

President's Report



William R. Dodds
President/CEO

Get to know your co-op network

The power behind your power

Every day, Spoon River Electric is hard at work to make sure all of our members have the electric power they need at the best possible price. And behind the scenes, we are working with a network of cooperatives to make that happen.

Spoon River Electric is a part of Prairie Power Inc. (PPI), which creates the power, along with 10 other distribution co-ops that receive power from PPI. We helped to create this second tier co-op so that we have more control over power supply and pricing.

It also takes a lot of money to run an electric co-op, so when we need to borrow capital, we turn to either the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation (CFC) or CoBank. Both of these organizations are also cooperatives. CFC is owned by electric co-ops throughout the country, and CoBank is owned by electric and agricultural co-ops nationwide.

As you know, every month we generate an electric bill that we send to you either electronically or through regular mail. We use SEDC to ensure we can apply the latest technology, help lower your energy costs and send timely, accurate bills to you.

No business can operate without several different types of insurance, such as general liability, auto and workmen's compensation. So once again, along with other

electric cooperatives across the country, we are members of Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange. This allows us to maintain reliable coverage at an affordable price.

It also takes a whole lot of "stuff" to operate an electric co-op, such as poles, wires, transformers and many other items that you may not see. This is why we partnered with

Every day, Spoon River Electric is hard at work to make sure all of our members have the electric power they need at the best possible price. And behind the scenes, we are working with a network of cooperatives to make that happen.

other co-ops to create United Utility Supply. The power of this co-op allows us to have quick access to all the materials we need at the best price.

Spoon River Electric is a member of Touchstone Energy, a nationwide alliance of 750 local, consumer-owned electric cooperatives. Our participation allows us access to a wealth of informational materials. It also allows us to benchmark our performance in comparison with other co-ops so that we

can learn from others as we constantly strive to serve you better.

Spoon River Electric is also part of the Cooperative Response Center, which allows us to answer your calls 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

So, while you are a member of one electric co-op, you are actually connected to many other co-ops. And being connected to this cooperative network ensures your needs are met in the most efficient and cooperative way possible.

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

Bernard Marvel, Browning

Vice Chairman

Terry Beam, Cuba

Secretary

Steve Pille, Glasford

Treasurer

Lyle Nelson, Abingdon

Assistant Treasurer

Robert Lascelles, Ipava

Board of Directors

James Banks, Canton
Jack Clark, Lewistown
Greg Leigh, Avon
John Spangler, Marietta

Editor of Spoon River News

Taryn Martin
tmartin@srecoop.org

Spoon River Electric Cooperative – By the Numbers

Miles of line energized: 1,255
Number of members served: 4,808
Number of power poles
in territory: 29,255

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



Save energy and money by lowering your water heater thermostat to 120 degrees Fahrenheit. This will also slow mineral buildup and corrosion in your water heater and pipes.

Source: Energy.gov

Top five energy users in your home

A starting point for savings

By Anne Prince

While most homeowners would like to be more energy efficient and save money, often it feels overwhelming because many people don't know where to start. How can the average family use less energy, lower their utility bill and still meet their daily energy needs? To help jumpstart your effort, it is useful to know what the top energy users are in your home. With this knowledge, you can choose a path that works best for your family.

According to the U.S. Energy Information Agency, the top five energy users in U.S. homes are:

1. Space cooling
2. Space heating
3. Water heating
4. Lighting
5. Refrigeration

Adjust the temperature.

Together, home heating and cooling use the most energy and take the biggest bite out of your energy budget. On the bright side, there are ways you can achieve at least 10 percent savings by taking a few simple low-cost or no-cost steps.

- During cold weather, set your thermostat to 68 degrees Fahrenheit.
- During warm weather, the recommended indoor temperature is 78 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Cleaning the filters of your HVAC system can cut costs from five to 15 percent.
- Clean the coils around your electric baseboard heater to maintain maximum efficiency.
- Caulk and weather-strip around windows and doors to prevent heat from escaping to the outdoors.

No matter what the climate or time of year, proper use of a programmable thermostat can save you 10 percent on your monthly utility bill.

Shine the light on savings.

Take a fresh look at the lighting in your home. If you still use incandescent lighting, your light bulbs are operating at only 25 percent energy

Continued on 16c ▶

Top five continued from 16b

efficiency. Replacing your home's five most frequently used bulbs with Energy Star-certified LEDs can save you \$75 per year. Another easy way to save is to always turn lights off in rooms that are not being used.

Water heating efficiency

Just as it is energy-wise to insulate your roof, wall or floor, it also pays to wrap your hot water heater with an insulating blanket. This is all the more critical if you have an older unit. Make sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions. For additional efficiency and savings, insulate

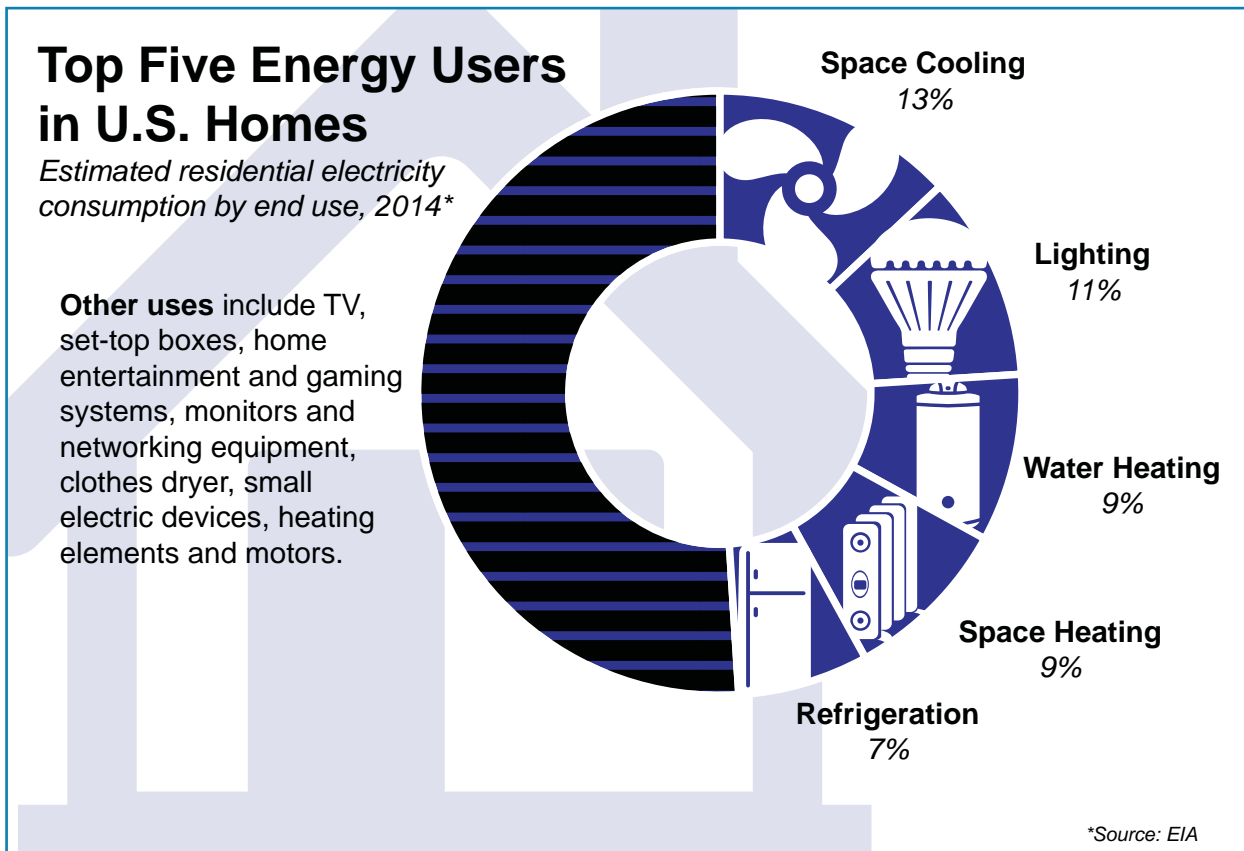
exposed hot water lines and drain one to two gallons of water from the bottom of your tank annually to prevent sediment build-up.

Put cold hard cash back in your wallet.

If your refrigerator was purchased before 2001, chances are it uses 40 percent more energy than a new Energy Star model. If you are considering an appliance update, a new Energy Star refrigerator uses at least 15 percent less energy than non-qualified models and 20 percent less energy than required by

current federal standards. Regardless of the age of your fridge, there are additional steps you can take to save energy and money. For example, don't keep your refrigerator too cold. The Department of Energy recommends temperatures of 35 – 38 degrees Fahrenheit for the fresh food compartment and 0 degrees Fahrenheit for separate freezers (used for long-term storage).

By understanding how your home uses energy, you can determine the best ways to modify energy use and keep more money in your wallet.



GUESS WHICH HOUSE HAS BETTER INSULATION IN THE ATTIC.

Effective insulation keeps heat from getting to your roof. Find out what you can do at

TOGETHERWESAVE.COM



Be prepared for winter storms

By Abby Berry

When winter temperatures drop and storms hit, it can be challenging to stay safe and warm. Winter storm severity varies depending on where you live, but nearly all Americans are affected by extreme winter storms at some point. Spoon River Electric cares about your safety, and we want you to be prepared.

Heavy snow and ice can lead to downed power lines, leaving co-op members without power. During extremely low temperatures, this can be dangerous. During a power outage, our crews will continue to work as quickly and safely as possible to restore power, but there are a few things you can do to prepare yourself.

- **Stay warm** – Plan to use a safe alternate heating source, such as a fireplace or wood-burning stove during a power outage. These are great options to keep

you and your loved ones warm, but exercise caution when using, and never leave the heating source unattended. If you are using gasoline-, propane- or natural gas-burning devices to stay warm, never use them indoors. Remember that fuel- and wood-burning sources of heat should always be properly ventilated. Always read the manufacturer's directions before using.

- **Stay fed** – The CDC recommends having several days' supply of food that does not need to be cooked handy. Crackers, cereal, canned goods and bread are good options. Five gallons of water per person should also be available in the event of an extended power outage.

- **Stay safe** – When an outage occurs, it usually means power lines are down. It is best not to travel during winter storms, but if you must, bring a survival kit along, and do not travel alone. If you encounter downed lines, always assume they are live. Stay as far away from the downed lines as possible, and report the situation to our dispatchers by calling 1(877)404-2572 if possible.

Winter weather can be unpredictable and dangerous, and planning ahead can often be the difference between life and death. Spoon River Electric is ready for what Mother Nature has in store, and we want you to be ready, too. For more winter safety tips, visit www.ready.gov/winter-weather.