

Would you risk being hit by lightning for \$100? Seems a bit ludicrous, but desperate times cause folks to do foolish things.

President's Report



William R. Dodds
President/CEO

Contents

Electrical fire safety.....	16b
How to stay safe	16c
Old baseball photos	16d

Thefts of copper, bronze, aluminum, and bronze are on the rise, at abandoned commercial buildings, empty homes, and — most dangerously — at power substations near neighborhoods. We need your help to keep our equipment safe, prevent outages, and save lives.

At an electric co-op in Oklahoma last year, metal thieves took off with about \$100 worth of wire in a substation, but left behind a \$1 million repair bill after a fire destroyed regulators, switches, and a \$600,000 transformer. More than 3,500 consumers were temporarily left in the dark after the incident, although the co-op moved quickly to reroute power to affected areas.

It's hard to understand why folks would put their lives on the line for a few dollars. Many law enforcement officials believe that methamphetamine users are responsible for much of the prob-

lem. And the damage done to our system packs a big punch, since equipment can be ruined without the protection copper wires provide. There's also the potential for loss of life. In 2010, metal theft-



related deaths occurred in North Carolina, West Virginia, Illinois, and Ohio.

The cost for scrap copper goes up and down, but recently it's been on the rise — and so have robbery attempts. In January 2011 scrap copper sold for five times the amount it went for in 2001.

We use copper to ground our

equipment, protecting it from electrical surges and lightning by giving electricity a safe path to ground. We use a lot of copper wire in our substations, where we step-down high-voltage electricity arriving from distant power plants before it travels to your neighborhood. Then another transformer near your home — either mounted on a utility pole or in a box on the ground — lowers the voltage again so you can use the power at home. Copper is an essential component every step of the way.

Our linemen are highly trained professionals who understand the dangers of working with electricity and take proper safety precautions. To protect the public we surround our substations with secure fencing and post warning signs. But some thieves will not be deterred.

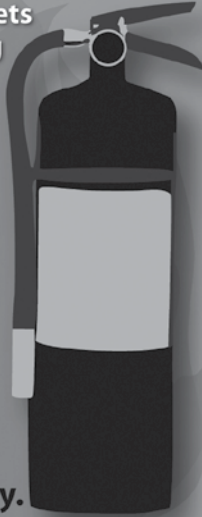
Please help us prevent these thefts. If you notice anything unusual, such as an open substation gate, open equipment, or hanging wire, call our office immediately at (309) 647-2700. If you see anyone other than our utility personnel or contractors around substations or other electric facilities, call the police.

Spoon River Electric Cooperative recently welcomed a new member to the Board of Directors. Robert Lascelles of Ipava now represents members in District 9.

Electrical Fire Safety

About 28,600 home electrical fires occur during a typical year, leading to \$1.1 billion in property losses. Faulty electrical outlets and old wiring are the main causes of electrical fires, as are damaged cords, plugs, switches, and light fixtures.

The number one priority in a fire is to escape safely.



Only use a fire extinguisher if:

- ☛ The fire department has been called.
- ☛ Everyone has exited the building.
- ☛ The fire is confined to a small area, such as a wastebasket, and is not growing.
- ☛ The room is not filled with smoke.

Not all fire extinguishers are alike. Only a Class C extinguisher can be used on an electrical fire. Remember the word **PASS**:

Pull the pin. Hold the extinguisher with the nozzle pointing away from you and release the locking mechanism.

Aim low. Point the nozzle toward the base of the fire.

Squeeze the lever slowly and evenly.

Sweep the nozzle from side-to-side.

Remember: Know when to go.

Make sure you have a home fire escape plan and working smoke alarms.

Source: U.S. Fire Administration, National Fire Protection Association

Thank You



Thanks to the members who responded to a recent bill insert and sent in their cellular phone numbers and e-mail addresses so cooperative staff can update records. We sometimes need to contact members about planned outages, line clearance or other issues important to electric service. If your contact information needs updated, please call the office at (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

Jack Clark, Lewistown

Vice Chairman

Bernard Marvel, Browning

Secretary

Steve Pille, Glasford

Treasurer

Lyle Nelson, Abingdon

Assistant Treasurer

Terry Beam, Cuba

Board of Directors

James Banks, Canton
Robert Lascelles, Ipava
Greg Leigh, Avon
Kathy Smysor, Smithfield

Editor of Spoon River News

Brenda Rothert
brothert@srecoop.org

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

How to stay safe

Want to maintain a safe (and energy efficient) house? Here are some simple how-to's to keep your appliances, outlets, and alarms working all year long!

Clean cold coils

Refrigerators are one of the highest energy-consuming products in your home. In fact, if your current refrigerator was made before 1993, it uses twice the amount of energy used by new models.

Vacuum the coils every three months to eliminate dirt buildup that reduces efficiency and creates fire hazards. To clean condenser coils:

Step 1: Unplug the refrigerator.

Step 2: Pull or unscrew the vent plate that protects the coils.

Step 3: Clean the coils with a vacuum hose, using a brush to wipe off dust you can see.

Clean air = safe air

Air conditioners need to be cleaned at the beginning of every season to keep them running safely and efficiently. To clean your air conditioner:

Step 1: Shut off power to the unit and remove the filter cover.

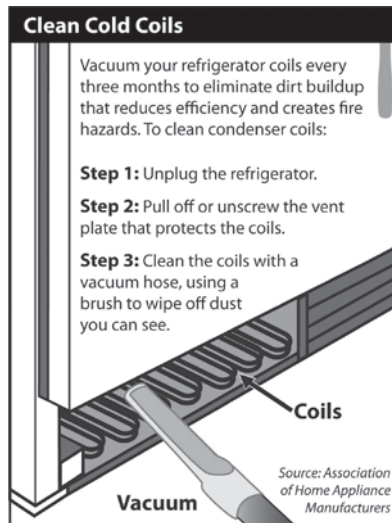
Step 2: Use a vacuum extension brush on either the coils or the visible air fins.

Step 3: Pull out the filter and clean or replace according to the instructions in the manual.

Step 4: Outside, clear leaves and debris away from the condensing unit. Hose off dirt.

Outlet serves as fail-safe

Ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) are designed to protect people from electrical shock and electrocution. A GFCI constantly monitors



Every three months remember to vacuum your refrigerator coils. This eliminates dirt buildup that reduces efficiency and creates fire hazards.

Source: NRECA

electricity flowing in a circuit. If it senses any loss of current, it quickly switches off power to that circuit.

GFCIs can be installed at the main service panel or in place of ordinary outlets. Typically, GFCIs are installed in areas where water and electricity mix in close proximity, such as a bathroom, garage, kitchen, or basement.

GFCIs can be damaged or wear out due to voltage surges from lightning, utility switching, or normal use. Just because an outlet works does not mean that the GFCI is functioning. GFCIs should be tested monthly to ensure they are in working condition.

Whether you have a receptacle-type or circuit breaker-type GFCI, pushing the TEST button should turn off the power of the circuit. Portable GFCIs should be tested before every use. Simply press the RESET button.

Smoke alarms

On average, eight people die in a home fire each day in the United States, for a total of nearly 3,000 fatalities every year. Roughly two-thirds of these deaths occur in homes without working smoke alarms. Smoke alarms save lives by providing early warning of fire. Newer smoke alarm recommendations and technologies provide greater levels of protection than ever before.

Smoke alarms should be installed in every bedroom, outside each sleeping area, and on every level of the home.

Test smoke alarms monthly by pushing the TEST button or using other procedures recommended by the manufacturer. Smoke alarm batteries should be changed at least once a year. If an alarm “chirps” or “beeps” to indicate low batteries, change them right away. Replace all smoke alarms at least every 10 years.

Arc Fault Circuit Interrupters

Arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs) replace standard circuit breakers in your home's electrical service panel. AFCIs provide a higher level of electrical fire protection, detecting hazardous arcing conditions traditional breakers were not designed to recognize, and shutting down the electricity before a fire can start.

AFCIs can stop working without showing signs of failure. Test AFCIs after installation and once a month to make sure they are working properly.

To test: Push the TEST button. The breaker handle should go to the middle or off position.

To reset: Move the breaker handle to the OFF position and then to the ON position.

Illinois Country Living reader Duke Taylor of Canton shared these photos with Spoon River Electric Cooperative after recently reading a story in the magazine about softball players.



In this photo from 1939, Taylor is the bat boy pictured sitting in front of the team. In the back row, from left to right, are John Tomlianovich, Frank Sepich, Frank Tomlianovich, George Tomlianovich, Tom Tomlianovich, "Ducky" Krulac and Walter Tomlianovich. In the front row, from left to right, are Pete Passini, Larry Vance, John Putrich, Grady Stanfel, Jim Shaw, Freddie Tomlianovich and John Passini.



This is the 1946 team that was sponsored by Halls Standard Service. In the back row, from left to right, are George Puskarich, Jack Ballard, Dick Fulton, Dick Mendenhall, Howard Degroot, Virgil Taylor, Jerry Conner and Duke Taylor. In the front row, from left to right, are John Puskarich, Jim Gardner, Phil Santos, Nig Powers, Francis Pollitt, Russell Degroot, Sammy Wright and Milton "Bud" Hall. The bat boy is Donnie Smith and the identity of the other boy is unknown.



Energy Efficiency
Tip of the Month

Electronics account for 8.1 percent of your home's energy use. Cut costs by plugging items into a power strip, and turning the strip off when not in use. "Smart" power strips are another good option—when one master device like a TV is turned off, it cuts power to other selected items (DVD players, gaming consoles, stereos, etc.).

Source: U.S. Department of Energy