

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



William R. Dodds
President/CEO

Spoon River Web Site Gets Facelift

As part of the New Year, we are going to be giving a much needed facelift to our Web site at www.srecoop.org. With the help of Scott Snowman, Web Design & Development at Spoon River College, and some of his students, the site will begin reconstruction in mid-January.

The site will have a new look and many new features on energy efficiency and the Co-op Connections Card, as well as the same options of paying and viewing your bill online. You will have access to up-to-date information about SREC and our programs and projects.

With the new site, we can easily update you with outage information, planned or unplanned.

Also, for those of you that pay or view your bill online, this feature will be unavailable

to you until the site's completion. You can call Cheryl or Marcia in the billing department to seek information or pay your bill with your credit or debit card.

If you have any suggestions on content for the site, contact Kaylyn Kuzniar, Director of Marketing and Member Services, as she will be the coordinator of the site during construction and after. We look forward to showing off our new Web site.



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Office Closing

Our office will be closed December 31 and January 1 for the New Year's Holiday.

We at Spoon River Electric get all kinds of questions regarding various topics ranging from capital credits to what our hours of operation are. Below is a section titled Ask the Experts and Words of Wisdom, where various employees will answer the questions that you, the members, ask us most frequently. I hope we have answered your question today, but if we didn't, please give us a call. We will also cover a safety topic, like in this issue, or a topic

of interest that happens to arise around the office or out in the field.

If you would like a certain topic discussed or question printed here, please e-mail me, Kaylyn Kuzniar, Director of Marketing and Member Services at kkuzniar@srecoop.org, and I will get you expert advice and print it in the next Spoon River News Center Section. And, for the record, we are open 8a.m. to 4:30p.m. Monday through Friday.

Ask the Experts

How do I get my password for online billing?

Billing Supervisor Cheryl Marvel says,

"If you are using online billing for the first time, your password is your account number, minus the last two numbers. Log on to www.srecoop.org and click on READ and BILLS, then click on CUSTOMER LOGIN. The next screen will ask you to enter your account number, minus the last two numbers. Re-enter the same number into the password field, and click SUBMIT.

"This next screen will prompt you create a new password that you prefer. Remember, it is case-sensitive and must be between 1 and 10 characters long. After you have changed your password, you have many options on the left side of the screen, including viewing current and past bills, as well as paying your bill online via credit or debit card.

"Please remember that you are charged a \$3 fee for using your debit or credit card. To avoid this fee, you can pay by cash, check or have the bill amount auto-debited from your checking account each month. You can request an auto debit form or call Marcia or I in the Billing Department to set up this billing option. If you have forgotten your password you can e-mail me at cmarvel@srecoop.org, or call to get your password."



I called J.U.L.I.E. Why didn't you come out and locate my facilities?



Engineer Mark Balbinot says,

"When you call JULIE, you are calling to locate Spoon River Electric's facilities only, not your own. If you would like your own facilities located call me here at the office to make an appointment to come out and locate your facilities."

Words of Wisdom

Winter is here and ice can weigh down and damage power lines.

Line Foreman Mike Coffey says,

"If you see a power line down, stay clear, and don't drive over it! Call us immediately and we will take care of it."



How To Install a GFCI Outlet—It Could Save Your Life

Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCI) are required in all new home construction. But if your home was built before 1993 it probably doesn't contain these lifesaving devices. A GFCI will cut the power to a circuit if it detects a fault, like if your mixer falls in a sink full of water. GFCIs should be in your kitchen, bathroom, near pools or spas and in your garage and outdoor outlets.

Please keep in mind that working with anything electrical can be very dangerous. Be sure to take all the safety precautions listed below. If you still feel nervous about it, call an electrician. If your existing electrical box is too small to accommodate a GFCI or if your home's wiring is aluminum instead of copper, you may need to hire an electrician.

1. Turn off the power to the outlet at your fuse or circuit box. Put a tag on the box saying that you are working on the outlet so no one will mistakenly turn the power back on.
2. Test the outlet using a circuit tester (available at most hardware stores). If there is no power in the outlet, continue.
3. Remove the cover plate, unscrew the outlet and pull it out of the wall a few inches.
4. Mark where each wire is attached to the outlet with pieces of tape or draw a sketch of where the wires attach.
5. Remove the wires by loosening the screws attaching them. Now the outlet is free from the wall.
6. Now look at the back of your new GFCI. It will contain two pairs of screw terminals marked Load and Line. There will also be a green grounding screw terminal.

7. Determine whether this outlet is at the end of the circuit. If the old receptacle had a single pair of black, white and green or bare wire attached, then it is the end of the circuit. If it had two pairs of black and white wires, plus a green or bare wire, then it is not at the end. Your installation of your GFCI will vary depending on this. **Warning, if you install the wires incorrectly, you will not get the protection you need.**

- 8a. If the GFCI is at the end of the circuit (one pair of wires) then wind the wires around the screw terminal marked Line and tighten the screws. The black wire goes on the Hot terminal and white wire goes on the White one.

- 8b. If your outlet has two sets of wires you'll need to know which set of wires are coming from the service panel. These two wires will attach to the terminal marked Line. The second set of wires will attach to the terminal marked Load. If you're not

sure which set of wires is which, spread the two sets of wires far apart and switch back on your circuit breaker. Then carefully use your circuit tester to carefully test each set and determine which wires are hot. These are the wires coming from your service panel that attach to the Line terminal. Turn the circuit breaker back off before continuing.

9. Connect the bare or green wire to the grounding screw by winding it in a clockwise direction and tightening the screw.

10. Fasten the GFCI outlet where the old outlet fastened and put back on the cover plate. Turn on your circuit breaker and test your GFCI immediately and every month hereafter. Press the test button, you should hear a click and the power to the receptacle shuts off. Press the reset button and power is restored. If your GFCI was not at the end of the circuit, you may want to use your circuit tester to test outlets coming after it to be sure you kept them powered.

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A New Year's Resolution That Makes Safety Sense!

Eliminate electrical hazards in your home

Tens of thousands of fires are caused each year by electrical problems inside the home, but most can be easily prevented with a few simple steps. Taking a few minutes to check for and eliminate electrical hazards is a New Year's resolution that makes sense!

"Electrical accidents and fires kill more than a thousand people, and result in tens of thousands of injuries each year," says Molly Hall, Director of Safe Electricity. "Overloaded outlets, misused and faulty cords and electrical devices are leading causes of home electrical shocks and fires."

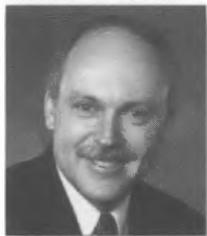
Safe Electricity suggests teaching your children how to be safe around electricity. Use this electrical safety checklist to help protect your home and loved ones:

- **Electrical outlets** – Check for loose-fitting plugs, which can be a shock or fire hazard. Replace missing or broken wall plates so wiring and components are not exposed. If you have young children in the home, make sure unused outlets are covered.
- **Plugs** – Never force them into outlets. Don't remove the grounding pin (third prong) to make a three-prong plug fit a two-conductor outlet. Avoid overloading outlets with adapters and too many appliance plugs.
- **Cords** – Make sure they are not frayed or cracked, placed under carpets or rugs, or located in high traffic areas. Do not nail or staple them to walls, floors or other objects.
- **Extension cords** – Use them on a temporary basis only. They are not intended as permanent household wiring. Make sure they have safety closures to protect young children from shock and mouth burn injuries.
- **Light bulbs** – Check the wattage to make sure light bulbs match the fixture requirements and are screwed securely in place. Replace bulbs that have higher wattage ratings than recommended and consider replacing burned-out bulbs with compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulbs, which last 10 times as long and use one-fourth the energy of an incandescent bulb.
- **Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs)** – Make sure GFCIs are installed in your kitchen, bathrooms, laundry, workshop, basement and garage as well as on outdoor outlets. Test them monthly to ensure they're working properly.
- **Circuit breakers/Fuses** – Fuses should be properly rated for the circuit they are protecting. If you don't know the correct rating, have an electrician identify and label the correct size to be used. Always replace a fuse with the same size you are removing. Check that circuit breakers are working properly.
- **Appliances/Electronics** – If an appliance repeatedly blows a fuse, trips a circuit breaker or has given you an electrical shock, immediately unplug it and have it repaired or replaced. Look for cracks or damage in wiring and connectors. Use surge protectors to protect expensive electronics.
- **Electrical wiring** - Wiring defects are a major cause of residential blazes. Check periodically for loose wall receptacles, wires, or lighting fixtures. Listen for popping or sizzling sounds behind walls. Immediately shut off, then professionally replace light switches that are warm to the touch and lights that spark and flicker.
- **Service capacity** – As you continue to upgrade your home with more lighting, appliances and electronics, your home's electrical service capacity may become overburdened. If fuses blow or breakers trip frequently, you may need to increase electrical service and add new branch circuits. A qualified, licensed electrician can determine the appropriate service requirements for your home.
- **Portable generators** – Be sure your generator is properly grounded and is not plugged into a home outlet or connected directly to your home's wiring system. A transfer switch should always be installed to protect you, your neighbors, and repair crews from serious injury resulting from backfeed. Follow all manufacturer's installation instructions and if you have questions call a licensed electrician for help. Also notify your local utility that a backup generator has been installed.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

A publication of Spoon River Electric Cooperative

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



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\$20,000 in Classroom Grants Awarded to Local Co-op Schools

Touchstone Energy electric cooperatives across Illinois distributed a total of \$20,000 in Touchstone Energy Classroom Empowerment Grants to fund innovative, unfunded school projects or materials. Twenty-one projects were awarded money from a total of the 130 projects submitted to the grant program.

These grants will provide a real boost for smaller projects that would not otherwise be funded.

Eligibility was limited to schools located in Touchstone Energy cooperative service territory, but they did not have to be served electrically by a cooperative. Projects could not be funded by any other source. Although electric-oriented projects were not required, extra consideration was given to projects that are electric oriented.

For more information about Touchstone Energy Classroom Empowerment Grants, please contact us.

The following schools received grants:

Scales Mound H.S.	Greenhouse electric controls
Dieterich H.S.	Wall simulators for household wiring
Fulton Community H.S.	Computerized embroidery machine
Fulton Grade School	Science library/learning centers
Martinsville Grade School	Solar powered power car
Coulterville School District	Science education beyond the classroom
Lincoln Intermediate in Monmout	4-Rs recycling program
Bushnell Prairie City H.S. in Avon	Physics in action, water as fuel
Bushnell Prairie Elem. in Avon	Listen to Learn program
New Simpson Hill School in Tunnel Hill	Generating future co-ops
Main Street School in Shelbyville	Smart Boards
Mendon Schools	Shoebox tasks program
Central A & M H.S. in Moweaqua	Graphing data loggers
Red Bud Grade School	Energized through learning program
St. John the Baptist School in Red Bud	Electric curriculum
Ana Jr. High School	Energy conservation program
Irvington Grade School	Special Education program
Immaculate Conception in Columbia	Tankless water heaters for school
Eldorado H.S.	Smart Boards for teaching rural history
Field Community School in Texico	Electronic library books
Dewey School in Quincy	Technology needed for seven habits program

Ask the Expert

What about my trees?

Josh DeWees, Manager of Forestry says

The difference between primary and secondary wire is important to our vegetation management program. Secondary wire is the covered wire from the transformer to your house. The primary wire is what feeds the whole neighborhood, and that is the wire we are concerned about.

Trees that pose a danger to the secondary wire are your responsibility. If there are trees in your yard that are a danger to our primary line, you can expect that we will trim those trees to the required clearance for a five-year growth period. In an outage or emergency situation we may have to take more extreme measures in order to restore power to you and your neighbors. The brush will be

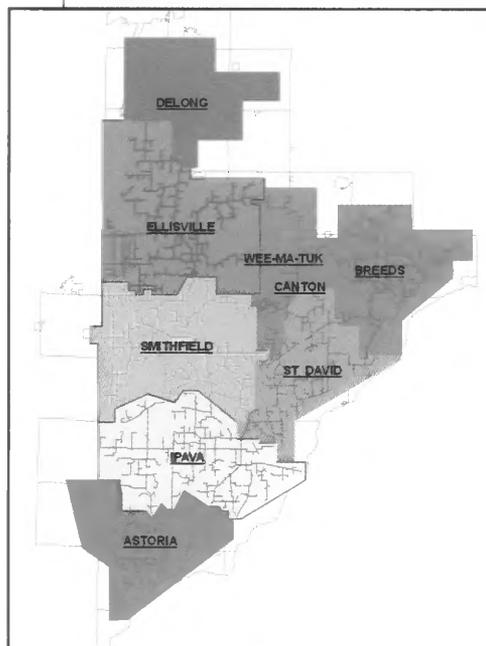


left for your use or disposal.

Also, when you are considering planting trees, be aware of the power lines on or near your property. Research different species or give me a call at the office if you have any questions on tree clearances. I have included a list of trees that are less than 20 feet at maturity.

We are currently working with McDonough Power

Cooperative in Macomb, and we will be working on the St. David and Ipava substations in 2008. Those of you that are on either of those substations, give us a call now if you have any questions regarding trees on or around your property. You can expect to see us in your neighborhood soon.



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Forestry Program

After working with McDonough Power in Macomb, our forestry program will begin maintenance on our St. David and Ipava substations in 2008. Here are some safety tips from our forestry team.

- Prevent children from climbing trees near power lines.
- While our crews are working in your area, please stay a safe distance away from the worksite.
- Make sure you plant your vegetation so it does not grow close or around power lines or utility poles.

The co-op is only concerned with trees and limbs that interfere with our power lines. We are not allowed to fell or prune trees that are clearly the responsibility of the member. Nor will we dispose of member-generated cuttings.

We are concerned about the health and appearance of your trees, so we no longer top trees. Doing so can cause the following:

Starvation: Topping removes so much of the crown that it upsets an older tree's well-developed crown-to-root ratio and temporarily cuts off food-making ability.

Shock: A tree's crown serves as an umbrella that shields the tree and neighboring trees from the sun. Removing the crown exposes the bark of the trees to sun scald, which can cause poor health and even death of a tree.

Insects and Disease: Large stubs have a difficult time healing. This makes the tree vulnerable to invasion from insects and spores of decay fungi.

Weak Limbs: The wood of a new limb that sprouts after a larger limb is stubbed is more weakly attached than a limb that develops normally. If rot exists or develops at the severed end of the limb, the weight of the sprout makes the situation even worse.



Trees less than 20 feet tall at maturity

These trees are good choices for planting around utility lines

Red Buckeye
Service Berry
Siberian Pea Shrub
White Fringe Tree
Flowering Dogwood
Hazelnut
Smoketree
English Hawthorn
Olive (Russian, Autumn)
Burning Bush
Franklinia
Goldenchain Tree
Star Magnolia
Crabapple
Cherry Plum
Higan Cherry
Japanese Flowering Cherry
Wafer Ash
Goat Willow

Stay Safe After Severe Storms

Electrical hazards associated with storms could cause serious injuries

Safe Electricity cautions everyone to be mindful of the electrical hazards that storms and flooding can leave in their wake, and offers vital safety tips to avoid electrocution and serious injury when dealing with the aftermath of a major storm or disaster.

"The danger does not end when the storm does," says Molly Hall, Executive Director of Safe Electricity. "People can be hurt or killed by hazards left behind. It's wise to be cautious in any clean-up effort."

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.

Keep in mind a downed power line that's energized can cause other things around it to become potentially hazardous. A fence or guardrail touching a downed line can be energized for several thousand yards, and this poses a threat to anyone coming into contact with these structures. Also, stay away from puddles of water in contact with downed lines. Encountering these objects can be as hazardous as coming into contact with the downed power line itself.

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

"Before re-entering storm-damaged buildings or rooms, be sure all electric and gas services are turned off," says Hall. "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.

- ❑ 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 10 feet away from wet surfaces.

"Cleaning up and using water-damaged appliances also carry safety risks," says Hall. "Electric motors in appliances that have been drenched or submerged should be thoroughly cleaned and reconditioned before they are put back into service. 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."

For more information on electrical safety, visit the www.SafeElectricity.org.





Member Turns Talent Into Business Laurie's Ceramics in Little America

Laurie sits in front of some of her most popular pieces, her personalized pumpkins and snowmen. Laurie can inscribe the name or phrase of your choice. Next to her sits a turkey that just came out of a mold and she is preparing to clean it of any imperfections.

Are you looking for the right gift? Something personalized? Or some décor to fill that empty spot on the bookshelf? Spoon River Electric member Laurie Johnson may have just what you need.

Upon walking in Laurie's shop, Laurie's Ceramics in Little America, shelves of every figurine you could imagine fill your eyes. You don't know where to look first, to side walls of colorful finished pieces, or to shelves of the pale, stiff bisque just itching for a coat of glaze or stain and another trip to the kiln, only to emerge full of life and color.

If you don't see what you want on the shelves, check out Laurie's catalog of more than 5,000 different molds. You are bound to find that special something, or possibly have Laurie look for that unique item you lost or broke years ago. If she doesn't have it, she either knows someone who does or can order it.

That's how it began for Laurie. "I went to a shop looking for a certain mold and got the bug," she says.

Soon after, Laurie began pouring her own molds, as well as pouring for local ceramics businesses. About seven years ago, she decided to turn

her hobby into a business and opened Laurie's Ceramics. Laurie lives in Lake Camelot with her husband, Keith, and travels to her shop six days a week.

In between greeting customers, Laurie also has her workshop in the back of the building, which houses two kilns used to fire her pieces. Not far from the kiln room is Laurie's workbench where she pours, cleans and glazes her pieces. Across from the workbench sits her vast collection of molds she has acquired since the late 1980s when her hobby sprouted.

"I find it very relaxing," says Laurie, of the several step process of creating her pieces. The process Laurie goes through when creating a certain piece for a customer, or just keeping her shop stocked, begins as simply as picking the right mold. Then, she takes the slip, a creamy mixture that is poured into the mold. The molds are held together by tightly bound, adjustable nylon straps. Large rubber bands are also available to keep the molds compressed.

After the mold is set, Laurie then loosens the mold and sets the piece up to dry and the timely task of cleaning it of any imperfections.

"I am very picky when it comes

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**Our office will be closed
Friday, March 21 for
Good Friday** 

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Laurie's Ceramics Cont.

to my work. It has to be perfect," she says. After cleaning, the piece can be fired to a bisque or left unfired, which is known as greenware. Laurie keeps a good supply of both greenware and bisque pieces on display in her shop.

Glazing or staining follows, allowing Laurie or her customer a little more creativity. She has a variety of glazes and stains available. Once the glaze or stain is applied, it is fired one last time in the kiln. After the kiln cools, Laurie removes the pieces and they are ready to take home.

All of the supplies Laurie uses are available for purchase, from the brushes, cleaning tools and glazes to the slip and molds. She can even special order potter's clay. Laurie is a distributor for Creative Paradise and a dealer for Doc Holliday as well.

During her down time, which is normally the earlier part of the year, Laurie pours and fires various pieces. As the summer continues, she begins to concentrate on her seasonal trees, angels and customer favorites of pumpkins and snowmen. Her pieces can be customized with names, teams, businesses or the phrase of your choice.

During this past holiday season, Laurie so kindly donated a snowman bearing "Spoon River Electric" that we proudly displayed in our drive up window. For most of her personalized pieces, a plug-in light is provided.

On display in her shop, Laurie has a fantastic set of dinner plates she made for her daughter. Each plate was hand poured, and a variety of cartoon characters are underglazed in several time consuming coats in the center of each plate. Accompanying the plates is an impressive matching canister set,



Figurines of all shapes and sizes line the shelves of Laurie's shop.

also poured and specially glazed with cartoon characters. A spoon rest and a salt and pepper shaker set join the plates and canisters. These pieces are not for sale, but Laurie can make you your own customized set with any cartoon character or image of your choice.

The Spoon River Scenic Drive kicks off Laurie's busy season. Finished pieces are available for purchase, as well as unglazed pieces. Special orders can be made and will be shipped, at the customer's expense, anywhere. She also rents out a portion of her property to fellow Scenic Drive vendors.

Laurie is proud of her work, and it is evident in the quality and care of her pieces. If you are looking for something in particular, or are interested in ceramics yourself, please pay her a visit at 21728 E. Route 24 in Little America. She is open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Or call her at 309-668-3120.



An angel sits on a high shelf waiting to be glazed. Angels are another popular item at Laurie's Ceramics.

New Technology Equals New Training

We provide our employees with the information they need to stay safe and familiar with new technologies.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



William R. Dodds
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New technologies have played a huge part in today's changing utility world. In the beginning of the electric cooperatives in 1937, the goal was to get power to rural America in order to power a few light bulbs. Now, the quality of power has become the first priority.

We are no longer providing power to a few light bulbs, we are feeding computerized grain bins, advanced home electronics and large barns and homes that rely on quality power to run efficiently. Decades ago linemen were taught simply to string wire and set poles. Today, they still learn the fundamentals, but they also learn why they are stringing wire and setting the poles.

To better understand these new technologies, we have stepped up to providing employees with advanced training, above and beyond what is required. For example, our forestry team will attend the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperative's Tree School in May at Lake Shelbyville where they will become certified line clearing arborists, with additional training in safety and pruning standards. Recently, the team completed flagging training, which extended their knowledge on securing a work



Spoon River Electric employees (l to r) Josh DeWees, Manager of Forestry; Cheryl Marvel, Billing Supervisor; Frank Romane, AMR tech; and Marcia Proper, Customer Account Representative, all utilize Web training provided by SEDC, the provider of our billing system.

site near a road.

Our journeyman linemen are going to complete courses on advanced substation training, regulator training, advanced metering and hotline school. A few of our office personnel will attend an Automatic Meter Reading (AMR) training seminar in St. Louis this spring.

The great news is that most of the advanced training is free of charge. We are attending training courses provided by the state, the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC), and utilizing our vendors to get more

bang for our buck. In some cases, employees don't even have to leave the co-op. Billing Supervisor Cheryl Marvel, Customer Account Representative Marcia Proper and Forestry Manager Josh DeWees completed training on our billing system via the Internet.

We have committed to keep advanced training an ongoing process. It is essential

to keep up with new technologies to survive in this utility business. This advanced training is critical in maintaining our number one goal of providing you, the member, with quality and safe service.

It is essential to keep up with new technologies to survive in this utility business.

Ask the Experts

What's so special about my new meter?

Frank Romane,
AMR tech says...



Automatic meter reading (AMR) utilizes Two-Way Automatic Communications System (TWACS), which improves operating efficiency in many ways. TWACS does more than read meters automatically, it detects meter tampering (resulting in lower line loss expense), aids in locating the source of a power outage, monitors power quality (blinking lights) and tracks usage patterns.

Power quality tests can also be performed by conducting voltage checks to determine if power is flowing correctly from the substation to the meter.

Implementing AMR has reduced costs for SREC by eliminating monthly meter reading cards, estimated billings due to hard to access meters and inaccurate readings. AMR has also reduced the internal processing time and procedures needed to bill members.

The new meters have a special module, which allows the meters to be read from the cooperative's office. A command to read the TWACS meters is sent from a computer at the co-op; the signal then travels to the substation via radio where a unit is installed that allows the readings to be collected remotely. From the substation the signal then goes to meters through the power lines. The meter readings are then transmitted to the computer in reverse order.

Examples of How AMR Will Help You

The AMR system will give SREC's employees new tools to provide better service and offer more convenience for the member. Here are a few examples of the conveniences of AMR.

- Suppose you suspect a problem with your water heater, which can raise an electric bill higher than normal. In 20 to 30 seconds, the co-op's billing supervisor will be able to read the meter to help determine if you have a problem, and create a report to help identify what, exactly, is causing the high electric bill.
- If you and your neighbors have lost power. Using TWACS, SREC will be able to send a signal to area meters to see if they have power. This enables the co-op to handle small and large outages more efficiently.
- If you don't have power, but the co-op finds that power is reaching the meter, then you will quickly know you need to check for such things as circuit breakers or damaged wire on your side of the meter.
- Before calling the co-op, you can determine if the problem is on the co-op's side of the meter, or your side. If numbers are displayed on your meter and the power is out, the problem is on your side

of the meter. If the display is blank, give the co-op a call to report the outage.

• If you have power in only part of your home, SREC's billing supervisor will be able to determine the voltage levels at the meter in about 30 seconds. The information provided will determine whether the problem is in your home requiring an electrician, or something the co-op needs to fix.

• If your lights continue to blink, the co-op will be able to track and locate the source of blinking lights on the system. If the meter locates an outage on the system at any time it will record that information in a database. When the meter is read at midnight it will notify the co-op of unnecessary blinking. The co-op also has the option of directing all of its attention to a certain area where members are reporting excessive blinking lights. This can help SREC identify where the blinks are coming from in a timely manner and can help the co-op determine how to solve the problem.

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Spoon River

N E W S

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

A publication of Spoon River Electric Cooperative

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



**William R.
Dodds**
President/CEO

Subsidiary Expands

We are proud to announce our subsidiary, Spoon River Propane, has purchased Easley Mechanical Services. Easley Mechanical is a well-established Canton business that provides heating, cooling and plumbing services.

We will continue to provide the excellent service Easley Mechanical has always offered its customers and community. This was an opportunity for us to help you, the member, better utilize your energy dollar.

Easley Mechanical was founded 32 years ago by Kermit Easley. The 11 employees on staff at the business will help make the transition to new ownership a smooth one. The experience and commitment to customers shown by the staff are tremendous assets to the business. They are an integral part of our plans for the future.

In addition to serving the existing base of customers and contractors, in the future Easley Mechanical will also consult with Spoon River Electric members, as well as customers in the Canton and surrounding communities, about energy efficiency.

Due to the increasing demand worldwide for energy and the impact of deregulation on

power costs, it is more important than ever that we educate you, the member, and customers about energy savings realized through the use of energy-efficient appliances, geothermal technology and energy-efficient lighting. Now we can have employees working in the field on energy audits in homes and businesses to help members implement plans to create savings.

"The purchase of Easley Mechanical will help us meet our ongoing mission, which is providing high-quality, reliable service," said Jack Clark, Chairman of the board of directors. "I believe this will be easy to achieve given the high standards Kermit Easley and his family set in the business."

Kermit Easley's wife, Bonnie, said, "Kermit worked hard for many years to build his business into what it is today. He cared for his employees and his customers and I know he would be pleased by this purchase because his commitment to them will be carried on by Spoon River Propane."

There will be no lapse in services at Easley Mechanical, which is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. New and existing customers can reach the business at 309-647-3450.

In this issue...

- New Homes and Training for Dogs..... 16a-16c
- Propane Safety, News and Notes..... 16d

Moore Care Kennel offers homes and training for dogs

Spoon River Electric members Nina and Bob Moore have been showing horses, raising Shetland Sheepdogs (Shelties) and boarding animals for years. As a next step, the Moores began rescuing dogs and created Moore Care Kennel at their home outside of Knoxville.

Many of the rescued dogs arrived with behavior problems and Nina found a need for obedience training at her facility. Nina's daughter, Michelle Terpening, provided training for the kennel and 10 years ago began offering obedience training classes.

Michelle began with a Puppy Kindergarten class that encourages early, hands-on education with a new puppy. It is a one-day course for owners to learn the basics of obedience. "We make the puppies surrender to their owners to show dominance. This helps with future training, as well as everyday obedience," says Nina.

Moore Care Kennel also offers six-week summer and winter obedience courses for dogs and owners. Michelle leads the classes with her assistant Farrah, a Toy Fox Terrier, who trots by Michelle's side as the demonstration dog for other classmates. Activities and lessons include the basics such as 'sit' and 'stay' and walking with a leash.

"We recommend using a choke or pinch collar, especially for larger breeds. However, we do not recommend keeping the collar on all the time. The collars are for training purposes only," says Michelle.

Michelle and Nina say a group class is essential. "It provides distractions for the dogs and



Buddy, a Puggle (a Pug-Beagle mix), gets up close and personal with the camera before class begins.

owners to overcome," says Nina. "A social atmosphere helps the dogs interact with unfamiliar surroundings, people and dogs."

Nina and Michelle encourage owners to continue training at home and keep it consistent. They both agree that it is obvious in class who practices with their dog and who doesn't.

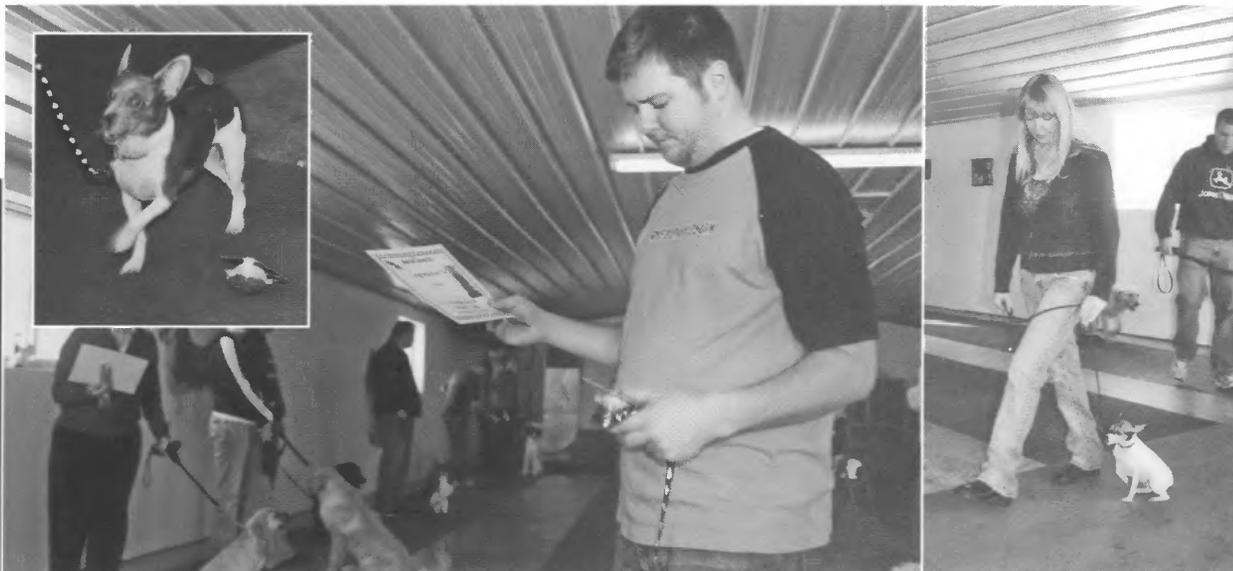
"We are really educating the owners in these classes," says Nina. "We give them the tools to train their dogs and properly respond to their behaviors."

For Chad and Renee Clevenger of Galesburg, Moore Care Kennel was their answer for an unruly puppy. Windsor, a 9-month-old Toy Fox Terrier, ruled the roost. The Clevengers wanted Windsor to listen better and interact positively with other people and dogs. In the last class, known as Graduation, Michelle awarded Windsor

the most improved dog out of the bunch. He received some fancy treats and a squeaky bug toy he quickly began to toss around. Renee says, "We have seen a huge improvement in his behavior. It was the best \$65 we have spent!"

Patti Bibo of Galesburg agrees. She has returned to Moore's for training basics for a new puppy. Patti is the proud owner of Buddy, a Puggle puppy, which is a Pug-Beagle mix. "My husband and I have trained three dogs. I came to Moore's to refresh on the basics for Buddy. I really like their positive philosophy."

Moore Care Kennel is located at 1307 Knox Highway 8, Knoxville, IL 61448. For more information please call 309-289-8838 or visit their Web site at <http://moorecarekennel.homestead.com/>.



Nina & Michelle's Tips

Dogs do not come pre-trained!

Research the breed before you purchase or rescue. Each breed has a different disposition. Find out which one fits your lifestyle.

Watch out for impulsive buys or rescues. You could be getting in over your head!

If you do end up with a puppy, enroll them in a local Puppy Kindergarten class. It is important to begin at a young age.

All breeds are different. Some are more trainable than others.

It's a good idea to have your dog learn how to walk on a leash.

Learn how to use a choke/pinch collar properly. You want to maximize effectiveness and not injure your dog. These collars are for training purposes only and are not to be left on your dog.

Dogs are like children; they are happier when they have boundaries and discipline.



The six-week session is over and Chad Clevenger's Toy Fox Terrier, Windsor (inset), was awarded the Most Improved Dog out of the class.

A teacher must have an example to show her pupils, both human and canine. Farrah, Michelle Terpening's Toy Fox Terrier, sits next to her left side before a quick walk around the room.

McKenzie, a Sheltie, watches the graduation class from the sidelines. McKenzie's owner, Sheila Johnson, facilitated the obedience classes before Michelle took over.

Words of Wisdom

Small cylinder transport and storage

Always transport and store cylinders in a secure, upright position so they will not shift, fall or roll.

Always close the cylinder valve and seal with a plug, even if the cylinder is empty.

Never keep a filled cylinder inside a hot vehicle or inside a trunk. Place it in a well-ventilated area of the vehicle.

Always proceed directly to your destination and immediately remove the cylinder from your vehicle.

Never store or place a propane cylinder indoors or in an enclosed area such as a garage, shed or tent.

Never store or place a cylinder in or near excessive heat. Heat builds pressure and could cause the pressure relief valve to release propane, which can result in flash fires or explosions.

Sources: ConocoPhillips Propane Marketing & Propane Education & Research Council

Emergency Propane Safety Procedures

If you suspect a leak:

Do not perform any action that can cause an open flame or spark.

Ventilate the area.

Do not turn the lights on or off.

Do not use any type of phone, including a cell phone.

Do not operate any type of equipment or appliance.

If it is safe, close all gas tank, cylinder or gas meter valves.

Tank and cylinder valves turn off in the clockwise direction.
Gas meter valves are in the off position when the handle is perpendicular to the piping.

Leave the area and immediately call the fire department and your trained propane service professional.

Do not re-enter the area until it has been inspected by a professional and determined to be safe.

Have a trained propane professional do the following:

Repair any leak, Turn on the gas, Leak test the system, Check all the gas appliances, Relight the pilot lights.

Spoon River Propane: 309-649-5462 • 888-346-6771

Duane Siegel, General Manager
Spoon River Propane
24005 N. IL Hwy 78, PO Box 370
Canton, IL 61520

Notes & Reminders

Installation of 3-phase meters

We are currently installing new, digital three-phase meters to our members. We should have all meters installed by mid-March.

Reminder: Surge Protectors

If the surge protector on your meter was installed more than 10 years ago the warranty has expired. Those surge protectors may have the brand

names of Meter Treater or Cooper. Surge protectors installed before 2003 do not protect sensitive electronics in your home.

However, the new Tesco surge protectors installed after 2003 do protect most electronics from power surges through power lines only. The Tesco surge protectors carry a 10-year warranty.

Remember, surge protectors installed on meters protect surges through power lines, not through cable or phone lines. Surges that come through phone or cable lines can also damage your electronics.

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT



**William R.
Dodds**
President/CEO

We at Spoon River Electric are proud to announce that our new Web site at www.srecoop.org is complete.

Our commitment to innovation and advancements in technology prompted us to give our Web site an overhaul. Kaylyn Kuzniar, Director of Marketing and Member Services, worked on the site with John Parkinson, a student at Spoon River College. Their goal was to make the site user-friendly and full of information that you, the member, can utilize. Kaylyn has provided some navigation tips on the next page, as well as some interactive stops to make while you are browsing.

Additions worth mentioning are links to our subsidiaries Spoon River Propane and Easley Mechanical Services. The Spoon River Propane link offers propane news, customer information and safety tips. The Easley Mechanical Services link offers news on special savings as well as heating, cooling, geothermal and water heater product information.

In conjunction with Spoon River Propane and Easley Mechanical Services, we at



SREC want to educate you on energy efficiency. With the rising demand for energy and the increase in fuel costs, we want you to better use your energy dollar. The new site offers several links to organizations dedicated to energy efficiency, including some interactive tools like the Light Bulb Energy Saver and the Energy Savings Home Tour from Touchstone Energy.

Along with the above additions to the site, we still offer the same, general information on SREC, plus more. The site will be updated often, so when you pay your bill online, take a few extra minutes to browse around. Turn to the next page and Kaylyn will guide you through the site.

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Scholarship Entry..... 16c

Electrical Safety Month..... 16d

I am excited about our new Web site and ever more excited to show you around. Before I do, I would like to make a quick note on computers; every computer is different. The site will look different depending on what internet browser (Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox, Safari, etc.) you are using. The size and settings of your monitor can also change the look of the site. If you are having problems viewing the site or accessing any of the links, please let me know. Also, please contact me with any suggestions or concerns you may have.

-Navigation Bar: On the dark blue Navigation Bar at the top of the page, drop-down menus offer a good deal of information and resources to you. I will mention a few important and useful stops to make as you are browsing through the site.

The jam-packed menu of **Community + Members** provides information on our community programs, such as scholarships. Safety is number one here at SREC, so I have listed a few electrical safety links. The recipes in the monthly Illinois Country Living magazine are a popular feature. I have provided a link that will take you right to the site so you can browse the recipe archives.

The **Rates + Payment** menu offers downloadable forms for the Budget-Billing and Auto-Debit programs.

Energy Efficiency provides great links loaded with information on energy efficiency and savings. Be sure to check out the interactive tools such as the Energy Savings Home Tour.



The **Other Services** menu offers information about the additional services we provide to our members and the community.

The **About** menu is filled with general information regarding the co-op, directors, links to the friends that help us out and a great page on the history of SREC.

-Homepage: You will notice the dark blue navigation bar at the top of the page, just under our logo, which will give you drop-down menus to access different pages of the site.



Just under the navigation bar are button links to **Spoon River Propane** and **Easley Mechanical Services**.

On the right side of the page the **Pay/View Your Bill Online** button links to the log-in page for on-line bill payment.

The **Outage Information** button will link to a page with up-to-date outage information to keep you informed during a major outage.

The button link to **JULIE** provides the Illinois One-Call System information.

The **Co-Op Connections Card** button links to a page with pharmacy discount information and a link directly to our list of discount deals offered by local businesses.

The **Light Bulb Energy Saver** can give you an estimate of how much money you will save if you replace incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent (CFL) bulbs.

Happy Browsing!



ATTENTION 2008-2009 SENIORS!

Spoon River Electric Cooperative is Awarding Two \$500 Scholarships to High School Seniors

High School seniors who are the son or daughter of a Spoon River Electric member can apply for a \$500 Scholastic Scholarship or a \$500 Honorary Scholarship, to be awarded by the cooperative at this year's Annual Meeting held on September 4, 2008.

Fill out the form at the bottom of the page and send to the cooperative before August 25, 2008, to participate. Please see official rules and descriptions of scholarships below.

OFFICIAL RULES

- Applying students and their parent/legal guardian must be present at the Annual Meeting September 4, 2008, to win.
- Students must be a son or daughter of a Spoon River Electric Cooperative Member.
- Students must be a high school senior during the 2008/2009 school year and begin college undergraduate studies in the 2009/2010 school year.
- Students must plan on attending a two-year or four-year accredited college or university, including vocational/technical schools.
- Scholarship winners must be full-time students (at least 12 hours) during the 2009/2010 academic year.
- Scholarships are for one year and non-renewable.

SCHOLASTIC SCHOLARSHIP

- The Scholastic Scholarship will be awarded based on an application detailing GPA, college entrance test scores, work and volunteer experience, participation in school and community activities, and a biographical statement.
- Five semi-finalists will be chosen from the scholastic application forms received.
- Semi-finalists will be notified by mail with a time and place for a personal interview.
- Those not chosen as semi-finalists for the Scholastic Scholarship will be automatically placed in the Honorary Scholarship drawing.

HONORARY SCHOLARSHIP

- The Honorary Scholarship will be awarded by a drawing as students are recognized at the Annual Meeting.
- All applicants are eligible for the Honorary Scholarship drawing except the Scholastic Scholarship winner.



Scholarship Participation Request

Name of Student _____

Address of Student _____

Name of Parent/Guardian _____

Telephone Number _____

Scholarship Applying For: Scholastic* _____ Honorary _____

Return To: Kaylyn Kuzniar
Spoon River Electric Cooperative
PO Box 340
Canton, IL 61520
647-2700

*Those applying for the Scholastic Scholarship will receive an additional form in the mail regarding scholastic achievement.

Home Safe Home

May is Electrical Safety Month

Electric energy use is typically on the rise during warmer weather, so as part of the new "Teach Learn Care" TLC campaign, Safe Electricity suggests "there is no time like the present" to conduct an electrical home inspection. During National Electrical Safety Month in May, the program encourages everyone to make sure your home is safe from electrical hazards to prevent electrical-related deaths, injuries and property damage.

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), faulty home electrical wiring is responsible for 40,000 fires a year and results in the loss of 350 lives, thousands of injuries from electrical shocks and burns and more than \$2 billion in personal property damage. It's estimated that more than 50 million homes and buildings have outdated or inadequate electrical wiring.

"Electrical hazards have a tendency to remain hidden until it's too late to avoid disaster. Don't let the small cost of prevention stand in the way of protecting your family and your property," says Mike Ashenfelder, Sangamon County Electrical Inspector "There are many things you can inspect on your own to ensure electrical safety in your home."

- Check electrical outlets for loose fitting plugs that can shock or be a fire hazard. Replace missing or broken wall plates so that the

inner wiring components are not exposed. If you have young children, make sure safety covers are used on unused outlets and outlets are not overloaded with too many appliance plugs. Consider installing tamper-resistant receptacles, which have a built-in shutter system that prevents hairpins and other small objects from being inserted into the outlet.

- Check the cords of the appliances in your home as well as the plugs and connectors. Make sure that they are not frayed, cracked or damaged, placed under rugs or carpets, resting on furniture, or located in high traffic areas. Do not nail or staple cords to walls, floors or any other objects.

- Extension cords should be used on a temporary basis only because they are not intended for use as permanent household wiring. Have additional outlets installed where you need them instead of relying on extension cords and power strips. If you are using extension cords, make sure that they have safety closures to protect young children from shock hazards or mouth burn injuries.

Never use an indoor extension cord for outdoor use. Use an extension cord specifically for outdoors; they are heavier and less likely to be damaged.

- Check your electrical panel to make sure that the breakers and fuses are properly rated for the circuit that they are protecting. If you do not know what the correct rating is, have a qualified electrician identify and

label the correct size to be used. If you are replacing a fuse, make sure that you replace it with the same size as the one that you are removing.

- Check light bulbs and appliances to make sure the wattage matches fixture requirements. Make sure not to replace bulbs with those that have higher wattage than recommended. Additionally, the bulb should be screwed in securely to prevent overheating.

- If an appliance repeatedly blows a fuse, trips a circuit breaker or gives you an electrical shock, immediately unplug, repair or replace it.

- Check for or install ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). A GFCI is an inexpensive electrical device that shuts off power instantly if there is a problem and should be installed in all "wet" areas of the home such as bathrooms, kitchens and basements. GFCIs should be tested monthly to ensure they are working properly. It's estimated more than two-thirds of the roughly 300 electrocutions occurring each year in and around the home could be prevented if GFCIs were installed in household branch circuits.

- Consider installing arc-fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs) on bedroom circuits, smoke detectors in all bedrooms and in hallways within 15' of bedrooms, and at least one smoke detector on every level. As always, check with your local electrical inspector if you have questions or concerns.

- Inspect all outdoor connections, appliances and tools for frayed cords, broken plugs and cracked or broken housings.

For more information on electrical safety, visit www.SafeElectricity.org.

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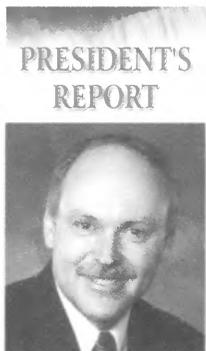
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Pay on Time and Save Yourself Money

In order for Spoon River Electric to operate in an efficient and financially sound manner, we must maintain a timely payment procedure fair and equal to all members. Any inconsistency in the procedure is costly to us, as well as to all of our members.

Past-due bills cause the cost of service to go up. Past-due bills hurt the financial condition of the co-op by reducing yearly operating margins and causing the membership to pay the uncovered expenses that disconnect/re-connect fees do not always cover.

Please refer to our Rates and Payment Procedure document for late payment charges and fees associated with disconnection. This document was included in your New Member Packet you received when you signed up for membership. The document is also available on our Web site at www.srecooop.org under Rates + Payment.

We are taking an assertive approach to reduce the amount of past-due accounts on our system. Our linemen who are out collect-



ing will be in Spoon River Electric trucks, as well as uniforms, identifying who they are. To avoid disconnection and extra penalties, please call the office and make adequate and reliable payment arrangements.

The rising cost of electricity affects you, as well as the cooperative. The future projections of energy cost offer no relief. Lowering your energy bill starts with you and a few small changes. Visit our Web site and click on Energy Efficiency for great tools and tips to help lower your energy costs.

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Spoon River Participates in Youth Day Activities

Senators David Koehler, Dale Risinger and John Sullivan and Representatives Rich Myers and Donald Moffitt met with 12 students representing Spoon River Electric Cooperative and 10 students from Mid Century Telephone Co-operative during the Illinois Electric and Telephone Cooperatives Youth Day on Wednesday, April 9, in Springfield. Students had an opportunity to view state government in action and tour the State Capitol, Illinois Supreme Court, Old State Capitol and the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum.

First row from left are Rep. Myers, Alyssa Saylor of Altona, Alisha Curtis of Gilson, Hannah Neuendorf of Lewistown, Daniel Lefler of Fairview, Sen. Koehler and Haley Fahnstrom of Canton

Second row from left are: Sen. Risinger, Sam Shafer of Lewistown, Victoria Smallegan of Fairview, Ellie Savage of Galva, Caitlyn Beard of Astoria, Dakota Horn of Farmington and Erika Hickie of Vermont

Third row from left are: Justin Scharfenberg of Maquon, Tim Larson of Galva, Libby Bair of



Browning, Nathan Williams of Canton and Sen. Sullivan

Fourth row from left are: Ian Stewart of Rio, Logan Bowman of Maquon, Aaron Parsano of Vermont, Michael Heitz of Vermont, Logan Bute of Canton, Brodie Cowin of Browning and Josie Casidy of Vermont.

The day was sponsored by the Illinois electric and telephone co-ops and is designed to introduce young rural leaders to state government.

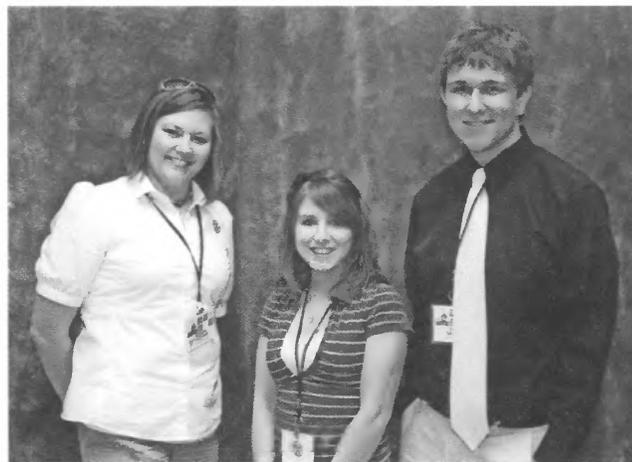
Spoon River Electric Cooperative is a member of Touchstone Energy® — an alliance of more than 660 local, consumer-owned electric utilities around the

country. Spoon River Electric is committed to providing superior service based on four core principles: integrity, accountability, innovation and commitment to community. The co-op serves more than 4,784 members over 1,238 miles of line in parts of Fulton, Knox, McDonough, Peoria and Schuyler counties. For more information visit www.srecoop.org.

Mid Century Telephone Co-operative serves members in Fulton, Henry, Knox, McDonough, Peoria and Stark counties. For more information visit www.mid-century.com.

Spoon River's Youth to Washington Tour Winners

Out of the 12 Youth Day participants Spoon River has chosen its 2008 Rural Electric Youth to Washington Representatives. Alisha Curtis (center) of Knoxville, daughter of Wilbur and Terasa Curtis; and Sam Shafer (right) of Lewiston, son of Tom and Terri Shafer will attend the event from June 13 – 20. Pictured with the students is Spoon River's Director of Marketing and Membership Kaylyn Kuzniar, who will serve as a chaperone during the trip.



Frank and Bill at transformer school



Spoon River Electric Cooperative Linemen Bill Braden (right) of Glasford and Frank Romane of Canton are working on a simulation during a transformer education class. The class covers transformer maintenance and troubleshooting. "Transformers are used to step down voltage from distribution lines to the services in your home," says Roger Larkin, coordinator for the class and Manager of Lineworker and Apprentice Development at the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC). The AIEC hosted the class from March 31 – April 3 in Springfield.

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Don't Forget! Next Month is the Fulton County Fair



Held annually at the Fulton County Fair Grounds in Lewistown. The Fair begins on July 21 and concludes July 26. Check the schedule below so you don't miss your favorite event.

Monday, July 21

6 p.m. Fulton County Queen Pageant & Talent Show

Tuesday, July 22

6 p.m. Motocross Races

Wednesday, July 23

9 a.m. Livestock Showings

6 p.m. ITPA Tractor Pull/Mini/Local 4X4 Truck Pull

Thursday, July 24

9 a.m. Livestock Showings

12 p.m. Harness Races

Kid's Day

6 p.m. Calf/Pig Scrambles

Friday, July 25

12 p.m. Horse Races

4 p.m. Kid's Petal Tractor Pull

6 p.m. ITPA Tractor and Truck Pull

Saturday, July 26

9 a.m. Tri-County FFA Shows

6 p.m. Demolition Derby

Events times and dates may change. Please contact the Fulton County Fair at 309-547-3748 for a complete schedule.



Spoon River
Electric Linemen
Mike Coffey, Rick
Roudebush, and
Donnie Schrodt (in
bucket) set a pole
in order to install
a tornado siren in
Wee-Ma-Tuk on
April 23, 2008.



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PRESIDENT'S REPORT



William R. Dodds
President/CEO

Our Energy, Our Future

Pressure is mounting in Congress to do something about climate change. And while political debates in Washington, D.C., may seem far away, the outcome will have a direct impact on our cooperative – and on you, the cooperative member and other electric consumers.

Climate change is but one aspect of a looming energy crisis created by increasing demand and decreasing capacity to meet that demand. Experts now say some areas of the country will be short of power within one or two years.

And yet energy supply isn't an issue our elected representatives are spending a lot of time on. These forces, the desire by government

to reduce greenhouse gas emissions quickly and the growing demand for power by consumers, are about to collide.

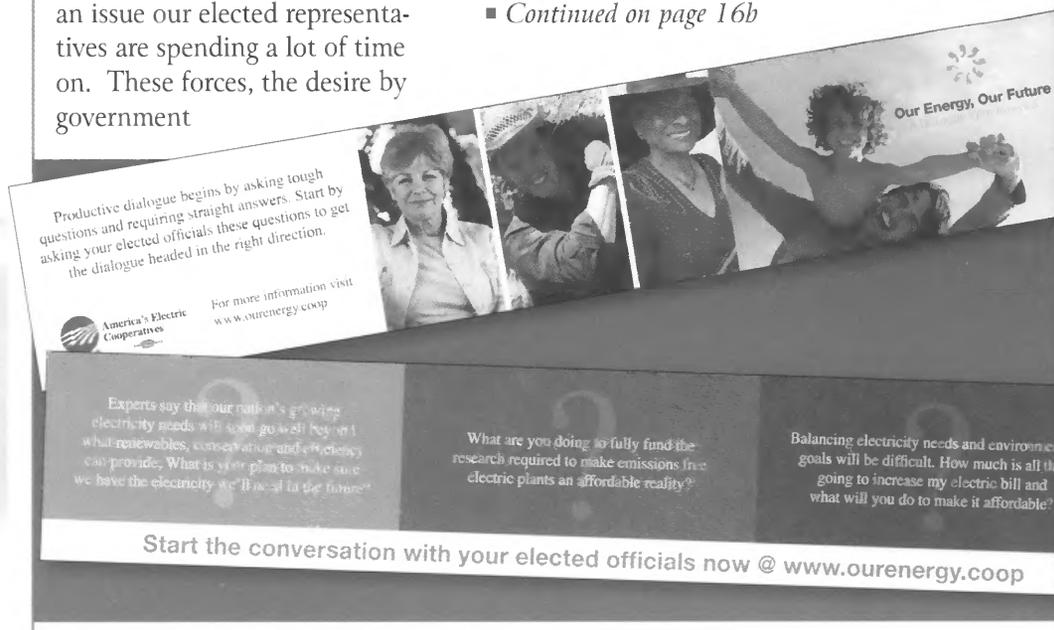
Some people say we can meet demand through efficiency and renewable energy. The reality is we need all the efficiency and renewable energy we can get, but that will not be enough.

To avert an energy crisis, the federal government must exercise true leadership, the same leadership that got Americans to the moon in the 1960s. Without that leadership – without a sound, responsible plan

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Productive dialogue begins by asking tough questions and requiring straight answers. Start by asking your elected officials these questions to get the dialogue headed in the right direction.

For more information visit www.ourenergy.coop

America's Electric Cooperatives

Experts say that our nation's growing electricity needs will soon go well beyond what renewables, conservation and efficiency can provide. What is your plan to make sure we have the electricity we'll need in the future?

What are you doing to fully fund the research required to make emissions free electric plants an affordable reality?

Balancing electricity needs and environmental goals will be difficult. How much is all this going to increase my electric bill and what will you do to make it affordable?

Start the conversation with your elected officials now @ www.ourenergy.coop

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■ *Our Energy, Our Future continued from page 16a*

– government risks not only the reliability of our electric system, but literally the ability of many Americans to be able to afford to pay their electric bill.

We, as electric co-op members and constituents, must call on elected officials to provide this leadership. That's why I want to encourage you to contact your elected officials. Now.

You don't need to be an energy expert to ask questions. Asking questions helps find the answers to solve the problem of balancing climate change goals with keeping your lights on and your electric bills affordable.

Right now, members of Congress as well as state elected officials are hearing from lots of different interest groups who have ideas about how to address climate change. No one is talking to consumers, however. We need a plan people can live with

today while we deal with the climate change problem of tomorrow.

To make things easy, we have a website that will send an email for you. Go to www.ourenergy.coop and plug in your address. There you'll be able to ask a series of questions to your representatives in Washington. We're kicking this effort off with a basic but critical question: What are they doing to make sure we'll have the power we need in the future?

Far too often questions don't get asked by policy makers until plans go wrong. We believe it makes sense to know the answers before the laws are passed. You can help your elected officials and yourself by having this conversation. The electric bill you save will be your own.

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

President/CEO

William R. Dodds 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

Kaylyn Kuzniar

kkuzniar@srecoop.org

ATTENTION

2008-2009 SENIORS!

Spoon River Electric Cooperative is Awarding Two \$500 Scholarships to High School Seniors

High School seniors who are the son or daughter of a Spoon River Electric member can apply for a \$500 Scholastic Scholarship or a \$500 Honorary Scholarship, awarded by the cooperative at this year's Annual Meeting held on September 4, 2008.

Fill out the form at the bottom of the page and send to the cooperative before August 25, 2008, to participate. Please see official rules and descriptions of scholarships below.

OFFICIAL RULES

- Applying students and their parent/legal guardian must be present at the Annual Meeting September 4, 2008, to win.
- Students must be a son or daughter of a Spoon River Electric Cooperative Member.
- Students must be a high school senior during the 2008/2009 school year and begin college undergraduate studies in the 2009/2010 school year.
- Students must plan on attending a two-year or four-year accredited college or university, including vocational/technical schools.
- Scholarship winners must be full-time students (at least 12 hours) during the 2009/2010 academic year.
- Scholarships are for one year and non-renewable.

SCHOLASTIC SCHOLARSHIP

- The Scholastic Scholarship will be awarded based on an application detailing GPA, college entrance test scores, work and volunteer experience, participation in school and community activities, and a biographical statement.
- Five semi-finalists will be chosen from the scholastic application forms received.
- Semi-finalists will be notified by mail with a time and place for a personal interview.
- Those not chosen as semi-finalists for the Scholastic Scholarship will be automatically placed in the Honorary Scholarship drawing.

HONORARY SCHOLARSHIP

- The Honorary Scholarship will be awarded by a drawing as students are recognized at the Annual Meeting.
- All applicants are eligible for the Honorary Scholarship drawing except the Scholastic Scholarship winner.



Scholarship Participation Request

Name of Student _____

Address of Student _____

Name of Parent/Guardian _____

Telephone Number _____

Scholarship Applying For: Scholastic* _____ Honorary _____

Return To: Kaylyn Kuzniar
Spoon River Electric Cooperative
PO Box 340
Canton, IL 61520
647-2700

*Those applying for the Scholastic Scholarship will receive an additional form in the mail regarding scholastic achievement.

How to

Keep your refrigerator from using more power than necessary

Your refrigerator runs often, which means it's the biggest energy user in your kitchen. If you have a really old unit, it will use even more energy. Check out these steps to keep your refrigerator running at its best.

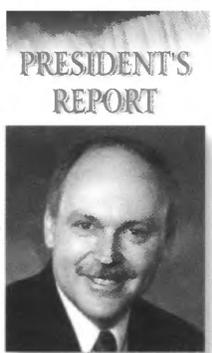
1. **Check the temperature.** Your freezer should be between 0-5°. Your fridge should be 35-38°. Use an appliance or outdoor thermometer to check the temp.
2. **Keep it full.** A fridge or freezer with empty spaces loses the temperature quicker, making the compressor run more often.
3. **Clean it once a year.** Not the inside, the outside. The condenser coils on the back of or underneath your fridge can get pretty dirty. Unplug the unit and then vacuum them.
4. **Don't smother it.** Find another place for storage, leave the top and sides free for ventilation.
5. **Close the door.** Keep the door closed and make sure it's tightly sealed. Just give it a little extra nudge each time to be sure.
6. **Keep foods sealed.** Put cooled foods in labeled plastic containers with lids. Evaporating moisture or hot foods make the compressor run more.



Our office will be closed
for Friday, July 4th.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

A publication of Spoon River Electric Cooperative



William R. Dodds
President/CEO

71st Annual Meeting Scheduled

The 71st Annual Meeting is just around the corner. The Annual Meeting is September 4, 2008 at 7 p.m. at Canton High School Auditorium.

We have a great program planned for you. A pork chop dinner and registration will begin at 5 p.m. Please call the office to make a dinner reservation. Entertainment for the evening is Panther Creek Duo. Mike Porter and Marsha Banning have received many awards such as the 2006 Illinois Country Music Association's Entertainer of the Year and their recent album earned the 2007 (NACMI) Country Music Album of the Year.

Our theme for this year is "Bright Ideas." With the changing rate environment and the increase in demand for energy worldwide, I will be discussing the rate increases SREC, and

others, will face in the future. In addition to rate increases, I will be discussing our power supply, achievements in the past year, and what we are doing to address the impact of rising energy costs.

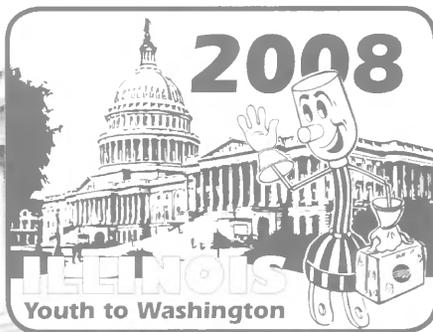
We have three Directors up for re-election: Greg Leigh of Avon, Lyle Nelson of Abingdon and Jim Banks of Canton.

Annual Meeting Scholarships will be awarded again this year. Please turn the page for the official rules and a participation form. As always, attendance prizes will be given away at the conclusion of the meeting. The Board of Directors and I encourage you to become involved in the co-op and attend this year's Annual Meeting. You will be receiving an Annual Meeting Notice in the mail with more details. I hope to see you on September 4th.

In this issue...

- Youth to Washington..... 16b
- Annual Meeting Scholarship Form..... 16c
- Customer Appreciation Day..... 16d

Our office will be closed on Sept. 1 in observance of Labor Day. The office will reopen on Sept. 2



Alisha Curtis of Gilson and Sam Shafer of Lewistown represented Spoon River Electric Cooperative in Washington, D.C., during the annual "Youth to Washington" Tour, June 13-20. Kaylyn Kuzniar, from the co-op, also attended in the role of chaperone. 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 met with several of their elected officials in the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate and were among 66 rural Illinois youth leaders selected for the trip. In addition to the Capitol, they also visited the White House, Arlington National Cemetery, the National Cathedral, the Smithsonian Museums, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the World War II Memorial, the new Newseum and a number of other historical sites.

Pictured from left are Shafer, Youth Tour Director John Freitag and Curtis.

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Telephone Number _____

Scholarship Applying For: Scholastic* _____ Honorary _____

Return To: Kaylyn Kuzniar
Spoon River Electric Cooperative
PO Box 340
Canton, IL 61520
647-2700

*Those applying for the Scholastic Scholarship will receive an additional form in the mail regarding scholastic achievement.

Customer Appreciation Day

Spoon River Propane and Easley Mechanical Services held a Customer Appreciation Day at Spoon River Propane's facility on Thursday, June 26. Both businesses wanted to thank customers for their business and continued support.

Over 500 customers were served a lunch or dinner of barbecue pork, Italian beef, brats and hot dogs. Those in attendance were eligible for prizes, including free propane from Spoon River Propane and free Clean and Checks from Easley Mechanical.

Spoon River Propane winners are Jim Hickman of Glasford, 100 gallons of propane and Don Oest of Avon, 50 gallons of propane. George and Marjorie Long of Table Grove won two Moon Valley rustic chairs. Easley Mechanical Clean and Check winners are David and Joyce Shelby of Lewistown and Phil Gregory of Canton.

Spoon River Propane is located at 24005 North Illinois Highway 78 in Canton, and can be contacted at 309.649.5462. Easley Mechanical Services is located at 405 ½ E. Linn Street in Canton, and can be contacted at 309.647.3450.

Propane Manager Duane Siegel, left, schedules a propane delivery for a customer. ►



▲ Propane employee, Donnie Stambaugh, lower right corner, talks with customers after they have finished lunch.



▲ Easley Mechanical Accountant, Jane Wages, left, greets customers as they arrive to eat lunch.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT



**William R.
Dodds**
President/CEO

In this issue...

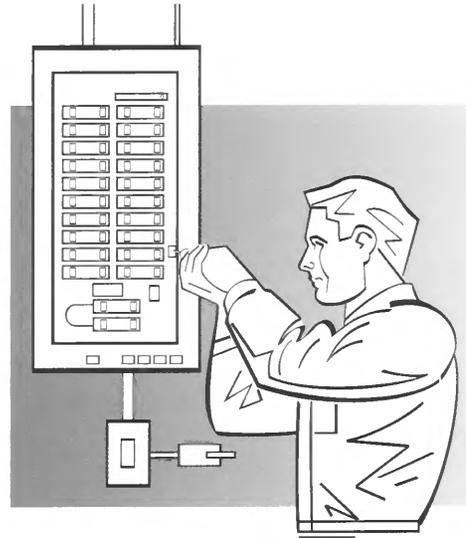
Save With Lighting..... 16b

CFL Fast Facts..... 16c

Yield Fewer Accidents
This Harvest 16d

Know Your Breakers

As a homeowner, or even a renter, it is important to become familiar with your electrical system, especially your breakers. When you lose power and call the co-op, one of the first questions we are going to ask is: Did you check your breakers? To help you out with this question, our Line Foreman Mike Coffey has a few suggestions below that could save you frustration and even a little money.



- ◆ Know the location of your main breaker. It could be in your house, most often in the basement or garage. If your meter is on a utility pole, your main breaker could be located on the pole under the meter.
- ◆ If your main breaker is located on a utility pole, it would be wise to check this breaker first before calling in with a no-power situation. If we make a trip out and all that is needed is to flip the main breaker on the pole, you will be charged by the co-op.
- ◆ Know how many breaker boxes you have. Believe it or not, some homes have more than one.
- ◆ If you know you have blown a breaker, flip it into the OFF position completely before flipping it back on. You may want to flip the breaker back and forth between the ON and OFF position a few times.
- ◆ If you need any repairs or replacement of equipment, we prefer you call an electrician. If you still have a fuse box in your home, we highly recommend you update your electrical system and replace that fuse box with a breaker box. It's not only a safety improvement, but it can possibly reduce your utility bill!

Change the World, Start Here

Take the pledge and help make a difference

Top 10 Ways To Save With Lighting

1. Your lighting purchase is important! Before buying a light bulb, check for the government's ENERGY STAR® label on the packaging. Not all compact fluorescent lights (CFLs) earn the ENERGY STAR. To earn the ENERGY STAR, a CFL must meet strict energy efficiency standards set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Energy, as well as quality and lifetime guidelines. By choosing ENERGY STAR qualified CFLs, you save energy, money, and help fight global warming.
2. Change five lights. By replacing your home's five most frequently used light fixtures or the bulbs in them with ENERGY STAR qualified models, you can save more than \$65 a year. The 5 highest-use lights are typically found in the kitchen, family and living room, bathroom, and outdoor areas (such as a porch or post lamp).
3. Get 1 instead of 10. ENERGY STAR qualified bulbs and fixtures use about 75% less energy than standard incandescent bulbs and last up to 10 times longer, saving you time buying and replacing bulbs, and about \$30 or more in energy costs over the life of each bulb. For each CFL you buy, you save as many as 10 trips to buy an incandescent bulb!
4. Look to lumens (not watts) for light. When selecting energy-efficient light bulbs, use lumens (light output) as your guide to getting the right bulb. Energy-efficient lighting will provide the same amount of light or more while using fewer watts.
5. Consider the environmental savings. Your home can cause twice as many greenhouse gas emissions as your car! Most U.S. homes still get their electricity from power plants that burn fossil fuels and release greenhouse gases into our atmosphere. An ENERGY STAR qualified bulb prevents more than 400 pounds of greenhouse gas emissions over its lifetime, the equivalent of keeping nearly 200 pounds of coal from being burned. Every bit helps to reduce the risks of global warming.
6. Flip a switch when leaving a room. Saving energy and money can start by not wasting energy. When you leave a room, turn off the lights and see the savings.
7. Safety first. ENERGY STAR qualified bulbs and fixtures produce about 75% less heat, so they're safer to operate and can cut energy costs associated with home cooling.
8. Put your lights on a schedule. Make sure your lights are on only when you need them. Use motion detectors on outdoor security fixtures to prevent their being on all night. Use photo cells or photo sensors on outdoor lighting to allow lights to come on only when the sun is down. All ENERGY STAR qualified outdoor fixtures come with photocells or photo sensors.
9. Close the loop – dispose of your CFL responsibly! Because CFLs contain a small amount of mercury, EPA recommends that you take advantage of local recycling options, if available in your area. To learn more about CFLs and mercury, including how to clean up a broken CFL and find proper disposal options, go to www.energystar.gov/CFLsandMercury.
10. Be part of a bigger change. Take the ENERGY STAR Change a Light Pledge at www.energystar.gov/changealight and join Americans nationwide in the fight against global warming.

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t with ENERGY STAR

in the fight against global warming

Energy Star® Qualified Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs *Fast Facts*

Why to use ENERGY STAR Qualified CFLs:

- All CFLs are not created equal. To earn the government's ENERGY STAR mark, a CFL must meet strict energy efficiency standards set by the US Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Energy, as well as quality and lifetime guidelines.
- Last 6 to 10 times longer than standard incandescent bulbs
- Use 75% less energy than ordinary bulbs
- Save about \$30 or more in energy costs over each bulb's lifetime; change five bulbs to ENERGY STAR qualified options and save more than \$150!
- Fit in almost any fixture, for indoors and outdoors
- Convenient in hard-to-reach and high-use fixtures because of their long life
- Generate 75 percent less heat, cutting home cooling costs
- Provide the same amount of light (lumens) as standard incandescent bulbs, but use fewer watts (energy)
- Backed by a minimum 2-year manufacturer warranty
- Can prevent more than 400 pounds of greenhouse gas emissions each over their lifetime

Where to use:

- To get the most energy savings, replace bulbs where lights are on the most, such as your family and living room, kitchen, dining room, and porch.
- Remember, CFLs work better in open fixtures that allow air flow.

How to choose:

- Matching the right type of CFL to the right kind of fixture helps ensure that it will perform properly and last longer. Read the packaging to be sure that the type you choose works for the fixture you have in mind. For example:
 - For recessed fixtures, it is better to use a 'reflector' CFL instead of a standard type.
 - If a light fixture is connected to a dimmer or three-way switch, select CFLs that are labeled as appropriate for a dimmer or three-way switch.
- To get the right amount of light, choose an ENERGY STAR qualified light bulb that offers the same light output, or lumen rating, as the light you are replacing. The higher the lumen rating, the greater the light output.

- Choose the color that works best for you. For example, while most CFLs are created with warm colors (2700 to 3000 degrees Kelvin) for most rooms in your home, you might choose a cooler color (3500 to 6500 degrees Kelvin) for task lighting.
- Close the loop – dispose of your CFL responsibly!
- Because CFLs contain a small amount of mercury, EPA recommends that you take advantage of local recycling options, if available in your area. To learn more about CFLs and mercury, including how to clean up a broken CFL and find proper disposal options, go to www.energystar.gov/CFLsandMercury.



Yield Fewer Accidents This Harvest

Harvest season can yield higher numbers of electrocution, shock and burn injuries on the farm. Nationwide, an average of 64 agricultural workers are electrocuted and hundreds more injured in electrical accidents each year. Safe Electricity and Spoon River Electric Cooperative urge farm workers to avoid tragic accidents by taking note of farm activities that take place around power lines.

“Equipment contacting overhead power lines is the leading cause of farm electrocution accidents in the Midwest,” says Mark Balbinot, Manager of Engineering and Operations. “Many of these accidents occur near grain bins, when augers make contact with power lines.”

“Everyone who works on the farm should know the location of power lines and keep farm equipment at least 10 feet away from them – below, to the side and above power lines,” says Molly Hall, Director of Safe Electricity. “Ensuring proper clearance can save lives.”

Here are some safety considerations for farm workers:

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

- Do not use metal poles when breaking up bridged grain inside and around bins.
- 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 may also conduct electricity under certain conditions.
- Use qualified electricians for work on drying equipment and other farm electrical systems.
- Apply decals to all equipment that may pose electrical hazards and explain decals to workers who use the equipment.
- Inspect farm equipment for transport height and determine clearance with any power lines under which the equipment must pass.
- Review the possibility of underground utility supplies for new or replacement power lines.
- If you have a standby power system, review its location, operation and importance with all workers.
- Train seasonal employees to be aware of risks for potential electrical shock on the farm even if they only work temporarily.
- Never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path.

If you come into contact with a power line:

“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,” says Hall.

“If the power line is energized and you step outside, your body becomes the path and electrocution is the result,” Balbinot says. “Even if a power line has landed on the ground, the potential for the area nearby to be energized still exists. Stay inside the vehicle unless 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 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 happen when the operator dismounts and, realizing nothing has happened, tries to get back on the equipment.

For more information on farm and other electrical safety, visit www.SafeElectricity.org.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

A publication of Spoon River Electric Cooperative

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



**William R.
Dodds**
President/CEO

In this issue...

71st Annual Meeting..... 16a-b

Grant and Loan Guarantees 16c-16d

71st Annual Meeting a Success

On Thursday September 4, 2008, the 71st Annual Meeting of Spoon River Electric Cooperative was held at Canton High School Auditorium. We at the cooperative feel the evening was successful despite the rainy weather.

Before the meeting began, a pork chop dinner provided by Joe's Place in Norris was served. Panther Creek Duo performed in the auditorium as members finished their meal and waited for the meeting to be called to order.

Board of Directors Vice Chairman Bernard Marvel called the meeting to order and Dr. Don Miller of Coal

Creek Bible Church conducted the invocation. Bernard then introduced the guests in attendance which included Bob Harbour, President/CEO of Prairie Power Inc., our generation and transmission cooperative and John Dalton, Vice President Engineering/Operations of Prairie Power, Inc.

From the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives we had Duane Noland, President/CEO and Lisa Rigoni, Assistant Editor join us. Also, employees of Spoon River Propane and Spoon River/ Easley Mechanical Services assisted co-op employees with the organization of the evening.

Board Secretary Steve Pille gave his report and the minutes of 2007's annual meeting stand approved.

I then presented my Management and Financial Report where I discussed energy costs in detail and revealed that our facilities charge will be raised from \$12 to \$15 starting January of 2009. The current charge of \$12 is the lowest facilities charge in the state. I will be discussing the rate increase in more detail in next month's issue. I continued my presentation, touching on positive developments at the co-op before I turned the microphone over to Duane Noland.



Prairie Power Inc. President/CEO Bob Harbour (left) and Vice President of Engineering and Operations John Dalton enjoy their pork chop dinner with SREC director Greg Leigh.

► Continued on page 16b

► *Continued from page 16a*

Duane introduced the Our Energy, Our Future: A Dialogue with America campaign that you may have noticed in past issues. He discussed how important this call to action is and what you can do to help us with the rising costs of energy. Upon registration, members filled out a Dialogue card. At the conclusion of Duane's presentation, he drew one of the cards and Georgia Burgett of Ipava won a crisp \$100 bill. You can find more information on Our Energy, Our Future at www.ourenergy.coop.

During the Our Energy, Our Future drawing, I asked the crowd who has attended the most annual meetings. At the age of 90, Martha Vaughn, of Ipava was the winner of a \$50 bill. Martha then shared her story of when the lights came on with the crowd. Margaret Kruse of Cuba was the winner of a \$50 bill for being the most recent member to join the co-op just a few weeks ago.

Next, Attorney Gary Barnhart conducted the election of directors and Jim Banks of District 3, Greg Leigh of District 2 and Lyle Nelson of District 1 were re-elected to the Board of Directors. After the election, director Terry Beam presented the Annual Meeting Scholarships. Winner of the Scholastic Scholarship was Shanna David of Farmington. Winner of the Honorary Scholarship was Tyler Walker of Gilson.

At the conclusion of the meeting we gave away a total of 55 gifts. Charles Haggarty of Smithfield was the winner of the Grand Prize, a Garmin GPS system. We hope that all of you that attended had a wonderful evening and look forward to seeing you next year.



Spoon River Electric employees Tanya Games (left) and Sandy Barnes count member registration cards and prepare them for the prize drawing at the end of the evening.



The 2008 Scholastic Scholarship winner is Shanna David of Farmington. She is the daughter of Brenda David. Shanna was interviewed by the Scholarship Committee earlier in the evening along with four other candidates.



Marcia Banning (above) of the Panther Creek Duo sings to the crowd. Marcia and her brother Mike frequent the area performing as a duo and with Gym Bob's Jamboree Show.



Mike Porter (right) of the Panther Creek Duo performs a variety of popular tunes from Elvis Presley and Jerry Lee Lewis to contemporary country hits. Mike is joined by his sister Marcia Banning to complete the duo.

Grants and Loan Guarantees for Rural Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Projects

Why invest in renewable energy and energy efficiency?

Renewable energy and energy efficiency systems provide a significant opportunity for rural economic development and growth. These opportunities include increasing local revenue, bolstering the local job market, and increasing the economic yield of land. As many U.S. farmers have discovered, renewable energy is the new cash crop of the 21st century. Landowners are reaping longterm additional revenue from their land while continuing with their existing operations.

Energy efficiency improvements are a useful tool for increasing farm or business productivity while reducing costs. By investing in energy efficient equipment, farmers, ranchers, and rural small businesses can enjoy savings and increased reliability for years to come.

What is the Rural Energy for America Program?

To foster rural economic development and growth, Congress passed the Rural Energy for America Program as Section 9007 of the 2008 Farm Bill. This program provides financial assistance to farmers, ranchers, and rural small businesses to purchase renewable energy systems or make energy efficiency improvements.

The Rural Development Business Program of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) administers this program.

What kind of funding is available for a project?

Grants can fund up to 25% of a project's total costs. Grants are limited to \$500,000 for renewable energy projects and \$250,000 for energy efficiency improvements. Grants as low as \$2,500 will be considered for renewable energy

projects and \$1,500 for energy efficiency projects. Loan guarantees are available to assist with funding for small to very large projects.

Who is eligible?

The program is designed to assist farmers, ranchers, and rural small businesses that are able to demonstrate financial need.

All agricultural producers, including farmers and ranchers, who earn 50 percent or more of their gross income from agricultural operations are eligible.

Small businesses that are headquartered in a rural area, generally defined as having a population of less than 50,000, are eligible to apply.

Rural electric cooperatives are typically eligible, but nonprofit organizations are not eligible.

What types of projects are eligible?

Most rural projects that reduce energy use and result in savings for the agricultural producer or small business are eligible as energy efficiency projects. These include projects such as retrofitting lighting or insulation, or purchasing or replacing equipment with more efficient units.

Energy efficiency improvements in new building construction are typically not eligible.

Eligible renewable energy projects include projects that produce energy from wind, solar, biomass, geothermal, and hydrogen-based sources.

The project can produce any form of energy, including heat, electricity, or fuel. For all projects, the system must be located in a rural area, must be technically feasible, and must be owned by the applicant.

How do I apply?

Once a year USDA announces in the Federal Register how much money is available, what rules apply and the deadlines for the applica-

tions for that year. Specific details are then posted on the USDA Rural Development Web site. You can contact the Illinois Rural Development state office and request that you be notified by email when the announcement is made.

Start early.

Applications require both well-designed projects and some detailed information concerning the applicant's agricultural or business operations. In the meantime...

- Check out the USDA Web site for the most recent program guidelines at www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/farbill/index.html While specifics change from year to year, many of the program requirements remain the same. Check to see if your idea is apt to qualify for funding and what information you are likely to need to apply.

- Call the Rural Energy coordinator in the Illinois Rural Development State Office. The coordinator will help determine if you and your project are eligible to receive funding under this program and will help you throughout the application process.

- Scope out your project. Start collecting the information you may need to supply in your application. Check out what resources are available to help you provide information that may be necessary. Determine the type and cost of equipment you want. If your project is very large, start assembling a project team (engineer, architect, etc.) whom you may need to develop your project.

- Talk to your lender to discuss your project if you plan to apply for a loan guarantee.

Where can I find more information? For further program details, go to:

► *Continued on page 16d*

► *Continued from page 16c*

www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs
Your Illinois USDA State Office contact for this program is: Molly Hammond Business Cooperative Specialist 217.403.6210 Molly.Hammond@il.usda.gov

For further information on all the Energy programs offered by USDA, please see the following website:

www.usda.gov/rus/index2/0208/EnergyPrograms.htm

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Revised August 2008

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

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William R. Dodds
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

Kaylyn Kuzniar

kkuzniar@srecoop.org

Fall **CLEAN & CHECK**

Call Now To Schedule Your

A Fall Clean & Check service call is an assessment of your furnace operation. The average homeowner spends about 56% of home energy costs on heating and cooling. It is important to make sure those systems are running efficiently.

SPOON RIVER/EASLEY MECHANICAL SERVICES

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Spoon River

N E W S

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

A publication of Spoon River Electric Cooperative

2008 Friendship Festival

This year's Friendship Festival was held Sept. 17-20 in Canton. Spoon River Electric and Spoon River Holdings companies, Spoon River/Easley Mechanical Service and Spoon River Propane, participated in both the festival and parade.

The Spoon River/Easley Mechanical Services and Spoon River Propane tent was a popular stop for dessert. The businesses gave away over 1,000 cups of ice cream. Spoon River Electric President/CEO, Bill Dodds entertained the parade crowd by throwing candy from a co-op bucket truck again this year. Spoon River/Easley Mechanical Services and Spoon River Propane also participated in the parade, with Spoon River Propane showing a off a brand new bobtail truck.



McKenzie Hedges, Bradley Henseler and Payton Mulligan carried the Spoon River Electric banner in the parade.



Spoon River Electric President/CEO Bill Dodds, tosses candy to the crowd while elevated in a co-op bucket truck.

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- Our Energy, Our Future 16c

Spoon River/Easley Mechanical employees John Dunning (driving) and DeLoyd Gentry toss candy to the parade crowd.



**PRESIDENT'S
REPORT**



William R. Dodds
President/CEO

2009 Rate Increase: Facilities charge rising \$3

Due to the rising costs of generating and delivering energy, we are implementing a rate increase in January of 2009. I am going to discuss with you in more detail about how we arrived at this rate increase and what we are doing to keep the impact as gentle as possible.

Rate History

First, let's go over our rate history. As Spoon River Electric members, you have not seen a rate increase on your electric bill since 1996. In 1996, we raised the facilities charge from \$8 to \$12. That \$12 facilities charge is the lowest in the state. In addition to the low facilities charge, our economic development rate was outdated and below market.

Currently, our average volume-based energy and distribution charge is 10.6 cents a kilowatt hour and our fuel adjustment factor is .0045 cents a kilowatt hour. In 2007, your Board of Directors implemented a Revenue Deferral Plan of 1 cent a kilowatt hour to take the place of the Clinton write-offs in order to prepare for the rising costs of energy. This was a smart choice. Due to that decision you will not be seeing a drastic rate increase in 2009.

2009 Rate Increase

It was important for the co-op to make the rate increase affordable. Instead of raising the cost per kilowatt hour, the facilities charge will increase from \$12 to \$15 beginning with the January 2009 bill. The \$15 facilities charge is still one of the lowest in the state. To add to the increased facilities charge, we updated our economic development rate and will feed back the 1 cent per kilowatt hour from the Revenue Deferral Plan.

7.37¢	KWH 2009 Energy Cost
-6.00¢	KWH Current Energy Rate
1.37¢	KWH Rate Deficiency
-1.00¢	KWH 2007 Revenue Deferred Feedback
0.37¢	KWH Rate Shortfall

You will note on the chart that after the Revenue Deferred Feedback of 1 cent, we are still short .37 cents. We at the co-op feel the increase of the facilities charge and projected sales growth will cover that shortfall. If not, we will increase our fuel adjustment factor in order to make up for the remaining deficiency.

What we are doing and what YOU can do, to ease the impact of rising energy costs.

We are here to give you options to help ease the impact of rising energy costs. With the purchase of Easley Mechanical Services in March of this year came the opportunity to provide energy-efficient

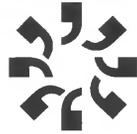
upgrades for homes and businesses at competitive prices to our members and the community.

Spoon River/Easley Mechanical Services provides energy-efficient and geothermal heating/cooling systems, tankless water heaters, electrical services to upgrade/improve your electrical system and refrigeration services. Next Spring, we will have a 1,200 square-foot showroom displaying energy-efficient solutions for your home and business.

We are able to provide these energy-saving services to you, but that is only part of the solution. Making small no-cost changes in your habits and low-cost improvements to your home or business can have a great deal of impact on your utility bill. Log on to our website at www.srecoop.org and click on 'Energy Efficiency' for a list of resources to help you save money. Also, we are part of a national campaign called Our Energy, Our Future: A Dialogue with America. You will see what this call to action is about on the next page. Please participate. Your voice will be heard in Congress and that will make a significant difference in the future of energy in this country.



Our Energy, Our Future



Our Energy, Our Future A Dialogue With America

Spoon River Electric Cooperative wants you to start the dialogue! We are participating in a national campaign called Our Energy, Our Future: A Dialogue with America. Experts say that our nation's growing electricity needs will soon go beyond what renewables, conservation, and efficiency can provide. With these needs increasing, balancing energy needs and environmental goals will be difficult. This call to action asks your elected officials three critical questions:

What is your plan to make sure we have the electricity we need in the future?

What are you going to fully fund the research required to make emissions free electric plants an affordable reality?

How much is all of this going to increase my electric bill and what will you do to make it affordable?

Currently, Illinois is 5th in the nation for emails sent to elected officials. We want to raise that number. We want each of you to participate. These issues are of great importance to the cooperative, but ultimately affect you, the member. There are two options to starting the dialogue.

Option 1: Log onto www.ourenergy.coop, click on 'Contact Elected Officials' on the left of the page. This will take you to a page with a pre-composed letter regarding the above energy issues. Below the letter are name and address fields you need to fill out. Once you have read the letter and completed the required fields, click the submit button. This simple, 3-minute task will get the dialogue going in the right direction.

Option 2: If you do not have internet access, you can fill out and sign the card below and send it in to the co-op with your next electric bill. Or, you can stop by the Spoon River Electric Cooperative office, we have dialogue cards for you to fill out. We submit the information for you.





Start The Dialogue

NAME _____

HOME ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

HOME PHONE (_____) _____

EMAIL _____

I AM A MEMBER OF _____ CO-OP _____

SIGNATURE _____



**America's Electric
Cooperatives**

For more information visit
www.ourenergy.coop

Once the email has reached your elected officials, you will receive an email or letter regarding their position on energy issues. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the campaign, please call Kaylyn Kuzniar at 309-674-2700. We need your help! Start the dialogue today.



2008 Hurricane Relief

Spoon River Electric Cooperative responded to Louisiana's cry for help. On Sept. 2, the cooperative sent a crew of four men and two trucks to assist the cooperatives of southern Louisiana whose electrical systems were severely damaged by Hurricane Gustav's winds.

A line crew of Mike Coffey and Rick Roudebush, plus a Forestry crew of Keith Miller and Mark Burkhead were just a few members of the Illinois crew from 12 Illinois cooperatives sent to the Baton Rouge, Louisiana area to assist Dixie Electric Membership Corporation (DEMCO). This cooperative is one of the largest co-ops in the state with roughly 100,000 meters. DEMCO reported 100 percent outages with extensive damage to trees, homes and businesses. They called on 800 linemen and contractors to help restore full power.

"This is a true example of the cooperative spirit and Spoon River



Spoon River Electric Cooperative Line and Forestry crew members Mike Coffey, Rick Roudebush, Keith Miller and Marcus Burkhead (left to right) are aiding Louisiana electric cooperatives suffering extensive damage due to high winds from hurricane Gustav. The SREC crew are four of 56 crew member from Illinois assisting in the relief effort.

Electric is eager to assist its fellow cooperatives in a time of need," says Bill Dodds, President/CEO.

After days of cleaning up debris,

assessing damage and restoring power, Mike, Rick, Keith and Mark safely returned home on Sept. 12.

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT



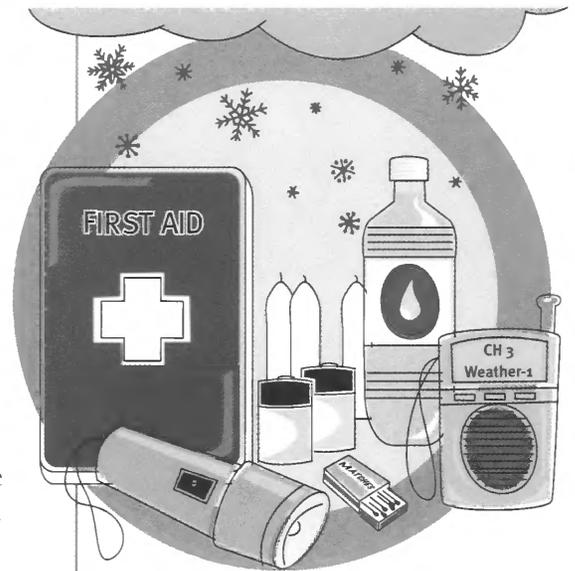
William R. Dodds
President/CEO

How to Prepare for a Winter Outage

We at Spoon River Electric want you to be prepared and safe during the upcoming months, which may bring unfriendly weather. Storms containing high winds and ice can cause widespread and prolonged outages. For the past few winters Spoon River Electric has been fortunate to brave the ice with very little damage, even sending crews to neighboring co-ops who were hit hard by the ice and wind. However, it is important to be prepared. Always call your cooperative when you have an outage, and follow these steps to get through it safely.

Have the following on-hand this winter:

- Battery-powered radio
- Flashlights
- Extra batteries
- Extra blankets
- Spare containers you can fill with water for drinking/washing/hygiene
- Food that doesn't require cooking and a hand-held can opener
- Extra prescription medicines
- Special items for infant, elderly or disabled family members
- A first aid kit
- A back-up battery system for your computer



To restore power quickly and efficiently during an outage, the safety of our linemen is top priority. If you have a standby generator, make sure you operate it safely and have a transfer safety switch. Install a transfer safety switch now, before your generator is needed. The switch will prevent electricity from traveling back through the electric lines, making the lines very dangerous for crews working to restore your power.

Follow these steps to keep you and your home safe and comfortable during an outage:

Switch off lights and appliances so you don't overload your circuits when power is restored.

(Continued on page 16b)

In this issue...

- How to Prepare for a Winter Outage 16a-b
- Wind Farm Forum 16c
- Dear Santa 16c
- 2009 Memorial Scholarships 16d

(Continued from page 16a)

Leave on one lamp to signal when your power is back on.

Close off any unused rooms. If you fear your water pipes will freeze and you don't have a well, turn the taps on slightly so water slowly drips. If you are on a well you can shut off the main water supply to your home and then turn all the taps on all the way to drain any remaining water (pour this water into containers so you can use it for drinking, washing, etc.)

If using grills to heat food, use them outside only, away from the house, to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.

Don't open the refrigerator or freezer. Food can stay fresh in a full refrigerator for 24 hours, and in a full deep freezer for 48 hours (24 hours if only half full).

Stay inside when possible and dress in layered clothing.

A final note that we cannot stress enough: Never go near downed electrical lines. Even if

your power is out, the lines could be energized. Call immediately and inform us of any dangerous lines. Outage updates will be available via local radio station AM1560 and CD 107.9. Depending on outage locations, additional radio stations will be updated. If your place of work or a family/friend, is capable of internet access, regular updates will be posted at www.srecoop.org.

Landowners Wind Farm Forum, Dec 16th

Have you heard there is a wind developer in your area? Been approached by someone wanting to talk to you about wind lease? Not sure what this means? What questions should you be asking? How quickly will something happen?

Dealing effectively with wind energy from a landowners' perspective will be the theme of a December 16th meeting coordinated by the Illinois Wind Working Group, University of Illinois Extension, and Western Illinois Economic Development Partnership (WIEDP). The program will be held at the Monsanto Agronomy Center located at 1677 80th Street, Monmouth from 2:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

"As we've experienced increased interest from wind developers in the Warren County region, we have also recognized the need to provide educational opportunities for landowners and government officials as they deal with this new industry,"

said Jolene Willis, Executive Director, WIEDP. "I'm pleased that the Illinois Wind Working Group selected our area as the pilot location for this valuable program."

Whether you have been approached by a developer, have heard there is interest in your area, or think there could be interest in the future, this program will provide you the base knowledge needed to start asking the right questions. University educators and industry professionals will present: Wind Energy 101 Dispelling Myths, Wind project development start to finish, and landowner contracts and issues.

Pre-registration is requested by December 10th. Seating is limited so registration will be taken on a first-come basis. A \$15 per person fee will be charged to cover refreshments, handouts and resource ma-



terials. To register for the program or more information, please contact the WIEDP office at 309-734-4253 or email to info@wiedp.org. No cancellations or refunds after December 10th. Directions to the meeting location will be provided upon registration.

Dear Santa,

This Christmas, please bring me items that my co-op says will help me save money!

- 1. An electric blanket*
- 2. Energy-efficient washer and dryer*
- 3. Energy Star dishwasher*
- 4. Low-flow showerhead*
- 5. Programmable thermostat*

Happy Holidays

From your Touchstone Energy Cooperative



Seven 2009 IEC Memorial Scholarships Available

Spoon River Electric Cooperative has announced that for the fourteenth consecutive year the Illinois electric cooperatives will award academic scholarships to high school seniors.

Seven scholarships of \$1,250 each will be awarded in 2009 to eligible high school seniors through the Illinois Electric Cooperative (IEC) Memorial Scholarship Program.

Four scholarships will be awarded to students who are the sons or daughters of an Illinois electric cooperative member receiving service from the cooperative. A fifth scholarship, the Earl W. Struck Memorial Scholarship, will be awarded to a student who is the son or daughter of an Illinois electric cooperative employee. The sixth and seventh

scholarships are reserved for students enrolling full-time at a two-year Illinois community college who are the sons or daughters of Illinois electric cooperative members, employees or directors.

"We hope to assist electric cooperative youth while honoring past rural electric leaders with this scholarship," says Bill Dodds, President/CEO. "Spoon River Electric and the other Illinois electric cooperatives are always seeking ways to make a difference in our communities. One of the best ways we can do that is by helping our youth through programs like this one."



Candidates are judged on the basis of grade point average, college entrance exam scores, work and volunteer experience, school and civic activities, and a short essay that demonstrates their knowledge of electric cooperatives.

For more information contact Kaylyn Kuzniar at Spoon River Electric at 309.647.2700 or ask your high school guidance counselor.

Holiday Hours

The office will be closed on the following dates:

Christmas
December 24 & 25

New Year's
December 31 & January 1

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