

President's Report



Josh DeWees
President/CEO

Powered by purpose

In October, electric cooperatives across the country take time to celebrate National Co-op Month and reflect on the unique advantages of being part of a cooperative. It's also the perfect time to thank you — the members who make it all possible. For us, it's not just a celebration. It's a chance to reaffirm the values that guide everything we do.

As the CEO of Spoon River Electric, I see purpose in action every single day. Unlike investor-owned utilities, our co-op doesn't exist to make profits for distant shareholders. We exist to serve you — our members, our neighbors and our communities. That purpose is what sets us apart. It's why we were founded, and it's what continues to drive every decision we make.

At its core, being a cooperative means we are member-owned and locally controlled. That's not just a tagline; it's the very heart of our business model. Members have a voice in how our co-op operates. You elect board members who live right here in our service area and understand the unique challenges and opportunities our communities face. Decisions aren't made in corporate boardrooms hundreds of miles away; they're made here at home, by people who care about the same things you do.

This local accountability means we can stay focused on what matters most: delivering reliable, affordable electricity and providing real value to the people we serve.

We do that by investing in essential infrastructure upgrades and technologies that strengthen our local grid and improve electric service. We work hard to manage costs and keep rates as low as possible — because we know how much rising prices affect families and small businesses in our area. And, when storms hit or outages occur, Spoon River crews are here and ready to respond quickly, because we live here, too.

But our commitment doesn't end at the power lines.

Co-ops were built to meet community needs, and that purpose extends well beyond delivering electricity. Whether we're supporting local schools, sponsoring youth programs, partnering with volunteer organizations, we are always looking for ways to improve the quality of life in the places we serve. Community support isn't an afterthought — it's part of our mission.

We're also planning for the future. As electricity demand grows due to new technologies and economic development, electric co-ops are working to ensure we continue to meet those needs with a balanced, reliable energy mix. We know our members care about affordability and dependability, and we're committed to delivering both.

That's the power of the cooperative difference. That's what it means to be powered by purpose.

This National Co-op Month, I encourage you to take pride in your cooperative membership. You're not just a customer — you're an owner, a stakeholder and a vital part of a larger effort to keep our community strong, connected and energized.

Thank you for the trust you place in us. We're proud to be your local electric cooperative.



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
jdeweess@srecoop.org

Chairman

Bernard Marvel, Browning

Vice Chairman

Wesley Strode, Marietta

Secretary

Jack Clark, Lewistown

Treasurer

JoDee Pedigo, Canton

Board of Directors

Gary Bowman, Maquon
Joe Davis, Canton
John Disharoon, Cuba
Kurt Duncan, Lewistown
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



Co-op Month Word Search

Did you know October is National Co-op Month?
Read the following facts to learn how co-ops are unique, then find and circle the **bolded** words in the puzzle.

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

Fun Facts about Co-ops:

- Co-ops and their members work **together** toward a common goal.
- Co-ops are local organizations, so they understand the **communities** they serve.
- All co-ops operate according to the same set of seven cooperative **principles**.
- Concern for community is the seventh **cooperative** principle.
- Co-ops don't serve customers; instead, they serve **members**.
- Co-ops are led by the **local** members they serve.

Safety Tip

Never bring your electronics to bed with you. Charging your phone or laptop while it's on or under a pillow or blanket—where airflow is blocked—can cause it to overheat and catch fire. Charge it on a hard, flat surface instead.



Safe Electricity.org®

Mutual aid in the electric utility industry and why it matters to you

From trimming trees to maintaining equipment to updating the grid — utilities work hard to reduce the likelihood of a power outage. But, when severe weather strikes, power outages can disrupt daily life in an instant. That's when a powerful network of cooperation known as mutual aid springs into action — helping communities recover faster.

It's not unusual to see utility trucks from a dozen different states lined up in a parking lot in the aftermath of a major storm. These lineworkers leave their families and travel long distances to help strangers, working in tough conditions to restore power, safety and a sense of normalcy.

For residents, knowing that help is coming — from near and far — can be a source of comfort during difficult moments.

What is mutual aid?

Mutual aid is a longstanding system of collaboration in which electric utilities help one another during major, multi-day outages to restore power quickly and safely.

Think of it like neighbors helping neighbors, but on a national scale. If a storm knocks out power in your area and your local crews can't reach every one fast enough, utility companies from nearby states — or even across the country — may send lineworkers and other utility personnel, trucks and supplies to lend a hand. This support continues until everyone's power is restored.

How it works

Even with year-round preparation, major weather events can still cause widespread outages. That's when mutual aid is activated.

Mutual aid agreements are not spontaneous offers of help. They're part of a well-organized system that allows utilities to quickly request and receive help when disaster strikes, and are most often used after:



- Hurricanes or tropical storms
- Ice storms or blizzards
- Tornado outbreaks
- Wildfires
- Earthquakes or other large-scale emergencies

When a utility anticipates a major weather event, it can prearrange support. Crews can be staged nearby and ready to respond as soon as conditions are safe. Once deployed, they help assess damage and replace poles and lines to get the lights back on as quickly and safely as possible.

Why mutual aid matters

Mutual aid dramatically shortens the time it takes to restore power after a disaster. But mutual aid isn't just about speed — it's a powerful example

of compassion, resilience and unity. It ensures that no matter a utility's size or location, customers can count on timely service during critical times, and entire communities can recover more quickly.

Thank you, lineworkers

Mutual aid works because of the dedication, courage and selflessness of lineworkers nationwide.

We owe a deep debt of gratitude to the crews who answer the call — not just in their own communities, but wherever they are needed.

So, the next time the lights go out, remember: you're not alone. There's a powerful team ready to help. In the utility world, mutual aid means everyone is part of the same family.

4 best bets to stay cyber safe

October is National Cybersecurity Awareness Month

Protecting yourself online doesn't have to be complicated or expensive. A few simple habits can dramatically reduce your risk of falling victim to cybercrime. While you can never be "hackproof," you can become resilient in the online world.

At the heart of online safety are four essential behaviors we at the National Cybersecurity Alliance call the "Core 4." These simple steps will help shield your personal information, protect your online accounts and keep your devices secure.

1. Use long, unique and complex passwords. Your passwords are the first line of defense between a criminal and your sensitive information. Here's how to have amazing passwords:

- **Every password must be long, unique and complex.** Nowadays, every password should be at least 16 characters long, which significantly overwhelms password-cracking programs. Use a random mix of letters, numbers and symbols.
- **Don't reuse passwords.** Every account needs a unique password. Unfortunately, making small changes, like adding numbers or switching out an S with a \$, doesn't count as a unique password.
- **Use a password manager to store and generate strong passwords.** If you're wondering how to manage so many unique, long passwords, the answer is a password manager. There are many free, secure options. Password managers are the safest way to store your passwords. If you prefer to keep a password notebook, treat it like cash.

2. Enable multifactor authentication (MFA). Multifactor authentication (sometimes called 2FA) adds an extra security layer

by requiring something more than just your password to log in. Think of it as using two locks on your digital door instead of only one. This could be:

- A one-time code sent to your phone
- A biometric scan like a fingerprint scan or FaceID
- A physical security key

Enable MFA on your accounts — especially email, banking and social media. It's a simple way to supercharge the security on your accounts. Also, never share MFA codes with anyone — this includes not sharing them over the phone, through texts or via email. Only scammers will ask for MFA codes.

3. Keep software updated.

Software updates don't just bring new features. They often fix security flaws that criminals exploit. It usually takes a few minutes, but updates are worth it. Here are some tips:

- Turn on automatic updates when possible for your devices and apps. You can usually find these options in your settings.
- Install updates promptly for your operating systems, browsers, antivirus tools and apps.
- Don't click "Remind Me Later" — the security is worth it.
- Remember your phones, smartwatches and tablets are computers, so keep these devices updated as well.

4. Look out for phishing and scams. Phishing remains the most common online threat. Criminals send fake emails, texts or social media messages to trick you into revealing sensitive information or clicking malicious links. These messages

aim to get you to click before you think by playing your emotions. Scammers will even call you. Here's how to look out for phishing and scams:

- Be highly skeptical of unexpected messages, especially those urging immediate action or asking for personal details.
- Phishing emails can light up positive emotions ("You've won our sweepstakes!") or negative ones ("You've been hacked!")
- Don't click suspicious links or download unexpected attachments.
- Report phishing attempts to your email provider, social media platform or IT department.
- If you're unsure if a message is legit, ask a friend, coworker or family member. A second set of eyes can be invaluable in spotting scams.

** Article provided by the National Cybersecurity Alliance, a nonprofit organization on a mission to create a more secure, interconnected world. From families to Fortune 500s and every kind of organization in between, we work together with one goal in mind: to make cybersecurity easier and more accessible, so that we can experience the benefits technology brings to our lives without worry.*

TIPS TO AVOID ENERGY SCAMS ⚠️

Do you know the warning signs of an energy scam? Scammers will often use **high-pressure tactics** that create a sense of urgency. They may also ask for **unusual payment methods** such as gift cards or cryptocurrency. **Dodgy communication** is typically associated with a scam, including poor grammar, spelling errors or unusual email addresses. If you spot any of these warning signs, take a moment to pause and determine if it's legitimate or if it's a scam.