



Spoon River News

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President's Report



William R. Dodds
President/CEO

Celebrating co-op independence

July is the time we celebrate our nation's independence. In the midst of apple pies and hot dogs, fireworks shows and parades, I can't help but think about the independent streak that inspired groups of farmers around America's countryside to band together and improve their quality of life.

Aside from President Franklin Roosevelt's promise of federal aid in the form of low-interest loans and engineering expertise, rural Americans didn't have much help in bringing electricity to their homes. They pulled themselves up by their proverbial bootstraps and did it themselves.

This independence not only tends to inspire cooperatives; it's a guiding principle. The Fourth Cooperative Principle, "Autonomy and Independence," means that no matter what contracts Spoon River Electric Cooperative might enter into, we will



The 1958 line crew pauses for a photo.

always remain an independent entity.

Each year, Spoon River Electric's annual meeting becomes an independence celebration. You vote for candidates on the board of directors, and we discuss co-op business. We share a meal and have some fun.

Electric cooperatives form a vast network across the country, from coast to coast.

Co-op lines are strung in 47 states, serving 42 million people—a different world from 1935, when much of America remained dark. This Fourth of July, as we recognize the hard-fought war that created the United States, I'll also tip my hat to Spoon River Electric Cooperative's founders, who beat incredible odds to make life better for themselves and their neighbors.



Office closing
*Our office will be closed
Thursday, July 4th, for
Independence Day*

Around-the-clock appliances

By Magen Howard

In 2013, new appliances don't just cook your food and keep it cold, wash your clothes and dishes, or offer a few hours of entertainment. These machines boast myriad functions that make our lives easier—but in doing so also consume more energy.

While appliances have become more energy efficient as technology has evolved and federal standards tightened, few ever truly shut down anymore. And as Americans add more and more electronic devices to their households—25 on average, according to the Consumer Electronics Association—much more energy is consumed.

Take a phone charger as an example. Leaving it plugged in without a phone attached doesn't mean it's not drawing power—in fact, it uses 0.26 watts of electricity even when a phone isn't connected, and 2.24 watts when the handset is charging.

Of course, that 0.26 watts by itself might not be a big issue. But if most of your electronic devices are doing that, it can add up to as much as 10 percent of your bill, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

Take a look around your house—how many cords are plugged in? Of those, how many are actually attached to a device? You might be surprised at how much electricity your family consumes, even when you don't realize it.

Cable boxes are a big culprit of 24/7 energy use. Leaving your cable box plugged in for a year and never turning it off adds, on average, \$17.83 to your electric bill. Toss in a DVR function and that total jumps to \$43.46, DOE reports.

And electronics aren't the only problem. Basic “white goods” appliances like clothes washers and dryers, refrigerators, and dishwashers are so savvy that you can set them to come on late at night, when the

wholesale power your co-op must buy costs less—helping your co-op keep power affordable for you and your neighbors. Here again, the bigger you go with a new appliance, the more energy it will use.

Electric bills don't have to be held hostage by 24-hour-a-day energy use. For starters, use a power strip to turn several electronics on or off at once. For a bigger investment, look into “smart” power strips. They allow you to cut power to certain appliances—say, your TV—while letting power flow to your cable box because it takes time to reboot after being unplugged.

If you're in the market for



a new appliance, look for an ENERGY STAR model. It generally consumes less power all around and uses less standby energy.

But remember that you actually have to use those energy-efficient settings on your appliances to see savings on your electric bill.

For more information on energy-efficient living, visit www.srecoop.org.

Spoon River Electric Cooperative

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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

2013 Fulton County fair grandstand schedule

Mon., July 22

Talent contest 5:30 p.m.

Queen contest 7 p.m.

Tues., July 23

Harness Races 5:30 p.m. – Free

Illinois Winery's Wine Tasting – 4:30 p.m.

Karaoke with Ted Martin – 8 p.m. (Beer Tent)

Wed., July 24

Motocross Races – Gates open 12 p.m., Races start 7 p.m. –

Grandstand \$6, Pit Pass \$10

Thurs., July 25

4-H/FFA Horse Show – 10 a.m.

Kids Day, Rides 1 – 4 p.m. – Armbands \$12

Livestock Auction 3 p.m.

Candy Scramble 5 p.m., Scrambles 6:30 p.m. – Grandstand \$4

Draft Horse Show (immediately following scramble)

Beer Tent 8 p.m. – Karaoke with Ted Martin

Fri., July 26

Kids Tractor Pull – 2:30 p.m.

Kids Rides Friday Evening – 6-11 p.m. – Armbands \$14

Truck, Tractor & Garden Tractor Pulls – 6 p.m. – Grandstand \$6,

Pit passes -- \$6

Beer Tent – 8 p.m. – Stranger Danger

Sat., July 27

FFA Livestock Show – 9 a.m.

Beef Cook-Off Contest Judging - 11 a.m.

Demo Derby – 6:30 p.m. -- \$6

Buddy Day – Buy a ticket and your buddy rides free – 1-4 p.m.

Beer Tent – 8 p.m. – Shotgun Dixie

Carnival rides begin each night at 6 p.m., 1 p.m. on Sat.

For more info go to <http://fultoncofair.webs.com/>



Geothermal: Energy from the Ground Up

By Magen Howard

Geothermal energy—created from Earth's natural heat—has been used for thousands of years to cook and bathe. Modern technology has unlocked new ways to harness geothermal potential: to produce electricity using hot water and steam locked below the Earth's surface, and to heat and cool buildings.

America leads the world in geothermal power production. Nine states generate nearly 3,200 megawatts of capacity, and more than 100 new projects are developing in 14 states, according to the Geothermal Energy Association, the national trade association for geothermal development companies. For comparison, 1 MW can power 750 to 1,000 average homes. Western states boast the most geothermal energy.

How it works

Typical fossil fuel-burning and nuclear power plants heat water to boiling to create steam. The steam turns a turbine, which generates electricity.

Geothermal power stations cut out the middle man, piping naturally heated water (changed into steam) or naturally occurring steam into a plant to spin turbines. Three different types of geothermal generation exist; the choice depends on the state of the steam or water and its temperature.

■ **Dry steam:** The first type of geothermal power plants built,

these facilities use steam from a geothermal reservoir (pulled from wells) and route it directly through turbines to create electricity.

■ **Flash steam:** The most common, these plants pump water with temperatures greater than 360 degrees Fahrenheit under high pressure to generation equipment. The steam is separated from the water and used to make electricity; leftover water and condensed steam are channeled back into the reservoir.

■ **Binary cycle:** These use moderate- to low-temperature groundwater or steam. In a binary cycle system, hot water is pumped from a well and passes through a heat exchanger, where it warms a secondary fluid with a lower boiling point than water. This causes the secondary fluid to flash to vapor, which in turn drives a turbine. The secondary fluid then condenses and returns to the loop system; the water gets pumped back into the well.

Other uses

Geothermal energy offers an array of benefits beyond power generation. In some cases, hot water can be piped directly into systems to heat buildings, greenhouses, and fish farms. Some cities run hot water under roads and sidewalks during winter to melt snow and ice.

The top 10 feet of earth remains a relatively constant 50 to 60 degrees Fahrenheit year-round. Geothermal heat pumps rely on the energy of the ground to move heat into and out of a building, providing heating and cooling. Also called ground-source heat pumps, these appliances come in two types: a groundwater (open-loop) system uses well water; an earth-coupled (closed-loop) model moves a water and antifreeze solution through underground pipes to disperse heat.

While geothermal heat pumps generally operate more efficiently than their air-source cousins, they are more expensive to purchase up front. A federal tax credit equal to 30 percent of the cost for materials and installation, with no limit on total project expenses, applies to geothermal heat pumps through Dec. 31, 2016.

Find a full list of geothermal heat pump requirements, along with a product list, at www.energystar.gov/taxcredits. To see if other rebates are available in your state, check the Database of State Incentives for Renewables and Efficiency at www.dsireusa.org.

A geothermal heat pump might not always be the best option in every situation. Contact Spoon River Mechanical Services at (309) 647-3450 to determine whether a geothermal heat pump is the right choice for you.



Energy Efficiency
Tip of the Month

Lighting accounts for about 13 percent of the average household's electric bill—cut costs by choosing new light bulbs that have increased output and longevity. Some cost more up front, but prices are dropping as technology advances. Options include color, brightness, and even dimming and multi-way functions. Combining lights with automatic sensors can cut costs further.

Source: NRECA's Cooperative Research Network