

CELEBRATING
75
YEARS



Spoon River News

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President's Report



William R. Dodds
President/CEO

Making Life Better

What would make life better in our service territory? I'm not talking about winning the lottery—that only makes life better for one person or a small group. But more jobs? Better health care? Improved parks? Those are areas that benefit everyone in Fulton and surrounding counties.

Spoon River Electric Cooperative exists to power communities and empower you, our members, to improve your quality of life. The cooperative business model offers the perfect tool for tackling tasks too big for one person to handle alone. But we need a common purpose to effectively wield the power of cooperation.

Think about the impact electricity made in rural areas 75 years ago. Women lived longer because they no longer had to work from dusk to dawn at backbreaking chores. Farm production jumped. Things like running water, lights, and stored food were possible—and with those leaps, our ancestors' lives were given new opportunities.

A few of you may remember our beginnings from your younger days—you know full well the power of neighbors uniting behind a common purpose. But the vast majority doesn't remember when this area rolled up its sleeves and worked together to get the lights on. Back when life was hard—before coop-

eration changed the landscape of the communities we serve.

Does that mean we don't need a cooperative anymore? Is our job done? Are there no challenges, no roadblocks to a brighter future for our children? What's next for us?

To be honest, that's up to you.

Spoon River Electric Cooperative is more than a power provider. We're

Our purpose—powering this community and empowering you, our members—can make life better.

proof that when folks unite with a single focus, we can bring dreams to reality. Our purpose—powering this community and empowering you, our members—

can make life better.

You, our members, have the power to enact change—all with a little cooperation. So think about it—what's important to you? What would make life better?

Please tell us what you're working on to improve the quality of life. We're here to support your efforts, and we want to know how we can help bring people with common needs and interests together. Remember, electric co-ops can be a mechanism you use to make life better. Send your ideas to brother@srecoop.org or call us at (309) 647-2700.

We exist today because co-op members like yourself believed they could turn darkness into daylight. Thanks for sharing your ideas with us—we can't wait to work cooperatively with you!

Here's your second chance for energy efficiency funds

Beginning Jan. 1, 2013, funds became available for the HomE Lite energy efficiency program. The "lite" version of the HomeE program provides a rebate check for qualifying cooperative members who install a new geothermal heating/cooling system or a high efficiency air source heat pump. The program also includes rebates for residential insulation or weatherization measures, installation of a heat pump water heater and up to \$300 for a complete home energy audit conducted by a BPI (Building Performance Institute) certified auditor.



Incentives Include:

- Geothermal system - \$1,500
- Air-source heat pump (16 SEER or higher) - \$1,000
- Insulation and weatherization - 50 percent of total -project cost, up to \$1,000
- Heat pump water heater - \$250
- Commercial installations - \$500 per ton of capacity, up to a maximum of \$10,000 for geothermal and air source heat pumps.

Don't wait, limited funds are only available until June of this year or until dollars run out. To get started, contact Brenda Rothert at Spoon River Electric at 309-647-2700 or email brothert@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

Protect Against Power Surges

Power surges are responsible for millions of dollars of property damage each year, and, over time, they can cause cumulative damage by decreasing the lifespan of TVs, computers, stereo equipment, and anything else plugged into a wall outlet. Being educated is the key to choosing the best surge protection for your home.

How does a power surge cause damage?

First, what is a surge?

“A surge is a boost in the electrical charge over a power line,” said Spoon River Electric Cooperative Operations Manager Frank Romane. “This can be caused by lightning, but it’s more commonly caused by motor-driven electrical devices, such as air conditioners and refrigerators, that require a lot of energy for starting and stopping compressors. Some surges can also be caused by faulty wiring.”

Frequent, small power surges tend to shorten the life of home appliances and electronics. “Power surges come in all shapes and sizes—the most extreme case being a lightning strike because it can destroy equipment and sometimes set your house on fire,” said Alan Shedd, director of residential & commercial energy programs for Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives, the national brand for America’s electric cooperatives. “But less severe power surges are rooted in hundreds of different causes.”

He continues: “The severity of a surge depends not only on

the voltage and current involved but how long the event lasts. Most surges are very short in duration. It’s important for people to realize that surges can happen through any connection on your equipment. If there is a wire connected to your equipment, then it provides a path for a surge.”

How can I protect my property?

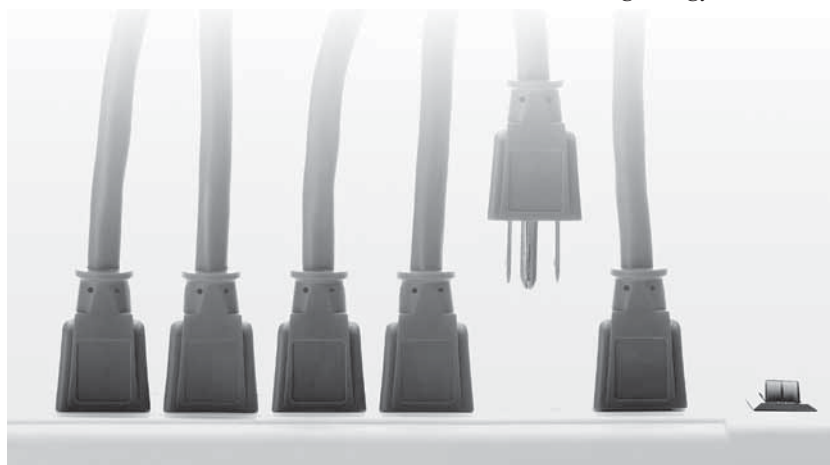
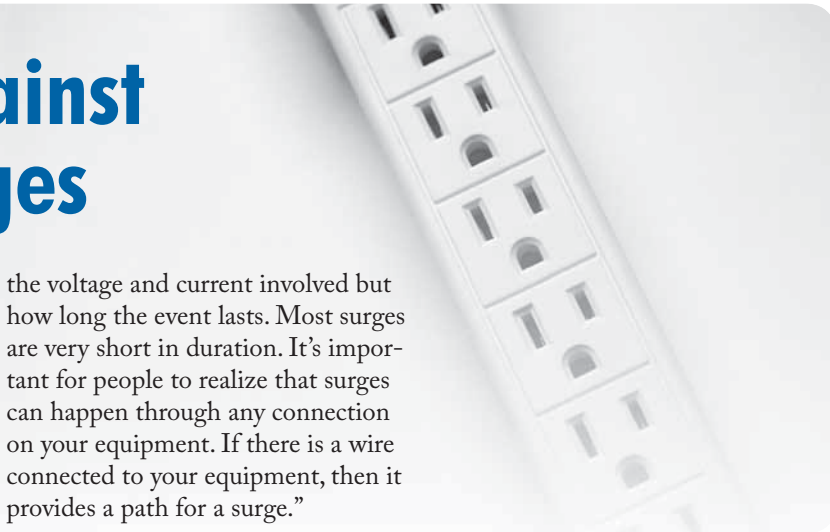
A surge protection device mounted at your home’s main electrical panel or the base of your electric meter protects equipment inside your house or business from surges coming through “ports of entry,” such as outside electric, telephone, and cable TV or satellite dish line.

Point-of-use surge protection devices do not suppress or arrest a surge but divert it to ground. They’re designed to protect your sensitive electronic appliances, like a computer, and resemble a regular plug strip. However, don’t assume your plug strip offers surge protection unless it specifically says so. You can also install special electrical outlets that offer surge protection, which can be helpful in places like kitchen countertops.

“My computer is plugged into an uninterruptable power supply with surge protection,” Shedd notes. “We had a lightning strike, and a surge came in over the phone line. But the surge protector stopped it.”

One of the most effective ways to protect your property is a two-tiered approach. A service entrance surge protection device reduces power surges to a lower level that protects large appliances, such as your stove or clothes dryer, while point-of-use surge protectors defend your sensitive electronics.

Remember to be cautious when shopping for surge protection equipment. “Some items claim that they can save energy, and these claims are generally false,” Shedd concludes. “Surge protection is a valuable tool for protecting your home or business but not for saving energy.”





Spoon River Mechanical Services is owned by *YOUR* electric cooperative.

Service is our top priority. We're your comfort for today and tomorrow.

Let us meet all your heating, cooling, plumbing and electrical needs by calling us at (309) 647-3450.

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