

## President's Report



William R. Dodds  
President/CEO

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Our cooperative is fortunate to have an experienced subsidiary HVAC business to meet heating and cooling needs in these cold winter months. Not only can the technicians at Spoon River Mechanical Services repair your furnace, they can also advise you on the latest in energy-efficient equipment. Their services are a great fit for an electric cooperative.

Spoon River Mechanical Services is led by Manager Rod Lynch. Rod is very committed to his base of customers and is always looking to add to that list. If you have concerns about your plumbing, furnace or air conditioner, Rod can take a look and offer you a free estimate if repairs or replacements are needed. If you like the idea of geothermal heating and cooling, Rod can tell you more about this technology and its efficiency.

There are other services offered by Spoon River Mechanical that you may not know about. Refrigeration, in-floor radiant heat and whole-house backup generators are all areas of specialty for the staff. As a Spoon River Electric member, you are eligible for a discount on a Generac whole-house backup generator. It's a great way to meet your family's energy needs during outages, which are sometimes unpreventable.

### SpoonRiver MECHANICAL Services, Inc.



*Spoon River Mechanical Services Manager Rod Lynch can give you a free estimate on heating, cooling and plumbing needs. Call him today at (309) 647-3450.*

From new home construction to the repair of a faulty electrical outlet, Spoon River Mechanical Services can meet all your mechanical needs. Rod and his staff

want to be your "one stop shop". A satisfied customer is a repeat customer, and they will strive to keep you satisfied. I encourage you to give them your business.



Energy Efficiency

## Tip of the Month



When decorating, remember that outdoor “icicle” lights use more energy because they have more bulbs per linear foot than regular light strands. Consider using regular strands of energy-saving LED (Light Emitting Diode) lights. They use less electricity and last up to 100,000 hours.

*Source: Alliance to Save Energy*



Spoon River Electric Cooperative Manager of Engineering Mark Balbinot presents a \$1,500 HomE rebate check to members Greg and Carla Lasswell of Smithfield. To learn more about how you can save on energy-efficient equipment, call (309) 647-2700.



Spoon River Electric Cooperative will be closed Dec. 23 and 24 for Christmas. Our offices will also be closed Dec. 30 and 31 for New Years.



## 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

# Why does the power blink?

By Scott Turner, P.E.

At one time or another, we've all returned home or woken up late for work to see a blinking "12:00" on our digital alarm clock. You then have to reset every digital clock in your household that doesn't have a battery backup, from the microwave oven to the answering machine. Usually, this state of "eternal midnight" was caused by a "blink" in the electrical system.

While blinks can be annoying, they show that an electrical system is working exactly as designed. And while Spoon River Electric Cooperative has taken steps to reduce the number of blinks across its power system, there are measures you can take as well.

Let's look at blinks. These momentary power interruptions can occur anywhere along a power system — from the time electrons are generated at a power plant to being shipped across transmission line to substations, or during distribution from a substation to your home.

## Why blinks?

Blinks are created when a breaker, or switch, opens along any portion of the power system. The breaker usually opens because of a large, quick rise of electrical current. This large rise, called a fault condition, can occur when a tree branch touches a line, lightning strikes, or a wire breaks.

When this happens, a relay senses the fault and tells the breaker to open, preventing the flow of power to the problem site. After opening, the breaker quickly closes. The brief delay, which allows the fault to clear, usually lasts less than two seconds.

If the fault clears, every home or business that receives electricity off that power line has just experienced a blink. This could include



thousands of accounts if the breaker protects a transmission line or a substation.

## Reducing the blink's effects

Your co-op employs methods to reduce blink frequency. Tree trimming is probably the easiest and most common way, and one area where you can help. Make sure your co-op knows of any trees or limbs located close to a power line. Call (309) 647-2700 to report any trees or limbs of concern.

Meanwhile, you can reduce the frustration of blinks by purchasing an alarm clock equipped with a battery backup. This type of digital clock offers "ride through" ability for momentary outages. It will also keep the correct time and sound an alarm in case of a long-duration outage, provided a charged battery is in place. As an added benefit, these devices only use the battery in the event of a power interruption.

Blinks affect all electrical equipment, not just digital clocks. If there is a blink while you are operating a computer, your computer may crash and you will have to reboot, hoping all the while that there will be few corrupted files.

An uninterruptible power supply (UPS) on your computer can help prevent information loss. The UPS incorporates surge suppression technology with a battery backup and provides you some time to save whatever you were working on and exit your computer properly.

## The future of blinks

Spoon River Electric Cooperative operates an active system maintenance program and works hard to identify and fix sources of service interruptions. Even though blinks will never disappear from our electrical energy delivery system, by working together with us we can minimize effects of the interruptions and the frequency with which they occur.

# Cool off your winter energy bill

You've budgeted for holiday gifts, meals, maybe a vacation — and with money tight, that doesn't leave much room for home energy efficiency upgrades. Does that mean you're powerless to lower your electric bill? Not at all. Keep your energy bill cool this winter with these tips and tricks:

## Drape Delivery:

Are you using your curtains to capture heat? Make sure drapes and shades are open to catch free solar heat during the day. Close them at night to keep the heat inside.

## Thermostat:

Set your thermostat to 68 F (or lower if comfortable).



## Got tape?

Though not as durable as foam, rubber, or vinyl, you can use non-porous tape (first aid cloth tape, for example) to keep cold air from squeezing into your home. Tape is good for blocking corners and irregular cracks, and can be used at the top and bottom of a window sash; door frames; attic hatches; and inoperable windows. Reinforce with staples if needed.

## Fan it up:

Run ceiling paddle fans on low and reverse the rotation to blow air up in winter. This keeps warm air circulating without cooling you.



## Free vents:

Your HVAC system will have to work twice as hard if your air registers and vents are blocked by rugs, furniture, or drapes. Keep them clear to allow air to flow freely.

## Garage Drain:

Leave your garage door down. A warmer garage in winter will save energy.

## Rug Relief:

Have a spare rug? Use it to cover bare floors for added insulation.



## Cool Food:

Don't make your fridge work too hard. Clean coils every year, and set the temperature between 34 - 37 F; leave the freezer between 0°-5° F. Keep the freezer full — frozen food helps your freezer stay cool. When cooking keep lids on pots, and let hot food cool off before placing it in the refrigerator.



## Hot Savings:

Heating water accounts for 12 percent of your home's energy use. Set your water heater temperature no higher than 120°F. For households with only one or two members, 115 F works.

There are other ways to conserve energy, too. Remember, you don't pay for what you don't use. When you're not watching TV or using lights, computers, and other electronics, turn them off. Lower your room temperatures a bit and wear a sweater to stay warm, or place an extra blanket on the bed at night. Find more ways to save at [www.TogetherWeSave.com](http://www.TogetherWeSave.com).