

President's Report



William R. Dodds
President/CEO

What you're missing at the annual meeting

By Adam Schwartz

Did you know every cooperative is required to conduct an annual meeting of the membership? The purpose is to hold the election for the board of directors, share important financial information, occasionally vote on other matters such as bylaw changes and of course—the great door prizes!

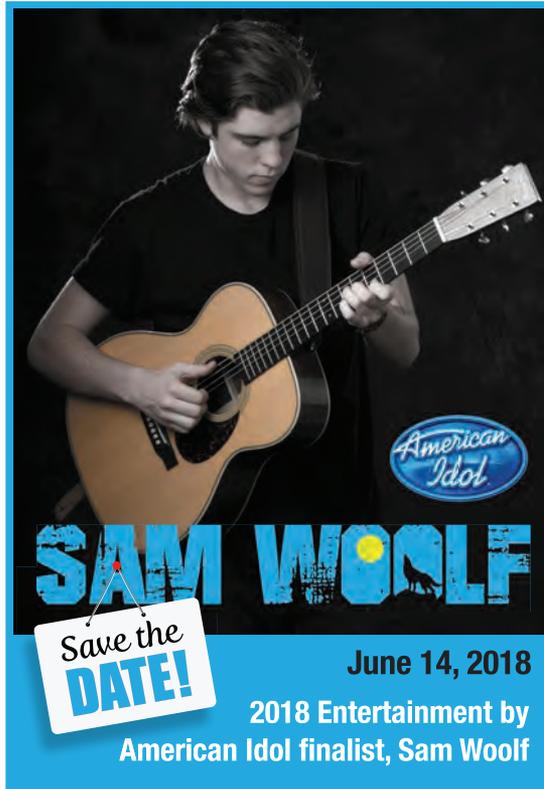
Spoon River Electric's annual meeting is a community gathering where neighbors can meet new neighbors—or catch up with old acquaintances. As our lives get busier with the “errands of life” and more of our interactions with others are online (via social media), we must renew the value of face-to-face human connections. Very few organizations are uniquely positioned like Spoon River Electric to bring together all members of our local communities.

While rural Americans probably do a better job of staying connected to our neighbors (in part because we need too), it is not something we should take for granted. The simple act of smiling, saying hello and shaking

someone's hand truly lifts both parties.

Our country and community face many challenges. Our economy feels like it has been stagnant for years. Overcoming these challenges will only happen if we come together.

Spoon River Electric's annual meeting is designed to take care of the important business of your co-op and the equally important business of building a real sense of community. All cooperatives serve both an economic and social purpose. While safe, reliable and affordable electric power is crucial to our mission, improving the quality of life for all members is at



Save the DATE!

June 14, 2018

2018 Entertainment by American Idol finalist, Sam Woolf

the core of what we do every day.

If you have not attended the annual meeting in the past or if it has been a few years, we urge you to take the time to be with your fellow co-op members.

We get out of life what we put into it. Spoon River Electric is connected to you by more than just powerlines. We are your neighbors, and we look forward to seeing you at your annual meeting, June 14, 2018!

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

Bernard Marvel, Browning

Vice Chairman

Terry Beam, Cuba

Secretary

Jack Clark, Lewistown

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Lyle Nelson, Abingdon

Assistant Treasurer

Robert Lascelles, Ipava

Board of Directors

James Banks, Canton
Wesley Strode, Marietta
JoDee Pedigo, Canton
John Spangler, Marietta

Editor of Spoon River News

Taryn Mellert
tmellert@srecoop.org

Spoon River Electric Cooperative – By the Numbers

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

Sixth Art on Main Fine Arts Festival planned for June 2-3 in Jones Park

The sixth annual Art on Main Fine Arts Festival, presented by Canton Main Street, will be held June 2-3 in Jones Park in downtown Canton. This year's event is expected to be the largest yet with 34 new and returning exhibitors. Local musicians will also contribute to making the festival a colorful, vibrant experience. A wine garden will set up, with wine for sale by the glass or bottle, and local restaurants and organizations will provide a wide variety of food choices. The event will be open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday. Admission is free, and the festival is open to the public.

Cheryl Bielema and Eric Duffield serve as the festival's co-chairs and say they are expecting a great event. "Our returning artists have given us exceptionally positive feedback over the years," Bielema says. "We are so excited about all the new artists we have coming this year. They have heard about what a wonderful festival this is."

Duffield is serving his first year

as a co-chair and believes Art on Main is an important community event. "Everyone benefits from the festival," he says. "Citizens, businesses and community leaders all have stepped up with cash donations, in-kind donations and items for our silent auction. The support has been phenomenal." The festival also receives support from the city of Canton and local and regional art councils.

Categories that will be represented at the festival include painting/drawing, jewelry, glass, photography, clay/ceramics, sculpture and wood. The Art on Main Fine Arts Festival is a juried show, and the Art on Main committee, which is made up of artists, art patrons, designers and other volunteers, review work submitted for consideration.

For more information on the Art on Main Fine Arts Festival, to volunteer or to become a sponsor, please contact Dana Smith at 309-647-2677 or dsmith@cantonillinois.org.



Good news for members interested in solar

A recent Illinois Commerce Commission ruling will allow electric cooperative members and customers of municipal utilities to benefit from the Solar Renewable Energy Credits (SREC) available to investor-owned utility (IOU) customers. The IOUs had argued that rural co-op members and muni customers would be subsidized by IOU utility customers if they received the SRECs. A judge in February agreed, but the Commission disagreed and ruled in favor of the state's solar advocates, co-op members and muni customers.

The SREC payment incentives are a part of the Future Energy Jobs Act (FEJA) passed in late 2016 with the goal of creating 2,700 MW of new utility-scale, distributed generation and community solar like the Spoon River Solar Farm near Summum, Ill.

So, what is a SREC and why should you care? Well, if you are interested in paying to install solar panels the SRECs can provide a substantial financial incentive and is in addition to tax credits. A renewable energy credit is simply a certificate that represents the environmental attributes of energy produced from solar or wind. A solar system owner will earn one SREC for every 1,000-kWh produced by their solar system. And a SREC can be worth as much as \$82 in certain markets.

All of this can get complicated, and it is why we held seven member meetings throughout our co-op territory. In these meetings, we talked with over 250 members and answered their individual questions about both the new rates and solar arrays. During these meetings, we also showed our members what their 2017 usage charges were on our old rate compared to what it would have been under our new rates.

With our new rates, our goal is to fairly allocate costs between members no matter their decisions on distributed generation like solar, or energy efficiency. Being connected to the lines has a fixed cost that does not change with the amount of kWh usage. We still have to maintain the lines, serve our



members, and answer any questions they may have regardless of their kWh usage.

With cooperatives being included in the new FEJA legislation, we know that there will be more interest in solar arrays. There is a lot of misinformation about solar, from companies saying “solar power will produce all the power that you need” or “you won't have an electric bill.” Distributed generation projects will still require a connection to the grid to supply energy when the sun isn't shining, and to provide a solar energy producer access to the grid for sale of excess energy. A traditional rate design simply won't fairly allocate the fixed cost of the distribution grid.

We also wanted a reliable company to work with us to answer member questions, provide dependable financial estimates, and most importantly work with you to install a safe and dependable solar system. That is why we created an alliance with Eagle Point Solar.

The proposed new rate structure is to change from a \$36 facility charge with a delivery charge of 4.55 cents per kWh on all kWh to a line access charge. The cost of the line access charge is \$65, but it also includes the first 800 kWh of delivery charges, not energy cost, in that \$65. After the first 800 kWh, the delivery cost goes to 2 cents per kWh plus the cost of the energy. It will be more like

your cable TV, or cell phone bill — a package deal.

We know this is a big change. That is why we held the member meetings. But as always, please contact our office if you have any questions about the new rate structure and if you are interested in solar energy.

During these member meetings we also listened and received valuable feedback from the members. The board of directors will be considering three important concerns with a goal of fairness to all members. One concern was for members with multiple meters, with some of the meters being very lightly loaded. A second concern that the board will address is impact of the new rate on elderly members on fixed incomes. A third issue that the board will consider is how to fairly treat members who have already installed solar systems under the old net metering policy.

The new rate concept presented at the meetings has not been finalized because we wanted an exchange of ideas, questions and concerns from members. Your board of directors want to thank the members who took the time to attend the meetings, and assure all members that the goal is to be proactive in addressing the changes presented by solar distributed generation, and maintain fair and equitable rates and policies for the benefit of all members.



ATTENTION 2017-2018 SENIORS!

Spoon River Electric Cooperative Is Awarding Three \$1,000 Scholarships to High School Seniors

High school students who are seniors during the 2017-2018 school year and are the son or daughter of a Spoon River Electric member are eligible to apply for a \$1,000 Scholastic Scholarship, a \$1,000 Honorary Scholarship, and the \$1,000 Scott Parrish Memorial Scholarship, which will be awarded at this year's Annual Meeting on June 14, 2018.

Please fill out the form at the bottom of the page and return it to the Cooperative to participate. Applications must be turned in by **May 31, 2018** to be considered. 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 June 14, 2018 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 2017-2018 school year and begin college undergraduate studies in the 2018-2019 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 2018-2019 academic year.
- Scholarships are for one year and are non-renewable.
- Past Spoon River Electric Cooperative scholarship winners are not eligible to receive another one.

SCHOLASTIC AND SCOTT PARRISH MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIPS

- The Scholastic and Scott Parrish Memorial Scholarships 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.
- 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 and Parrish Scholarships 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 and Parrish Scholarship winners.



Scholarship Participation Request

Name of Student _____

Address of Student _____

Name of Parent/Guardian _____

Telephone Number _____

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