High School 7 p.m. Elect board members, visit with friends, attend to other co-op business. The offices of SREC will close at 3:30 p.m., so we can prepare for the event.



Like it or not, there's still lots to do outside — carefully

For many of us, as winter draws to a close and spring arrives, we begin to look forward to getting outside, even if it's just to mow the lawn, do the trimming with our monofilament trimmers, pull weeds, and to do other chores around the yard. We get those urges because winter confinement and snow shoveling has warped our minds.

Unfortunately, the chores that look so fun in the first bloom of spring last well into the summer and fall. Many of us, by now, are a little less enthusiastic about yard work than we were just a few short months ago.

Still, those chores need to be done. Remember, there's always a certain amount of risk when dealing with power tools outdoors, or when working with ladders and poles near electric lines.

There are several things you can do to make your outdoor work safer, and some of the rules also apply to power tool activity. For example, you should inspect power tools before each use, to make sure they are in the same condition they were in when you put them away. Tools sometimes have a way of getting borrowed, broken, and returned, without you knowing about it, especially if you have children.

At any rate, be sure to look for frayed power cords, broken plugs and cracked or broken housings. When using tools or power cords outdoors, be sure they're marked for use outside. And any time you're using power cords, be sure they're rated for a higher amperage than the tool they're powering. Always turn off a tool if its cord overheats.

A ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) is an important part of any circuit that is used outdoors, or where you may come into contact with water. GFCIs sense a fault in a current and can shut off that circuit in a fraction of a second, before it can do any real damage.

The National Electrical Safety Code, often referred to as "the code," requires GFCIs in newly constructed kitchens, bathrooms and outside receptacles. Safety experts strongly recommend that you have them retrofitted into older homes, too.

But they're especially important outdoors, where

you're more likely to be standing on the ground and working in damp conditions. Working with electricity in wet conditions is not a good idea, GFCI or not. If you have outside outlets on your home, be sure they're weatherproof, and make sure that they're protected by a GFCI.

If you have an outlet and it's not protected, you can buy extension cords with such protection built in. They're not very expensive, and they offer a lot of protection.

As fall approaches and the urge to plant a tree overcomes you, be sure to look up — and down — before starting to dig that hole. Look up to be sure the tree you plant won't eventually grow into your lines, or those of your co-op. And look down, because more and more homes these days are being served by underground utilities. It wasn't all that long ago that you had one line coming into your house for electricity, a pipe for some kind of fuel, and water and sewer lines. Now you need to worry about electric lines, telephone lines, water lines, sewer lines, and maybe a couple of others. Be sure you know where they are before you dig. Digging into an electrical line could ruin your whole day, if not your whole life.

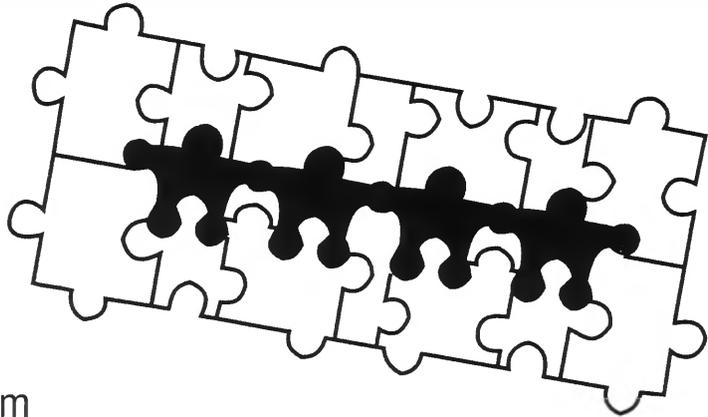
And while some lines are sturdy enough that your shovel isn't going to damage them very much, telephone and electric lines are sheathed in plastic and will break fairly easily. If you're using some kind of mechanical digger, you can do a lot of harm quickly.

The danger of dig-ins brings up an important safety point for the future: If you don't know where all your underground stuff is, find out, and draw a simple map spelling out all those locations. It may help you avoid dig-ins in the future. If the recent past is any indication, there's a good probability that there'll be more underground things going into your home, not less.



One reason they're called cooperatives

When weather is severe —from ice storms to tornadoes — your cooperative has assistance at the ready. Last year, as early as Halloween, an ice storm caused severe damage in the northern part of the state. How reassuring to know help was only a phone call away.



All 26 of Illinois' electric cooperatives participate in an emergency response program. When help is needed, available line crews from cooperatives across the state are dispatched to the trouble spots. Working together in perilous conditions, they combat the obstacles to restore electricity.

We salute the work of the cooperative employees — men and women who are our neighbors — who give meaning to the word *reliability*.

We get our power from you.

Electric Cooperatives of Illinois

Celebrating National Cooperative Month in October

Affirmative action, equal opportunity employers



Spoon River Electric News

SPOON RIVER ELECTRIC CO-OPERATIVE, INC

309-647-2700

CANTON, ILLINOIS

Long-time members to receive checks from SREC

Established in 1937, Spoon River Electric Co-operative held its 61st annual membership meeting Thursday, September 3, in the Canton High School auditorium. In addition to the election of three members to the board of directors, the crowd of over 450 heard reports on utility deregulation and what it might mean to the local, consumer-owned utility.

Members also learned the cooperative will pay back capital credits for the first time in its history. As a not-for-profit cooperative Spoon River Electric retains margins in a capital credit account until the co-op is financially able to repay the money. Those members receiving electric service anytime during 1939 to 1955 will receive a letter and return postcard in the mail based on the last known address. Once the return card is mailed back to the cooperative verifying the accuracy of the address, a check will be mailed to the member.

"Each year the board is going to have to look at the financial condition of the co-op to see if we can repay capital credits," said David M. Bergland, board chairman. "We can't promise that we will be able to do this every year, but we were able to catch up with a lot of years right now." The cooperative's policy is to pay out capital credits on a "first in, first out" basis. Bergland said the board may propose a policy change that would allow paying out capital credits in a blend of "first in, first out" and payments to current members. The change would be presented to the members first, he said. Bergland also urged members to help the cooperative locate past members so they can receive the capital credit payment.

A video report was shown during the meet-

ing that updated the members on electric deregulation and the cooperative's programs and plans for the future.

Earl Struck, president/CEO of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) said, "Many states are taking the view that co-ops should be regulated by some state agency. We are pleased the legislators in our state saw the wisdom of allowing cooperatives to continue to be controlled by their members. Cooperatives run on a not-for-profit basis and you are the right people, through your board of directors, to determine the future of your organization."

Joe Firlit, president/CEO of Soyland Power Cooperative, Spoon River Electric Co-operative's wholesale power supplier, told the members about recent wholesale rate reductions and how the generation and transmission cooperative was preparing for deregulation. Debt reduction and a renegotiated power contract with Illinois Power have already resulted in a 12 percent rate decrease. Firlit said

by 2003 Soyland should have all remaining debt paid off and be able to pass on a 40 percent wholesale rate decrease to Spoon River Electric and other Soyland cooperatives.

Although it is clear electric rates are coming down, Carl Dufner, director of engineering for AIEC, warned consumers will need to be aware rates will be unbundled and each cost component for delivering electricity will have a separate charge. "With unbundled rates you might buy power from one utility, transmission from another utility and finally pay your local utility or cooperative the cost of distributing that power to your meter," Dufner said.

Reliability of electric power is also a concern



Dave M. Bergland of Glasford, chairman of the SREC board of directors, addresses the meeting.



Edward Cox, left, president/CEO of Spoon River Electric Co-operative, congratulates newly elected board member Jack L. Clark of Lewistown, and re-elected board members Scott Parrish of Havana and Harold "Corky" Bordner of Cuba upon their election to three-year terms on the cooperative's governing board. The election was held at Spoon River Electric's 61st annual meeting, Thursday, September 3, at Canton High School. Spoon River Electric Co-operative is a not-for-profit electric utility that provides electricity and other services to more than 4,256 members.

for cooperatives with the coming of deregulation, said Bob Harbour, vice president of engineering and operations for Soyland Power. "High voltage transmission lines are like the interstate highways," said Harbour. Those transmission "highways" will be critical for importing and exporting electricity under deregulation. Harbour said cooperatives are working closely with other regional utilities to limit the possibility of power shortages.

Unfortunately, Harbour said, Illinois came close to a blackout situation on June 24 and 25. Extreme summer heat created heavy air conditioning demand and at the same time several generating plants were off line. "We worked with other companies within the Mid-America Interconnected Network and other regional reliability councils to coordinate the transfer of power. This helped us avoid blackouts," said Harbour.

Under Illinois electric utility deregulation law, the board of directors of each electric cooperative will decide the best course for the cooperative and its members under deregulation. Regional meetings were held earlier in the year to discuss deregulation. "We want your input," Bergland told the members. "We are going to have some very tough decisions to make as your board of directors and any input you can give us is important."

In addition to preparing for deregulation, Spoon River Electric Co-operative continues to look for ways to improve the quality of life for its members. "That is and always has been our mission,"

said Edward Cox, president/CEO. In addition to several new billing options, a local crime watch service and youth programs, the co-op is now providing such diversified services as surge protection, storage buildings, and Internet help for local businesses that want to advertise in cyberspace. The cooperative is considering a new service that would provide emergency response assistance for older members who might need a helping hand or other members who might need medical assistance.

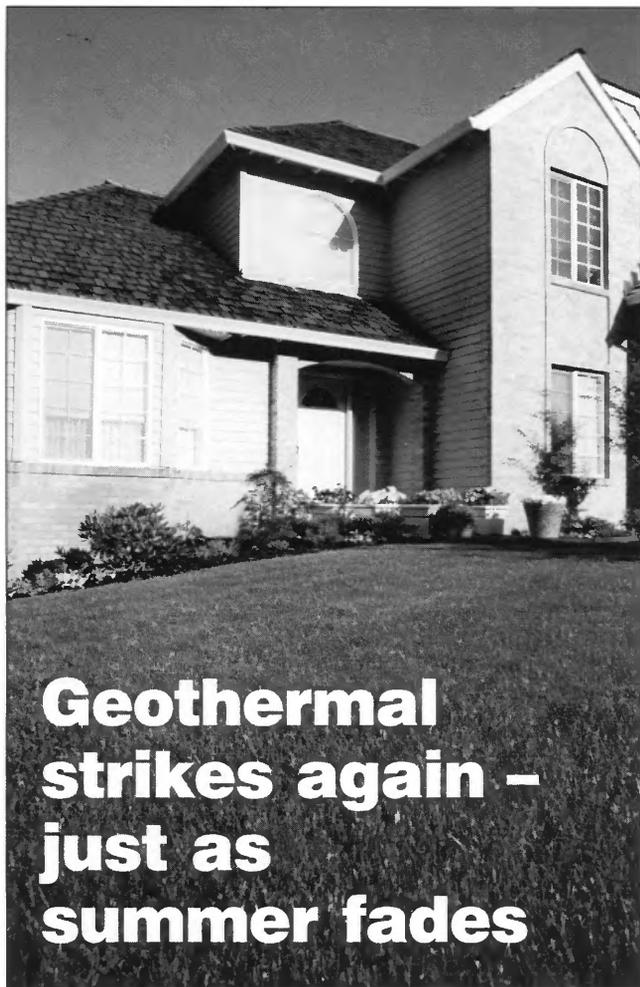
During the business meeting, members elected a new board member, Jack L. Clark of Lewistown, and re-elected board members Harold "Corky" Bordner of Cuba and Scott Parrish of Havana. Each will serve a three-year term on the board.

John Butler, of Lewistown and secretary of the board, was honored as he retired from the board after four terms. He was presented with one plaque in recognition of his 12 years of service and given another for his contribution to the Illinois Action Committee for Rural Electrification.

With 21 employees Spoon River Electric Co-operative serves 4,256 members in Fulton, Knox, Peoria and Schuyler counties. The locally-owned cooperative has 1,195 miles of line and a total utility plant valued at over \$10.3 million.



John Butler of Lewistown, left, a 12-year member of the Spoon River Electric Co-operative board of directors, receives a plaque in recognition of his years of service to SREC. Dave M. Bergland, chairman of the SREC board of directors made the presentation. Butler was also recognized for his efforts on behalf of the Action Committee for Rural Electrification.



Geothermal strikes again - just as summer fades

Mother Nature is a perplexing creature. She hits us with hot weather, cold weather, dry weather and rainy weather, and sometimes it seems that we're getting them all at once.

But she prepares her brood for weather by providing them with ways to get out of the worst she throws at them. For many of our furry little friends, Ma Nature gives them the wisdom to dig a burrow, or to move into someone else's. Hundreds, if not thousands, of species winter underground, and many also escape the summer's worst heat by finding a subterranean snug place, where the temperature's about the same the year around.

We can do that too, and we don't have to go down there where it's dank and dark and musty. We can have a geothermal heating-and-cooling system installed in our homes.

As we've said here many times, a geothermal system is an all-in-one heating, cooling and water-heating system, and it will provide you with definite benefits through all the seasons.

A geothermal heating-and-cooling system can cool your home more efficiently than a regular air conditioner or heat pump, and it can provide you with heat for less money than natural gas. That's right: Geothermal gives you cheaper heat than natural gas. Electric co-ops don't discuss that fact very much because in many places, it's really a moot point. Most co-op members don't have natural gas, and the prospects of them getting it any

time soon are slim, except in those areas where electric co-ops are branching out into the natural gas business!

If you heat with propane, remember that geothermal can heat and cool for less than you can perform those chores with propane.

And when you're about to replace that old propane furnace that's limped through the last couple of winters, remember the horrendous price spikes of just a few years ago, when your supplier was forced - because of a shortage - to triple his prices, just as cool weather set in.

That situation has improved for some, since some electric co-ops have gotten into the propane business to help insulate their members from such practices.

Electricity rates in Illinois have been steady for some 15 years now, and while they've been higher than your co-op friends like, they are coming down. That's another thing to consider when you set out to replace that old furnace.

To refresh your memory, a geothermal system is really just a heat pump, but it's like a heat pump on steroids. A heat pump is sort of a reversible air conditioner, bringing cool air into your home in the summer, and bringing in warm air in the winter. You control what it does with your wall-mounted thermostat.

But if a heat pump has a weakness, it's that it begins to lose its "oomph" in the wintertime about the same time most of us do. When the mercury drops to about 10 degrees F., your heat pump's efficiency drops, leaving you hunting supplemental heat.

A geothermal unit is different. It uses a liquid-filled buried loop that circulates underground much like those burrowing little critters we were discussing earlier. It works with a medium that's about 55 degrees F., the year around.

So while an air conditioner or heat pump has to work hard to cool 90-degree air in the summer, your geothermal unit is breezing along with its 55-degree medium, blowing cool air into your home. That's a lot easier than working with the normal outside air temperature. And when it's cooling, it's also transferring heat into a water-heater connection, to help you save about half the cost of that convenience.

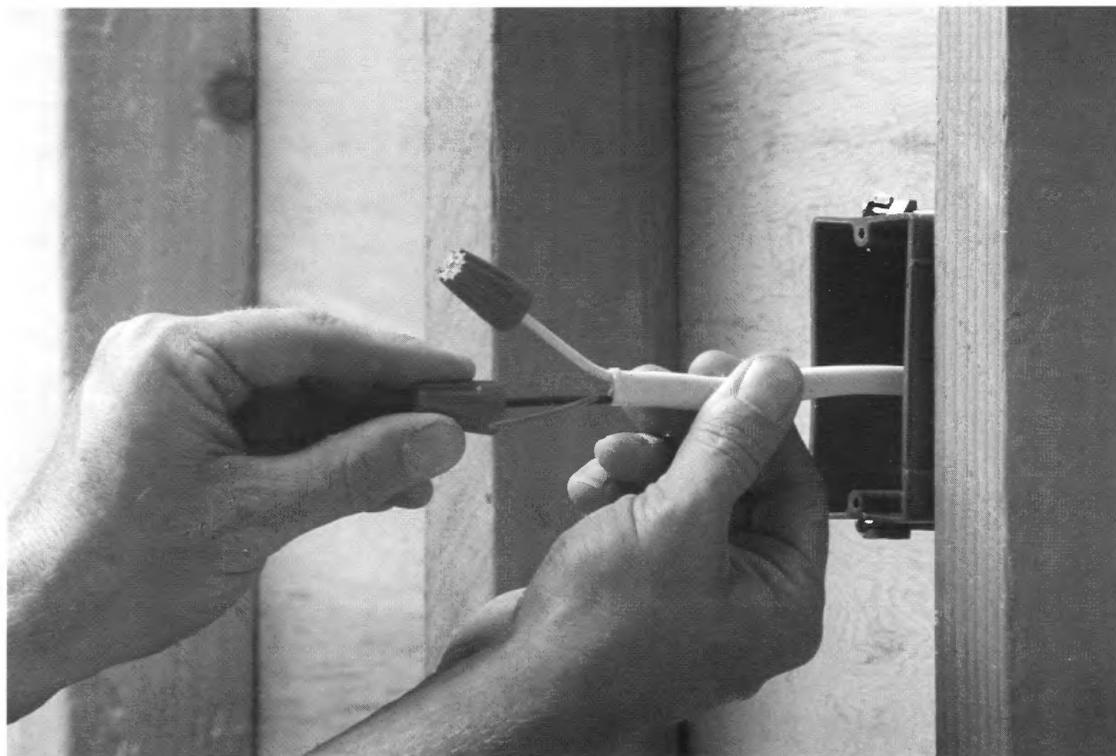
And while the average heat pump struggles to heat zero-degree air in the winter, your geothermal unit is breezing along with its 55-degree medium, taking warmth out of the ground and blowing it into your home. It's a system that can't be beat.

If there's a disadvantage to geothermal, it's that the initial cost can be steep. Those buried loops are often sunk into trenches or wells, and digging those can get expensive. Often, the grid can be sunk into a good-sized pond, since you're really just looking for a hefty heat sink.

But whatever the case, geothermal warrants very careful consideration, because its savings are so great. And it's available wherever there's an electric line.

Be sure to look into geothermal, especially if you're thinking of building a new home or replacing an old furnace. The difference is well worth the trouble, and your friends at your local co-op will be happy to help you make the right decision.

Wiring problem warnings



You can often spot wiring problems if you watch for the following signals. If they occur have a qualified electrician check the wiring.

- Do fuses blow or breakers often trip?
- Do lights dim or does the TV picture shrink when appliances switch on?
- Is the switch box warm to the touch?
- Do you have trouble with faltering motors?
- Have you added new appliances?

Only you can prevent house fires

Check the circuit panel for signs of overheating — discoloration and melting of insulation. Tightening screws in the fuse box can prevent flickering and excessive heating of terminals.

Make sure appliance cords are kept in good condition. If an appliance makes a funny noise, does not work, or has a burnt smell — unplug it immediately. Malfunctioning appliances at the very least increase your electric bill, at the worst they can cause a fire.

Be extremely careful with all portable heaters. Install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Give someone you love a fire extinguisher for Christmas and buy one for yourself.



Spoon River Electric News

SPOON RIVER ELECTRIC CO-OPERATIVE, INC

309-647-2700

CANTON, ILLINOIS

Capital credits

Spoon River Electric board of directors has announced that SREC will begin paying capital credits beginning with the inception of the cooperative until 1955. The cooperative has sent a mailing to everyone who received service during that period of time. If you did not receive any information and if you know of anyone who received service from the co-op, please contact us at (309) 647-2700 and update us on your current address.

(IEC) Memorial Scholarship Fund

The Illinois Electric Cooperatives Memorial Scholarship Fund established by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC), Springfield, Illinois, offers two \$ 1,000 scholarships each year to high school seniors. The AIEC board of directors created this memorial fund in January 1994, to honor deceased members of the electric cooperative family throughout Illinois.

Winners are required to use the scholarship to pay educational costs. They must be a full-time student at an accredited two or four year college, university, or vocational/technical school in Illinois, and begin undergraduate studies within a year of being notified they have won.

Scholarships are divided into two categories and the applicant is eligible for only one of the categories:

- Sons or daughters of members/consumers
 - Sons or daughters of employees/directors
- All applications will be forwarded directly to

the IEC Memorial Scholarship Committee for judging.

Scholarships are awarded on grade point average, college entrance test scores, work experience, volunteer service, participation in school and community activities, biographical statement and knowledge of electric cooperatives as demonstrated by a short essay.

The scholarship committee will review all applicants and select the semifinalists. The Northern Illinois University scholarship selection committee will select the winner in each category based on criteria supplied by the IEC Memorial Scholarship Committee.

The deadline for applications is Jan. 1. Scholarship winners will be notified by May 1. Scholarships are for one year and are not renewable.

If you have further questions contact Spoon River Electric Co-operative at (309) 647-2700.

Office closings

In order for our employees to celebrate the holidays with their families, our office will be closed on Dec. 24 and 25 and Dec. 31 and Jan. 1.

The board of directors and employees of Spoon River Co-operative wish you a joyous holiday season.



Tips for a safe and energy-efficient holiday 39

If you are planning on being out of town for the holidays, lower your thermostat to 50 degrees to cut down on heat loss while you are away. You will risk having frozen pipes if you set the thermostat below 50 degrees. If you are going to be gone for several days you may want to turn your electric water heater off, which you should do at the circuit breaker panel. Don't forget you will need a few hours for your water heater to reheat when you arrive home. For energy and security you may want to install timers on lights. You can then choose the times for lights to turn off and on. Timers can usually be purchased that plug into a wall outlet for \$5 to \$20. Waterbeds can be turned off or the thermostat lowered while you are away, but again, it will need a few hours to heat up when you return. Remember to unplug appliances, TVs, VCRs and computers in case of storms while you are away that may cause voltage problems on the electric lines.

If you plan on using your fireplace this winter make sure the flue is free of creosote. Burn dry, seasoned wood only, do not burn holiday wrappings. To reduce heat loss, close glass doors when fire burns down, but keep them open while burning.

For baking, try to plan to prepare as many meals and baked goods at one time as possible. Cooking with lids on pots and pans traps steam and cooks food faster. When baking, turn off the oven a few minutes before the dish is done and the stored heat will do the rest. To reduce moisture buildup, keep vent fans running.

Strings of old-fashioned bulbs have higher wattage than strings of miniature lights. Using mirrors and oil for reflective decorations reduce the need for additional lighting. Using outdoor lights after sunset and turning them off before you retire at night is more energy efficient. Unplugging your Christmas tree before watering will help avoid shocks.

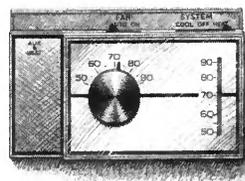
We can't avoid downed power line in the winter

Winter is here. And your electric co-op is ready for it. But no matter how well we prepare; we cannot avoid downed power lines. Hours of freezing rain can snap a power line without warning. Snowbound trees can fall, taking several lines down with them. If you spot a downed power line, please stay away from it. Call us immediately and we'll repair it and restore your power as quickly as possible. Rain or shine, day or night.

During office hours (M-F 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.), (309) 647-2700 is the only phone number you need to remember for 24-hour service.

Think of it as the gas pedal in your car

You know what happens when you constantly speed up and slow down, or run your car at high speeds. You use a lot more fuel. The same is true of your heating system thermostat. Constantly changing your temperature setting consumes more energy. Setting it on high temperatures drastically increases your electric bill. So, pick a comfortable setting – between 68 degrees and 72 degrees; set it and forget it. You'll be comfortable, and you'll get a lot more hours of heat per dollar.



Throw that snow — carefully

A snow thrower can make quick work of cleaning a walk or driveway, but it's only as good as the safety sense of its operator. So before you start that engine, take some important safety precautions:

- NEVER put your hand in a snow thrower to clear a clog. Always stop the engine and use a long stick to unclog the machine.
- Always stop the engine if you need to make a repair or adjustment.
- Keep hands and feet away from moving parts.
- Never leave a running snow thrower unattended.



If you need to leave it for more than a moment, shut off the engine.

- Add fuel to the tank before starting the machine. Never add gasoline to a hot or running engine, and always add it to the snow thrower outdoors.
- If you're using an electric snow thrower with a power cord, be sure you know where the cord is at all times.
- Check the machine each time you use it before you start the engine.
- Follow the manufacturer's guidelines on care and maintenance.

Source: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

Take precautions when using supplemental heaters

As we move into fall, when the weather often changes from somewhat warm to downright chilly and back again, many of us are faced with the choice of freezing or turning on the furnace. Often, because it's really not that cold, we're reluctant to turn up the thermostat and incur the costs of being warm all through the house.

Often, it's not necessary. Sometimes a carefully placed portable supplemental space heater will provide just the needed additional warmth, without breaking the bank. So if you're in the kitchen enjoying the thrill of washing dishes and begin to feel a trifle chilly, all you need to do is bring in a little space heater.

Afterward, if you want to watch TV in the family room, you can pick up your little heater and move it there to create your own cozy little nook.

Naturally, your electric co-op hopes you'll use a portable electric heater because, overall, they're safer and more convenient than the other kinds. Even so, you must be careful with them. While they don't have an open flame, they do have hot surfaces.

And while they don't rely on volatile liquid or gas fuels that may spill or get out of control, they do use electricity, which packs considerable punch when not used properly.

One of their major advantages, though, is that they do not give off carbon monoxide, and they don't require venting to make them safe.

Be sure to use your portable electric heater only for temporary heating of limited space only.

Be sure not to place them in heavily traveled areas, or in places where children may touch them. Don't use an extension cord with an electric heater if you can possibly avoid it. Most cords you'll find around the home aren't adequate.

Don't conceal the cord under a rug to get it out of sight or prevent tripping. Extension cords wear quickly under a rug, and can become a shock or fire hazard before you know it.

While most portable space heaters built in the last few years have good, solid bases to prevent tipping, older ones may not, and you need to be very careful with them. Newer models also have built-in switches to shut them off automatically if they tip over, and that's a desirable safety feature.

If you decide to use a portable kerosene heater, keep in mind that you need to provide adequate ventilation, which usually means cracking a window to let in fresh air and the cold. Use only 1K kerosene, and no other kind of fuel. Adjust the burner to the manufacturer's specifications, and don't refuel a hot heater. Many recommend that you refuel kerosene heaters outdoors.

It's tempting to bring in gas camping heaters and the like, and that's downright unsafe. In addition to the dangers of contact burns, the danger of carbon monoxide poisoning is as great as it is with kerosene heaters, and there's also the problem of tipping.

If you plan to use any supplemental heater besides electric ones, you'd be wise to buy a carbon monoxide detector in addition to your smoke detector, and make sure both are properly installed and working.

No matter what kind of portable heater you use, there are some basic safety precautions YOU should take to avoid becoming a statistic.

First, you should keep children and pets away from portable heaters, and avoid using them overnight in a room where you're sleeping.

Keep heaters at least three feet away from bedding, drapes, furniture and other combustibles, and always follow the manufacturer's instructions in installing, operating, and maintaining your heater.

Properly used, portable space heaters can help you stay comfortable while keeping your costs within reason. If you have questions about the safe use of portable electric heaters, contact your friends at your local co-op. They'll be glad to help.

