

## President's Report



William R. Dodds  
President/CEO

## Bundle up for winter storms

By Abby Berry

Are you ready for winter's cold grasp? Snow and ice are inevitable when dealing with winter storms, but being prepared can make a world of difference. Spoon River Electric recommends the following tips to help you prepare for wintery blasts.

### Winterize your home

Winter storms wreak havoc on your home. By winterizing your living space, you'll be prepared for extreme cold and hazardous conditions.

- Remember to maintain and inspect heating equipment and chimneys every year to ensure they're working safely and properly.
- Caulk and weather strip doors and windows to make the most of your heating system.
- Freezing temperatures often cause water pipes to burst. Remember to insulate pipes with insulation or newspapers and plastic. Allow faucets to drip during extreme cold to avoid frozen pipes.
- Consider installing storm windows for better insulation. You can also cover windows with plastic (from the inside) to keep the cold out.
- Make sure everyone in your family knows where the home's fire extinguisher is located and how to use it properly. House fires occur more frequently during winter months, as people tend to use alternative heating methods that may not be safe.

### Prepare a winter survival kit

Severe winter storms often bring heavy accumulation of ice and snow, which can lead to downed power lines and extended outages. Spoon River Electric crews will

work hard to restore power, but having a winter survival kit on hand is a smart idea.

- **Food:** Store food that does not require cooking, such as canned goods, crackers, dehydrated meats and dried fruit. Keep a large supply of water on hand. Ready.gov recommends five gallons per person.
- **Medication:** Be sure to refill all prescriptions in the event of a major power outage.
- **Identification:** Keep all forms of identification handy, such as driver's licenses, photo IDs and social security cards. Bank account information and insurance policies are also good to have on hand.
- **Other items:** First Aid Kit, blankets, flashlight, battery-powered radio and extra batteries.

### Stay warm and safe

If an outage occurs, you should plan for an alternate heating source. A fireplace, propane space heater or wood-burning stove would be sufficient. Fuel and wood-burning heating sources should always be vented, and make sure carbon monoxide and smoke detectors are working properly. Always practice extreme caution when using alternate heating sources.

If you decide to use a portable generator during an outage, make sure it is placed outside the home for proper ventilation. Be careful not to overload the generator. Use appropriate extension cords that can handle the electric load.

Follow these tips, and your family will stay warm in the event of a power outage. For more information on preparing for winter storms, visit [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov).

## Spoon River Electric Cooperative

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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

# How renters can fight the winter chill

By Abby Berry

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 33 percent of Americans lease their homes. Unfortunately, many lease agreements forbid major alterations to rental properties. But don't worry, renters! Consider using these low-cost, energy-efficient tips from Spoon River Electric to improve the efficiency of your home this winter.

### Hot savings

Heating the home typically makes up about 48 percent of your utility bill. Set your thermostat as low as is comfortable in the winter – Energy.gov recommends 68 degrees Fahrenheit to boost energy efficiency.

During the winter months, take advantage of heat from sunlight. Open draperies and shades during the day to allow natural light to heat your home. Remember to close them in the evenings as the temperature drops and windowpanes become chilly.

Does your home have window air conditioning units? This winter, remember to insulate the units from the outside with a tight-fitting cover, available at your local home improvement center or hardware store. This keeps heated air from escaping outside. If desired, you can remove the window unit during winter months to prevent energy loss.

Another way to save on heating is to make sure your water heater is set at the lowest comfortable setting. Have you experienced scalding hot water when taking a shower? If so, it's likely

that your water heater is set too high – which is a waste of energy. Older models of water tanks are often not insulated, which can be easily remedied by covering them with an insulating jacket.

### Bright ideas

Lighting is one of the easiest places to start saving energy, and savings are not strictly limited to winter months. Try replacing a few of your most frequently used light bulbs with ENERGY STAR-qualified lights, and save more than \$65 a year in energy costs. ENERGY STAR-qualified compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) use 75 percent less energy and last several times longer than incandescent light bulbs, saving money on energy bills and replacement costs. Practicing energy-efficient habits is another great way to reduce energy use. Always turn off your lights when leaving a room.

### Other ways to save

Leasing an older home or apartment? Odds are you have single-pane windows and old or missing caulk. Don't let the winter chill seep indoors! Apply caulk around window frames, sashes and door panels to combat air leaks. Also, be mindful when using electronics at home. Unplug devices when not in use, and use smart power strips to save on energy use. To learn more ways to be energy efficient around the home, visit [www.energy.gov](http://www.energy.gov)

## Office Closing

**Our office will be closed**

**December 24-25  
for Christmas and  
December 31 for  
New Year's Eve.**



# 17th annual Lineman's Safety Rodeo

Linemen from Spoon River Electric Cooperative in Canton, participated in the 17th annual Lineman's Safety Rodeo sponsored by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives on Friday, Oct. 3.

The Lineman's Safety Rodeo, held on the Hot Line Training Grounds at Lincoln Land Community College (LLCC) in Springfield, coincided with a series of courses designed to help electric line personnel improve their work skills in safe and efficient ways. Each year at the rodeo, teams of linemen from Illinois electric cooperatives participate in competitive events using skills that focus on agility, speed and accuracy. This year 14 teams participated in the competition.

Spoon River linemen Sean Koen and Trent Ross competed in the individual events. Trent Ross received second place and Sean Koen placed third in the Bucket Truck Obstacle Course.

Line personnel competed in five team events and three individual events. Team events included Hurt Man Rescue, Egg Climb (linemen climb a 30-foot pole with a raw egg in their mouth), H Structure

Obstacle Course, and two Mystery Events. Individuals competed in the Egg Climb, Hurt Man Rescue and H Structure Obstacle Course. Scores for each event use a 100-point scale and are based upon completion time and proper execution of the task including safe work practices. Deductions are made to a team or individual's overall performance score due to such things as slipping when climbing poles, dropping tools or executing inappropriate procedures or methods.

Spoon River Electric Cooperative is a member of Touchstone Energy — an alliance of 750 local, consumer-owned electric utilities around the country. Spoon River Electric is committed to providing superior service based on four

core principles: integrity, accountability, innovation and commitment to community. The co-op serves nearly 5,000 meters over 1,266 miles of line in parts of Fulton, Knox, McDonough, Peoria and Schuyler counties. For more information visit [www.srecoop.org](http://www.srecoop.org).



*Linemen participated in the Bucket Truck Obstacle Course during Association of Illinois Electric Cooperative's 17th Lineman's Safety Rodeo held in Springfield, Ill.*



Congrats  
on your  
Retirement,  
Tanya!



# SIGN UP FOR AUTO DEBIT

Pay your bill "Worry Free" with an auto debit to your checking or savings account. This is a great way to pay your bill while away from home or if your busy schedule gets in the way. You'll save postage, too. This is a good way to make sure your payment is received on time and avoid late penalties. All you need to do is sign up for our "Worry Free Auto Debit" and we will take care of the rest. You will still receive your notice by mail to notify you of the date and amount charged to your account.

## FILL OUT BELOW OR ATTACH A VOIDED BLANK CHECK

Bank Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Checking

Savings

Account Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Bank Routing Number: \_\_\_\_\_

*I agree to have Spoon River Electric deduct from my account specified above.*

Sign Here \_\_\_\_\_



## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



Be merry and bright, but don't let your holiday lights shine all night. Save money on your electric bill by installing a light timer for your decked out home. It can help lower your electric bill and reduce energy consumption. Use a manual timer plugged into an electrical outlet to automatically turn lights on and off as scheduled.

*Source: U.S. Department of Energy*