

President's Report



William R. Dodds
President/CEO

By the community, for the community

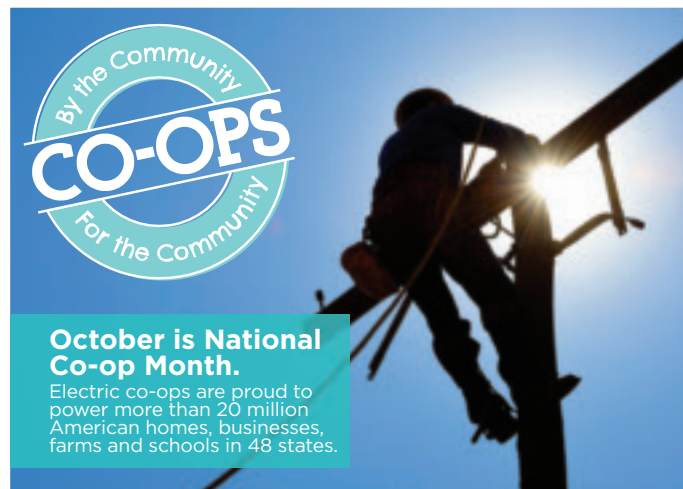
October is National Co-op Month

When you think of October, pumpkins, Halloween and beautiful fall foliage naturally come to mind. But October is notable for another reason – it's National Co-op Month! This is the time of year when cooperatives across the country, including Spoon River Electric, celebrate who we are and more importantly, the members we serve. Cooperatives are different than other types of businesses. When the market declines to offer a product or service, or does so at a high price, co-ops intervene to fill the need. Similar to how Spoon River Electric was built by members who came together to bring electricity to our community, cooperatives are conveners for the common good. Your electric co-op exists to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy to you, the members of the co-op. Equally important is our mission to enrich the lives of the members we serve.

As a co-op, we are well-suited to meet the needs of the community because we are locally governed. Spoon River Electric's leadership team and employees live right here in the community. Our board of directors, who helps set long-term priorities for the co-op, live locally on co-op lines. These board members have been elected to the position by neighbors like you.

We know our members (that's you!) have a valuable perspective. That's why we are continually seeking your input. Whether through community events, our social media channels or the annual meeting, we want to hear from you.

Our close connection to the community ensures we get a first-hand perspective on local priorities, thereby enabling us to make more informed decisions on long-term investments, such as community



solar programs, and equipment and technology upgrades.

Another feature that sets our co-op apart from a traditional utility is one of our core principles, "Concern for Community." We partner with local organizations like our very own Operation Round-Up program, the Canton Area Chamber of Commerce Youth Leadership Academy and support local students and their future endeavors with our yearly scholarship program.

Ultimately, the larger community benefits from these programs because of you and your neighbors. You empower the co-op through your membership and through your participation in and support of these programs.

We hope you will think of Spoon River Electric as more than your energy provider, but instead as a local business that supports this community and powers economic development and prosperity for the people. We will continue to learn from our members about their priorities so that we can better serve you – because your electric co-op was built by the community, for the community.

Spoon River Electric Cooperative

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8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
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President/CEO

William R. Dodds
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Chairman

Bernard Marvel, Browning

Vice Chairman

Terry Beam, Cuba

Secretary

Jack Clark, Lewistown

Treasurer

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

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

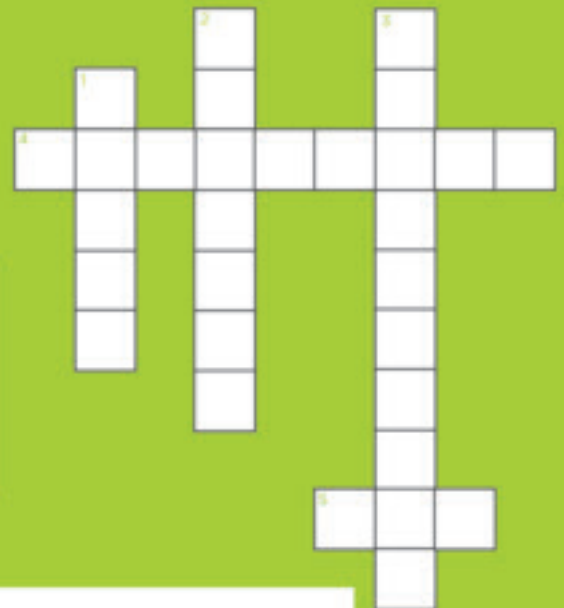
Heating requires more energy than any other system in your home, typically making up about 42% of your energy bill. With proper equipment maintenance and upgrades like additional insulation and air sealing, you can save about 30% on your energy bill.

Source: *energy.gov*



CO-OP MONTH CROSSWORD

October is National Co-op Month! Complete the crossword puzzle below to learn about ways co-ops are unique. Need a hint? Use the word bank below.



WORD BANK:

LED
MEMBERS
LOCAL
COMMUNITY
PRINCIPLES

CLUES:

- DOWN:** Co-ops are _____ organizations and businesses, so they understand the communities they serve.
- DOWN:** Co-ops don't have customers; they have _____.
- DOWN:** All co-ops operate according to the same set of seven cooperative _____.
- ACROSS:** "Concern for _____" is the seventh cooperative principle.
- ACROSS:** Co-ops are _____ by the members they serve.

ANSWER KEY

1 DOWN: MEMBERS
2 DOWN: LOCAL
3 DOWN: COMMUNITY
4 ACROSS: CONCERN FOR
5 ACROSS: RUN BY



Cybersecurity starts with all of us

This October, Spoon River Electric is observing National Cybersecurity Awareness Month, and we want to remind everyone that you are our first line of defense against cybersecurity threats. It only takes one click on a malicious email, website or attachment to enable a bad actor to gain access to our network.

The energy sector continues to be a target for cyber attacks, and we will continue to face threats that target our employees, our supply chains and partners. It is critical that we stay vigilant, because we are not only a part of one of our nation's critical infrastructures, we are the infrastructure all of the others rely upon. We want our members – and the world – to know we take our role in managing cybersecurity threats to our members' data and our operations seriously.

Ransomware, credential theft, phishing emails and other attempts at cyber crime are no longer a question of if, but of when. Anyone with a password is a possible access point into our systems for bad actors. This

reality spreads the responsibility of keeping our systems secure to all members of our co-op's staff, not just those on our information technology team. If you use our co-op's computers, mobile devices and network, you have a role in protecting our co-op.

Here are some simple things you can do to protect our systems from cybersecurity threats. Remember, the actions and steps you learn here to protect Spoon River Electric can also help protect you at home!

Keep your defenses up!

Make sure all your computer software—including your web browser—is updated with the latest version. Keeping software up-to-date ensures security patches being deployed by our security team can succeed in blocking cyber threats. Create a strong password and keep it private—it can take five days to crack a nine-character password, but more than two centuries to crack a password consisting of 12 characters or more!

Treat all Wi-Fi networks as a

potential security risk. Never check financial or other sensitive accounts when using public Wi-Fi at a conference, meeting or when you're on the road. Encrypt sensitive data when using a public Wi-Fi network.

Don't fall for a phish!

Be on the lookout for emails, phone calls and other messages that try to gain access to co-op and member information. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. If something seems off, trust your instinct and convey your concerns to a manager or member of the security team.

Think before you click! Don't click links or attached files in emails or text messages from senders you don't know. Even if you do know the sender, hover over the link before you click, as they may have been hacked or someone could be spoofing them! There are many ways to spot a phish, and you can visit www.staysafeonline.org to see them all. Remember, you are Spoon River Electric's first line of defense against cybersecurity threats.



Smart devices

They're definitely smart, but not always secure



For many of us, buying and using technology to make our homes smarter and interconnected is as tempting as walking through a candy store as a kid.

Although not found in every household, many U.S. homes have one or two components, such as a smart security system complete with cameras, a smart thermostat, or a know-it-all “voice assistant” such as Amazon’s Alexa. The rest of our homes range from doing things the old-fashioned way (no smart devices at all) to having a home decked out in every smart technology one could imagine.

According to Statista, a company specializing in market and consumer data, North Americans are forecast to spend \$63 billion in the smart home market in 2022. That’s nothing to sneeze at. (But if we do, millions of Americans may hear Alexa say, “Bless you.”)

Although convenient – who doesn’t want real-time glimpses of who is ringing our doorbell or to hear Google Assistant recite a recipe – smart devices come with their own set of security concerns.

Canada’s CBC News hired hackers (ethically responsible ones of course) to hack a family’s smart home and they got in, literally. “All it took was a white van, a team of three hackers and a phishing email to remotely unlock ... the front door.”

This eye-opening scenario is not intended to scare people; rather we encourage you to give your smart devices serious thought before diving in. Security measures for smart devices are similar to the steps we should take in our daily life to protect us against seedy scammers and hackers everywhere.

For example, be leery of emails or

calls asking for personal information such as login info or passwords. And although everyone loves to use the same passwords like “abc123” for everything, doing so can make your smart devices vulnerable. (Note: it’s not a good idea to use “abc123.” Be creative and make them hard to crack.) And although it seems obvious, never use the factory-set password; change it immediately.

Many tech companies are considering (and others have already switched) to two-step authentication for the smart devices they sell. Although the extra step can feel like a pain, the two-step process is a good thing; it is a valuable step in keeping you and your family safe and your conversations private.

Without the code provided in the second security step, outsiders can’t access your device or account — even if they guessed your SweetHomeAlabama1973 password (or whatever).

For more in-depth technology advice, consult an IT professional. For more information about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org. And if your password is actually SweetHomeAlabama1973, we apologize; it was used for illustrative purposes only.

Smart device technology tips

Although not an exhaustive list and not written by security experts, Safe Electricity and Spoon River Electric recommend these basic tips to make your smart devices less hackable and more secure:

NEVER click a link in an email claiming to be from a security- or smart-home related company, even if it looks official. Scammers and hackers get sign-in information and

passwords this way, which they can use to hack your smart technology.

Although tempting, don’t use all the same passwords for all of your devices.

Absolutely change factory-set passwords provided by the manufacturer.

Make your passwords complex and challenging.

If you do receive an email from your smart device manufacturer, see if the email address the company used is the same as the one they have used to contact you in the past. These emails should be general in nature and should never ask for personal or login information.

Never give out login or password or other personal information in an email, over the phone, or for any other reason unless you are the one contacting the company directly via verified phone number or other trusted method of contact.

Regularly update the device’s software so that it is protected by the latest security.

Unless the hacker makes him/herself known, it can be hard to detect if a smart device has been hacked until the obvious happens.

If it has been hacked, your gadget might be slower than usual, unresponsive, or compulsively reboot.

If you are tech savvy, keep watch on the IP addresses that access the devices.

Disclaimer: Tips are designed to increase awareness. For expert and in-depth technology advice, contact an IT professional or manufacturer. For more information about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.