

Spoon River News

President's Report



William R. Dodds
President/CEO

Electricity remains a good value

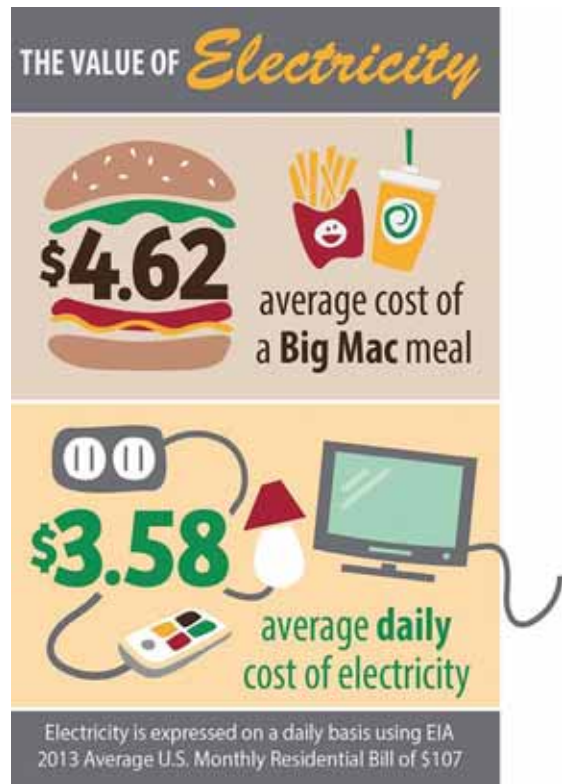
In today's world, you won't find many items that cost less than \$5. You can purchase a gallon of milk, a gallon of gas or a Big Mac® meal from McDonald's. But did you know that an average day's worth of electricity costs less than \$5?

Even in our country's shifting energy climate, electricity remains a good value. In fact, electricity has the lowest cost per day of any of the items listed above. And not all of those items are necessary for daily life!

As CEO/general manager of Spoon River Electric, I urge you to think about your daily necessities (electricity and gasoline, to name a couple), and then think about the cost of the special treats we allow ourselves to purchase on a weekly basis (maybe even on a daily basis for some items!). We don't often question the cost of a Big Mac® meal – it costs over \$1 more to buy a Big Mac® meal than it does to purchase a day's worth of power. And yet, we frequently become upset if our electricity rates rise.

It makes sense; we have become increasingly reliant upon electricity. Electricity has, for many of us, gone from a luxury commodity to a necessity and an expectation. We expect the lights to come on when we flip the switch, and we expect our power to stay on during the best *and* worst conditions. How else would we keep our food fresh, our homes cool in the summer or warm in the winter? It is easy to cut a Big Mac® out of your spending routine here and there to save a few dollars. But we cannot simply cut electricity out of our budgets if times get tough or we decide that we want to scale back our spending in order to save.

Perhaps that is why it is so upsetting to us when our rates increase, even if only in small increments. It is nearly impossible for us to think about what our lives would be



like if we did not have electricity. If at times it doesn't seem that electricity is affordable, remember – even as the demand for electricity grows – annual cost increases still remain low, especially when compared to other consumer goods such as medical care, education, gasoline and, yes, even Big Macs®. Electricity is still a great bargain. And also remember this: as the CEO/general manager of Spoon River Electric, your local electric cooperative, I am committed to making sure that you and your family always have safe, reliable and affordable electric service in your home.

So the next time you crave a Big Mac®, remember your electric bill, and think about what a great deal you're getting for your dollar!



RENEWABLE ENERGY



NUCLEAR POWER



NATURAL GAS



CLEAN COAL

America needs an **ALL OF THE ABOVE STRATEGY** to keep electric bills affordable

**TELL THE EPA TO RECONSIDER
ITS "ALL-BUT-ONE" APPROACH**

ACTION.COOP

Please join us in taking action

Every day we rely on electricity. We depend on the refrigerator to keep our food fresh, air conditioning and heating to keep us comfortable and, of course, lights on a daily basis. We also depend on electricity to re-charge our electronics. Whether it's a phone to keep in touch with relatives, a tablet for students' homework or the laptop on which we stream movies, these devices all have become integral to our daily routine.

At work, we rely on electricity to power our computers, phones, lights and productivity. Without this consistent, reliable and affordable power source, businesses would relocate, jobs would be lost and prices of goods and services would increase.

That's why Spoon River is concerned about the latest proposed regulations on existing power plants from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This round of rules impacts the power plants on which we rely every day.

Cooperatives are different from other electric utilities. We are owned by our member-consumers. When we look at our power options, we are not driven to make a profit. We strive to provide the most affordable and reliable electricity possible to our members.

Owning our own, independent plants has allowed cooperatives to

keep costs affordable. For co-ops, "energy independence" in part means independence from expensive, profit-driven power.

However, these new regulations could endanger this independent supply of affordable electric power. Electric cooperatives, like Spoon River, are small businesses. We're not large utilities with several different power plants operating with a variety of fuel sources. We built power plants when it made sense for our members. But the way the new rules are written, we might have to close our plant and lose our independence.

The EPA has drafted a regulation that adversely and disproportionately affects electric cooperatives. That's why we are telling the EPA that this regulation simply does not work for us.

When the EPA drafted regulations limiting greenhouse gases from new power plants, the agency received more than five hundred thousand emails opposing the regulation. Today we ask you once again, please join us. Visit www.Action.coop again and tell the EPA you cannot afford these new regulations.

Your voice was heard last time. The EPA took note of electric cooperatives, and our collective voice showed that co-op consumers were engaged.

That's why we're asking you to take action again. The EPA needs to understand the impact that these regulations have on the people at the end of the power lines. Electric cooperative members are uniquely situated to help the EPA understand that these regulations will cost Americans more money.

These regulations also will cost Americans jobs. These regulations will not work for rural Americans.

Please, also ask your friends and neighbors to join us. Ask them to visit www.Action.coop and tell the EPA co-op consumers cannot afford regulation. We can balance environmental needs with affordability and reliability.

America needs a healthy economy. America needs jobs. America needs manufacturing. And affordable, reliable electricity is the linchpin to these vital assets.



Are you grounded? GFCI outlets can help!

By Amber Bentley

Did you know there are different types of electrical outlets? Each are designed for different purposes; however, there is one specific type that stands high above the rest—the ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) outlet. GFCIs have saved thousands of lives and cut the number of electrocutions in half since the 1970s. If your home lacks GFCI outlets, don't fret—you can learn how to “get grounded.”

GFCIs are the most efficient outlet in protecting from electrical shock. If it senses a loss of current, the outlet switches off power to that circuit. These devices can either be installed in your electrical system or built into a power cord. The third hole at the bottom of the outlet



is known as the “ground” slot, and it monitors electrical currents that flow through the left “neutral” slot and the right “hot” slot on each

outlet. A GFCI can react faster than a blink of an eye to any imbalance of power by immediately shutting off the electrical current. These outlets are now a requirement in all places where water could potentially come into contact with electrical products such as bathrooms, garages, outdoors and kitchens. GFCIs are not exclusive to three-prong outlets. They can be installed into standard outlets, and there are even portable devices available when installation is not practical.

GFCIs should be tested at least once a month to ensure they are

working effectively. The first step you need to take is to test an item, such as a lamp, that visibly powers on when plugged in. Push the “reset” button to prepare the outlet then push the “test” button. Did your lamp turn off? If it did, the GFCI is working properly. Now, hit the “reset” button once again to power

it back on. If your lamp did not power off, then you should contact a certified electrician to correct the problem.

Next time you have a free moment, take the time to look around your house. If you're not “grounded,” consider updating your electrical outlets to GFCIs.



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

When it's hot outside, appliances and lighting can actually heat up our homes more than we think. To save energy, minimize the activities that generate additional heat, such as burning open flames, continuously running a computer, or using hot-hair devices like curling irons. This will ultimately keep your house cooler.

Source: Department of Energy

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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



Watch for overhead power lines

Each fall the harvest paints an idyllic landscape, but that can quickly turn dark in the blink of an eye. Each year, 62 farmers in the U.S. lose their lives to electrocution as a result of power line contacts. That's why you need to be especially careful when operating farm machinery near power lines.

