

President's Report



William R. Dodds
President/CEO

Capturing energy from the Sun!

Prairie Power Inc. introduces Bright Options Solar

Who doesn't like to soak up some rays on a nice sunny day? Typically you think of swimming, boating, baseball, cookouts and other outdoor activities on a nice sunny day; however, the sun's rays can also be used to generate electricity.

Prairie Power, Inc. (PPI), an electric generation and transmission cooperative headquartered in Springfield, recently announced plans to offer its 10 member distribution cooperatives the opportunity for their member-consumers to purchase solar-generated electricity through the Bright Options Solar program. Bright Options Solar allows any member of Spoon River Electric the opportunity to buy blocks of solar energy generated from two 500-kilowatt solar farms operated by PPI subsidiaries.

The Spoon River Solar Farm is located near Astoria, and the Shelby Solar Farm is located in Shelbyville. In the fall of 2015, both solar farms became operational. These two solar farms are harvesting energy from the sun to provide an opportunity for

homeowners to receive some of their electricity from it.

"It's exciting to think we will be providing our members a means of participating in solar renewable energy without the risks, hassles and costs of having solar panels on their roofs," says SREC President/CEO Bill Dodds.

Under Bright Options Solar, a member agrees to purchase blocks of solar-generated energy, at an added cost, through the member's participating electric cooperative. There are three purchasing options available, namely blocks of 200, 400 and 600 kilowatt-hours (kWh).

The added cost for a 200 kWh solar block is \$12 per month; the added cost for a 400 kWh solar block is \$24 per month; and the added cost for a 600 kWh solar block is \$36 per month. Bright Options Solar participants may begin purchases at any time with an automatic renewal at the beginning

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Offices will be closed on Monday, September 5th in observance of Labor Day.



Spoon River Electric Cooperative

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8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
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Spoon River Electric Cooperative – By the Numbers

Miles of line energized: 1,271

Number of members served: 4,808

Number of power poles
in territory: 29,255

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



Consider insulating your water heater tank, which could reduce standby heat losses by 25 to 45 percent and save you about 4 to 9 percent in water heating costs. You can find pre-cut jackets or blanket available from around \$20.

Source: Energy.gov



Bright Option Solar continued from 16a

of each calendar year. The cost associated with each block of solar energy purchased will appear as a separate line item on the member's electric bill and is in addition to all other normally billed charges.

"If you are an environmentally-minded consumer, Bright Options Solar just might be what you have been waiting for to participate in renewable energy," says Dodds.

Any member of Spoon River Electric is eligible to participate in the Bright Options Solar program. To learn more about

Bright Options Solar call us at 309-647-2700.

PPI is the supplier of wholesale electricity and electric transmission services to 10 member-owned distribution cooperatives in Illinois, which includes Spoon River Electric. PPI also obtains wind-generated electricity from Pioneer Trail wind farm located just east of Paxton; electricity from natural gas turbines located in Alsey; and electricity generated by Prairie State Energy Campus, a state-of-the-art coal-fired plant, located near Marissa.

Stay focused on safety during harvest

During harvest season, many farmers reap the benefits of advancement in agricultural technology. With the help of GPS auto-steer devices, farmers are able to decrease driver error and maximize productivity. Yet despite these advances, safety risks remain. To help farmers stay out of harm's way, Safe Electricity shares tips for a safe harvest.

GPS with auto-guidance provides farmers with real-time location data about a field, which can be used for crop planning, map making, navigation assistance and machinery guidance. During harvest, this technology allows drivers to have their hands off the steering wheel as the combine maneuvers itself through the field. Thanks to this technology, farmers can more easily and efficiently maintain accuracy even during low-light conditions, which enhances productivity.

“One critical part of safety around electricity is awareness,” explains Kyla Kruse, communications director of the Safe Electricity program. “It’s important to remember that farm machinery is vulnerable to hitting power lines because of its large size, height and extensions. Being aware of the location of overhead power lines and planning a safe equipment route can help reduce accidents.”

In equipment with auto-guidance systems, less focus is needed on steering, which may lead some drivers to think that they do not need to be as aware of navigation issues. However, even while using a GPS with auto-steering, farm workers need to keep safety in mind and stay focused on their surroundings.

Putting safety first requires alertness, focus and knowledge of potential hazards and safety steps. Varying pass-to-pass accuracy levels



and potential issues, such as power poles not being correctly plotted in the system, reinforce the need for drivers to stay focused on the location of the farm equipment while in the field and to be ready to take action if necessary.

Regardless the technology used on the farm, keep the following electrical safety guidelines in mind:

- Use a spotter when operating large machinery near power lines.
- Keep equipment at least 10 feet from power lines—at all times, in all directions.
- Look up and use care when moving any equipment such as extending augers or raising the bed of grain trucks around power lines.
- Inspect the height of farm equipment to determine clearance.
- Always set extensions to the lowest setting when moving loads to prevent contact with overhead power lines. Grain augers should always be positioned horizontally before being moved.

- Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.
- If a power line is sagging or low, contact Spoon River Electric.

If your equipment does make contact with a power line, do not leave the cab. Immediately call 911, warn others to stay away and wait for the utility crew to cut the power. The only reason to exit equipment that has come into contact with overhead lines is if the equipment is on fire, which is rare. However, if this is the case, jump off the equipment with your feet together and without touching the ground and machinery at the same time. Then, still keeping your feet together, hop to safety as you leave the area.

For more information on electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org. The Energy Education Council is a non-profit membership organization providing consumer safety and energy efficiency materials to more than 400 co-ops.



SERVE OUR CO-OPS; SERVE OUR COUNTRY

We owe them our freedom. We owe them our lives. And now, we thank them. Through military experience, returning veterans are a disciplined and skilled workforce. A program called *Serve Our Co-ops; Serve Our Country* is connecting them with America's electric cooperatives to build a next-generation workforce. Let's give them the chance they deserve.

For more information, log on at <http://www.servevets.coop/>

