

President's Report



Josh DeWees
President/CEO

Make your voice heard at the 2024 annual meeting

Recently, a Spoon River Electric member reminded me of a conversation we had at our annual meeting a few years back. She provided a valuable, unique perspective on a community initiative we were exploring at the time. Conversations like this are one of the many reasons I look forward to Spoon River Electric's annual meeting. You, the members we serve, always bring value to the discussion, and I know our co-op team is energized by these interactions.

If you've never attended the annual meeting, I'd encourage you to participate. Why? Because input from members like you matters and helps drive the direction of the co-op.

At the annual meeting, we report on current initiatives and discuss our financial health and priorities for the coming years. And, equally important, this is an opportunity for Spoon River Electric to hear from you.

You have the power

This is also a time to vote for new directors who will represent you and our community's interests in the co-op. As a member of Spoon River Electric, you have the power to help shape our community's energy future.

Electric co-ops are democratically controlled by the members we serve, which means you have a say in who governs our co-op. By voting in the annual director election, you can weigh in on the leaders who will make important decisions about the future of the cooperative and our local energy needs.

Spoon River Electric's board of directors are community-minded individuals with different skill sets. We rely on them to help us make more informed decisions on long-term priorities and investments. Spoon River Electric has nine directors who live in the

co-op's service area. We consider them the eyes and ears of the community, because they provide their unique perspective on various local issues.

2024 candidates:

The following Spoon River Electric members are candidates for the 2024 director election. The names are listed in the order they will appear on the ballot.

District 4: JoDee Pedigo

District 7: Dan Williams

District 8: Bernard Marvel

We want to make voting as convenient as possible for our members, so we offer a variety of ways for you to participate. We hope you'll join us at the annual meeting on June 6th, where you can cast your vote in person. If you're unable to attend, you can vote by mail-in proxy or at our office location.

If you've never been to an annual meeting or it's been a while, we hope you'll stop by. We'll have fun activities for all ages, so we hope to see you and your family there. Join us for food, fun, door prizes and more. All members who attend the event will receive a member gift, a \$10 bill credit and the chance to win a \$100 bill credit.

Your Spoon River Electric team will be ready to answer any questions you may have. We look forward to seeing you at the annual meeting on June 6th at the Fulton County Fairgrounds in Lewistown, Ill., from 4-7 p.m.



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

President/CEO

Josh DeWees
jdewees@srecoop.org

Chairman

Bernard Marvel, Browning

Vice Chairman

Wesley Strode, Marietta

Secretary

Jack Clark, Lewistown

Treasurer

Lyle Nelson, Abingdon

Board of Directors

Joe Davis, Canton
John Disharoon, Cuba
Kurt Duncan, Lewistown
JoDee Pedigo, Canton
Dan Williams, Smithfield

Editor of Spoon River News

Taryn Mellert
tmellert@srecoop.org

Spoon River Electric Cooperative – By the Numbers

Miles of line energized: 1,272
Number of members served: 5,022
Number of power poles
in territory: 29,361

what does a LINEWORKER do?

On any given day or night, in all kinds of weather conditions, lineworkers install and maintain overhead and underground electrical systems.

We entrust our lineworkers with your safety, so they hold a very important job. We also rely on their expertise to power our world.

Safety comes first

Lineworkers must commit to safety above all else for the benefit of those they serve (you!), fellow crew members and themselves. They spend thousands of hours in safety trainings each year and must learn and apply numerous safety regulations.

They are specially trained to:

- Climb poles to service power lines in areas inaccessible by trucks.
- Stand in an elevated bucket to assess and repair overhead lines.
- Install poles, overhead lines and other equipment.
- Work on both energized and deenergized lines.
- Install and service underground lines.



LINEWORKER SAFETY GEAR WORD SEARCH

Lineworkers use a variety of gear to stay safe while working near power lines and other electrical equipment. Read about their safety gear below, then find and circle the **blue** words in the puzzle.



- Safety **goggles** keep debris out of a lineworker's eyes while they work.
- Rubber **gloves** are insulated and protect lineworkers from electric shock.
- Steel toe **boots** provide extra protection when lineworkers lift heavy objects.
- **Hard hats** protect lineworkers from potential head injuries.
- Lineworkers wear a safety **harness** to prevent falls while climbing poles or working in a bucket.
- Lineworkers use a **hot stick**, an insulated tool made from fiberglass, when working on energized lines.

I	O	Y	L	L	F	S	O	F	W	D	L	S	S	G
G	J	H	U	P	M	K	T	P	E	U	Q	T	W	C
H	U	N	A	P	B	I	Y	O	Q	Q	Z	A	W	B
M	W	F	R	Z	P	L	V	L	O	W	B	H	E	Y
F	F	S	E	V	O	L	G	S	R	B	N	D	G	D
I	E	N	Z	D	Q	R	S	M	Z	F	G	R	A	Y
A	F	K	X	R	Q	E	Z	V	Z	O	K	A	I	B
N	J	Y	G	H	N	H	U	Q	G	Q	N	H	J	E
T	C	X	C	R	L	H	G	G	J	S	U	W	H	H
S	Q	X	A	R	O	M	L	M	G	O	B	S	Z	U
R	F	H	R	T	Y	E	Y	A	E	O	Q	A	X	Z
O	O	F	Y	G	S	C	G	M	P	F	J	Q	R	S
H	O	T	S	T	I	C	K	R	J	T	C	F	U	V
A	P	X	F	P	N	Z	Y	A	R	A	G	U	N	W
P	T	S	Z	L	S	B	E	Y	T	E	Y	T	T	O



Whatever it takes: Powering life, from a lineworker's perspective

Linework is ranked as one of the 10 most dangerous jobs in the country. The lineworkers at Spoon River Electric work rain or shine, often in challenging conditions, to ensure you have reliable electricity. We celebrate Lineworker Appreciation Day in April.

Spoon River Electric has seven lineworkers who work every day in all weather conditions to make sure our community has the power to live their lives. These lineworkers are dedicated to their job. It's hard work but can be very rewarding. We hope this will give you a better look into what they face, and more importantly, why they do it.

The danger

A lot of people know linework is dangerous because lineworkers work near high-voltage electricity. Move just the wrong way or lose focus for a split second, and it could be deadly. You have to be aware of your surroundings and the safety of the person next to you. They often work on energized power lines, and you can't always tell they are energized by just looking at them. You're working with an element of danger that requires concentration, and there is no margin for error. The environment compounds the pressure, because when you need power most is usually when weather is worst. I'm often working in storms with rain, wind, extreme heat and cold, in the dark or on the side of the road next to fast-moving traffic. Yes, it's dangerous, but that's what we're trained to do.

Many may not realize it, but we undergo years of training before we can officially be called a lineworker. We typically start as a groundperson, helping crews with tools and keeping job sites safe, then we transition to apprentice status, which typically spans four years. After an apprenticeship, with more than 7,000 hours of training under our belts, we transition to journeyman lineworker status — that's when we're considered officially trained in our field.

But the education is ongoing. Lineworkers continuously receive training to stay mindful of safety requirements and up to date on the latest equipment and procedures.

The physical demand

The daily expectations of a lineworker are physically demanding, but you won't hear any of us complain about that. I know what I signed up for — loading heavy materials, climbing poles and in and out of buckets. A lot of

times, we go places the trucks can't, so I might be hiking through the woods loaded down with 40 pounds of personal protective equipment. But that's the job. Most of us are just glad to be outside.

The sacrifices

There are some sacrifices to being a lineworker. I'm often first on the scene of an emergency, seeing things that are devastating, like car accidents, structure fires and damage from severe storms. You don't know what type of situation you're going to face or when you're going to face it. We get calls at all hours and in the middle of the night. I've missed a lot of games and family dinners, but my family is very supportive, and it pays off in the end. We make sure there is nothing standing in the way of helping our friends and neighbors get back to normal life.

It's worth it

One thing that makes this job worthwhile is the camaraderie. My co-op is my second family, and the line crews are a brotherhood (and sisterhood). In this work, you have to depend on the person beside you in life-or-death circumstances. It's a culture of trust, teamwork and service. It's all about keeping the teammate beside you safe and the lights on for everybody else.

I take a lot of pride in my work. Even when it's cold and wet, I know I'm working to keep people warm. There's a lot of satisfaction in hearing someone yell "Thank you!" from the window after the lights come back on and seeing people flipping the light switches on their porches after an outage is restored. No matter how tired I am or how long I've been working, that feeling always makes it worth it.

Spoon River Electric and its employees are members of this community. We live in the same neighborhoods. We shop at the same stores. Our kids go to the same schools. If your lights are off, there is a good chance ours are off, too. So, you can trust that we are doing our best to get the lights back on as quickly and safely as possible — so you can get back to normal life.



ATTENTION 2023-2024 SENIORS!

Spoon River Electric Cooperative Is Awarding Three \$1,000 Scholarships to High School Seniors

High school students who are seniors during the 2023–2024 school year and are the son or daughter of a Spoon River Electric member are eligible to apply for a \$1,000 Scholastic Scholarship, a \$1,000 Honorary Scholarship, and the \$1,000 Scott Parrish Memorial Scholarship, which will be awarded at this year's Annual Meeting.

Please fill out the form at the bottom of the page and return it to the Cooperative to participate. Applications must be turned in by **May 10, 2024** to be considered. Please see official rules and descriptions of scholarships below.

OFFICIAL RULES

- **Applying students and their parent/legal guardian must be present at the Annual Meeting to win.**
- Students must be a son or daughter of a Spoon River Electric Cooperative Member.
- Students must be a high school senior during the 2023–2024 school year and begin college undergraduate studies in the 2024–2025 school year. Students must plan on attending a two-year or four-year accredited college or university, including vocational/technical schools.
- Scholarship winners must be full-time students (at least 12 hours) during the 2024–2025 academic year.
- Scholarships are for one year and are non-renewable.
- Past Spoon River Electric Cooperative scholarship winners are not eligible to receive another one.

SCHOLASTIC AND SCOTT PARRISH MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIPS

- The Scholastic and Scott Parrish Memorial Scholarships will be awarded based on an application detailing GPA, college entrance test scores, work and volunteer experience, participation in school and community activities, and a biographical statement.
- Semi-finalists will be notified by mail with a time and place for a personal interview.
- Those not chosen as semi-finalists for the Scholastic and Parrish Scholarships will be automatically placed in the Honorary Scholarship drawing.

HONORARY SCHOLARSHIP

- The Honorary Scholarship will be awarded by a drawing as students are recognized at the Annual Meeting.
- All applicants are eligible for the Honorary Scholarship drawing except the Scholastic and Parrish Scholarship winners.



Scholarship Participation Request

Name of Student _____

Address of Student _____

Name of Parent/Guardian _____

Telephone Number _____

Return To: Taryn Mellert
Spoon River Electric Cooperative
PO Box 340
Canton, IL 61520
647-2700