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# Spoon River News

## President's Report



William R. Dodds  
President/CEO

## Spring cleaning delivers safe, reliable power

Spring gives us a chance to thaw out after a chilly winter. I take advantage of longer daylight hours by doing a little spring cleaning and yard work. But the seasonal shift isn't all good news. The rapid change from harsh, cold air to warmer temperatures can trigger severe weather. To protect our lines and keep power flowing safely to your home, Spoon River Electric Cooperative maintains our rights-of-way. Think of it as spring cleaning for power lines.

Right-of-way (ROW) maintenance keeps tree limbs and other obstacles away from high-voltage power lines. It's an important part of the service we provide to you, our members, for three reasons: safety, reliability, and cost.

Our primary concern is the safety of our workers and members. Properly maintained ROW keeps our crews safe when they are restoring service and maintaining our system. Keeping trees clear of power lines also keeps your family safe. From making sure a child's tree house doesn't hit power lines to creating a safe environment while doing yard work, a well-maintained ROW helps avoid tragedy.

Power lines are a constant part of our landscape; it's easy to forget they are around.

We work hard to keep the area around our lines clear, but we need your help. Be alert this spring. Don't plant trees or tall vegetation under power lines, and keep an eye out for power lines when working in your yard.

If severe spring weather blows through, a well-maintained ROW leads to fewer outages and faster response time. Trees are less of a threat. When trees do fall, crews are able to restore service more quickly than they could with poorly maintained areas.

As a not-for-profit company, Spoon River Electric Cooperative strives to keep costs affordable for you, our members. Maintaining our ROW is an important part of controlling costs. Fewer and shorter outages save money for everyone. When crews work in well-maintained areas, we can reduce risks for employees and equipment too—another way to keep costs low.

Safety, reliability, and cost: this is why we believe in ROW 'spring cleaning.' If we compromise on one of these areas, it impacts the others. At Spoon River Electric Cooperative, we aren't willing to compromise. Maintaining our ROW is a priority for your safety, comfort, and pocketbook.



### Energy Efficiency *Tip of the Month*

Programmable thermostats can save up to \$160 a year in energy costs. Match thermostat settings to your schedule: cold when you're away and warm when you're at home. In winter, set the thermostat to 68 degrees during the day (lower at night when you're snug in bed). By turning your thermostat down 10 to 15 degrees for at least eight hours, you can shave 5 to 15 percent from your heating costs.

Source: TogetherWeSave.com, U.S. Department of Energy

# Welcome to our new employees



*Cody Schall – Accountant*



*Taryn Martin –  
Payroll and Benefits Administrator*

## 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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**Chairman**  
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**Editor of Spoon River News**  
Brenda Rothert  
[brothert@srecoop.org](mailto: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

# Dining in the Dark

## Food safety tips during a power outage

Storm-induced power outages can take you by surprise. If you've lost power and have a refrigerator full of food, make sure time and temperatures are on your side.

If your home's power is interrupted for two hours or less, losing perishable foods shouldn't be a concern. When an outage is prolonged, it's time to decide when to save and when to toss food away.

A digital quick-response thermometer can be one of the most useful tools you can wield in your battle to preserve food. The gadget checks the internal temperature of food, ensuring items are cold enough to eat safely.

Use these food safety tips to help you minimize food loss and reduce the risk of foodborne illness:

### Refrigerated Food

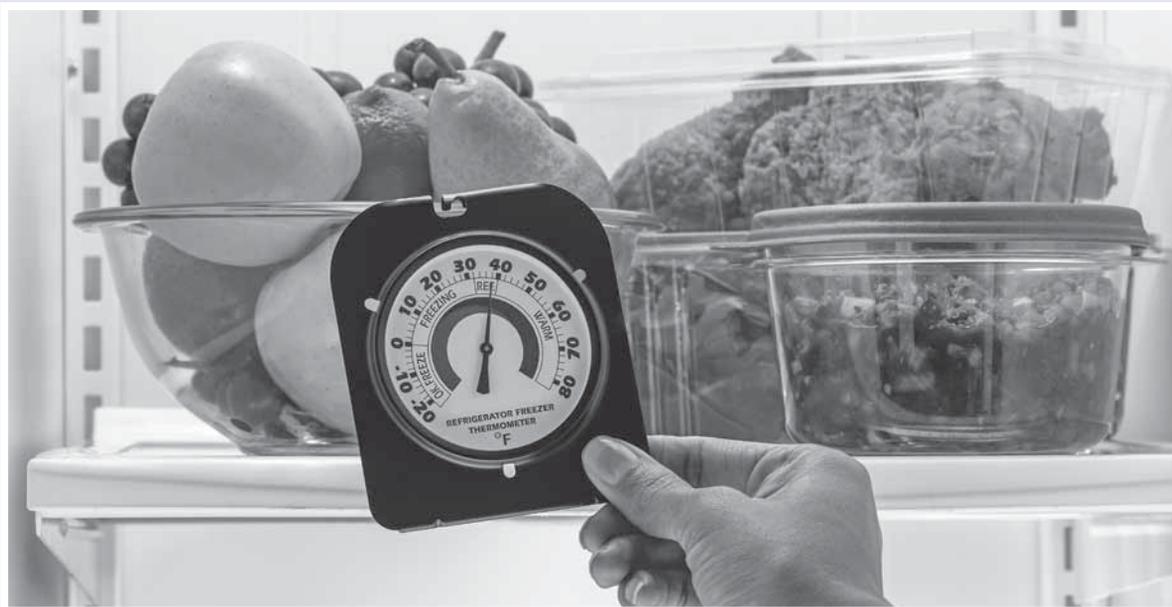
- Keep refrigerator doors closed as much as possible. An unopened refrigerator keeps food cold for about four hours.
- If food (especially meat, poultry, fish, eggs, and leftovers) has been exposed to temperatures above 40 degrees Fahrenheit for two or more hours, or has an unusual odor, texture, or color, get rid of it. Remember the American Red Cross food safety rule: "When in doubt, throw it out."
- Never taste food to determine its safety or rely on appearance or odor.
- Use perishable foods first, then frozen food.
- To keep perishable food cold, place them in a refrigerator or cooler and cover with ice.

### Frozen Food

- A full freezer stays colder longer. Freeze containers of water to help keep food cold in the freezer. If your water supply runs out, melting ice can supply drinking water.
- If you keep the door closed, a full freezer keeps the temperature for approximately 48 hours (24 hours if it is half full).
- If food in the freezer is colder than 40 degrees Fahrenheit, is partially thawed, and has ice crystals on it, you can safely refreeze it.
- Always discard frozen or perishable food items that have come into contact with raw meat juices.

Find more tips at  
[www.FoodSafety.gov](http://www.FoodSafety.gov).

Sources: American Red Cross, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services



Monitoring the temperature of refrigerated foods during a power outage can keep you and your family safe and minimize the loss of perishable items. Use a food thermometer to ensure that that food stays at a optimal 40 degrees Fahrenheit or below.

Source: USDA



# What is a cooperative?

As a member of Spoon River Electric Cooperative, you're also an owner. Cooperatives are member-owned, non-profit organizations. Our Cooperative is guided by seven principles that set us apart from investor-owned utilities:

- 1 Voluntary and Open Membership**
- 2 Democratic Member Control**
- 3 Members' Economic Participation**
- 4 Autonomy and Independence**
- 5 Education, Training and Information**
- 6 Cooperation Among Cooperatives**
- 7 Concern for Community**

