

# SPOON RIVER ELECTRIC News

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

## New Geographic Information System Being Installed



The Egyptians used clay tablets, the Incas used knotted strings, we use a computer, but in one way or another man has always had a need to keep track of his stuff and to know where it located. Today the latest technology for keeping track of our assets is called a geographic information systems (GIS). A GIS combines maps, databases and computers and the result is a lot of incredibly powerful information that will help us better manage the 1,227 miles of power lines, representing over \$20 million in utility assets.

Global Positioning Systems (GPS) use as many as 12 satellites to triangulate coordinates for a single point on earth. These satellite signals are received by our data mapper and the coordinates are recorded. A list of customized attributes is accessed and information about the specific type of point is then entered by Josh DeWees. All of our linemen will learn to use the GPS and antenna system. From left are co-op System Engineer Mark Balbinot, Patterson Dewar, Inc. employee Robbie Gobble, and GIS Consultant Josh Dewees.

After the Internet, GIS is the fastest growing computer information technology. It is being used by police to analyze crimes, trucking companies to route trucks, farmers to optimize fertilizer placement, and, of course, by utilities for engineering and operations management. GIS is really one of the cornerstones to

all the other utility automation options innovative electric utilities are using to improve efficiency, increase reliability and lower costs.

A GIS is simply a computer system that puts information in a geographic context. For instance, computerized maps can be tied to information from outage

*continued on 16b*

reports, right of way work or pole maintenance programs. The combination makes it easy to interpret and visualize raw numbers. During an outage up to date outage locations can be shown on a computer screen helping to efficiently route crews and speed restoration of service.

A GIS can replace all of our outdated paper maps with computerized, up-to-date maps. The real beauty of a GIS is its simplicity in visually presenting data about our system, like where the oldest poles are located, or what part of the system is experiencing new growth. Anyone can read a map. It is not too abstract, and a whole lot more appealing than a stack of tables and figures.

By combining GIS data with data from the customer information system (CIS), engineering analysis software, automated staking software, outage management and other systems our co-op employees will be able to work more efficiently and provide better service. GIS helps unlock information so that we can make better decisions and plans, and provide better service.

We are in the beginning stages of building a GIS for Spoon River Electric Cooperative that will be the cornerstone to future utility automation projects.

The first step to a GIS project is completing a field inventory and gathering accurate location information about all of our utility assets – every pole, transformer, meter, etc. This field inventory work will be done using a global positioning system (GPS) driven data collection system. Each geographic point is marked at its state plane coordinate and then data is observed and recorded about that site. After collection, the GPS data is downloaded daily into a computer based GIS program.

This process is used to improve accuracy and speed in the mapping process. This information will be very helpful in planning daily operations and outage management, and also long term system planning and upgrades.

Data collection will take Spoon River Electric personnel to every pole, switch, and member location in our service area. The employees doing the GPS field inventory will have to physically stand at every point we



Is this a man of the future? Actually this is lineman Rick Roudebush using the GPS and antenna system to update our mapping system.

***President/CEO Bill Dodds says, "I believe this project is one of many commitments made by our linemen to serve our members in the most efficient, low-cost manner available. Many other utilities have had to outsource the inventory process, but our linemen have agreed to learn and complete the process to hold down costs to our members."***

will be marking. That data is then brought back to the office to be downloaded and processed. This final data will be reviewed and approved by Mark Balbinot, our System Engineer.

This endeavor is a large one, but worthwhile. The project was discussed and approved by the board of directors in September 2004. Software and the GPS data collection device were obtained in late October. Data collection began in November and the first substation area field inventory was completed in mid January 2005. The entire project is slated to take approximately three years.



# Nab the Energy Thieves

**E**nergy thieves live and work among us, adjusting the thermostat a few degrees at their whim, and wasting energy dollars as they do.

Stop them by replacing your old-fashioned thermostat with a programmable one. It will automatically adjust the temperature in your home or business for maximum comfort and energy efficiency. Each degree you drop the setting will equate to a 5 percent decrease in energy costs.



Touchstone Energy®  
*The power of human connections*

*Brought to you by your local Touchstone Energy® Cooperative*

## Office Closing

**Spoon River Electric Cooperative's office will be closed Friday, March 25, 2005, to observe Good Friday.**

### Spoon River Electric Co-operative, Inc.

930 South Fifth Avenue  
P.O. Box 340  
Canton, Illinois 61520

(309) 647-2700

Office hours: 8 a.m. — 4:30 p.m.  
Web address: [web.winco.net/nsrec](http://web.winco.net/nsrec)

# Call of the Wild

**Easy ways to attract furred and feathered friends to your backyard**

By Tina Marie Farmer



Spring is here. Winter's bitter winds are no longer nipping at your nose. Everywhere you look, birds and other animals are shunning their cold-weather homes and returning to our beautiful Midwest climate. You relax on your front porch, enjoying their antics, when suddenly you realize that while the creatures flock to the neighbor's yard, they keep to the perimeter of yours.

Perplexed, you have no idea how to make your property as popular. Fortunately, you can attract wildlife to your home. Add these four elements to your landscape, and your yard will be the main attraction.

**Food.** Planting native fruit-bearing foliage provides a constant supply of nutrition for wildlife. Surround your home with hawthorn, dogwood, mulberry, or blackberry trees and you will also surround it with the melodious arias of songbirds such as robins and cardinals. If you long to watch butterflies and hummingbirds flit about your home, plant perennials such as bee balm, coralbells, and butterfly bush.

For a fun and simple children's activity, collect pine cones and have your little ones smear them with peanut butter, roll them in birdseed (sunflower seeds are a special treat), and hang them from your trees to provide a buffet for birds.

Also, provide your children with chunks of fruit such as apples, bananas, and oranges to scatter on the ground under seed feeders or stick on the tips of your tree branches.

**Water.** We all know water is essential for human life, but it is also essential for wildlife. Without water to maintain their feathers, birds cannot perform aerial acrobatics, and all animals must have drinking water to survive. A bird bath is the simplest way to provide water, but nothing is quite as soothing to bunnies, chipmunks, or people as the sound of a babbling brook or a bubbling fountain. In fact, the sound of water in motion is the original call of the wild.

Be sure to clean bird baths regularly by spraying them with a garden hose, and consider purchasing heated bird baths to provide a reliable source of water when lakes, creeks, and ponds are frozen. You may also consider installing a water garden to beautify your landscape and attract a wildlife show.

**Shelter.** Besides trees and shrubs, birdhouses are probably the first shelter you think of, but bat and toad houses can provide a bit of diversity to your outdoor community. The antics of these creatures fascinate adults and children alike, while providing natural pest control.

Many creatures require nest-

building materials and you can provide them. Straw and grasses are obvious choices, but you may supplement them by scattering burlap shreds and dryer lint in densely planted areas around your yard. If you provide lint, be certain it has not been contaminated by fabric softeners, which can harm small animals.

**Refuge for the babies.** Your new guests will maintain their population only if they feel safe. Few things bring as many smiles to your children's faces as baby animals. Dense pine and spruce trees are particularly suited to protecting your new friends and their offspring. Besides providing shelter, oak, pine, hickory, and walnut trees are an excellent food source. Other choices include elderberry, winterberry, and chokeberry shrubs. Remember to plant all trees, shrubs, and flowers as densely as the plants will tolerate and be sure to plant vegetation of varying heights.

For more information about adding a splash of wildlife to your life, visit the National Wildlife Federation at [www.nwf.org](http://www.nwf.org), the National Bird-Feeding Society at [www.birdfeeding.org](http://www.birdfeeding.org), or [www.backyardwildlifehabitat.info](http://www.backyardwildlifehabitat.info). Also consult your favorite garden center or landscape nursery for additional foliage suggestions.

# Spoon River

N E W S

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner



A publication of Spoon River Electric Cooperative

## Meet Your Board Of Directors

### District 1

Lyle H. Nelson



Lyle is employed by Alpha FS as a Feed Sales Associate in Knox and Fulton

County. He is a grain and livestock farmer in the Abingdon area. Lyle is a township trustee and belongs to the Knox County Pork Producers. Lyle was seated on the board April 25, 1994, and currently serves as Treasurer.

### District 2

Curtis D. Strode

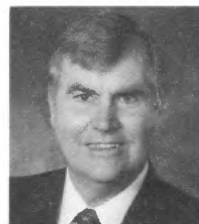


Curtis is engaged in grain farming and raising beef in the Marietta area. He is a graduate

of Bushnell-Prairie City High School and the University of Illinois with a degree in Ag Economics. Curtis was seated on the board July 20, 1988, and currently serves as Vice-Chairman.

### District 3

Jim Banks



Jim is a newly appointed member of the board. He will serve the remainder of the

term vacated by John Schoon in December 2004. Jim is a retired math teacher from Canton High School, where he taught 35 years. He received a bachelor's degree in mathematics from Illinois State University. Jim and his wife Carolene reside near Canton Lake.

*(Continued on page 16b)*

## Illinois Rural Electric and Telephone Cooperative Youth Day and Youth to Washington Tour

For the last eight years, Spoon River Electric Cooperative has participated in the Youth Day and Youth to Washington Tour organized by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives.

### In this issue...

Meet the Board of Directors .. 16a-b

Youth Day and Youth to Washington Tour ..... 16a-16c

Touchstone Energy..... 16c

Spoon River Receives Safety Award ..... 16d

Around February 1 a letter is sent to the 11 schools in our service territory asking them to nominate two junior students to represent their school at Youth Day in Springfield. Nominations are received and those students are asked to fill out a participation form answering questions such as: a brief explanation of how you feel a rural electric cooperative operates to serve its members; personal achievements; both non-school and school activities; extra curricular activities; specific awards, honors, achieve-

ments; future educational goals; what is your greatest strength and how it has enhanced your life; what issue interests you most about our government process and why; what political leaders past or present have influenced you the most and why; a brief explanation of why you would like to be chosen to represent our cooperative on the Washington Tour.

On April 13, all students, along with those chosen to represent Mid-Century Telephone Cooperative, will meet at Spoon

*(Continued on page 16c)*

**District 4  
Scott Pille**



Scott has a bachelor's degree in education from Illinois State University and a master's degree from St. Xavier University. He is a teacher at Limestone Community High School in Bartonville and a partner in his family's grain farm. Steve was elected to the board September 4, 2003, and currently serves as Secretary.

**District 5  
Jack L. Clark**



Jack is a graduate of Lewistown High School, has a B.S. degree from the University of Illinois, a MS degree from Montana State University and his PH.D from the University of Missouri. Jack farms in the Lewistown area raising corn, soybeans, and cattle. Jack was elected to the board September 3, 1998, and currently serves as Chairman.

**District 6  
Terry Beam**



Terry has a master's degree in education from Western Illinois University. He is a retired teacher from Canton High School. Terry was seated on the Board May 21, 2001, and currently serves as Assistant Treasurer.

**District 7  
Kathy Smysor**



Kathy graduated from WIU with a bachelor's degree in English and an master's in history. She teaches for the Cuba School District. Kathy was seated on the board November 26, 2001.

**District 8  
Bernard Marvel**



Bernard graduated from Cuba High School and attended WIU taking courses in Industrial Arts. Bernard is retired from farming. He was elected to the board on November 22, 1994, and is serving his fourth term.

**District 9  
Scott Parrish**



Scott is engaged in farming in the Havana area, raising corn, soybeans and cattle. Scott was elected to the board September 6, 1995, and is currently serving his fourth term.



**Daylight  
Savings  
Time Begins  
April 3<sup>rd</sup>**

Remember to set your clocks one hour ahead on Saturday night, April 2.

River Electric Cooperative and board a chartered bus for Springfield. We stop in Petersburg and pick up the representatives of Menard Electric Cooperative and head to the Northfield Center in Springfield. Upon arrival, a buffet breakfast awaits us with a short welcome by AIEC President/CEO Earl Struck and Vice-President of Operations John Freitag.

At approximately 9:30 a.m., we board our bus and head for the Capitol Building where we meet with our Senators and Representatives for pictures and a brief question and answer period. We then walk across the street and tour the Supreme Court. Returning to the Capitol, we met with Secretary of State Jessie White, who unbelievably, takes off his shoes, climbs on his desk, and talks to all of the students who are packed into his office.

At 11:30, we board our bus and head back to the Northfield Center for a buffet luncheon and the "Wheel of Cooperation" game show. A student from each

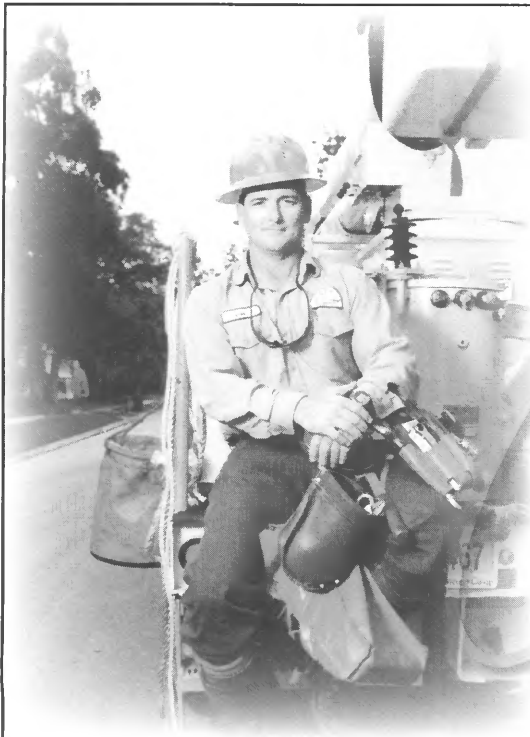


cooperative is chosen to be a contestant prior to arriving at the center. The teams are then given questions to answer to score points. It is a fun time for all!

At 2:30, we again board the bus to visit Lincoln's Tomb. We head for home around 3:30 where we will have pizza and soda while the participants are being interviewed by a member of the AIEC. Two students are


then chosen as our Youth Tour representatives. They will tour Washington D.C. the week of June 17-24.

If students would like to take the Washington Tour and have not been chosen as a cooperative representative, they may go as a "Willie Wirehand Student" at a cost of \$950. If you have an interest please contact Vicki Murphy at (309) 647-2700.



**We work hard to impress  
YOU the owners of  
our electric co-op**

Only your local electric co-op makes every customer an owner of the business. Unlike other electric utilities, your co-op exists to make sure your needs are always met, not to make a profit. And since every electric co-op is locally owned and operated, your co-op is always there with you, reinvesting in your community. That's why in an electric co-op, the people have the power.



**Touchstone Energy®**  
*The power of human connections*

## Spoon River Receives Safety Award

*"I would like to congratulate our employees on achieving our safety goal.*

*Spoon River Electric's number one goal is to maintain a safe work environment that allows employees to return home each day in the same condition as they came to work," says President/CEO Bill Dodds.*

Spoon River Electric Cooperative received a safety honor for "best lost time accident record" recently during the Safety/Supervisory Technical Conference held in Springfield. The award is

given to cooperatives with outstanding "lost time" safety records for 2004. The conference is sponsored annually by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC).



*Spoon River Electric's entire line crew strives to keep safety as their top priority every day on the job. From left are Frank Romane, Donnie Schrodt, Ed Harper, Bill Braden, Marcus Burkhead, Kevin Bloyd, Paul Moffitt, Justin Cox, Mike Coffey, Rick Roudebush, and Gary Hulsey.*

### Spoon River Electric Cooperative

930 South Fifth Ave, PO Box 340, Canton, IL 61520

8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

(309) 647-2700

[www.srecoop.org](http://www.srecoop.org)

**President/CEO**

William R. Dodds  
[bdodds@srecoop.org](mailto:bdodds@srecoop.org)

**Chairman**

Jack Clark, Lewistown

**Vice Chairman**

Curtis Strode, Marietta

**Secretary**

Steve Pille, Glasford

**Treasurer**

Lyle Nelson, Abingdon

**Assistant Treasurer**

Terry Beam, Cuba

**Board of Directors**

James Banks, Canton  
Bernard Marvel, Browning  
Scott Parrish, Havana  
Kathy Smysor, Smithfield

**Editor of Spoon River News**

Vicki Murphy  
[vmurphy@srecoop.org](mailto:vmurphy@srecoop.org)



# Spoon River

N E W S

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner



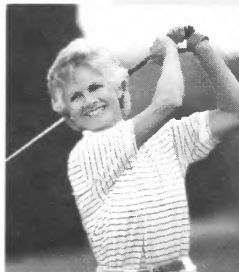
A publication of Spoon River Electric Cooperative

## Worry Free Payment Options

Do you worry about paying your electric bill on time? Has it gotten lost in the pile on your desk? Have you gone on vacation without paying it? Is the post office closed when you get off work? Spoon River Electric Cooperative has a solution for all these problems, paying your electric bill automatically from your bank account.

Fill out the form below to authorize the co-op to withdraw your electric bill from your bank account each month. We'll still send you a bill to tell you the amount paid.

Please allow us one month to process your request. After that, don't worry, your account will be paid on time, every time.



### In this issue...

- Stay Safe After Storms ..... 16b
- Farm Electrical Safety ..... 16c-d
- Touchstone Energy ..... 16c
- Office Closing ..... 16d

### WORRY FREE AUTO DEBIT PAYMENT PLAN

FILL OUT BELOW OR ATTACH A VOIDED BLANK CHECK

Bank Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Location \_\_\_\_\_  
Account # \_\_\_\_\_  
Bank Routing # \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Electric Account # \_\_\_\_\_  
Savings # \_\_\_\_\_  
Checking # \_\_\_\_\_

## Stay Safe After Storms

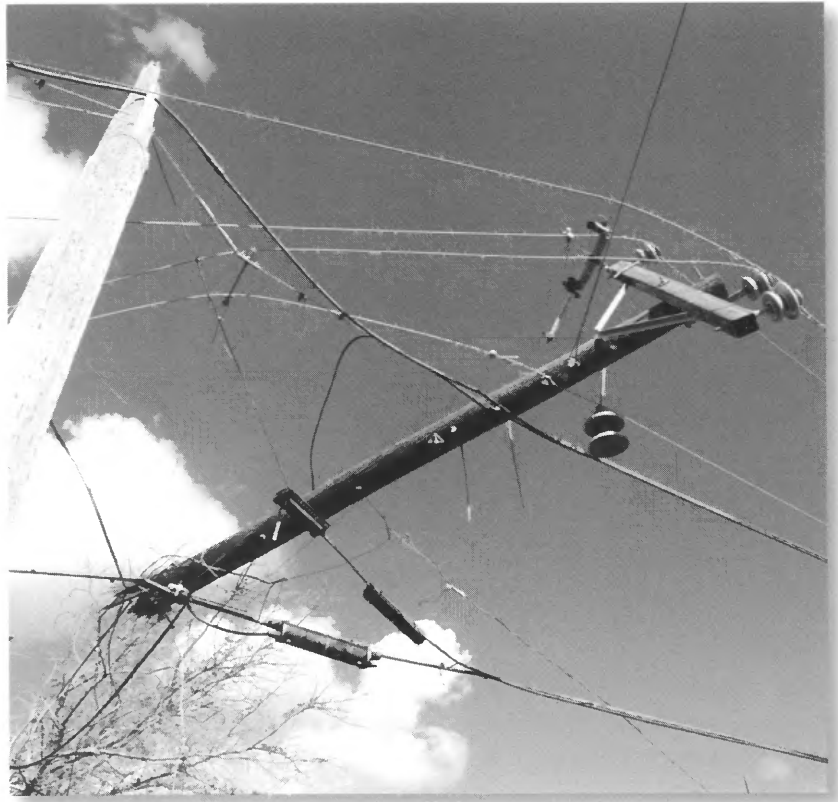
Springtime can spawn severe, damaging storms and heavy rain. Below are safety tips to avoid serious injury or death when dealing with the aftermath of a major storm or disaster.

- Stay away from downed power lines and be alert to the possibility that tree limbs or debris may hide an electrical hazard. Treat all downed or hanging power lines as if they are energized. Warn others to stay away and contact the electric utility.

- If using electric yard tools in clean-up efforts, do not operate them if it's raining or ground is wet, or while you are wet or standing in water. Keep all electric tools and equipment at least ten feet away from wet surfaces.

- "Before re-entering storm-damaged buildings or rooms, be sure all electric and gas services are turned off," said Jay Solomon, University of Illinois Extension Engineering Educator. "Never attempt to turn off power at the breaker box if you must stand in water to do so. If you can't reach your breaker box safely, call your electric utility to shut off power at the meter."

- Never step into a flooded basement or other area if water is covering electrical outlets, appliances or cords. Be alert to any electrical equipment that could be energized and in contact with water. Never touch electrical appliances, cords or wires while you are wet or standing in water. It may be necessary to repair or replace electrical appliances or tools that have been in contact



with water. Do not use any water-damaged appliance until a professional has checked it out."

- If after a storm or disaster, the power to your home is out for a prolonged period, know

*If after a storm or disaster, the power to your home is out for a prolonged period, know important safety rules.*

important safety rules, such as never using a charcoal or gas grill to cook inside! And if you use a standby generator, make sure a transfer safety switch is used or

connect the appliance(s) directly to the generator output through an isolated circuit before you operate it. This prevents electricity from traveling back through the power lines, what's known as "back feed." Back feed creates danger for anyone near lines, particularly crews working to restore power.

Source: *SafeElectricity*. Visit [www.SafeElectricity.org](http://www.SafeElectricity.org).

### Outage Updates

Visit our Web site at [www.srecoop.org](http://www.srecoop.org) for updates on large power outages. Call the office at 647-2700 to report a power outage, and be patient, we might have a large volume of calls coming in at the same time. We'll answer all calls as soon as we can.

## Farm Electrical Safety is Never Out of Season

One of the greatest hazards on today's farms is the risk of electrocution. Before heading back into the fields this spring, Safe Electricity reminds farm workers to be especially aware of dangers working near overhead power lines, and urges review of farm activities and work practices that take place around all electric lines. "Educate all who work on the farm about power line hazards," says Molly Hall, Executive Director of Safe Electricity. "Make sure everyone knows the location of overhead power lines and remind workers to keep farm equipment at least 10 feet away from them."

Before excavating or digging, Hall also reminds farmers to call the local underground utility locator service. "Keep in mind, the minimum 10 foot distance is a 360-degree rule – below, to the

side and above lines," reminds Hall. "It may take a little more time, but ensuring proper clearance can save lives."



*"If the power line is energized and you step outside, your body becomes the path to the ground and electrocution is the result."*



Simply coming too close to a power line while working is dangerous as electricity can arc or "jump" to conducting material or objects, such as a ladder, pole or a truck. "Many farm electrical accidents involving power lines occur when loading or preparing to transport equipment to fields, or while working on farm machinery near power lines," notes Bob Aherin, University of Illinois Agricultural Safety Specialist. "Sometimes a power line is closer than it looks. When moving large equipment or high loads near a power line, always use a spotter to help ensure that contact is not made with a line."

Be aware of increased height when loading and transporting larger modern tractors. Before transit, avoid raising the arms of planters, cultivators or truck beds near power lines. Be aware that

■ (Continued on page 16d)

A large hot air balloon with a white and black checkered pattern. The text "Touchstone Energy Cooperatives" is written across the balloon. A smaller version of the balloon is visible in the background.

And you thought balloons were just for kids

Come see the Touchstone Energy Hot Air Balloon at the Centralia Hot Air Balloon Festival on August 18-20.

The logo for Touchstone Energy, featuring a stylized figure with arms raised, flanked by two birds or wings.

Touchstone Energy®  
The power of human connections

■ (Continued from page 16c)

many tractors are now equipped with radios and communications systems that have antennas extending from the cab to fifteen feet above the ground that could make contact with power lines. "Never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path," warns Aherin. Many farm fatalities have been attributed to portable augers coming in contact with overhead wires. Always lower portable augers or elevators to their lowest possible level - under 14 feet- before moving or transporting; use care when raising them.

As in any outdoor work, be careful not to raise any equipment such as ladders, poles or rods into power lines. Remember, non-metallic materials such as lumber, tree limbs, tires, ropes and hay will conduct electricity depending on dampness and dust and dirt contamination. Do not try to clear storm-damage debris and limbs near or touching power lines or near fallen lines. The overhead electric wires aren't the only electrical contact

that can result in a serious incident. Pole guy wires are grounded to the neutral; but, when one of the guy wires is broken, it can cause an electric current disruption. This can make those neutral wires anything but harmless. If you hit a guy wire and break it, call the utility to fix it. Don't do it yourself. When dealing with electrical poles and wires, always call the electric utility.

"Operators of farm equipment or vehicles should also know what to do if the vehicle comes in contact with a power line," Hall said. "It's almost always best to stay in the cab and call for help. Warn others who may be nearby to stay away and wait until the electric utility arrives to make sure power to the line is cut off."

"If the power line is energized and you step outside, your body becomes the path to the ground and electrocution is the result," Aherin said. "Even if a power line has landed on the ground, there is still the potential for the area nearby to be energized. Stay inside the vehicle un-

less there's fire or imminent risk of fire."

In that case, the proper action is to jump - not step - with both feet hitting the ground at the same time. Do not allow any part of your body to touch the equipment and the ground at the same time. Continue to shuffle or hop to safety, keeping both feet together as you leave the area. Once you get away from the equipment, never attempt to get back on or even touch the equipment. Many electrocutions occur when the operator dismounts and, realizing nothing has happened, tries to get back on the equipment.

Farmers may want to consider moving or burying power lines around buildings or busy pathways where many farm activities take place. If planning a new out building or farm structure, contact your power supplier for information on minimum safe clearances from overhead and underground power lines. © Safe Electricity, All Rights Reserved

## OFFICE CLOSING

Our office will be closed Monday, May 30 to observe Memorial Day.



### Spoon River Electric Cooperative

930 South Fifth Ave, PO Box 340, Canton, IL 61520

8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

(309) 647-2700 • [www.srecoop.org](http://www.srecoop.org)

**President/CEO**

William R. Dodds  
[bdodds@srecoop.org](mailto:bdodds@srecoop.org)

**Chairman**

Jack Clark, Lewistown

**Vice Chairman**

Curtis Strode, Marietta

**Secretary**

Steve Pille, Glasford

**Treasurer**

Lyle Nelson, Abingdon

**Assistant Treasurer**

Terry Beam, Cuba

**Board of Directors**

James Banks, Canton  
Bernard Marvel, Browning  
Scott Parrish, Havana  
Kathy Smysor, Smithfield

**Editor of Spoon River News**

Vicki Murphy  
[vmurphy@srecoop.org](mailto:vmurphy@srecoop.org)

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner



A publication of Spoon River Electric Cooperative

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT



**William R.  
Dodds**  
President/CEO

## New Logo Represents Our Values

Things have certainly changed in the business world in the past century. Integrity and accountability are hard to come by. Innovation is something we've come to expect. And commitment to community often doesn't exist because companies don't operate in the communities they serve. But Spoon River Electric Cooperative is different from most businesses. That's because we're a cooperative, and we're owned by you, our members. We've come up with a new logo recently that not only signifies our dedication

electric cooperative that provided service where investor-owned utilities wouldn't. It was during that time that REA, or Rural Electrification Administration, represented electric cooperatives. In fact, if you ask many electric cooperative members today who provides their electricity, they'll still say REA. But REA and Willie are associated with the history of rural electrification. We now need something to help us look to the future of a more innovative and resourceful cooperative.

The logo you'll now see symbolizes wires electrified across fields, which is how cooperatives started. Farmers united to erect poles and run the wire from house to house, across fields and roads, to enhance rural life. It is the official symbol of the National

Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), and one that you will see associated with electric cooperatives around the country.

You'll also notice another aspect of our new logo, the Touchstone Energy® symbol. In 2003, Spoon River joined the Touchstone Energy alliance. Touchstone Energy is the new brand for the future of electric cooperatives. Through the Touchstone Energy alliance, we have the strength that comes from 620 cooperatives. We pledge a higher quality of customer service, have state-of-the-art technology at our fingertips, and we have the resources of the larg-

■ (Continued on page 16b)



to our members and to all the values listed above, but also signifies a bright and stable future for your cooperative.

In the past, our logo emphasized Willie Wirehand, that whimsical character that was created in 1950 from a socket, plug, and some wires. His name came from the fact that wire brought an additional hired hand, electricity, to farm families. Willie quickly became one of the best known symbols of rural America. His image appeared on buildings, co-op trucks, co-op hats and shirts, and a myriad of other items. His image reflected a strong, reliable

## In this issue...

Farmington Emergency Siren .... 16b

Touchstone Energy..... 16c

Youth To Washington ..... 16d

■ (Continued from page 16a)

est utility network in the country. It gives us a far greater voice than we had as an individual cooperative.

The three little figures just below our name show the world that our employees follow the four core values of a Touchstone Energy cooperative: accountability, integrity, innovation, and commitment to community. And you can

count on those same values to be upheld in Touchstone Energy co-ops across the country. Yes, these are the same values many of us strive to uphold in our daily lives, but in today's business world, they are hard to find. You can be assured that Spoon River Electric Cooperative incorporates these values into everything it does. See page 16c for more information on

Touchstone Energy and how it's helping your community.

So who are we? Just look at our new logo and you'll know. We're Spoon River Electric Cooperative, a proud member of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association and committed to upholding the values of Touchstone Energy.

## Spoon River Electric Cooperative donates utility pole to city of Farmington for emergency siren

Spoon River Electric Cooperative's Board of directors voted to donate a 55-foot, class 1 utility pole to the city of Farmington. The pole is needed to complete the installation of a new emergency warning siren.

The new siren will replace a 30-year old emergency siren that couldn't be heard at the south edge of town, or near the new K-12 school. The new siren will be louder and even have audible broadcast capability for emergency announcements such as a missing child message.

The city and the local Chamber of Commerce raised \$28,500 for the new siren, but fell just short of having enough for the \$1,000 pole. Chris Helle, the city Emergency Service and Disaster Agency director called the investor-owned utility serving the city, but was unable to get a response to his request for a pole donation.

Although Spoon River Electric Cooperative doesn't serve the city, the co-op does serve the surrounding rural area near Farmington and all of Fulton County and the southern parts of Knox and Peoria counties. Dodds says, "Although we have limited resources we have made a commitment to helping our communities. We deal with severe weather too, and this emergency siren can certainly make a difference and help protect Farmington's citizens."

"Spoon River Electric Cooperative is locally owned by the members



From left are William Dodds, President/CEO of Spoon River Electric Cooperative; Sandy Monari, Chairperson Fulton County Board; and Chris Helle, Farmington Emergency and Disaster Agency Director.

we serve," says Jack Clark, chairman of the co-op's board of directors. "As a not-for-profit co-op we have to be very careful in how we make donations. But all of our board members and employees believe strongly in the co-op principle of commitment to community. We may not have the resources of a large investor-owned utility, but we don't have the bureaucracy either. Our co-op is locally controlled by the member-elected board of directors."

Chris Helle says, "We hope to have this project finalized next week. McDonalds, the Chamber of Commerce, Heritage Bank, Farmington Moose and Farnsworth Engineering also donated to this project. The co-op

was kind enough to donate the pole and we were very grateful. That was the last thing holding up the project. We were short just a dang pole."

Sandy Monari, Fulton County Board Chairperson expressed her appreciation to Spoon River Electric Cooperative, Farmington Moose, Farmington Chamber of Commerce, McDonalds, Farnsworth engineering and Heritage Bank for their donations. Monari says, "This is just another example of how local businesses can work together to enrich the lives and safety of the citizens in the community. Congratulations to all involved in this project."

## What is a Touchstone Energy® Cooperative?

Hopefully you've seen these words before and recognize that Spoon River Electric Cooperative is a Touchstone Energy Cooperative. But what is a Touchstone Energy Cooperative is and how does it affect you and your cooperative?

Several years ago, leaders in the electric cooperatives recognized there were many challenges and changes on the horizon, including deregulation of the industry. In response, many of the cooperatives across the nation joined together and formed an alliance called Touchstone Energy.

One of the objectives of Touchstone Energy is to build a national relationship brand ID. A relationship brand focuses on the relationship between the organization and the customer (member) rather than the particular attributes of the product. Think of it this way. When you see the John Deere logo, I'm sure thoughts come to mind. For many, it might be a vision of quality or even success. You probably didn't think

of the horsepower of a particular product, but you did have some feelings or expectations. We want to do the same through Touchstone Energy. The relationship we want to build with you, the member, is one of trust and loyalty. Touchstone Energy Cooperatives want to develop and build this relationship by providing service to our members based on four core values—*accountability, integrity, commitment to community and technology.*

It's one thing to talk about these values and another to genuinely live up to them. Our employees provide service to you based on these values. We make management decisions based on the same values. In other words, we want to truly live up to your expectations.

In fact, the reason the name "Touchstone" was chosen was because it reflects this same idea. A touchstone, as defined by Webster's Dictionary, is a test or measurement of purity or genuineness. In the days of the gold

rush, it was hard to distinguish between gold and fool's gold. Miners panning for gold would carry a special stone with them that they would rub their find across. Depending on the mark the nugget left, they knew whether they had found gold or fool's gold. That special stone was called their touchstone.

We hope you have seen our Touchstone Energy ads on television, on the radio or in Illinois Country Living magazine. Our goal with these ads is to communicate to you what you have a right to expect from a Touchstone Energy Cooperative and how we try to meet those expectations in our day-to-day operations. We also want you to know how we differ from an investor-owned utility.

Being a Touchstone Energy Cooperative is not about an ad campaign. It is about earning your trust and loyalty. It is also about listening to you and striving to find ways to meet your needs and improve your quality of life.



### Because Mike's dad is one of the owners of his electric co-op, there are new lights at the baseball field.

Only your local electric co-op makes every customer an owner of the business. Unlike other electric utilities, your co-op exists to make sure your needs are always met, not to make a profit. And since every electric co-op is locally owned and operated, your co-op is always there with you, reinvesting in your community. That's why in an electric co-op, the people have the power.



Touchstone Energy®  
The power of human connections



*Spoon River Board Chairman Jack Clark (left) and President/CEO Bill Dodds (far right) congratulate winners of this year's Youth To Washington Trip (left - right) Trig Meade of Canton, Marlana White of Cuba, and alternates Chad Peters of Gilson and Adam Franey of Knoxville.*

## Two Students to Experience Washington, D.C.

**T**rig Meade of Canton and Marlana White of Cuba are this year's winners of an all-expenses paid trip to Washington D.C. courtesy of Spoon River Electric Cooperative. This trip is part of the Youth To Washington Trip organized in the late 1950s by electric and telephone cooperatives in Illinois to introduce rural youths to our democratic form of government and cooperatives.

Meade and White will be among 60 rural Illinois youths touring the nation's capital June 17 - 24 and will visit the Nation's Capitol, Gettysburg, the White House, Arlington National Cemetery, the National Cathedral, the Smithsonian Museums, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and other historical sites.



In the event Meade and White are unable to attend, first and second alternates Chad Peters of Gilson and Adam Franey of Knoxville will take their place.

### Spoon River Electric Cooperative

930 South Fifth Ave, PO Box 340, Canton, IL 61520  
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. ■ (309) 647-2700 ■ [www.srecoop.org](http://www.srecoop.org)

**President/CEO**  
William R. Dodds  
[bdodds@srecoop.org](mailto:bdodds@srecoop.org)

**Chairman**  
Jack Clark, Lewistown

**Vice Chairman**  
Curtis Strode, Marietta

**Secretary**  
Steve Pille, Glasford

**Treasurer**  
Lyle Nelson, Abingdon

**Assistant Treasurer**  
Terry Beam, Cuba

**Board of Directors**  
James Banks, Canton  
Bernard Marvel, Browning  
Scott Parrish, Havana  
Kathy Smysor, Smithfield

**Editor of Spoon River News**  
Vicki Murphy  
[vmurphy@srecoop.org](mailto:vmurphy@srecoop.org)



## Employees and Directors Support ACRE®

Recently, 100 percent of Spoon River Electric Cooperative employees and directors joined ACRE, the Action Committee for Rural Electrification®. That means that every one of our employees and directors wishes to support rural electrification in congress.

And this support is needed today just as much as it was 70 years ago when the rural electric administration was forming on the government level. ACRE is a grassroots political action committee where supporters of the rural electric cooperative program communicate with legislators at local, state and federal levels on issues affecting cooperatives and their members.

The organization is truly bipartisan, supporting candidates who support electric cooperative issues, not political parties. And the legislators who receive support know it comes from a lineman or office worker contributing money from their personal paycheck to support the cause, not \$1,000 checks coming from executives.

"We know that a decision to join ACRE is a deeply personal decision that requires a commitment of hard earned money by employees and the directors," says Dena Stoner, Vice President and Director of NRECA Government Relations Department. "We promise to use the resources that Spoon River has provided us to the highest purpose. What a wonderful achievement for Spoon River. This



*"In today's changing utility environment it is imparitive that we all support and protect our way of business. A business where the member is number one and our primary focus is realibility and service. I want to thank the directors and employees for their support and encourage the members to join ACRE," says President/CEO Bill Dodds.*

kind of dedication is what makes the cooperative industry unlike any other and helps keep it strong in every way."

Though deregulation may be on hold now, other issues in congress are just as important to the electric cooperatives throughout the state. Recently, co-ops have been fighting hours of service legislation that could affect our linemen's ability to work during power outages after they have already put in a full day's work. The legislation restricts the number of hours personnel who drive during working hours can be "on

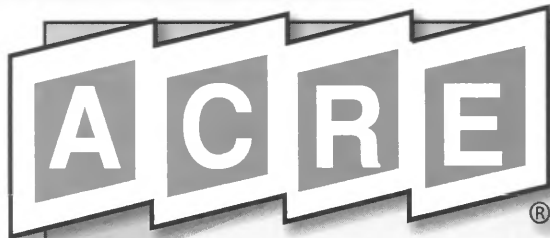
*First row: Scott Parrish, Bernard Marvel, Jim Banks, Lyle Nelson, Terry Beam, Jack Clark and Bill Dodds. Second row: Marcus Burkhead, Bill Fletcher, Shirley Skinner, Marcia Proper, Bernita Hammond-Trigg, Tanya Games, Sandy Barnes, Cheryl Marvel and Gary Hulsey. Third row: Frank Romane, Ed Harper, Vicki Murphy, Marti Pritchard, Kevin Bloyd and Jon Hedges. Fourth row: Rick Roudebush, Donnie Schrodt, Mike Coffey, Paul Moffitt, Mark Balbinot, Justin Cox and Bill Braden. Kathy Smysor, Curtis D. Strode, and Steve Pille not pictured.*

the clock." Thanks to our support in state government, co-ops can, with a quick phone call, become exempt from that rule when a power outage occurs. That means our linemen can continue to do their jobs and provide you with the fast power outage restoration service you, as members, deserve. We continue to fight this legislation on a national level to receive total exemption for all electric cooperatives in the nation.

In politics is where rural electric cooperatives began, more than 70 years ago, and it is where we keep our membership in control and our co-op's strong. Your Spoon River employees and directors are supporting the national effort to do that by supporting ACRE. I am very proud of their commitment.

### In this issue...

ACRE .....	16a-b
Safe Summer Play .....	16c
Touchstone Energy .....	16c
Lineman Attends Underground Locating School .....	16d



# YES!

*I want to help keep the voice of rural electric cooperatives heard in the political process by participating in ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action®.*

I would like to make a one-time contribution in the following amount:

- \$25.00 – Regular ACRE Member  
 \$100.00 – Century Club ACRE Member  
 \$500.00 – President's Club ACRE Member  
 \$2.09 added to each monthly bill

I affirm that my contribution has been made with Non-corporate funds:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Account #: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Federal Election Law requires the following information for contributions equal to or exceeding \$200:

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

**Contributions to ACRE/ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action are strictly voluntary. Contributions to federal and state Political Action**

## Now Members Can Participate in ACRE!

Just like your co-op employees and directors, now you too can show your support for your cooperative. ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action® has been created specifically for member/owners, allowing you to take a very proactive step of your own to promote and protect cooperatives' interests in the political arena.

The regular membership contribution to the program is only \$25. For that, you will receive a quarterly ACRE newsletter, a lapel pin, window static, and most important of all, a voice in the political process. The newsletter will give you inside information about what is happening in Washington, D.C., that can have a negative impact on your co-op and your lifestyle. You'll find out how to be an effective advocate, not only for co-ops, but for

yourself, as well. You'll also get the scoop on which legislators running for Congress are co-op friendly and are receiving ACRE contributions. And there's much more.

Like electric cooperatives themselves, ACRE enjoys an outstanding reputation amongst elected officials. Members of Congress know that ACRE speaks for real people with real concerns and ... real votes. The more of us there are, the more effective we can be.

This is a very critical time for the electric industry in this country and we need supporters to help us bring sanity back to the discussions about a national energy policy.

Today, I am asking you to join with the employees of your cooperative who have dedicated thousands of their own dollars to make sure the voices of co-

operative consumers are heard in Washington and the state capitol.

I urge you to take up the challenge. Become a \$25 member of ACRE through the ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action® program and stand with us as we fight for your rights and the rights of the nearly 37 million co-op consumer-owners across this great land.

You can join by simply signing a form that gives us permission to add the cost of membership to your electric bill. It's only \$2.09 each month. Ladies and gentlemen, that's a pretty cheap insurance policy. I don't know where you can spend two bucks a month and get the kind of return you'll get from this critical program. I urge you to give it the most serious consideration.

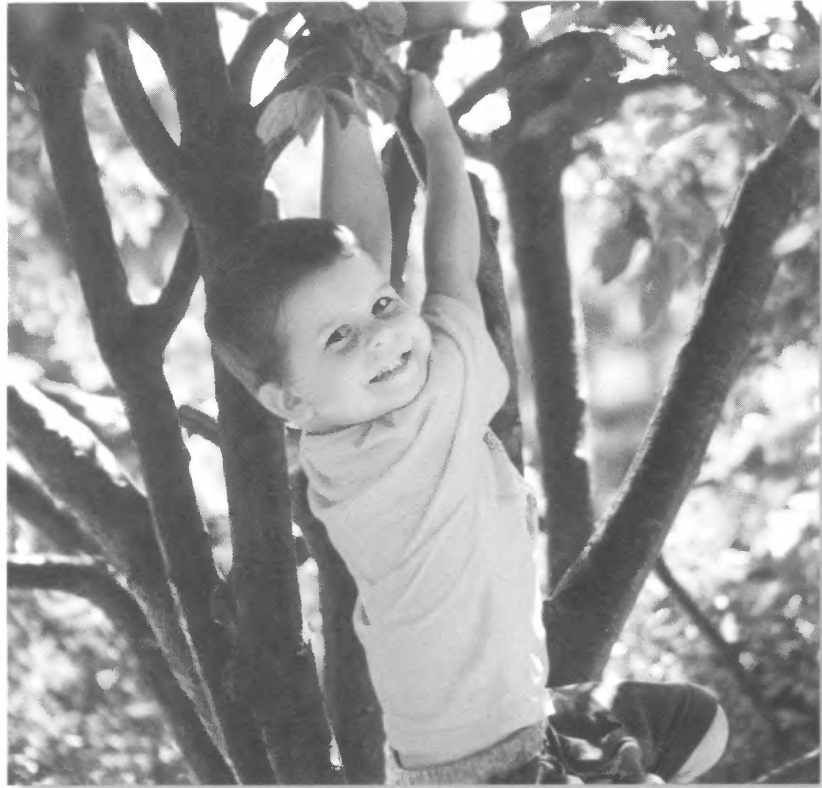
# Safe Summer Play

Play up outdoor electrical safety to children

Sunny summer days beckon the child in us all to head outdoors to play. Before you start summertime activities, Safe Electricity and Spoon River Electric Cooperative recommends that families review and stress to children to follow simple electrical safety rules for safe outdoor play.

"Go over these rules with your children. And set a good example by following safety rules yourself and installing safety equipment such as GFCI outlets," says President/CEO Bill Dodds.

- Never climb trees near power lines. Even if the power lines aren't touching the tree, they could touch when more weight is added to the branch.
- Fly kites and model airplanes in large open areas like a park or a field, safely away from trees and overhead power lines. If a kite gets stuck in a tree that's near power lines, don't climb up to get it. Contact your electric utility for assistance.
- Never climb a utility pole or tower.
- Don't play on or around pad-mounted electrical equipment.
- Never go into an electric substation for any reason - even on a dare. Electric substations contain high-voltage equipment, which can kill you. Never rescue a pet




or retrieve a ball or toy that goes inside. Call your electric utility instead.


When designing an outdoor play area for your children, do not install playground equipment or swimming pools underneath or near power lines. Protect all family members from serious shock and injuries by installing and using outdoor outlets with ground

fault circuit interrupters (GFCI). Use portable GFCIs for outdoor outlets that don't have them. Keep electrical appliances at least 10 feet away from pools, ponds, and wet surfaces.

For more information on electrical safety, and on-line games and activities that teach kids to safely use and play around electricity, visit [www.SafeElectricity.org](http://www.SafeElectricity.org).



**T**hanks to the military personnel who have fought for all of us, the star-spangled banner yet waves O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave. Brought to you by your local cooperative.



Touchstone Energy®  
The power of human connections

# Lineman Attends Underground Locating School



Frank Romane, a Lineman for Spoon River Electric Cooperative, attended an underground locating school at Staking University near Chicago, Illinois on May 10 – 12.

All the linemen attending used different kinds of locators as well as their own. The university is located at an old mental institution where there were a lot of different buried lines such as gas, electric, water, etc. It was its own little city at one time.

The school was hosted by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives in Springfield, Illinois.

*"I have been locating underground and attending these schools for more than 20 years and this is by far the best. I feel more confident with underground locating and protecting our members. I highly recommend this school," says Romane.*

## OFFICE CLOSING

Our office will be closed Monday, July 4 in observance of Independence Day.

## Spoon River Electric Cooperative

930 South Fifth Ave, PO Box 340, Canton, IL 61520  
8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.  
(309) 647-2700  
[www.srecoop.org](http://www.srecoop.org)

**President/CEO**  
William R. Dodds  
[bdodds@srecoop.org](mailto:bdodds@srecoop.org)

**Chairman**  
Jack Clark, Lewistown

**Vice Chairman**  
Curtis Strode, Marietta

**Secretary**  
Steve Pille, Glasford

**Treasurer**  
Lyle Nelson, Abingdon

**Assistant Treasurer**  
Terry Beam, Cuba


**Board of Directors**  
James Banks, Canton  
Bernard Marvel, Browning  
Scott Parrish, Havana  
Kathy Smyser, Smithfield

**Editor of Spoon River News**  
Vicki Murphy  
[vmurphy@srecoop.org](mailto:vmurphy@srecoop.org)

# Spoon River

N E W S

39

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

A publication of Spoon River Electric Cooperative

## Students Represent Spoon River Electric in Washington D.C.

Trygve Meade and Marlana White represented Spoon River Electric Cooperative in Washington, D.C., during the annual "Youth to Washington" Tour, June 17-24. This event, sponsored by the electric and telephone cooperatives of Illinois, began in the late 1950s to introduce rural youths to our democratic form of government and cooperatives.

The students were among 61 rural Illinois youth leaders selected for the trip. In addition to the Capitol, students also visited Arlington National Cemetery, the National Cathedral, the Smithsonian Museums, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the World War II Memorial, the newly dedicated Native American Indian Museum, and a number of other historical sites.



*Pictured from left are Meade, White, and chaperone John Freitag.*

### In this issue...

- Kid Friendly and Energy Smart.... 16b
- Keep Pets Safe From Electrical Hazards..... 16c
- Check Electrical Outlets..... 16d

## Spoon River Electric Scholarships

Spoon River Electric Cooperative will award two \$500 scholarships at the Annual Meeting on September 1, 2005. The winners of the scholarships for the 2006-2007 school year must be high school seniors with a parent/guardian who is a member of the cooperative.

A \$500 Scholastic Scholarship will be awarded based on merit. The qualifications include grade

point average, college entrance test scores, work and volunteer experience, and a biographical statement.

A drawing will also be held to award a \$500 Honorary Scholarship.

The student and parent or legal guardian must be present at the meeting to win either scholarship.

For information contact Vicki Murphy at (309) 647-2700 or [vmurphy@srecoop.org](mailto:vmurphy@srecoop.org).

# Kid Friendly and Energy Smart

by Laura Camper

"C lose the door You're letting all the heat out!"  
"Turn off the lights when you leave the room!"  
"Turn off the TV if you're not going to watch it!"  
"Don't hold the refrigerator door open!" And so the battle between kids and parents about wasted energy continues.

It's time to try a different approach – conservation education.

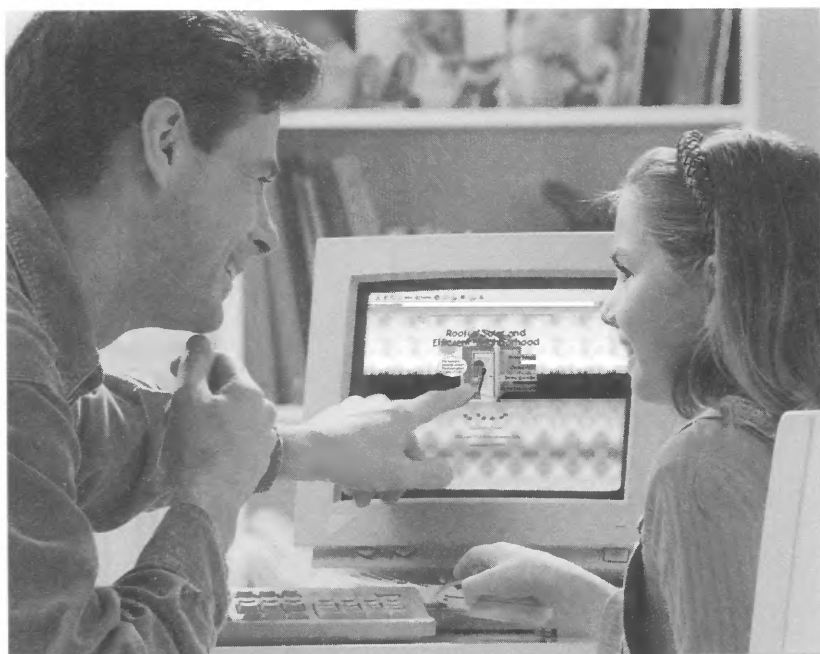
There are lots of resources on the Internet for parents to teach their kids how to save energy and why it is important.

With the Department of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, take a field trip to Dr. E's Energy Lab at [www.eere.energy.gov/kids/](http://www.eere.energy.gov/kids/) and a funky, monkey scientist in a lab coat and glasses will lead kids through his lab. They can learn about renewable energy sources like wind, solar, and geothermal energy.

They can also learn about saving energy. Besides reading some energy saving tips, kids can follow a link to Energy Hog, to play a game that teaches them how to spot energy hogs in their own home and how to fix them.

In Roofus' Solar and Efficient Neighborhood at [www.eere.energy.gov/roofus/](http://www.eere.energy.gov/roofus/), also by the Department of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, kids can take a tour of Roofus' energy efficient home and neighborhood. Roofus, a very smart retriever donning a baseball cap and sunglasses, gives the kids tips on how they can make their own home more energy efficient. Roofus also gives kids some solar projects that they can build, including a solar pizza box oven and a sundial.

The Energy Kids Page at [www.eia.doe.gov/kids/](http://www.eia.doe.gov/kids/), by the Energy Information Administration, is written for junior high or high school students.



Energy Ant, sporting a red turtleneck and looking like he stepped out of an Archie comic, leads students through the different activities and information sections.

Under Fun & Games they can take field trips to energy related sights from a Kerr McGee drilling sight to the National Renewable Energy Laboratory to the National Atomic Museum. All tours feature color photos and informational stories about each of the sights. There are also crossword puzzles and word searches for the kids to do and a coloring book for younger kids.

Under Energy History, kids can learn about famous people who contributed to energy knowledge and the history of energy and its use - people like Benjamin Franklin, Albert Einstein, and Henry Ford to name a few. There are also pages for Energy Facts and for Classroom Activities for ages 5 through 18.

To explain why conservation is important, have your kids visit [www.epa.gov/kids/](http://www.epa.gov/kids/), the Environmental Protection Agency Web

site. The Web site explains global warming and the greenhouse effect in terms that kids of all ages can understand and the Ozone is explained in an online comic book. The Web site also explains how people and their use of resources have changed the earth.

The EPA also has a Web site aimed at high school students at [www.epa.gov/highschool/](http://www.epa.gov/highschool/). This Web site is a gold mine for students. It has links to Web sites on environmental topics organized by the headings of Air, Water, Waste and Recycling, Conservation, and Ecosystems. Each link has a short description of the information available on that site.

In addition, the Web site lists environmental careers, internships, and scholarships for those students interested in pursuing an education in environmental science.

So, instead of barking orders at your kids, have them visit some of these Web sites. They can learn, on their own, the importance of saving energy and hopefully, start some good habits that will last a lifetime.

## “Paws” and Take Steps to Keep Pets Safe From Electrical Hazards

Your family pet can turn anything it finds in and around the home into a play or chew toy. It's important to make sure your pets don't add electrical devices to their toy chest.

A frisky dog or curious cat can cause an electrical hazard or fire in ways you may not have thought about. Safe Electricity offers this safety checklist:

- 1) Keep electrical cords away from puppies and kittens so they don't chew on them and receive a severe shock. If you have difficulty getting your pet to stop chewing on the cord, you can paint it with a bitter tasting polish or wrap the cord in a thick plastic sleeve.
- 2) Make sure nightlights and appliances are completely

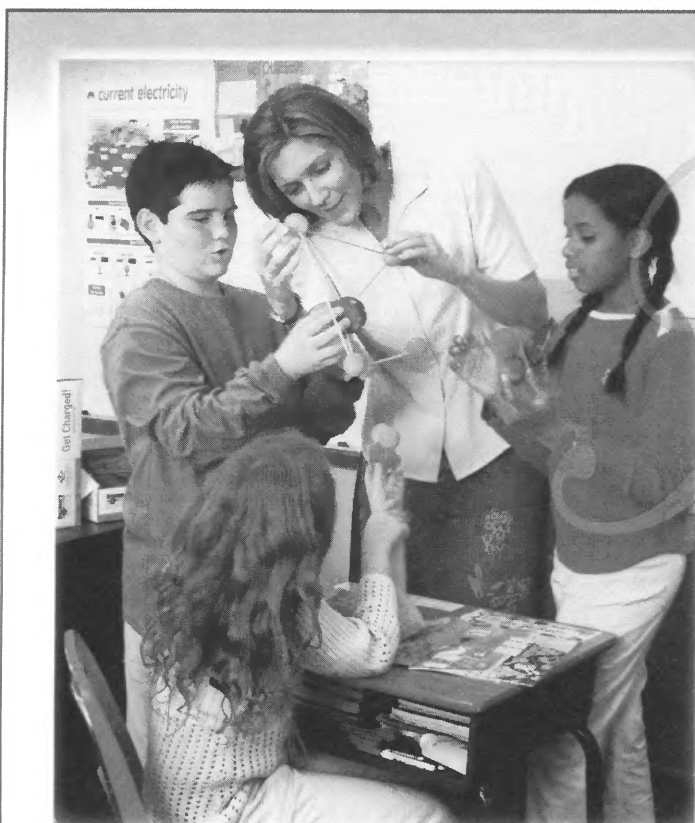
plugged into wall outlets. Partially exposed prongs are a hazard for curious children, puppies, and kittens.

- 3) Keep halogen lamps away from play areas for pets and children. Some halogen bulbs can reach very high temperatures, and if knocked over during play, could easily start a fire.
- 4) Keep appliances near sinks and bathtubs a safe distance away from the water source. Playful pets can knock radios, curling irons, and other items into the water, creating a dangerous situation.
- 5) Discourage cats and dogs from



curling up for a nap behind warm computer equipment. Pets need to be kept away from all electrical connections.

For more electrical safety information, visit [www.SafeElectricity.org](http://www.SafeElectricity.org).



## Get Charged!

The kids will soon be heading back to school, and we would like to shine a little light in your science classroom this year. Contact us to receive a Discovery Channel “Get Charged! Electricity and You” interactive electricity curriculum kit for middle school students. It's just one way we're showing that electric cooperatives are about more than just kilowatt hours and meters. We're the power of human connections.

For more information about the kits, log on to [www.touchstoneenergy.coop](http://www.touchstoneenergy.coop), and double click on the Discovery Channel logo.



Touchstone Energy®

*The power of human connections*

# DRIVE SAFELY

this School Year



It's back to school time again! Remember to watch for students walking to school, crossing streets and getting on and off buses.

## Check Electrical Outlets

Never overload electrical outlets and circuits. Overloaded electrical outlets, or overloaded circuits that supply power to several outlets, are a major cause of residential fires. Overloaded outlets and circuits carry too much electricity, which generates heat in undetectable amounts. The heat causes wear on the internal wiring system and can ignite a fire.

All wiring systems should have circuit breakers or fuses that disconnect power when circuits become overloaded. However, an improperly sized fuse or breaker can cancel this built-in safety feature.

To prevent overloading, never plug more than two appliances into an outlet at once or "piggyback" extra appliances

on extension cords or wall outlets. Use only outlets designed to handle multiple plugs.

Give special consideration to appliances that use 1,000 or more watts, such as air conditioners, refrigerators, hot plates, irons, microwave ovens, dishwashers, heaters and deep fryers. Avoid plugging them into the same outlet or circuit. To use these appliances safely, know which outlets are connected to the same electrical circuit in your home.

Do not exceed 1,500 watts for each outlet or circuit. Wattage requirements are listed in appliance manufacturers instructions.

Begin a habit of regularly checking electrical cords and outlets. Fires that begin in these areas are difficult to detect, yet easy to prevent.

*Overloaded electrical outlets, or overloaded circuits that supply power to several outlets, are a major cause of residential fires.*

## Spoon River Electric Cooperative

930 South Fifth Ave, PO Box 340, Canton, IL 61520

8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

(309) 647-2700

[www.srecoop.org](http://www.srecoop.org)

### *President/CEO*

William R. Dodds  
[bdodds@srecoop.org](mailto:bdodds@srecoop.org)

### *Chairman*

Jack Clark, Lewistown

### *Vice Chairman*

Curtis Strode, Marietta

### *Secretary*

Steve Pille, Glasford

### *Treasurer*

Lyle Nelson, Abingdon

### *Assistant Treasurer*

Terry Beam, Cuba

### *Board of Directors*

James Banks, Canton  
Bernard Marvel, Browning  
Scott Parrish, Havana  
Kathy Smysor, Smithfield

### *Editor of Spoon River News*

Vicki Murphy  
[vmurphy@srecoop.org](mailto:vmurphy@srecoop.org)



## “Blinks” Can Signal a Properly Working Electrical System

We often hear the question from members “What causes my lights to blink?” The utility network is subject to certain short-term losses of power, and your co-op’s employees take all possible measures to prevent these occurrences and minimize the affects to our members.

Blinking lights are a result of momentary outages that occur when some type of disturbance exists on the line. This could be a lightning strike, an automobile striking a pole, or when a squirrel or tree branch comes into contact with an energized power line.

When lights blink, it is an indication that the cooperative’s equipment is operating properly. If a fault or short circuit happens on a power line, a device called an “oil circuit recloser” (OCR) opens to stop it, then quickly closes back in. Although the process is quick – and usually temporary – it may cause your lights to blink, making it necessary to reset digital clocks and appliances with digital displays.

*When lights blink, it is an indication that the cooperative’s equipment is operating properly.*



**Lightning, wind, tree limbs, and even animals can short circuit the power. Oil circuit reclosers (OCR) on the system protect the system and isolate the outage, but allow three “blinks” before cutting off power. An OCR can prevent long outages caused by temporary problems.**

The OCR is essentially a breaker, functioning much like a breaker in the electrical panel in your home. It permits power to continue flowing through the line with only a brief interruption of service – rather than causing an extended power outage. If the short circuit continues, the OCR will operate or ‘trip’ three times before eventually stopping the flow of electricity and causing a power outage. This process protects the lines from damage, cutting off power to the affected section of the line and isolating the problem until it can be repaired.

Although the weather and

nature’s creatures are beyond our control, cooperative members can lessen the effects and inconvenience of “blinks” when they occur. When purchasing small appliances and digital clocks, consider a model with battery backup. You may also want to install meter-base surge protection for the major appliances in your home and surge protection with built-in uninterrupted power supply (UPS) for your computer or other electronic devices whose “memory” would be lost with a power interruption.

*Source: Myrna Baumgart, Newsletter Editor of Itasca-Mantrap Co-op in Park Rapids, Minn.*

### In this issue...

What is Mine and What is the Co-op's .....	16b
Harvest Workers Urged Caution .....	16c
Look for that UL Label.....	16d

# What is Mine and What is the Co-op's?

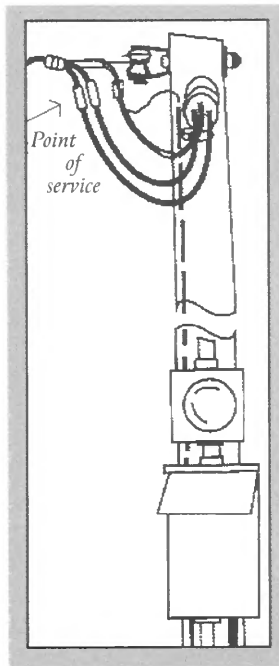
A lot of times a member may be surprised when he hears that the cooperative will not make a repair to part of his service equipment or wire. Sometimes it is hard to see a clear distinction between what is the cooperative's responsibility and what is the member's.

A loose interpretation is that the cooperative is responsible for everything before the meter and the member for everything after the meter. For a residential location this is a reasonable representation. However, a better description would be the service point where the cooperative's equipment meets the member's equipment.

Below are a few examples.

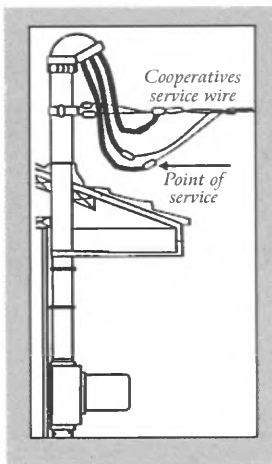
## ■ Your meter is on a pole near your home

The cooperative is responsible for the meter and the connection at the top of the pole. The member is responsible for the meter box, meter loop, the wire running up the pole and the service wire running from the pole to the house. The cooperative will provide a pole and meter loop specifications if requested. Members should have a qualified electrician build a meter loop for them. (Diagram shows the meter loop and meter box on the pole.)



## ■ Your meter is attached to your home

When a meter box and loop are on a member's house, the wire to the meter loop is the cooperative's responsibility, but the socket is not. A mast needs to be set up



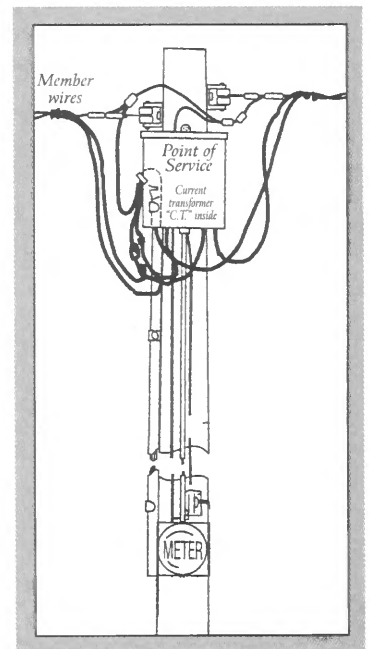
before service can be connected. (Diagram shows where the service point is.)

## ■ Your meter connects from your home to a pad mounted transformer

The co-op is responsible for the pad mounted transformer and the underground line running to the meter. We can connect a temporary service 15 feet from the transformer but the meter loop needs to be installed on the house before permanent service can be connected.

## ■ Your meter connects to a current transformer

With a current transformer (CT) rated meter, the electric current is measured by passing the service wire through a CT, which then sends a ratio of this current to the meter. The cooperative is responsible for the wire until it connects to or passes through the member's equipment.



Source: Norris Electric Cooperative

**If you are still unsure of what is your responsibility and what is the cooperative's, just give us a call at (309) 647-2700.**

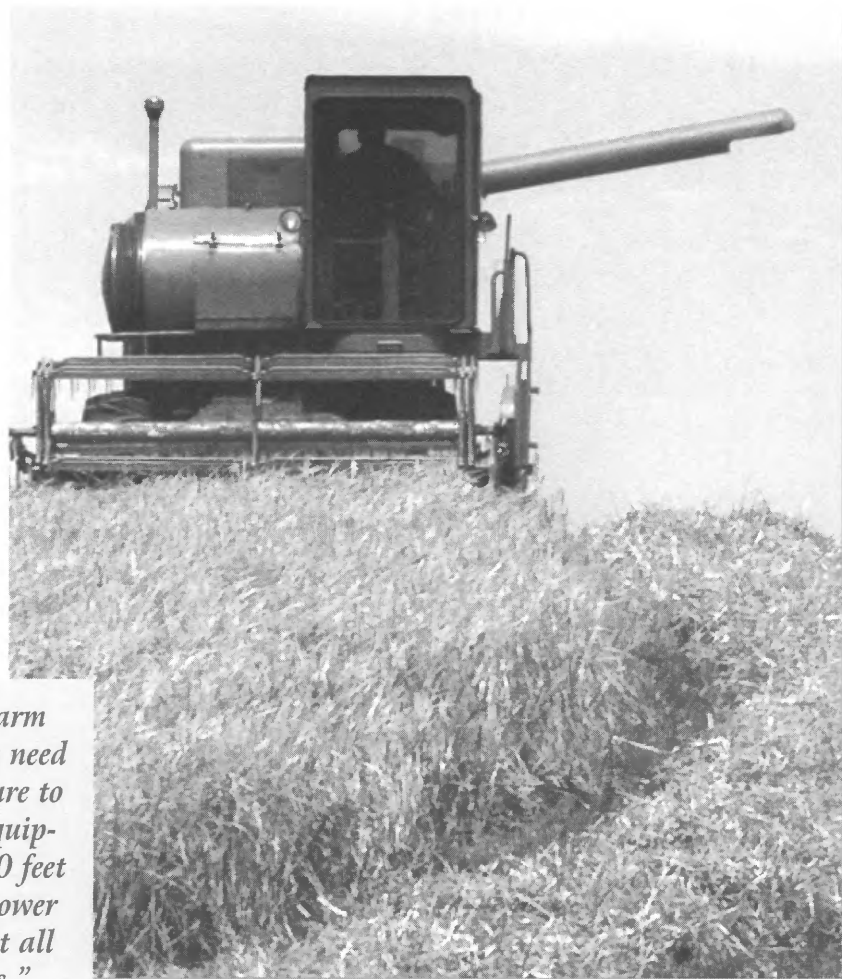
# Stay Safe This Harvest Season

Harvest season can yield higher numbers of electrocution, shock, and burn injuries. Nationwide, an average 60 agricultural workers are electrocuted and hundreds more injured in electrical accidents each year.

“Equipment contacting overhead power lines is the leading cause of farm electrocution accidents in the Midwest,” says Bob Aherin, University of Illinois Agricultural Safety Specialist. “Many of these accidents occur near grain bins, when augers make contact with power lines”

Spoon River Electric Cooperative President/CEO Bill Dodds says, “All farm workers need to be sure to keep equipment 10 feet from power lines at all times. That’s 10 feet above, below, and to the sides of the lines. Lower all equipment you can before moving it and use a spotter for large equipment.”

*“All farm workers need to be sure to keep equipment 10 feet from power lines at all times.”*



## Some equipment safety considerations:

- Always lower portable augers or elevators to their lowest possible level - under 14 feet- before moving or transporting; use care when raising them.
- When moving large equipment or high loads near a power line, always use a spotter, or someone to help make certain that contact is not made with a line.
- Be aware of increased height when loading and transporting larger modern tractors with higher antennas.

- Never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path!

If equipment comes in contact with power lines, stay inside the cab and call for help. Tell others to stay away until a co-op lineman arrives at the scene to make sure power is disconnected. If there is risk of fire and you must leave the area, the proper action is to jump – not step – with both feet hitting the ground at the same time. Do not allow any part of your body to touch the equipment and the ground at the same time. Continue to hop or shuffle to safety, keeping both

feet together as you leave the area.

Once you get away from the equipment, never attempt to get back on or even touch the equipment. Many electrocutions occur when the operator dismounts and, realizing nothing has happened, tries to get back on the equipment.

It is very important that all farm workers and seasonal employees are informed of electrical hazards, and trained in proper procedures to avoid injury. For more information on farm and home electrical safety, visit [www.SafeElectricity.org](http://www.SafeElectricity.org).

# Look for that UL Label

By Laura Camper

Think of all the electrical appliances you have in your home: toaster, microwave oven, bread machine, can opener, food processor, garbage disposal, dishwasher, refrigerator, coffee maker - and that is just in the kitchen. It would be nice to know that all these products will operate for years safely and effectively, but how can you tell?

The first thing to look for is the Underwriters Laboratories label. The UL label, the letters UL inside a circle, means the product has undergone testing to ensure safety and reliability. The label can be found attached to the power cord or often stamped onto the body of the appliance.

Underwriters Laboratories, Incorporated, an independent, not-for-profit organization, has been testing products since 1894 in order to ensure the public's safety and has developed more than 800 safety standards.

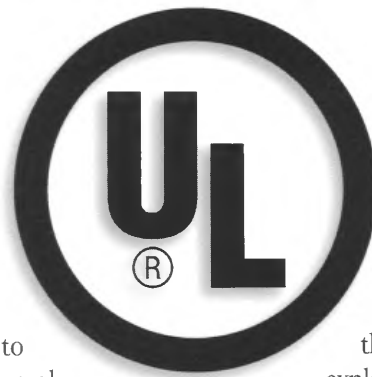
While the UL standards are not mandated by the government, John Drengenberg, Consumer Affairs Manager of Underwriters Laboratories, says if they are not met the manufacturer will not be able to display the UL label on its product and most retailers won't stock a product without the UL label.

UL representatives make visits to manufacturers to check samples of their product and make sure they meet the safety standards of the UL. Drengenberg says, "We test for various safety hazards. We look for fire hazards, electrical shock hazards, mechanical hazards such as sharp edges, and even radiation hazards (in microwave ovens)."

The UL tests for normal use and abnormal abuse of products. For instance, one of the basic tests is to drop a hair dryer several times to see if it will break open and expose live wires that could injure the consumer.

Even after a product has been certified safe, UL representatives continue random checks to make sure it is still a safe, reliable product. If the product fails to meet safety standards later, the UL label will be removed unless the manufacturer corrects the problem.

UL tests 19,000 categories of products such as hairdryers, vacuum cleaners, and televisions. Occasionally, representatives come across a category of products that does not meet UL's minimum safety requirements. One such product category is the turkey fryer. In these cases, the UL uses the media



to get the word out. Information has been sent out in press releases and published on the UL Web site explaining the hazards

of using a turkey fryer and why the UL mark is not on these products at this time. Drengenberg says, "However, there are very, very few products that we have that situation with."

UL has laboratories all over the world, including one in Northbrook, Ill and tests products internationally. The corporate mission is to ensure that safe products reach the consumer. So if you're looking for safe and reliable products, look for that UL label.

If you would like more information about recalls, safety standards, and consumer safety tips, visit the UL Web site at [www.ul.com/](http://www.ul.com/) and click on the Consumers tab.

## Spoon River Electric Cooperative

930 South Fifth Ave, PO Box 340, Canton, IL 61520

8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

(309) 647-2700

[www.srecoop.org](http://www.srecoop.org)

### *President/CEO*

William R. Dodds  
[bdodds@srecoop.org](mailto:bdodds@srecoop.org)

### *Chairman*

Jack Clark, Lewistown

### *Vice Chairman*

Curtis Strode, Marietta

### *Secretary*

Steve Pille, Glasford

### *Treasurer*

Lyle Nelson, Abingdon

### *Assistant Treasurer*

Terry Beam, Cuba


### *Board of Directors*

James Banks, Canton  
Bernard Marvel, Browning  
Scott Parrish, Havana  
Kathy Smysor, Smithfield

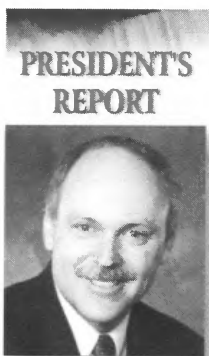
### *Editor of Spoon River News*

Vicki Murphy  
[vmurphy@srecoop.org](mailto:vmurphy@srecoop.org)

# Spoon River NEWS

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

A publication of Spoon River Electric Cooperative



**William R. Dodds**  
President/CEO

## 2005 Annual Meeting

Those of you who attended our 68<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of Members September 1 at Canton High School learned of changes and improvements to the co-op. Printed here is a brief synopsis of my comments to members concerning the co-op.

The most important change I spoke about affects the co-op's future power supply. The co-op's current power contract with AmerenUE expires in late 2008. Spoon River Electric and Soyland/Continental Cooperative Services, our generation and transmission

co-op, spent considerable time this past year locating 7 megawatts (mw) of power to replace Ameren's contracted portion. One portion of the power supply will come from purchasing a 4-mw share of Prairie State power plant, a coal-fired power plant that will be constructed near Baldwin.

Spoon River will purchase the remaining 3 mw of power from Franklin County, a coal-fired plant that will be constructed near Benton. Both the Prairie State and Franklin County plants will become operational in the

■ *Continued on 16b*

### In this issue...

2005 Annual Meeting  
..... 16a-c

National Co-op Month  
..... 16d



*At this year's annual meeting, members re-elected Lyle H. Nelson of Abingdon, center, as a director on Spoon River Electric's board. Gregory M. Leigh of Avon, left, was elected to replace Curtis D. Strobe of Marietta, who reached his board term limit, and Jim Banks of Canton, right, who was previously appointed to the board seat vacated by John Schoon, was also elected to the co-op's board.*

■ *Continued from 16a*

next 3-4 years and will be among the cleanest coal burning plants built in the country. The 7 mw from these two projects, along with Soyland's existing portfolio, should provide a reliable, diversified and affordable power supply to meet our members' power needs long into the future.

We also made a significant investment in strengthening the reliability of the distribution system. Constructing new power lines in high growth areas and improving vegetation management will enable co-op employees to provide more efficient service.

Spoon River also continues to replace outdated technology and bring in more innovative tools to improve service for its members. For example, we recently installed a geographic information system (GIS), which is an electronic mapping system. The system will enable employees to keep better track of poles, transformers, meters, and electrical devices. The GIS system will help us better manage the 1,200 miles of power lines, representing more than \$20 million in utility assets.

Cooperatives helping co-operatives is one of the seven cooperative principles. Spoon River Electric has done its part to assist both in state and out-of-state cooperatives when personnel and equipment are needed. This past spring, we sent personnel and equipment to aid M.J.M. Electric in Carlville after its service territory sustained tornado damage. And personnel and equipment were sent to aid victims of Hurricane Ivan in Alabama last September. Several of our linemen are currently helping Hurricane Katrina victims in Mississippi.



More than 230 members attended this year's meeting. Each registered member received a \$5 gift certificate of use towards their energy bill.



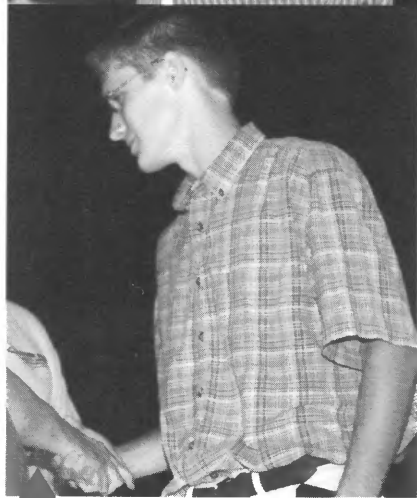
Blood Pressure checks and health information were provided by Graham Hospital staff.



Linemen Paul Moffitt and Bill Braden taught about electrical safety using Shelby Electric Cooperative's safety display.



*Linemen Rich Roudebush and Frank Romane gave bucket truck rides. Here, Roudebush takes Mariah Hedges, daughter of co-op employee Jon Hedges, up in the bucket.*



*Kourtney Parks (top) receives the honorary \$500 college scholarship. Tyson Graham receives a \$500 academic college scholarship. 23 students applied for the scholarships.*



*The Billy Cook Jazz Quartet entertained members during the meeting.*



*Curtis D. Strode was awarded this Adirondack Chair to relax during his retirement.*



# NATIONAL CO-OP MONTH



by Laura Camper,  
Intern, Illinois Country Living

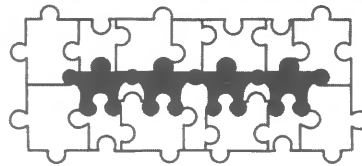
October is National Co-op Month, a time to celebrate the cooperative way of doing business. Cooperatives are formed to benefit the people who are served by them. Cooperatives are owned by the members, so the priority becomes the service of the members, not profit.

Because the members own the company, they have a voice in how the company is run. They elect the board of directors, the guiding body of the cooperative, and they are invited to meetings to hear the important issues and news related to the co-op. The co-op also sends members newsletters and other communication to keep them informed.

Member-owned also means locally-owned, so co-ops have a vested interest in the communities they serve. If members have questions or concerns, they can contact the cooperative locally to voice their opinions. And co-op employees are often very active in their communities.

## *Did you know that...?*

- Ben Franklin formed the first successful cooperative in 1752.
- Toad Lane in England is considered the birthplace of the modern cooperative because many of the principles that guide cooperatives were formed there in 1844.
- Cooperatives are guided by seven internationally recognized principles: voluntary and open membership; democratic member control; member economic participation; autonomy and independence; education, training, and



## **Businesses People Trust**

information; cooperation among cooperatives; and concern for the communities they serve.

■ Cooperatives are formed by producers to sell their products, by workers who own and operate the company they work for, by consumers who use a service or product, and by small business owners and municipalities to share purchases of goods and services in order to increase their purchasing power.

■ Electric cooperatives provide electric service to the member-owners at the cost of service. The mem-

bers share any profit either through investment in the company or by credit to the member-owners.

■ Electric cooperatives own 2.4 million miles or 43 percent of the nation's electric distribution lines and deliver 10 percent of the total kilowatt-hours in the United States annually.

■ Electric cooperatives serve 12 percent of the population in the United States and employ 63,000 people.

■ Land O Lakes, Ocean Spray, and Sunkist brands are all produced by cooperatives.

■ Ace Hardware and True Value are owned and operated by cooperatives.

## Spoon River Electric Cooperative

930 South Fifth Ave, PO Box 340, Canton, IL 61520

8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

(309) 647-2700

[www.srecoop.org](http://www.srecoop.org)

### *President/CEO*

William R. Dodds

[bdodds@srecoop.org](mailto:bdodds@srecoop.org)

### *Chairman*

Jack Clark, Lewistown

### *Vice Chairman*

Curtis Strode, Marietta

### *Secretary*

Steve Pille, Glasford

### *Treasurer*

Lyle Nelson, Abingdon

### *Assistant Treasurer*

Terry Beam, Cuba

### *Board of Directors*

James Banks, Canton

Bernard Marvel, Browning

Scott Parrish, Havana

Kathy Smysor, Smithfield

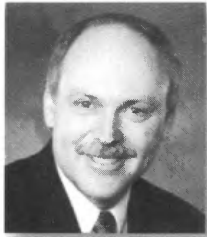
### *Editor of Spoon River News*

Vicki Murphy

[vmurphy@srecoop.org](mailto:vmurphy@srecoop.org)



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT



**William R. Dodds**  
President/CEO

## Hurricane Katrina

Cooperatives helping co-cooperatives is one of the core principles Spoon River operates under. Five of our employees lived this principle by volunteering to travel for an unknown length of time to help restore power to cooperative members of another state.

Linemen Bill Braden, Mike Coffey, Ed Harper, Frank Romane, and Don Schrodtt were part of the 145 linemen from Illinois who volunteered to aid Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana cooperatives in restoring power to members affected by the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. Harper and

Coffey spent approximately a week and a half assisting Mississippi. Romane and Schrodtt relieved them to continue aiding Mississippi. Romane and Braden headed for Louisiana September 22 to aid in restoration after Hurricane Rita.

The Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana cooperatives requested help through the emergency work plan through the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives. Electric co-ops that receive assistance repay their counterparts who provide emergency assistance once service restoration has been completed.



*Linemen Bill Braden, Frank Romane, Ed Harper, Mike Coffey, and Don Schrodtt (not pictured) assisted co-ops in Louisiana and Mississippi after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.*

## In this issue...

Helping Cooperative Employees  
..... 16b

Remembering the Protectors of  
Our Freedom  
..... 16d

## Helping Cooperative Employees

Many in the Illinois electric cooperative family have expressed interest in making financial contributions to support the employees of the Mississippi and Louisiana electric cooperatives. Many co-op employees in those two states lost their homes and possessions, but even though they suffered personal hardships, they remained on the job to restore electric service for cooperative members.

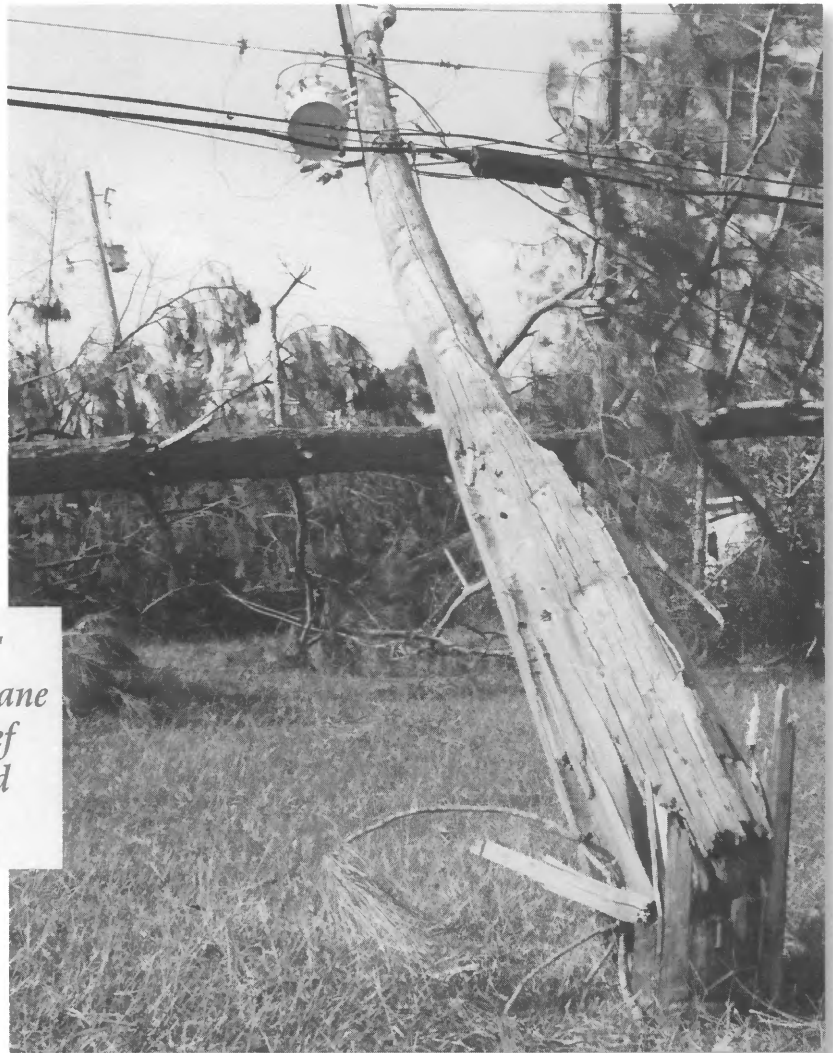
To assist the Mississippi and Louisiana electric co-op family, the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC, our statewide organization) has established a hurricane relief fund. They are encouraging cooperative employees, directors, members, and others who are interested in helping, to contribute to the IEC Hurricane Relief Fund.

**One hundred percent** of all funds will go towards supporting co-op employees and families who have been devastated by the hurricane. All funds will be split 50-50 between the Mississippi and Louisiana electric cooperatives.

All donations are tax deductible. Tax statements will be distributed by the AIEC after the funds have gone to Mississippi and Louisiana.

Donations should be sent to the IEC Hurricane Relief Fund, care of the AIEC, PO Box 3787, Springfield, IL 62708.

### *IEC Hurricane Relief Fund*





## We have the power to serve anyone

**A**utomobile manufacturers, book publishers, and national retailers have all chosen to build in communities served by Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives. They could've located their business anywhere, but they know with co-ops they're more than customers; they're member-owners of their cooperative. Their local co-op gives them a voice and works with them to deliver reliable power and customized solutions — all at a competitive, not-for-profit price.

For more information about Touchstone Energy, log onto [www.touchstoneenergy.coop](http://www.touchstoneenergy.coop). If you're seeking potential business sites in co-op territories, log onto [www.sitesacrossamerica.com](http://www.sitesacrossamerica.com).



Touchstone Energy®  
*The power of human connections*

# Remembering the Protectors of Our Freedom

By Laura Camper

As families gather for their evening meal, many are faced with an empty seat at the dinner table, a reminder that they have a father, mother, son, or daughter serving in the military. The soldier's contribution to the family's nightly conversation may be an e-mail dashed off before attending to duties, a quick phone call, or a letter written in precious, spare time.

This scene has been played out countless times, as men and women have served our country from the American Revolution to our current war in Iraq. In peacetime and in war American soldiers have given up their lives, time with their families, and their everyday living in order to protect our freedoms, and their valor should be remembered and honored.

On Nov. 11, we celebrate Veterans Day to honor all

*On Veterans Day,  
remember all those  
who can't be with  
their families.*



veterans who have served their country in the armed forces. The holiday is often marked with a local parade or memorial service at a military cemetery. In Arlington, Va., a national memorial service is held at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery.

Originally Armistice Day, Nov. 11 was the day that Germany and the Allied Forces signed a peace treaty ending World War I in 1918. In 1919, President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed Nov. 11 a day to honor World War I veterans. In 1954, the name was changed to Veterans Day

to honor all veterans, living and deceased, who served during war or peacetime.

This year, as you sit down to dinner with your family on Veterans Day, remember all those who can't be with their families because they are serving our country. Think about all the people who sacrificed their lives to protect our freedom and add them to your list of things for which you are thankful.

Reflect on Woodrow Wilson's words from 85 years ago proclaiming Armistice Day - words that are still true today.

*"To us in America, the reflections of Armistice Day will be filled with solemn pride in the heroism of those who died in the country's service and with gratitude for the victory, both because of the thing from which it has freed us and because of the opportunity it has given America to show her sympathy with peace and justice in the councils of the nation."*



## OFFICE CLOSING

Our office will be closed Friday, November 11 in observance of Veteran's Day and Thursday, November 24, for Thanksgiving.



## Spoon River Electric Cooperative

930 South Fifth Ave, PO Box 340, Canton, IL 61520

8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

(309) 647-2700

[www.srecoop.org](http://www.srecoop.org)

### *President/CEO*

William R. Dodds

[bdodds@srecoop.org](mailto:bdodds@srecoop.org)

### *Chairman*

Jack Clark, Lewistown

### *Vice Chairman*

Bernard Marvel, Browning

### *Secretary*

Steve Pille, Glasford

### *Treasurer*

Lyle Nelson, Abingdon

### *Assistant Treasurer*

Terry Beam, Cuba

### *Board of Directors*

James Banks, Canton

Greg Leigh, Avon

Scott Parrish, Havana

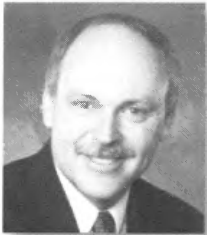
Kathy Smysor, Smithfield

### *Editor of Spoon River News*

Vicki Murphy

[vmurphy@srecoop.org](mailto:vmurphy@srecoop.org)

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT



**William R. Dodds**  
President/CEO

## Good Time to Consider Geothermal Technology

Now is the time to consider a residential geothermal heating/cooling system. In an effort to encourage more energy efficient homes, part of the new energy bill signed recently by President Bush details how consumers who install new geothermal heat pumps in 2007 or 2008 will be rewarded with a tax credit. The tax credit will total 10 percent of the installed price, up to a maximum of \$300. There are minimum efficiency requirements the system must meet for tax credit eligibility. Contact Spoon River Electric Cooperative for details prior to installing a new system.

Also ask about our geothermal Spoon River rebate of \$300 per ton up to 3 tons for co-op members. See the rebate form on page 16b.

Benefits of geothermal systems are numerous, with lower heating and cooling costs topping the list.

Geothermal systems average 40 percent greater efficiency than air source heat pumps, 48 percent greater efficiency than the best gas furnaces, and 75 percent greater efficiency than oil furnaces. Geothermal systems have the added advantage of providing a home or business with free hot water – supplying on average approximately 30 percent of hot water needs. And many electric

cooperatives offer special incentives for geothermal users.

Geothermal heat pumps have fewer mechanical components, and have no exposure to outdoor elements, making them more reliable, easier to service, and less prone to failure. The expected life span of a geothermal unit is 30-35 years, compared to 15 years for a conventional furnace. Ground loops have a life expectancy of hundreds of years.

With no dangerous fumes, no

■ *Continued on 16b*

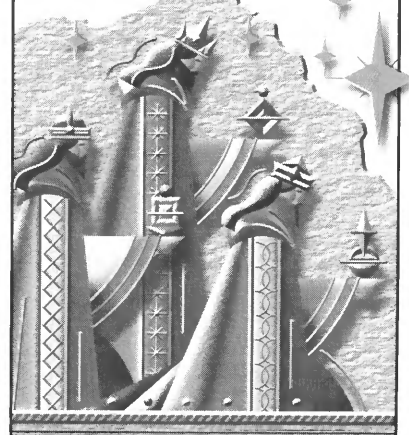
## In this issue...

Snuggle Up Safely ..... 16c

Remember the Heroes ..... 16d

## OFFICE CLOSING

Our office will be closed Friday, December 23 and Monday, December 26 for the Christmas Holiday. We will also be closed on Friday, December 30 and Monday, January 2 for the New Year.



■ *Continued from 16a*

flame, and no flue, geothermal systems are also safer.

Geothermal systems are more comfortable and quieter. Constant fan velocities and longer fan running times allow the temperature to stay as consistent by the wall or ceiling as it is by the floor. And having no outdoor fan unit makes the unit's operation whisper quiet. You may not even know it's running.

Here are some interesting facts from the Geothermal Heat Pump Consortium:

■ Using geothermal technology, a typical 1,500-square-foot home in a moderate climate can be heated and cooled all year for an average of \$1 per day.

■ Today, more than 500,000 geothermal heat pumps are installed in the U.S., resulting in annual savings of 4 billion kilowatt hours (kwh) of electricity, eliminating the need for 20 trillion BTUs of fossil fuels, cutting peak electrical demand by 1.3 million kilowatts (kw), and slashing greenhouse gas emissions by 3 million tons of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>).

■ Geothermal installations to date equate to converting 650,000 cars to zero-emission vehicles, planting 190 million trees, reducing U.S. reliance on imported fuels by 11 million barrels of crude oil per year, or eliminating

the need for one 1,300-megawatt (MW) power plant.

Heating and cooling costs will likely continue to rise in years to come. Reliance on foreign oil will continue to increase, and the price of propane and natural gas will continue to skyrocket. Using geothermal technology for heating and cooling just makes good sense.

***For more information about geothermal systems, contact your local electric cooperative, log on to the Geothermal Heat Pump Consortium Web site at [www.geoexchange.org](http://www.geoexchange.org), or call them at (202) 558-7175.***

## Cooperative Member Rebate

Spoon River offers a geothermal rebate of \$300 per ton up to 3 tons.

Please fill out the form below and return to the co-op. If you have questions, please call (309) 647-2700.

### EARTH COUPLED GEOTHERMAL HEATING AND COOLING REBATE APPLICATION

MEMBER'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ ACCOUNT # \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF INSTALLATION \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE # \_\_\_\_\_

BRAND OF UNIT INSTALLED: \_\_\_\_\_

SIZE OF UNIT INSTALLED: \_\_\_\_\_ MODEL # \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ SERIAL # \_\_\_\_\_

INSTALLED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF INSTALLATION: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ EMPLOYEE WHO VERIFIED UNIT

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

# Snuggle Up Safely

*Supplemental heating appliances are the leading culprit of home fires in cold weather*

Approximately one-third of all house fires nationwide occur during the cold, home-heating season of December, January, and February. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), the major cause of these winter fires can be attributed to faulty and improper use and maintenance of supplemental heating equipment, such as space heaters.

"Space heaters can warm up that chilly back room fast, but they need to be used carefully. In addition to fire hazards, these heaters can burn pets and children. Follow these tips from Safe Electricity to learn the proper procedures to keep your family safe," says Spoon River Electric Cooperative President/CEO Bill Dodds.

- Purchase only space heaters that have been safety tested and rated. Make sure the unit is equipped with automatic shut-off features and heating element guards. Read and follow all of the manufacturer's instructions for operation and care.

- Before use, check to make sure the heater is in good condition, and have all problems professionally repaired.



- Place heater out of high-traffic areas and on a level, hard, non-flammable floor surface-- NOT on carpets, furniture or countertops.

- Remember to keep space heaters at least three feet from all flammable items such as draperies, blankets and sofas.

- Do not overload circuits. Don't use extension cords or multiple plugs with a space heater, and make sure the unit is not plugged into same circuit as other electric appliances.

- Never leave space heaters unattended. Turn off your space heater and unplug it before leaving the room or going to bed.

- Some cities have banned the use of many types of portable space heaters. Before purchasing or using any type of space heater, check with your local fire department to find out if it is legal in your community.

For more electrical safety information, visit the [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org) Web site.

## Winter Checklist for Your Home

If you're wondering what you can do to reduce your heating bills immediately, consider the suggestions below. They are arranged in order of urgency and importance.

- Use a programmable thermostat that automatically adjusts your thermostat set point back at night and during the day when no one is home. Or remember to change the temperature set point manually every day.

- If you stay alone in a large house, try to confine your activities to one room and leave the remainder of the house at

the low nighttime set point.

- Use electric blankets or quilts for sleeping comfort and to allow a lower nighttime thermostat setting.

- Change your furnace filter as often as it gets dirty. Buy several when you shop so that you will have one when you need it.

- Seal large air leaks around plumbing pipes, wires, chimneys, and other penetrations through your floors and ceilings. You can find these from your attic or basement.

- Make sure that all your storm

windows are closed during winter weather. If your storm windows are broken or missing, repair or replace them.

- Open drapes and blinds on your home's south-facing windows during the day to let solar heat in.

- Be sure that your walls are filled with insulation and that your attic has at least 8-inches of insulation. Nothing can compensate for lack of insulation. Insulate your walls and attic if they need it.

- If you must replace a gas furnace, choose a 90 percent efficient model to save on heating costs.

## Flooding?

*You can have worse problems than a malfunctioning sump pump*

While attention is focused on winter storm activity, the heavy rains and continued flooding in parts of the state also pose electrical safety threats. Safe Electricity and Spoon River Electric remind everyone to be alert to electrical equipment that could be energized and in contact with water, along with other potential hazards that create a serious danger of electrocution. Cleaning up and using water-damaged appliances also carry safety risks.

Safety measures to keep in mind include:

- Never step into a flooded basement or other room if water may be in contact with electrical outlets, appliances or cords.

- Never attempt to turn off power at the breaker box if you must stand in water to do so. If you can't reach your breaker box safely, call your electric utility to shut off power at the meter.

- Never use electric appliances or touch electric wires, switches or fuses when you're wet or when you're standing in water.

- Keep electric tools and equipment at least 10 feet away from wet surfaces.

- If an electrical appliance has been in contact with water, have a professional check it out before it is used. It may need to be repaired or replaced.

- GFCIs are recommended for outlets near wet areas of the home such as kitchen, bath and laundry room as well as outdoor outlets. These outlets quickly cut off power when there's a problem.

For more information on electrical safety, visit [www.SafeElectricity.org](http://www.SafeElectricity.org).



## Remember the

# HEROES

As you enjoy this festive holiday season with family and friends, pause and give thanks to the many service men and women who are serving our country overseas. Their commitment is insuring the gift of freedom for all of us.

*Brought to you by your local Touchstone Energy® cooperative.*



Touchstone Energy®  
The power of human connections

## Spoon River Electric Cooperative

930 South Fifth Ave, PO Box 340, Canton, IL 61520

8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

(309) 647-2700

[www.srecoop.org](http://www.srecoop.org)

### *President/CEO*

William R. Dodds  
[bdodds@srecoop.org](mailto:bdodds@srecoop.org)

### *Chairman*

Jack Clark, Lewistown

### *Vice Chairman*

Curtis Strode, Marietta

### *Secretary*

Steve Pille, Glasford

### *Treasurer*

Lyle Nelson, Abingdon

### *Assistant Treasurer*

Terry Beam, Cuba

### *Board of Directors*

James Banks, Canton  
Bernard Marvel, Browning  
Scott Parrish, Havana  
Kathy Smysor, Smithfield

### *Editor of Spoon River News*

Vicki Murphy  
[vmurphy@srecoop.org](mailto:vmurphy@srecoop.org)