

President's Report



William R. Dodds
President/CEO

Congresswoman Bustos works a shift at Spoon River Electric

Congresswoman Cheri Bustos made a stop at Spoon River Electric Cooperative as part of her “Cheri on Shift” tour. After meeting with leadership at the cooperative headquarters in Canton, Bustos and crew headed out to the Wee-Ma-Tuk subdivision.

Bustos suited up to help the line crew kick off our pole light conversion project. Line Foreman Bill Sego took Bustos up in the bucket and had her assist him in changing out one of the old pole lights to a new LED light. The goal is to convert all the mercury vapor and high pressure sodium pole lights to LED lights.

Bustos has done over 70 different “Cheri on Shifts” since taking office. She has done a variety of jobs including: carp processor, beekeeping, making toys, sacking groceries, welding, working on cars, delivering mail, running lights at a theatre and serving as an auctioneer.

“What I found is that there are a lot of people working very hard, eight to 10 to 12 hours a day who are having a hard time getting by, and they can’t always make ends meet,” Bustos said explaining what she has learned over the course of the program. “I do this so I have a deeper understanding of what people are going through when I vote for or against something.”

After the light was changed, Bustos, the linemen, and the Spoon River Directors and staff headed to President/CEO Bill Dodds’ home for cake, refreshments and good conversation. Also in attendance were Eric Hobbie, President & CEO of Prairie Power Inc.; Duane Noland, President/CEO of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives and Mike Smith, President/CEO of McDonough Power Cooperative.



Spoon River Electric Cooperative

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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





\$6,250 donated to local organizations through Spoon River Electric's Operation Round-Up

The Spoon River Electric Cooperative Operation Round-Up (ORU) Committee recently awarded \$6,250 to five local organizations through its Operation Round-Up Program. The organizations that received funding include Browning Volunteer Fire Department - \$1,500 toward a rescue saw, Smithfield Fire Protection District - \$1,500 toward a rescue utility vehicle, Astoria School District - \$1,500 to help upgrade its lighting to all LED, Vermont Ballpark Playground Fund - \$1,500 for playground equipment, and Loving Bottoms Diaper Bank in Galesburg - \$250 for industrial shelving.

“Thank you so much for the Operation Round-Up Grant money. Your donation will make it possible for us to buy a piece of new equipment for the toddler play area. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.”
 – Laura Holmes, Vermont Ballpark Playground

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 bill 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.





Distracted driving injures and kills – Zone in on safety

Stay focused in roadside utility work zones

Electric linemen put their lives at risk each day, and distracted drivers add even more hazards to an already dangerous job.

It's always important to drive fully focused; however, drivers should pay special attention when approaching work zones. Slow down and refrain from any activity that would distract from driving.

Cell phones play a huge role in distracted driving. If you use it while driving, you're 23 times more likely to be in an accident. Although better than holding your phone, a hands-free call is still a bad idea.

In addition to nixing distractions, be sure to slow down when approaching a work zone. Frenzied drivers or drivers of big rigs going too fast could also brush or rattle a utility truck. Even the slightest movement could cause a line worker in a bucket to move a few feet, putting his or her life in jeopardy while working on equipment that can carry high voltages.

In addition to a growing number of work zone close calls, at least four

utility workers have been killed and several more injured in roadside work zone incidents since 2015. Utility crews are not the only workers putting their lives on the line. According to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA):

- 1 work zone crash occurs every 5.4 minutes
- 70 work zone crashes result in injuries each day
- 12 work zone crashes result in fatalities each week

Before leaving home, be sure to research your route, and avoid work zones and use detours whenever possible. Use your phone settings to automatically advise others you are driving and can't respond. In addition, Safe Electricity reminds you to take the following steps to save lives and avoid accidents:

1. Be aware of your surroundings. This includes other drivers, utility and road crews, pedestrians, bicyclists and motorcyclists.
2. Pay attention and stay focused. Always keep your eyes on the road,

especially in work zones. Avoid distractions such as using your cell phone, eating/drinking, adjusting the radio, using GPS and conversing with passengers.

3. Slow down when entering a work zone where lane closures, traffic pattern shifts, and reduced speeds are expected.
4. When approaching a work zone, move into the open lane as soon as possible. Watch for vehicles that could be in your blind spot.
5. Rear-end crashes are extremely common in work zones, so keep your distance. Maintain extra space between your vehicle and the one in front of you, and do not cut off any driver.

Safe Electricity reminds you that distracted driving injures and kills utility crews and other workers who put themselves in danger every day by sharing their workspace with vehicles on the road. There isn't a text or a phone call that is worth it. Remember to zone in on safety and save lives. For more information, visit SafeElectricity.org.