

Electrical safety in the neighborhood

President's Report



William R. Dodds
President/CEO

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When thinking about your home or neighborhood, chances are you don't picture power lines. They're easy to overlook, stringing high above your roof, along property lines and roadways, or near trees. But the old adage, "Out of sight, out of mind," may be dangerous — power lines pose serious electrical hazards if forgotten. I want to pass on some valuable information from the U.S. Department of Energy.

Trees can be a power line's worst enemy. Strong winds, storms, and heavy ice can topple trees or shatter branches that pull down power lines and cause outages. Sometimes, even if heavily damaged, lines remain energized with the potential to electrify trees and nearby objects.

Arcing and flashovers between power lines and trees are also dangerous. In winter, extra weight from snow and ice can bend or break tree branches, bringing them close to power lines. During warm weather or when power lines are carrying heavy electrical loads, they can heat up and sag as much as 15 feet or 20 feet, dropping them toward nearby vegetation. Electric current caused by arcing or flashovers between power lines and trees in either situation can easily injure or even kill an individual nearby.

Follow these safety tips and be sure to pay attention to power lines:

- Make sure to always look for nearby power lines before you cut down any tree or trim branches. If a tree falls into a power line, contact Spoon River Electric Cooperative at (309) 647-2700.
- Treat all power lines as energized. Never climb or attempt to handle a tree that has a limb caught in a power line. You may not see any visible evidence that the tree is "electrified" or dangerous.
- Make sure to maintain required clearances between equipment and power lines.
- If a fire starts from a fallen power line, notify the fire department and our office. Stay away from the site of the electrical hazard. Make sure others stay clear of the line and treat it as energized.
- Do not use water on or near a fallen power line.

Along with taking necessary steps to respond to an electrical emergency, you can help stop potential power line problems before they start by practicing these safety measures:

If you notice anything such as trees or branches that might interfere with power lines or pose a serious threat, notify our office. If you are planning to plant trees on your property, make sure not to plant them directly under or within at least 25 feet of power



Spoon River Electric Cooperative President/CEO Bill Dodds congratulates 2010 Fulton County Fair Queen Breana Cameron of Astoria on her win. Spoon River Electric Cooperative was a sponsor of the fair queen pageant, which took place the first night of the fair.

lines for short trees and at least 40 feet away for medium-sized trees. Shrubs, hedges, and other plants should be kept clear of electric towers and poles.

The Right Tree in the Right Place

Courtesy of the Arbor Day Foundation

The Arbor Day Foundation encourages thoughtful practices that help preserve community trees while also benefiting electric co-op consumers.

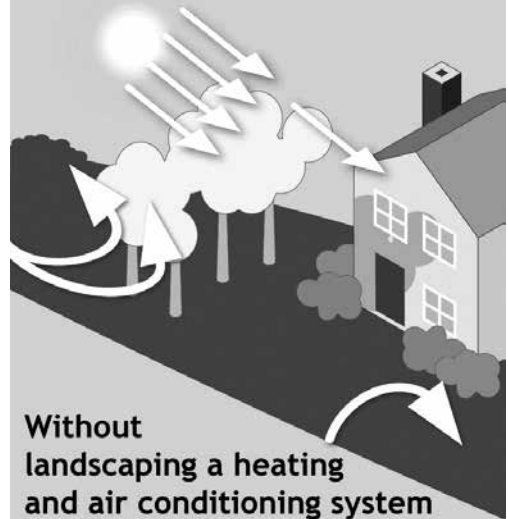
Trees can help cool your home and neighborhood, break cold winds to lower your heating costs and provide food for wildlife. Properly placed trees can lower line clearance costs for utility companies, reduce tree mortality and result in healthier community forests.

Tall trees surrounding your home, such as maple, oak, pine and spruce, provide summer

shade to lower cooling costs and keep out cold winter winds. Medium trees, 40 feet or less in mature height, might include Washington Aawthorne and Golden Raintree, while smaller trees suitable for planting beneath utility lines might include Redbud, Dogwood, and Crabapple. When planting near utility lines, consider a 25 foot maximum mature height and 20 foot spread.

To learn more about which trees might work best in your yard, visit www.arborday.org.

Landscaping **REDUCES** direct summer sunlight and cold winter winds.



Without landscaping a heating and air conditioning system has to work **HARDER.**



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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bdodds@srecoop.org

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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

Clearing a path of safety

Spoon River Electric Cooperative Manager of Line Clearance Josh Dewees answers some commonly asked questions about the co-op's line clearance program.



Tree Planting Guide



Q: Why is line clearance important?

A: Clearing brush and tree limbs away from power lines improves the efficiency and reliability of your electricity. It reduces outage and improves response time when there is an outage.

Q: Why do some trees have to be removed, rather than trimmed?

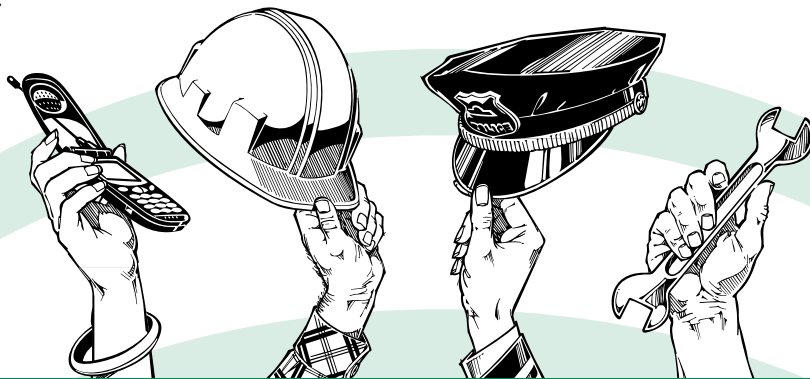
A: We take care to trim rather than remove trees in members' yards. However, trees in the right of way sometimes have to be removed, even when they are in yards. When they are very close to our power lines, trees are a chronic problem for us. It is best to plant trees a safe distance from lines. Also, members should not plant vines or add landscaping around our poles. They are an unsafe obstruction when our linemen need to climb those poles for maintenance or outages.



Q: Why are herbicides used in line clearance?

A: We use custom-blended herbicides that target broadleaf and woody species because they extend the life-cycle of line clearance work and they are 60 percent more efficient than manual line clearance. Members receive written notification at the address we have on file

for them when we will be doing trimming on their property. This work is often followed up with herbicide application the following year. There are no grazing restrictions with our herbicides, but people should not touch the leaves herbicides have been applied to until the product has dried.



Spoon River's Office will be closed September 6 in observance of Labor Day

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