

President's Report



William R. Dodds
President/CEO

Spoon River Electric Cooperative will be closed December 23 & 24 for Christmas and December 30 & 31 for New Year's.

\$5,500 donated to local organizations through Spoon River Electric's Operation Round Up



The Spoon River Electric's Operation Round Up committee recently met and voted to donate \$5,500 to five local organizations within its service territory. VIT FFA received \$1,500, \$1,000 went to Camp Big Sky's Accessing the Outdoors Activities, \$500 to the Cuba Area Food Pantry, \$1,500 to the VIT Jr/Sr Art Department and \$1,000 to the Rushville H.E.L.P. Center's Kids Shopping Program.

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 the funds collected are donated back into our communities as charitable grants. The average donation a member makes annually ranges from \$6 to \$12.

For more information about the Operation Round Up program, visit our website: srecoop.org under the Operation Round Up tab or call Taryn at 309-647-2700.

Important note

If you know of a food pantry or school food program in need, please contact Taryn at Spoon River Electric by calling 309-647-2700.



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

President/CEO

William R. Dodds
bdodds@srecoop.org

Chairman

Bernard Marvel, Browning

Vice Chairman

Terry Beam, Cuba

Secretary

Jack Clark, Lewistown

Treasurer

Lyle Nelson, Abingdon

Board of Directors

Joe Davis, Canton
Kurt Duncan, Lewistown
JoDee Pedigo, Canton
John Spangler, Marietta
Wesley Strode, 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

HOLIDAY SAFETY WORD SEARCH

Remember to keep electrical safety in mind this holiday season!

Read the safety tips below, then find and circle the bolded words in the puzzle.



D	T	T	X	M	L	N	L	W	V	B	H	G	P	M
P	E	Y	E	N	H	S	A	G	E	T	Q	W	C	O
D	C	R	A	K	P	T	C	K	J	X	N	C	J	Q
E	X	R	E	I	O	J	I	T	B	S	L	E	Y	I
M	P	W	W	T	W	F	R	V	V	Z	U	U	V	J
X	R	K	Z	Z	A	T	T	L	X	W	L	M	X	Y
D	T	Z	G	P	N	W	C	C	N	L	Z	A	H	Z
I	N	S	P	E	C	T	E	D	P	F	R	R	Z	T
D	P	G	V	B	E	E	L	L	Q	P	H	V	W	F
A	J	K	F	L	B	A	E	S	K	H	I	Z	W	M
N	M	V	D	T	W	V	X	R	I	R	B	H	U	C
C	O	N	B	B	R	W	O	H	O	W	Q	N	Q	P
X	A	W	X	S	N	O	I	T	A	R	O	C	E	D
C	K	L	B	T	K	R	A	J	B	C	M	D	Y	P
X	C	M	A	Y	S	K	B	O	Y	Q	M	Q	K	Q

- Do not overload electrical outlets with too many **decorations** or appliances.
- Make sure your Christmas tree is **watered** daily.
- Turn off all **electrical** decorations before leaving home or going to sleep.
- Never leave a **candle** burning if you're not in the room.
- Extension cords used for holiday decorations should always be **inspected** for damage or exposed wires.



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Heading out of town for the holiday season?

Remember to unplug electronics that draw a phantom energy load. Some gadgets like TVs, phone chargers, gaming consoles and toothbrush chargers use energy when plugged into an outlet—even when they're not in use.



Beat holiday stress: Tips for a calmer season

Old songs call it the most wonderful time of the year, but the holiday season carries a high degree of stress for many people. The final months of the year include added pressures that may affect well-being, relationships, finances and other factors that contribute to anything but a merry and bright time.

Common causes of holiday stress

Although it sounds obvious, the best way to manage stressors is to remove or avoid them as much as possible. This is often easier said than done. Are there holiday-related events or tasks that are daunting? If so, consider not doing them if they aren't necessary.

An overbooked holiday schedule is not the only thing that can cause strife and discontent, however. Here are other seasonal but common causes of stress, anxiety or depression.

■ Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)

As daylight hours become shorter, the rates of depression increase. If you are diagnosed with SAD, follow your doctor's advice. Options include light therapy, counseling and medication.

■ Unrealistic expectations

These anxiety-producing thoughts and feelings can either come from external sources or ruminate in our minds. Outside expectations from family members, children, bosses, friends and others can leave you feeling like you are not enough or that you are spread way too thin. Internal expectations can push you to do more than is healthy or reasonable. Consider reframing your thoughts and anticipating unreasonable expectations by:

- Knowing your limits for work hours, budgets or patience with specific people or situations
- Practicing or writing down polite refusals that you can use with others who pile on the pressure
- Recognizing that it is okay to have negative thoughts and feelings sometimes

- Realizing that while others may put their best holiday foot forward, this does not mean that they will have a perfect holiday season (which is also unrealistic). Social media posts are not always as they appear

■ Financial difficulties and debt

Financial stress is often paired with unrealistic expectations. According to a Magnify Money survey conducted in 2020, more than 30 percent of shoppers went into an average of \$1,380 of debt for holiday gift buying and other expenses. This type of strain on your budget lasts far longer than the celebrations. Consider:

- Setting a limit before you begin to shop
- Tracking expenses
- Putting credit cards aside and using only cash for gift buying
- Setting aside money each month as a Christmas or holiday fund

■ Loneliness and family issues

Memories of pleasant holidays or comparisons between your life and others enjoying the season can exacerbate loneliness. With so much focus on sharing time with others, people without positive familial or

social connections can experience more sadness during the holiday season than during other times of the year. Consider:

- Creating new traditions with friends
- Volunteering for an organization that helps others, such as serving food on Christmas Day
- Getting help if you need it by seeking out counseling

■ Tips to alleviate stress

If you find you are overstressed, don't feel like yourself, or all the joy has been zapped from the most wonderful time of the year, try out some of these stress-alleviating techniques.

- Identify negative self-talk and immediately refocus on a more positive message
- Maintain a healthy eating and exercise regimen to minimize physical stress
- Keep your distance from toxic or negative people and focus on quality relationships
- Use positive affirmations and take the time to pamper yourself

The holiday season may come with more stressors than at other times of the year, but self-care, tempering expectations, reaching out to positive people and sticking to both financial and time budgets will help you avoid a blue Christmas and instead focus on the warmth of the season.



Deck the Halls SAFELY

- Use only lights, cords, animated displays, and decorations **rated for outdoor use**.
- When decorating outside, **look up and around** for power lines. **Never throw lights** or other decorations into trees near power lines.
- Keep ladders, equipment, and yourself **at least ten feet away** from power lines.
- Cords should be plugged into outlets equipped with **Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs)**.

For more holiday safety tips visit:

 Safe Electricity.org

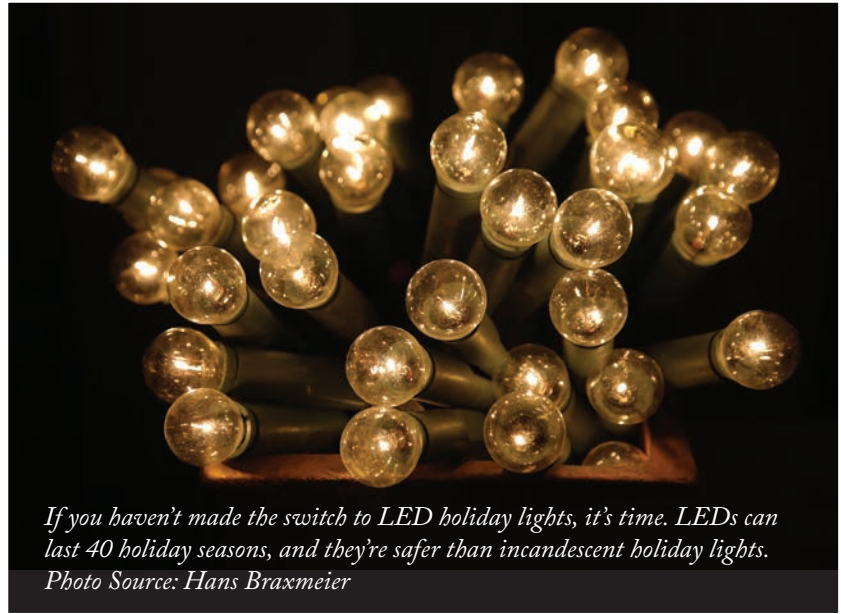
Holiday Décor Tips for an Energy-Wise Home

By Abby Berry, NRECA

Whether you've already decked your halls or you're just getting started, there's still time to incorporate energy savings into your holiday décor planning.

If you haven't strung your twinkle lights, be sure to use LED light strands. LEDs consume far less energy than incandescent lights and they can last 40 holiday seasons. They're also safer because they're made with epoxy lenses, not glass, making them more resistant to breaking—and they're cool to the touch, so no burnt fingers!

If you missed Santa's memo about energy-saving LEDs and your holiday lights are already up, you can still save on lighting costs. All you need is a programmable light timer. Most models cost between \$10 to \$25 and can be purchased through online retailers like Amazon or at big box stores like Lowe's or Wal-Mart. With a light timer, you can easily program when you want your holiday lights turned on and off, which will save you time, money and energy. If you're using a timer for exterior lighting, make sure it's weatherproof and intended for outdoor use.



If you haven't made the switch to LED holiday lights, it's time. LEDs can last 40 holiday seasons, and they're safer than incandescent holiday lights.

Photo Source: Hans Braxmeier

If Clark Griswold's décor style is a bit much for your taste, consider a more natural approach. Many Christmas tree farms, and even retailers like Lowe's and Home Depot, give away greenery clippings from recently trimmed trees. With a little twine, extra ornaments and sparkly ribbon, you can create beautiful garlands and wreaths to hang over your front door or windows. To add extra twinkle at night, you can install solar-powered

spotlights to illuminate your new (essentially free!) greenery. Solar spotlights can vary in price, but you should be able to purchase a quality set of four for about \$30—and because they run on natural energy from the sun, there's no additional cost to your energy bill.

Regardless of how you decorate your home for the holidays, there are plenty of ways to save energy throughout the season.

Keep Your Holidays

MERRY & BRIGHT

Don't add stress to your holiday season. Knowing how to properly use and hang lights could prevent injury or fire.



Make sure your home's electrical system can handle the load.



Unplug lights or decorations before changing a bulb or other parts.



Do not use cords or plugs that are damaged, frayed or cracked.



Only use lights certified by a reputable testing lab.

In addition, consider LED lights when replacing old light strands. LEDs use 80 to 90% less energy than incandescent bulbs.



Learn more: SafeElectricity.org