

## President's Report



William R. Dodds  
President/CEO

## This November, let your voice be heard

By Meghaan Evans

Low voter turnout has been a topic of conversation for the last several election cycles. Since the 1960s, voter turnout during presidential elections has seen a steady decline – with the occasional uptick here and there. In the 2016 primary election cycle, voter turnout in most states was only 21 to 30 percent, and this was a record year for primary voter turnout. In Illinois, we saw a voter turnout percentage of 38.9 percent, but that still leaves a large number of voters that aren't making their voices heard.

Some speculate the reason for the decline is because the average American is not as engaged in politics as they have been in the past. And who can blame us really? Often times, we may feel like candidates are not speaking to the issues we care about. Or perhaps we don't feel like we understand enough about the candidates' stances on the issues, or even the issues themselves. But we can change this.

Here at Spoon River, we want to see civic engagement in our rural communities increase. We want to give you what you need to make informed decisions about candidates at all levels of government, not just the presidential race. And we want you to know more about the issues that could impact our local communities.

America's electric cooperatives are doing their part by informing co-op staff and members through Coops Vote, a



non-partisan campaign with one simple goal: increase voter turnout at the polls this November. By visiting [vote.coop](http://vote.coop), you can learn about your candidates, access voter registration information and more.

The future of rural economies depends on their ability to keep up with today's global economy, which is why access to broadband internet is a key topic of discussion this election season. Just 55 percent of rural Americans have broadband at home. Quick access to information is crucial in finding a job, getting a better education and even gathering the information needed to make major health decisions. But there is a barrier: expensive costs.

With the right state and federal policies, broadband technology can become available to all rural Americans, allowing families and businesses to communicate in new and faster ways. Electric cooperatives are already committed to providing affordable electricity to our communities, so helping provide affordable broadband access is a natural next step. We encourage you to visit [vote.coop](http://vote.coop) and take the pledge to learn more about the issues that impact us locally. Let's work together to improve our communities by increasing voter turnout and changing our country, one vote at a time.

*Meghaan Evans writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.*

**Office is closed  
November 24  
and 25 for  
Thanksgiving**



## 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](http://www.srecoop.org)

### *President/CEO*

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## Spoon River Electric Cooperative – By the Numbers

Miles of line energized: 1,271  
Number of members served: 4,808  
Number of power poles  
in territory: 29,255

## Small Business Saturday

Small Business Saturday is the Saturday after Thanksgiving and it sits between Black Friday and Cyber Monday. This year, it falls on November 26. Small Business Saturday is a day for everyone — from the business owners who create jobs to the customers who buy locally — to support small businesses that invigorate the economy and strengthen our community. SBS is a national event championed by elected officials in all 50 states and Washington, D.C., including President Obama.

The Canton Chamber of Commerce will be representing SBS in the Santa Parade, creating and handing out holiday coupon books for our small businesses, spreading the word through social media and SBS merchandise, and holiday Canton Cash Cards are back.

Small businesses are the lifeblood of every community. Local businesses support the Canton community each and every day. When you shop locally you support the businesses that support the schools, the sports teams, the non-profits, the churches and the other businesses that make our community such a great place to live and work. Local businesses enhance the sustainability and build an even stronger and more vibrant Canton community.

Keep in mind, for every \$100 spent in locally-owned independent



stores, \$68 returns to the community through taxes, payroll and other expenditures; \$43 when spent in a local national chain store. When you purchase online or out of town, nothing returns to our community.

**WHAT CAN I DO:** This Small Business Saturday®, buy what you love from the businesses you love. And, keep money in our community for better schools, road and sidewalk improvements, and cleaner parks. Anything you can do to give the small businesses the support they need helps to keep creating jobs, powering the economy and invigorating communities. Because that's what makes SBS a success!

Canton offers something for everyone – grab a local latte while you shop for home and seasonal décor, women's clothes and fashion accessories, body essentials, or antiques and primitives.

### Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



Heating your living space uses more energy than any other system in your home – typically making up about 42 percent of your utility bill. By combining proper equipment maintenance and upgrades with recommended insulation, air sealing and thermostat settings, you can save about 30 percent on your energy bill

*Source: Energy.gov*

# Know what's below

*Dial 811 before you dig.*

Spring is an optimal time of year to dream up and achieve your landscaping masterpiece, but in many parts of the country, planting shrubs in early fall gives the plants a head start at establishing roots in the season's cool, moist soil. Perhaps you're planning to build a new deck to enjoy those cool autumn evenings. If any of your fall projects require digging—such as planting trees or shrubs, or setting posts—remember to dial 811 first.

Underground utilities, such as buried gas, water and electric lines, can be a shovel thrust away from turning a fall project into a disaster.

Play it safe by dialing 811 to find out where utility lines run on your property. Your call will be routed to a local "one call" center. Tell the operator where you're planning to dig and what type of work you will be doing, and affected local utilities will be notified.

In a few days, a locator will arrive to designate the approximate location of any underground lines, pipes and cables. These areas will be marked with flags or paint so you'll know what's below. Then the safe digging can begin.

Although many homeowners tackling do-it-yourself digging projects are aware of "Call Before You Dig" services, the majority doesn't take advantage of the service. A national survey showed that only 50 percent of homeowners called to have their lines marked before starting digging projects, according to the Common Ground Alliance (CGA), a federally mandated group of underground utility and damage prevention industry professionals. CGA data also shows that an underground utility line is damaged every six minutes in the U.S. because someone decided to dig without first dialing 811.



**Know what's below.  
Call before you dig.**

Even simple tasks like installing a new mailbox post can damage utility lines, which can disrupt service to an entire neighborhood, harm diggers and potentially result in fines and repair costs.

Never assume the location or depth of underground utility lines. There's no need: the 811 service is free, prevents the inconvenience of having utilities interrupted and can help you avoid serious injury. For more information about local services, visit [www.call811.com](http://www.call811.com).

A photograph of a middle-aged man with a grey beard and mustache, wearing a grey baseball cap and a dark green jacket over a light-colored shirt. He is speaking into a vintage-style silver microphone. The background is a bright, clear sky.

**EVERY MEMBER HAS A VOICE.  
MAKE SURE YOURS IS HEARD.**

Here's something worth shouting about. As an electric co-op member, you have a say in how the co-op is run and the decisions that are made. Isn't that nice to hear? Learn more about the power of your co-op membership at [TogetherWeSave.com](http://TogetherWeSave.com).

 **SPOON RIVER  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**  
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

**TOGETHERWESAVE.COM**



**WE ALL HAVE A JOB TO DO.** When it comes to using energy wisely, no job is too small. But some are pretty high up. Yet when every co-op member works together, it's a job that comes with countless benefits. Learn more about the power of your co-op membership at [TogetherWeSave.com](http://TogetherWeSave.com).



[TOGETHERWESAVE.COM](http://TOGETHERWESAVE.COM)

