

## President's Report



William R. Dodds  
President/CEO

## Affordable electricity powers quality of life

Most of us use electricity, either directly or indirectly, at almost all times. Because electricity is so abundant and available with the simple flip of a switch, it's easy to take it for granted.

According to the Energy Information Agency (EIA), the typical U.S. household uses more air conditioning, appliances and consumer electronics than ever before. The average home also contains 10 or more internet-connected devices. Considering everything that is powered by electricity, it's no wonder we occasionally might wince at our monthly bill. But keep in mind, it's no longer just the "light bill."

### Electricity powers quality of life

Electricity powers our quality of life. From the infrastructure of your home (appliances, water heater and HVAC system) to charging your smartphones, computers, TV and Wi-Fi router, your energy bill covers so much more than lighting.

Today, there is more demand for electricity than ever before. At home, in schools and business, and in commercial sectors such as transportation, the need for electricity is increasing.

Typically when demand goes up, so too does the price, as is the case with most goods or services, like cable or even your favorite specialty coffee. However, that's not true with electricity.

Let's take a look at how the value of electricity compares to other common expenses.

Over the last five years, the cost of rent increased 3.4 percent; medical care increased 2.8 percent; and education increased 2.2 percent. But the cost of electricity only increased 1



percent. Considering all the ways we depend on electricity, it still remains a great value.

So, the next time you're enjoying your favorite podcast, TV series or movie, consider the value of electricity and how it enhances your quality of life.

We care about you, the members we serve, and understand that electricity is more than a commodity—it's a necessity. That's why Spoon River Electric will continue working hard to power your life, reliably and affordably.

# Spoon River Electric Cooperative

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## Spoon River Electric Cooperative – By the Numbers

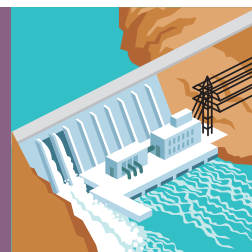
Miles of line energized: 1,272  
Number of members served: 5,022  
Number of power poles  
in territory: 29,361

## HYDROPOWER WORD SCRAMBLE

You know that it's never safe to mix water and electricity. But did you know that large amounts of flowing water can be used to create electricity? It's called hydropower, and it's made from the movement of water.



Read the facts about hydropower below, then unscramble each **bolded** word. Check your work in the answer key.



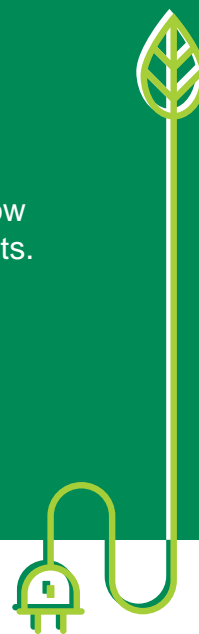
1. **YROHD** means “water” in Greek.  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Water flowing down a **EVRRI** is used to spin large turbines that help make the hydroelectricity.  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. When the turbines spin, a large **TROAEGREN** spins, which makes the electricity.  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. The amount of water used to generate hydropower is controlled through use of large **MDAS**.  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Hydropower is a form of **ELNERAEWB** energy.  
\_\_\_\_\_

ANSWER KEY: 1. HYDRO 2. RIVER 3. GENERATOR 4. DAMS 5. RENEWABLE

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

When shopping for new light bulbs, know the difference between lumens and watts. Lumens measure the amount of light produced by the bulb. Watts measure energy consumption. Energy-saving LEDs come in a variety of colors and brightness levels and last 15-25 times longer than incandescent bulbs.

Source: energy.gov



## SREC awards three \$1,000 scholarships

This year, with the uncertainties of the world, our board of directors decided to continue with the scholarship program the same way as 2020. The formal Annual Meeting for 2021 has been canceled, but a picnic for members will be held in its place August 23 at the cooperative in Canton.

Scholarship interviews were held early June 2021 and three very deserving students were awarded \$1,000 each.

Max Johnson of Lewistown was awarded the Scott Parrish Memorial

Scholarship of \$1,000.

Claire Wheelwright of Canton was awarded the Spoon River Electric Scholastic Scholarship of \$1,000. Claire will be attending the University of Missouri majoring in pre-med hoping to continue onto medical school.

The Spoon River Electric Honorary Scholarship of \$1,000 was awarded to Ruby Davis of Canton. Ruby will attend Southwest Baptist University



Max Johnson



Claire Wheelwright



Ruby Davis

for the Doctor of Physical Therapy program.

Spoon River Electric couldn't be more proud of all these scholarship recipients. We wish them the best of luck with their future!



## Understanding power surges and blinks

Photo courtesy of Pat Gaines

Have you ever noticed your lights blink during a thunderstorm? Or perhaps you've noticed a blinking microwave clock when you arrive home. When this happens, you've likely experienced a brief disruption to your electric service, which could result from a power surge or blink. While the symptoms of surges and blinks can appear similar, what's happening behind the scenes can be quite different.

### What's a power surge?

Power surges are brief overvoltage spikes or disturbances of a power waveform that can damage, degrade or destroy electronic equipment within your home or business. Most electronics are designed to handle small variations in voltage; however, power surges can reach amplitudes of tens of thousands of volts—this can be extremely damaging to your electronic equipment.

Surges can be caused by internal sources, like HVAC systems with variable frequency drives, or external sources, like lightning and damage to power lines and transformers.

Spoon River Electric encourages all members to install surge protective devices (such as surge protector power strips) to safeguard your sensitive electronics. If you're experiencing frequent surges in your home or business and you believe the cause is internal, contact a qualified electrician to inspect your electrical system.

### What's a power blink?

Power blinks are also brief service interruptions, but they're typically caused by a fault (short circuit) on a power line or a protective device that's working in reaction to the fault. Faults can occur through a variety of instances, like squirrels, birds or other small animals contacting an energized power line; tree branches touching

a power line; or lightning and other similar events. In fact, when it comes to power disruptions caused by critters, squirrels reign supreme. In 2019 alone, squirrels were responsible for more than 1,200 outages nationwide.

Any of the events noted above can cause your power to blink, but you may also experience a brief interruption when protective devices that act like circuit breakers are working to detect the fault. Believe it or not, these brief power blinks caused by protective devices are actually good because that means the equipment is working as it should to prevent a prolonged outage.

Regardless of the cause, Spoon River Electric crews will be on their way to inspect the damage and make necessary repairs after a power outage. And you can help too! Any time you experience repeated disruptions to your electric service, please let us know by calling 309-647-2700.

# Proper rest makes a huge difference in staying safe during harvest

For many farmers, fall requires long days in the field and little rest. The pressure to harvest as much as possible, combined with fatigue and looming deadlines, increases the risk of injury. In fact, most injuries occur during the spring and fall when stress and fatigue are common among farmers.

The safety and health of workers, including making time for sleep,

should be a priority when considering a farm's productivity, according to Josie Rudolphi, University of Illinois Extension associate research scientist. "Rushing and cutting corners can lead to injury, which no one has time for, especially during the harvest," she says.

Rudolphi grew up on a farm and understands the pressures of harvest season. She says that getting proper

rest can make a huge difference in staying safe, but during the time crunch of harvest season, farmers sacrifice sleep to work late into the night.

"Sleep deficiency has been associated with increased injury, reduced reaction time, and reduced concentration," Rudolphi says. "All of which could impact health and safety, as well as productivity."

The demands of harvest are stressful, and a lack of sleep can intensify that and lead to errors in the fields or even on the roads.

To improve sleep, Rudolphi advises farmers to go to bed and wake up at regular times when possible. They can use rainy days to catch up on sleep.

Other sleep health tips include:

- Create a bedroom environment that encourages sleep; keep it quiet, dark and cool.
- Limit electronic device use.
- Avoid large meals, caffeine and alcohol before bedtime.

In addition to improving sleep, managing stress is an important component to injury prevention, health and safety. "By using the 'Four A' Method of avoid (planning ahead), adapt (changing expectations), alter (changing the situation when you can) and accept (acknowledging that a situation is what it is), farmers can successfully manage the stress of long hours and unpredictability," Rudolphi adds.

For information about safety around electricity, including farm and ranch safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

Feeling stressed this harvest season?

## WHAT'S YOUR PLAN?

Breakdowns. Long hours. Setbacks. There is no way to predict what harvest will bring.

Have your PLAN in place to manage your stress for a safe and healthy harvest.



### Prepare for the season

With preparation, some stress can be avoided. Anticipate the demands of harvest and plan ahead. For example, prep healthy meals, fuel equipment and perform routine maintenance ahead of schedule. What can you do to prepare?



### Lean on loved ones

Seeking support from others rather than taking on everything yourself can help reduce stress. Text or call a friend or family member when you need support.

Whom can you lean on?



### Activate coping mechanisms

Coping mechanisms can help manage stress. They include engaging in physical activity, finding ways to make yourself laugh and carving out time for hobbies.

Which coping mechanisms will you use?



### Nip negative self-talk

Negative self-talk leads to decreased morale and feelings of hopelessness. When your inner critic nags, be kind to yourself and remember thoughts are not reality.

How will you tell your inner critic to take a hike?

Content developed by Josie M. Rudolphi and Courtney Cuthbertson, University of Illinois Extension



### Need immediate assistance?

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:  
1-800-273-8255

