

President's Report



Josh DeWees
President/CEO

Know the signs of a scam

It's no secret that consumers with a water, gas or electricity connection have long been targets for utility scams, but fraudsters have changed their tactics since the COVID-19 pandemic. As consumers became more reliant on technology for work, school and commerce, scammers noted these shifts and adapted their tactics to this changed environment.

Imposter scams are the number one type of fraud reported to the Federal Trade Commission. While scam artists may come to your door posing as a utility worker who works for the "power company," in today's more connected world, attempts are more likely to come through an electronic device, via email, phone or text.

Common types of scams

A scammer may claim you are overdue on your electric bill and threaten to disconnect your service if you don't pay immediately. Whether this is done in-person, by phone, text or email, the scammers want to scare you into immediate payment so you don't have time think clearly.

If this happens over the phone, simply hang up. If you're concerned about your bill, call us at 309.647.2700. Our phone number can also be found on your monthly bill. If the scam is by email or text, delete it before taking any action. If you're unsure, you can always contact us to check the status of your account. Remember, Spoon River Electric will never attempt to demand immediate payment after just one notice.

Some scammers may falsely claim you have been overcharged on your bill and say they want to give a refund. It sounds easy. All you have to do is click or press a button to initiate

the process. If you proceed, you will be prompted to provide banking or other personal information. Instead of money going into your bank account, the scammers can drain your account and use personal information such as a social security number for identity theft.

If this "refund" scam happens over the phone, just hang up and block the phone number to prevent future robocalls. If this scam attempt occurs via email (known as a "phishing" attempt) or by text ("smishing"), do not click any links. Instead, delete it, and if

possible, block the sender. If you do overpay on your energy bill, Spoon River Electric will automatically apply the credit to your next billing cycle. When in doubt, contact us.



Defend yourself against scams

Be wary of call or texts from unknown numbers. Be suspicious of an unknown person claiming to be a utility worker who requests banking or other personal information.

Never let anyone into your home that you don't know unless you have a scheduled appointment or reported a problem. Spoon River Electric employees wear High-vis yellow uniforms or shirts with our logo on them. Our trucks are also marked. When we perform work on our members' property or come into your home, our employees are professionals and will always identify themselves.

We want to help protect our community against utility scams, and you can help create the first line of defense. Please report any potential scams to us so we can spread the word to prevent others in the community from falling victim.



4th JULY
INDEPENDENCE DAY

The Spoon River Electric Cooperative office will be closed July 4 to celebrate Independence Day.

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

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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

COOPERATIVE FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

As a member of an electric cooperative (also known as a co-op), you're part of something special! Read the facts about co-ops below and use the word bank to fill in the blanks. Check your work in the answer key.



Word Bank:
Electric
Principles
Members
Communities
Co-ops

1. Co-ops don't have customers. Instead, they have _____.
2. Co-ops are local organizations and businesses, so they understand the local _____ they serve.
3. All co-ops are guided by the same set of cooperative _____.
4. _____ are led by the members they serve.
5. You're a member of an _____ co-op, but there are also housing, grocery and other types of co-ops.

Answer Key: 1) members 2) communities 3) principles 4) co-ops 5) electric

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Did you know the combined use of large appliances like dishwashers, clothes dryers and washing machines account for the largest percentage of electricity use in the average U.S. home? Take small steps to save energy when using these appliances.

Only run full loads in the dishwasher, and thoroughly scrape food from dishes before loading. Dry towels and heavier cottons separate from lighter-weight clothing, and clean the lint screen after every use. Wash clothing in cold water to save energy used to heat water.

Source: EIA and DOE



Stay fresh

Five tips for better indoor air quality

We spend a lot of time indoors. In fact, the Environmental Protection Agency estimates the average person spends 90 percent of their life indoors. (I don't know about you, but I suddenly have the urge to go for a long walk!)

Additionally, our homes are becoming more energy efficient—they're better insulated and sealed with less ventilation—which is great for our energy bills but not so much for our indoor air quality.

The thought of breathing in pollutants can be scary, but the truth is, indoor air pollution is common and simply unavoidable. The good news is there are ways you can easily improve the air quality of your home.

Here are five tips to help you breathe a little easier.

Change your air filter often.

Clogged, dirty filters reduce the amount of airflow and the HVAC system's efficiency. When a filter becomes too clogged, the excess dirt and dust are sent through your air ducts, adding unnecessary allergens and other unwanted particles into your living space. During the cooling season (summer months), the Department of Energy recommends replacing your air filter every month or two. This is one of the easiest ways to promote better indoor air quality and energy efficiency.

Regularly vacuum carpet and rugs—especially if you have furry friends. The cleaner the home, the healthier the home. Vacuuming carpet and area rugs once a week can greatly reduce the accumulation of pet dander and dust inside your home. Frequently clean other areas that collect dust, like drapes, bedding and cluttered areas.

Use vents to remove cooking fumes. Those exhaust fans aren't just for when you burn the bacon. Fans help remove fumes emitted while cooking and eliminate unwanted moisture and odors. They may be a bit noisy, but these handy tools can help you improve indoor air quality while you're preparing that culinary

masterpiece (or even a grilled cheese sandwich!).

Get a handle on humidity. Summer months typically bring more humidity than we'd like, especially if you live in a high-humidity climate zone. Moisture in the air can carry bacteria and other unwanted particles that you eventually breathe in. Dehumidifiers work to remove that moisture from the air, reducing the amount of bacteria, mold and other allergens in your home.

Incorporate air-purifying plants into your living space. There are several varieties of indoor plants that can help detoxify your home from

dust and germs found in a variety of home products, furniture and other materials. A few low-maintenance, air-purifying plants to consider are snake plants, aloe vera plants and pothos plants (also known as Devil's Ivy). These vibrant, lush plants are eye-catching and beneficial for any home. Remember to review care conditions and think about placement for any new plants you add to your home.

Taking simple steps to purify indoor air can improve health and overall quality of life. With a little effort, you can improve the indoor air quality of your home and breathe a bit easier.

Breathe Easier.

Regularly changing your cooling system's air filter provides multiple benefits.

- Improved indoor air quality
- Cleaner home
- Fewer indoor allergens
- Improved system efficiency



Always assume a downed power line is energized. Downed lines can energize the ground up to 35 feet away.



To install (insulation) or not to install, that is the question

Making sure your home is properly insulated can go a long way toward making your home more energy efficient and comfortable.

Before you attempt to replace insulation, however, there are some tasks of the job to consider, including its location and your comfort level with starting and completing the job correctly. If you will be installing batt insulation, check to see if it is labeled with an R-value or find an online value chart by zone.

Consider the following before purchasing insulation.

- Should I do the job myself?
- Whether you take it on depends on several factors, according to the Insulation Institute, including:
- If the space you want to insulate is open and accessible. The easiest and most common places to do DIY installation projects are attics and basements.
- The type of material you want to use. Batts or rolls are often installed by homeowners, while other types of insulation can require professional installers.
- Your skills and comfort level.
- Any safety issues that might make the job more suitable for a professional.
- How much time will be needed to address air leaks.
- Can I complete it safely?
- Even if you are considering installing insulation in an open area that

is easy to access, the space should be inspected. A professional should be called in to correct problems and complete the job if you find these conditions or issues, according to the institute:

- Wet or damp insulation.
- Moldy or rotted attic rafters or floor joists.
- Vents that exhaust moist air directly in the attic space instead of outdoors.
- A history of ice dams in the winter.
- Little or no attic ventilation.
- Knob-and-tube wiring (homes pre-1930).
- Unsealed and uninsulated recessed (“can”) lights (special care must be taken when insulating around these).
- Possible presence of asbestos (see next tip).
- What is the age of my home?

If your home was built around 1975 or earlier, the insulation may be vermiculite, which can contain asbestos. It is a lightweight, pea-sized, flaky gray material, according to the institute. If you suspect you have this type of insulation, do not disturb it and hire a professional to test it. Your local health department might be able to help locate a reputable testing company. If asbestos is found, the insulation will need to be removed by a professional.

For more tips on energy efficiency and electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

DeWees wins statewide scholarship

Spoon River Electric is proud to announce that Elena DeWees of Astoria High School is one of 14 winners of this year’s Thomas H. Moore Illinois Electric Cooperatives (IEC) Memorial Scholarship. She is the child of Josh and Melinda DeWees of Astoria. Elena competed for the scholarship with 222 other students from across the state. The \$2,000 awards are given each year to 13 sons or daughters of electric co-op members, employees or directors. A 14th scholarship is reserved for a student interested in lineworker’s college and will be announced at a later date. Elena will be recognized during the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives’ annual meeting on July 28, 2022 in Springfield.

Candidates were judged on grade-point average, college entrance exam scores, work and volunteer experience, school and civic activities, and a short essay demonstrating their knowledge of electric cooperatives.

Come this fall, Elena will attend Spoon River College to study communications. Spoon River Electric is honored to have a scholarship recipient and is excited to see how she will represent the community.

