

President's Report



William R. Dodds
President/CEO

Patriotism in Action

By Anne Prince

According to Merriam-Webster's dictionary, patriotism is "the love for or devotion to one's country." Perhaps no other day of the year evokes such a sense of patriotism than Independence Day. With flags rippling in the wind—red, white and blue bunting adorning porches and store fronts and local parades and marching bands on display, it's easy to feel a swell of pride for our country.

Arguably, another, perhaps deeper form of patriotism is active engagement in public and civic life. Involvement in your town promotes a richer community life, and ensures that institutions thrive and communities remain vibrant and inviting places to live work and play. Besides being enjoyable, your participation in community events and activities, together with your friends, neighbors and co-workers makes a difference. Simple things like supporting a bake sale or attending a local high school event signals to the young people in your community that you care and support them, and that the community itself is worth sustaining.

In fact, there are civic engagement

opportunities through Spoon River Electric. You may recall that one of our most important cooperative principles is that of democratic participation. If you pay your bill, you are a member of the co-op with an opportunity to provide input through voting during our annual meeting.

Spoon River Electric, like other types of co-ops, originated to serve a need that was not being met by traditional for-profit electric companies. While providing reliable electricity is our top priority, we are exploring other needs that might not be met otherwise – renewable energy options, like community solar. We make decisions based on long-term thinking – what decisions will benefit the larger community in which we operate? One of the best ways you can engage with your co-op is by casting your vote when it's time to elect board members. These are folks just like you, from our community, who provide guidance to co-op leadership on a myriad of issues and decisions both short term and long term.

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**Our office will be closed
Wednesday, July 4th, for
Independence Day**

Spoon River Electric Cooperative

930 South Fifth Ave, PO Box 340,
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8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
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Spoon River Electric Cooperative – By the Numbers

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

Spoon River Electric Operation Round-Up donates \$9,500 to local organizations

The Spoon River Electric Cooperative Operation Round-Up (ORU) Committee recently awarded \$9,500 to seven local organizations through its Operation Round-Up Program. The organizations that received funding include VIT High School Technology Department - \$1,500 toward upgrading their facilities to include a technology lab and classroom; Cuba FFA Chapter - \$1,400 to help fund the conference trip to the Illinois FFA Convention so 20-plus agriculture students; Knoxville FFA/Ag Department - \$1,100 for electrical wiring kits, snap circuit kits and other electrical equipment; Cuba Fire Protection District - \$1,250 for back up cameras for the fire trucks; Ingersoll Scout Reservation - \$1,500 toward a water softener system for the dining hall; Fulton County Fair & Racing Association - \$1,250 toward updating the fairgrounds; and Astoria Fire Depart - \$1,500 for new turn out gear.

"The students will benefit greatly because of the opportunity Spoon River Electric Operation Round-up Program has given us!" said Knoxville ag teacher Mallory Tolley.

These donations are made possible by the generous members of Spoon River Electric who voluntarily make the decision each month to "Round-Up" their electric bills to the next dollar and donating this "extra change" directly to the Operation Round-Up Program. All of the funds collected are donated back into our communities as charitable grants. The average donation a member makes annually is about \$6.

For more information about the Operation Round-Up Program visit our website: srecoop.org under the Operation Round-Up tab.



▲ *Fulton County Fair & Racing Association*



▲ *Astoria Fire Department*

▼ *Cuba FFA Chapter*



◀ *Cuba Fire Protection District*



▲ *VIT High School Technology Department*



▲ *Knoxville FFA/Ag Department*

▼ *Ingersoll Scout Reservation*



Keep your bills low as temperatures rise

Temperatures outside are rising, but that doesn't mean that utility bills need to. There are steps you can take to make your home more efficient during these hot summer months.

Home efficiency during summer months have a lot in common as the home efficiency checks that you do during the winter months. Make sure that you change your air filters at least monthly to keep your unit running efficiently. Just like checking for cold air leaking in through cracks in the winter, look for any areas that may need weather stripping and caulk where heat could enter your home.

You may be in the habit of setting your thermostat on a lower temperature while you are away during the day to save during the winter months, but now is the time to set that temperature higher. Set your thermostat to around 85 degrees during the day while you are gone. This temperature will keep any pets that may be in the home comfortable but can help to lower your bills.

A programmable thermostat will help you control the temperature of your home, so it is cool when you

return home for the day. It is important to remember when adjusting your thermostat, whether it's manual or programmable, do not lower the temperature rapidly to cool your home faster. Your air conditioner will cool just as fast at 78 as it might at 68 degrees.

Ceiling fans are also a great way to keep rooms cool while saving energy. "Fans average between a quarter to one amp used, while air conditioners can range between 12 to 16 amps of electricity used," says Sam Adair, energy expert. "While running a fan may not exactly bring in new cold air, it does circulate the cold air that is already in the home and may make it feel cooler than it really is." Adair also adds that it is possible to turn on your fans and turn up your thermostat a degree or two and not notice a difference.

Other simple things you can do to keep the cool in include just simply



keeping your shades, blinds and drapes closed during the day. A darker room stays cooler longer than a room that has sunlight coming in. Also, consider running stoves, dryers and other heat producing appliances during cooler hours of the day, such as the evening or early morning.

Energy efficiency, whether in the winter or in the summer months, is key for keeping your bills lower and your family comfortable. For more information visit: SafeElectricity.org.

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Perhaps you haven't voted in the past because you didn't think you were qualified to weigh in on a particular topic, or maybe you simply didn't have time to vote. But you do have an opinion on the issues that affect our community and Spoon River Electric wants your particular perspective.

Everyone has valuable experience that informs their decision-making process. Diverse perspectives benefit the whole community. You may have a different view than your neighbor, but together, those perspectives provide a more balanced view of the community. You could be bringing new information that hadn't been previously considered. We seek more members participating in the process, because greater numbers reflect a consensus on the direction of the future and the will of the people.

The next opportunity to vote in the board election is

June 2019. I would argue that voting, whether in the co-op or in local and national elections is a form of patriotism, as it reflects a devotion to one's community and commitment to ensure that it thrives.

Democracy is not a spectator sport; it takes active civic engagement by citizens to thrive. This Independence Day, I hope you will embrace the local celebrations and actively participate in your community – and vote at every opportunity!

Anne Prince writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives. From growing suburbs to remote farming communities, electric co-ops serve as engines of economic development for 42 million Americans across 56 percent of the nation's landscape.