

## New phone system improving customer service

### President's Report



William R. Dodds  
President/CEO

We made an addition to our office recently that is already saving time and money. Our new Voice over Internet Protocol phone system is in place, and though it is streamlining our operation, it's something you'll probably never even notice.

When you call our office, employees still answer the phone. In the rare case that everyone is tied up with other members, we have voice mail now, whereas before members could not leave us messages.

As we looked at new phone systems, one goal was to improve

our service to members. Before, we only had a handful of lines coming into the cooperative. This meant that during an outage, when a lot of members were calling, many were not getting through. Now we have more lines available, though it isn't costing more money. The Voice over Internet Protocol technology makes it possible.

This system is helping us use our time better in the office, too. No one has to hand-write phone messages anymore, and employees can better manage phone calls.

Soon the phone system will be added at our subsidiary business, Spoon River Mechanical Services. With the large call volume there, the system will be a great benefit.

We worked with Scott Brown and his team from TimbukTech on implementation of this system. They did a great job and made the transition easy and we are very pleased with the results. I think you will be, too, because getting in touch with us will be easier now. If you need to do that, give us a call at (309) 647-2700.

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## HomE Program Extended

*Money is still available for energy efficiency improvements*

Good News! The HomE Energy Rebate program that began in May of last year has been refunded and money is again available for our members.

### HomE Rebates

- \$1,500 – Geothermal heat pumps (closed loop 14.1 EER or 3.3 COP) (open loop 16.2 EER or 3.6 COP)
- \$1,000 – Air source heat pumps (16 SEER)
- \$350 – Natural Gas or LP furnace (95% efficiency)
- \$350 – Central air conditioner (16 SEER)
- \$250 – Heat pump water heater (2.0 Energy Factor)
- 30% of cost of insulation and weatherization (max of \$500)

Insulation and heat pump water heater rebates can be combined with others. Furnace and air conditioner rebates cannot be combined. Rebates will continue until the money is exhausted.

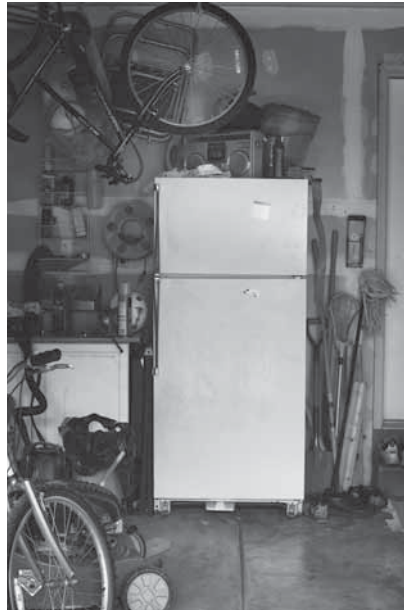


## Old refrigerators eat energy and money

**D**oes this sound familiar? You bought a new refrigerator and moved your old fridge to a garage or basement to keep a few drinks and some surplus food items cold. Here's a tip from Spoon River Electric Cooperative that can help you save energy and money.

Old refrigerators, especially those bought before 1993, use more than twice as much electricity as a new ENERGY STAR model. What's more, refrigerants in these older appliances weaken over time and door seals start to leak, causing a decline in the performance.

If you have moved your old refrigerator to an uninsulated location, such as a garage, it will use even



more energy during hot weather. A fridge in a 90 degree environment, for example, uses nearly 50 percent more power than one in a 70 degree environment. And if the temperature falls below about 40 degrees in winter, the refrigerator's thermostat may not run its cooling and defrost cycles for the appropriate amount of time.

By pulling the plug on that old refrigerator, you can save \$146 a year. For other tips on how to save energy — and money — visit Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives energy-saving website, [www.TogetherWeSave.com](http://www.TogetherWeSave.com).



Energy Efficiency

### *Tip of the Month*

Ninety percent of the energy it takes to wash clothes is used to heat water. If you wash in cold water, you could save \$40 per year if you have an electric water heater and \$30 annually if you have one powered by natural gas.

## 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)

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### Spoon River Electric Cooperative – By the Numbers

Miles of line energized: 1,249 • Number of members served: 4,944

Number of power poles in territory: 29,255



## Solar system in place

**S**poon River Electric Cooperative members Dennis and Kathy Smysor are using a newly installed solar panel system to produce electricity for their Smithfield home. The system has 24 panels which can each produce 235 watts.

On a recent overcast day, the system had accumulated nearly seven kilowatt hours by early afternoon.

"On a sunny day, I can get 30 kilowatt hours, which is way above what we use," Dennis Smysor said.

Spoon River Electric Cooperative's net metering program allows members to accumulate credit for electricity on days when they produce more than they need. They can use that electricity on days when they don't produce enough.

"Net metering helps make renewable energy a more cost-effective option for our members," said Frank Romane, Manager of Operations for Spoon River Electric Cooperative.

Bill Fabian of Midstate Renewable Energy Services worked on the design and installation of the system.

"He was super ... very, very meticulous," said Dennis Smysor of working with Fabian.

Dennis Smysor, who is retired from the postal service, serves on the MidCentury Telephone Cooperative Board of Directors. Kathy Smysor, a retired teacher, serves on the Spoon River Electric Cooperative Board of Directors.



▲ Bill Fabian of Midstate Renewable Energy installs a solar panel at Dennis and Kathy Smysor's Smithfield home recently.



▲ A technician measures framework for Dennis and Kathy Smysor's solar panels.





*A meter installed at Dennis and Kathy Smysor's home will measure the kilowatts produced by the solar panels against those provided by the Cooperative, in a system known as net metering. ►*





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