

## President's Report



Josh DeWees  
President/CEO



## \$10,000 donated through Spoon River Electric's Operation Round Up program

The Spoon River Electric Operation Round Up Committee recently donated \$10,000 to eight local organizations within our service territory. \$1,500 to The Browning Volunteer Fire Department, \$1,500 to The Browning Senior Center, \$1,500 to the VIT Welding Department, \$500 to Lincoln Elementary Snack Pantry and \$1,000 to the Canton SPARKS Program, \$1,000 to the Feed My Lambs Mission, \$1,500 to the Spoon River Pregnancy Center and \$1,500 to the Can-Y-Cudas Swim Team.

These donations are made possible by the generous members of Spoon River Electric

who voluntarily make the decision each month to "Round-Up" their electric bill to the next dollar and donate this "extra change" directly to the Operation Round-Up Program. All the funds collected are donated back into our communities as charitable grants. The average donation a member makes annually ranges from \$6-\$12.

For more information about the Operation Round-Up Program, visit our website at [srecoop.org](http://srecoop.org) under the Operation Round-Up tab or call Taryn at 309-647-2700.

Applications are being taken now through October 6.



We will be closed  
September 1  
for Labor Day.

## 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*

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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

## Keep food safe before, during and after a storm

### At a glance: Benefits of energy storage

- Keep appliance thermometers in your fridge and freezer.
- Limit the opening of appliance doors.
- Use coolers and ice for outages longer than 4 hours.
- Never taste food to check safety. When in doubt, throw it out.

Storm season can bring power outages, putting your food at risk of spoiling. You can keep your groceries safe and reduce waste with a little preparation.

### Before the storm

Take a few precautions:

- Use appliance thermometers in your fridge and freezer. Safe temps: 40 F (fridge), 0 F (freezer)
- Freeze water containers to help maintain cold temperatures.
- Keep coolers, ice packs or ice ready in case of long outages.
- Consider filling plastic containers with water, leaving an inch of space inside each one, to help keep food cold if the power goes out.

Stock up on ready-to-eat foods that don't need refrigeration, including:

- Bottled water
- Canned goods such as veggies, fruits, beans and tuna (Don't forget a manual can opener.)
- Instant mashed potatoes or oatmeal for carbs and energy
- Crackers and nuts
- Dry cereal and powdered milk

### During an outage

In the event of a disaster, it is important to follow a specific sequence for using your available food supply. Start with perishable foods and items from the refrigerator. Following that, turn your attention to the freezer, then begin

using nonperishable foods and essential staples.

Losing a fridge full of food is costly, inconvenient and can be dangerous if you're running low on rations. While you may not be able to save everything, here are ways to preserve food as long as possible:

- Keep doors closed. A fridge keeps food safe for up to 4 hours; a full freezer, up to 48 hours.
- Use a cooler if the power is out for more than 4 hours. Layer frozen items with fridge foods and ice for a more consistent temperature.
- If you don't have a cooler, you can use your freezer. Put ice in bowls and place them around the food to prevent melting ice from flooding your freezer. Use blankets to insulate the freezer, but ensure that air vents are unobstructed.
- Monitor temperatures with a thermometer. Food must stay below 40 F to stay safe.
- Never taste food to test safety. If it smells, looks or feels off — throw it out.
- Don't use food that touched floodwater unless it is in water-proof packaging.

### After the power returns

- Frozen food is safe if it still contains ice crystals or has stayed under 40°F.
- Don't refreeze or cook food that got too warm.
- Throw out anything questionable.

Use the U.S. Department of Agriculture's guide to learn more about foods you can keep or should throw out after a power outage: [www.food-safety.gov/food-safety-charts/food-safety-during-power-outage](http://www.food-safety.gov/food-safety-charts/food-safety-during-power-outage).

Staying prepared can help you avoid illness, waste and added stress during a storm.

# Farm safety for kids

## Farm and ranch safety: Top tips to protect kids

Farms and ranches give kids unique opportunities to gain responsibility, independence and strong work ethics. Growing up on a farm helps children develop problem-solving skills, build close family bonds, gain respect for the food cycle and cultivate a deep passion for the land.

However, agriculture is also one of the most dangerous industries for youth in the U.S. More young people die working in agriculture than in all other industries combined, with a child lost to an agriculture-related incident approximately every three days. Many of these tragedies occur when kids take on tasks that aren't suited to their age or abilities.

The impact of a farm injury or fatality extends beyond the individual, affecting families and entire communities. The emotional and mental toll can last a lifetime, underscoring the importance of making safety a priority for everyone.

By implementing safety strategies, farmers, ranchers, families and employees can reap the benefits of farm and ranch life while minimizing risks.

### Why are kids at greater risk?

Injuries often occur when children are doing something beyond their mental, physical or emotional abilities. They are susceptible to certain types of accidents and injuries:

- Children often work on farms at young ages and in hazardous jobs.
- Their bodies and brains are still developing, affecting coordination, decision-making and impulse control.
- Kids tire easily, are more likely to get distracted (think cell phones and social media) and may take risks to prove themselves.
- Many lack experience and may be reluctant to ask questions or admit uncertainty.

### Grain bin dangers

Grain bins are especially hazardous. Grain can act like quicksand, trapping and suffocating anyone who enters. Most youth grain entrapments are fatal. Kids should never enter grain bins or "walk down" grain, and all grain storage areas should be off-limits and secured.

In 2010 in Mt. Carroll, Ill., four young farm workers aged 14-20 were sent to loosen clumped grain from inside a grain bin. Three of the youth became entrapped in the grain. Two were engulfed and suffocated and the third was rescued following a six-hour mission. A settlement of \$16 million was awarded to the affected families. This case led to the formation of the Grain Handling Safety Council, [www.GrainSafety.org](http://www.GrainSafety.org).

### Five essential farm safety tips for kids

1. **Keep kids off tractors.** Tractors are involved in more than 40% of fatal farm accidents involving children under 15. Most kids are not tall or strong enough to operate them safely. Only let youth operate one if they meet safety guidelines for age, size and maturity.
2. **Supervise and restrict access.** Young children should never be in work areas unsupervised. Fence off or lock hazardous areas like grain bins, animal pens and equipment storage.
3. **Assign age-appropriate tasks.** Match chores to the child's abilities and maturity. Teens are more likely to take risks, so clear guidelines and supervision are essential.
4. **Create a safe environment.** Remove hazards such as slippery or uneven surfaces, keep equipment keys out of reach and avoid repetitive motion. Provide protective gear like gloves, non-slip shoes and hearing protection.
5. **Train and model safe behavior.** Teach kids how to do tasks safely, practice together until they are proficient and always demonstrate safe habits yourself. Kids learn by watching adults.

### Farm safety starts with open communication

Talk regularly with your kids about farm safety. Clearly explain which areas are off-limits, how to spot hazards and why following rules is important. Frequent, open conversations help build safe habits and encourage kids to think before they act.

Conduct safety audits of your farm, ranch and home together. Identifying and fixing hazards not only protects your children but also helps them learn how to prevent injuries.

Supervision is key. Always keep an eye on children, especially around potential dangers. Remember, learning safe habits takes time and patience — be prepared to repeat instructions to encourage smart, lasting and safe work habits.

For more tips on assigning safe farm tasks to kids, check out the Agricultural Youth Work Guidelines at [CultivateSafety.org/AYWG](http://CultivateSafety.org/AYWG).

Farming is more than a job; it's a way of life. By making safety a family priority, we can help ensure that future generations enjoy the rewards of farm life with fewer risks.



# Be Prepared!

## National Preparedness Month

September is National Preparedness Month! That means it's time to learn how to stay safe during storms, emergencies and other unexpected events.

Answer the questions below, then use the words in your answers to complete the word search!

1. What should you put in an emergency kit?
2. Where should you go during a tornado?
3. What should you do if there's a fire?
4. What is something you can do with your family to get ready for emergencies?



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

### Word Search Challenge!

Find all the words from the answers above using the word bank below.

#### Words to find:

1. Flashlight
2. Batteries
3. Water
4. Food
5. First Aid
6. Basement
7. Room
8. Get Out
9. Stay Out
10. Plan
11. Practice