

## President's Report



Josh DeWees  
President/CEO

## Camp Big Sky



Founded by the Guidi Family of Farmington in 2000, Camp Big Sky is a camp that provides education, training and skills development to children and adults with disabilities through participation in accessible outdoor activities.

The camp is available at no cost to any person of any age with any disability and their family, friends and caregivers from the first week of May until the end of October. The camp is located on 102 acres of former strip mine ground one mile south and one mile west of Middle Grove, Ill., in northern Fulton County.

Three primary services make up what is called “living a life like any other.”

**Accessing the Outdoors** provides some 15 outdoor pursuits including fishing, boating, kayaking, hayrack rides, archery, arts and crafts, overnight camping and other opportunities that encourage active and independent participation by people of all abilities.

**Life Skills Education** teaches local high school special education students critical skill sets that enable them to live more independently and successfully transition into adulthood upon completion of their public education.

**Volunteer Training** teaches adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities how to become great volunteers and employees in the community outside of the sheltered workshop environment. Seeing people with disabilities as engaged and contributing members of their community helps to increase acceptance and understanding while dispelling misunderstandings.

The camp directly addresses critical community needs by preparing those we serve to live an engaged, contributing, meaningful and productive life. This is especially important as Illinois ranks 49th in funding for supporting independence in the community, at the same time ranking third in the number of people segregated behind walls and fences in large institutional facilities at a much higher cost per person. Currently, 16,000 await services with little hope of receiving them due to this lack of funding.

Volunteers are the heart of Camp Big Sky and contribute 5,000 hours of their time and talents each year to provide direct camper support, construction and maintenance, fundraising and governance. Materials, equipment,

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# 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](http://www.srecoop.org)

## *President/CEO*

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## *Editor of Spoon River News*

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## 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

### Camp continued from 18A

supplies and services are generally procured through donations and discounted pricing from vendors who support the mission.

### The organization's core values include:

- Providing all-day services at no cost.
- Never exceeding their capacity to provide quality services in a safe, comfortable and efficient manner.
- Treating all guests with respect and dignity.
- In everything that we do, we believe in the value of every

person and their ability to thrive.

A sustainable and diverse funding model includes individuals, families, service organizations, churches, corporations, foundations, United Ways and county level branches of government. The organization does not receive any state or federal funding.

To find out more about scheduling a visit, volunteering and supporting Camp Big Sky, please visit their website at [www.campbigsky.org](http://www.campbigsky.org), check out their Facebook page at Camp Big Sky/IL or contact Executive Director Haven Kensinger at [exec@campbigsky.org](mailto:exec@campbigsky.org) or 309-258-6002.



## For safety's sake, do not mess with a meter

For your safety, never try to tamper with or pull (remove) a meter. Only electric utility crews should access an electric meter.

Illegally accessing a meter can cause an arc flash bright enough to result in blindness and powerful enough to launch fragments of red-hot, shrapnel-like debris, according to the Cooperative Research Network. Serious injury or death from electrocution, explosion or fire is often a result of meter tampering.

Individuals may tamper with a meter to bypass it, create an illegal connection to a power line, electrify fences or attempt to reconnect or disconnect the power, often with disastrous consequences.

### More on meter safety

- Tampering with a meter is illegal in most states.
- Meters should only be installed, maintained or removed by electric utility crews.
- Accessing the backside of a meter can generate high voltage; pulling or tampering with a meter can cause electric shock, sparks, surges, explosions or fire.
- Electricity should always be connected or disconnected using a transfer switch or a dedicated disconnection point.
- There is no guarantee that a structure is deenergized by pulling a meter.
- If firefighters respond to a call and know they will need a disconnect, they should call the electric utility en route.
- If firefighters try disconnecting a home by pulling a meter, it can introduce additional problems and damage.

For more information about electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

# Electricity provides powerful value

If you're like me, there are aspects of your life that become sort of a daily routine. I get ready for work, get in my car and drive to the coffee shop on the way to the office. At lunchtime, I drive to the nearest fast-food location and get lunch. Once I finally end the day at home, I stream an episode or two of my favorite show before bed.

As we all look for ways to save money in this age of increasing inflation, I began to think about my daily routine and how much value it provided me compared to the money I spent. A morning latte was costing me about \$6, a fast-food combo with a burger, fries and a drink was setting me back \$10, and my Netflix subscription is about \$16 each month. All these daily expenses totaled around \$85 a week, or about \$340 monthly. And what was the real value — short-term satisfaction and a larger waistline? Even as I started packing my own lunch, my latte was still costing me about \$120 a month. This got me thinking — is this the best value for

my money?

The average daily cost of electricity is about \$4.57, and the average monthly electric bill for members of Spoon River Electric is \$180. You could power your entire home every day for the price of a medium latte. I could brew my own coffee, cook my own meals, binge a series and run on a treadmill for less than the cost of that drink. Now to me, that's real value.

Electricity provides benefits that we often take for granted. It goes well beyond short-term satisfaction by allowing us to charge devices and have cold food and hot water, all in a comfortable indoor climate. Besides the privilege it affords, electricity has also remained relatively cost-stable, even amidst rising inflation.

As a member-owned cooperative, Spoon River Electric does everything in our power to ensure your costs stay reasonable and that electricity remains a great value for our members. It's not always easy, as there are several factors beyond inflation that impact the price

of electricity — some within our control but most beyond it.

The cost of electricity can fluctuate due to supply and demand, infrastructure investment, maintenance and operational expenses. Weather patterns also contribute, affecting both demand and generation capabilities, with extreme conditions leading to heightened energy use or disruptions. Government policies, such as subsidies for renewable energy or taxes and regulations on emissions, shape electricity costs as well. Your electric co-op considers all these aspects when adjusting rates, and because we're a cooperative, we consider the impact of those costs on our members as well.

As our community continues to rely on electricity for nearly everything in our homes, schools, hospitals and businesses, we need it to be reliable and affordable. You can be assured, Spoon River Electric always keeps you top of mind and works each day to ensure electricity remains the best value for your money.

## Where Do You Find Value?

Did you know the average daily cost of electricity is \$4.57, or about \$140 per month?

Electricity fuels our daily life essentials, from heating/cooling equipment to entertainment devices and appliances. Think of how vital power is compared to other everyday purchases. **That's real value.**



**Morning To-Go Latte**



**Fast-Food Combo Lunch**



**All-Day Power**

Sources: Energy Information Administration, MoneyGeek and CNET

# Grilling: A delicious and energy-friendly option for cooking

Grilling and America go together like hot dogs, baseball and apple pie. There's nothing like a sizzling grill on a summer day. But guess what? Grilling not only satisfies our cravings for great food, but it also helps preserve the environment. So, let's fire up the grill and save energy!

## The cost of staying cool

As refreshing as it is to feel the cool breeze of an air conditioner (AC) on a hot summer day, its energy consumption can be hefty. Depending on the model, it can consume as much energy as a marathon runner (and run almost nonstop), using anywhere from 0.48 to 5.14 kWh per hour. That is enough to make anyone break a sweat.

Did you know that millions of people add to their AC's energy consumption without realizing it? How? By opening the oven door while cooking. According to the book "Bakewise" by Shirley O. Corriher, an oven can lose up to 150 degrees within 30 seconds. Where does all that heat go? You guessed it — right into your home. Plus, even with the door closed, your oven still radiates heat into your home since it has nowhere else to go.

## The solution: grilling

If you are looking to maintain a cool vibe and lower your AC's energy consumption, head outside to the grill.

Rather than generating heat indoors, the heat is dispersed outside, reducing strain on the AC, which ultimately lowers utility bills. In addition, you will be chowing down in no time like a true grill master, as grills reach a toasty 375 degrees in just 5 minutes. Compare that to the oven's sluggish 20-minute warm-up, and you'll be laughing all the way to the butcher shop.

## Tips for safe grilling

Make sure your next BBQ extravaganza is a sizzling success without any burns or mishaps. Here are some safety tips to follow:

- Take it outside. Only use grills in the great outdoors.
- Keep your grill at least 10 feet from any buildings or structures.
- Make sure your grill is on a flat, steady surface.
- Stay close. Never leave your grill unattended while preheating, cooking or cooling down.
- Dress for success. Avoid loose or long clothing that can catch fire.
- Keep a water spray bottle beside your grill to tackle any little flames that flare up quickly.
- Keep your cool with a fire extinguisher nearby, just in case.

## Keeping your grill clean

Grills should undergo deep cleaning once or twice per year. Follow these steps to keep your gas grill in prime condition:

- **Burn away buildup:** Turn on the grill, close the lid and set the heat to maximum for at least 30 minutes. This process will eliminate any remaining grease or food debris.
- **Scrub it clean:** In a bowl, mix warm water with soap and dip a wire brush into the mixture. Scrub the grates to remove any carbon buildup.
- **Let it cool:** Allow the grill to cool down completely before storing it. Now your grill is ready for your next barbecue feast.
- **Regular maintenance:** In between uses, preheat your grill and then scrape it off with a wire-bristled brush before adding food.

## Happy grill, happy life

In addition to keeping it clean, it is also important to regularly check the propane tank and replace it if necessary. Inspect the hoses and connections for any leaks or damage. Make sure the burners are free of debris and are functioning properly. Finally, covering your grill when not in use can help protect it from the elements and prolong its lifespan.

Menu options are truly endless when it comes to grilling. Grab your apron, fire up the grill and get ready to impress your friends and family with your grilling skills while saving energy.

**HEAT UP THE GRILL**  
**TO SAVE ENERGY THIS SUMMER**

Nothing screams summer more than firing up the grill.

The good news is that using your grill in the great outdoors helps lower your energy bill. If you cook outside, less energy is needed to cool your kitchen.

- Nearly 70% of Americans own a grill.
- The Fourth of July is the most popular holiday for outdoor cooking.
- The hamburger is the favorite item to grill.
- The all-American hot dog gets the most votes from kids.
- More men grill than women.
- Grilling and barbecuing are not the same thing.
- Grilling means cooking over a fire, hot and fast.
- Barbecuing means cooking slowly over indirect heat.

Source: Breco Box

Safe Electricity.org