

## President's Report



Josh DeWees  
President/CEO



Our office  
will be closed  
Monday, May 25  
in observance of  
Memorial Day.

## How to protect your home from a wildfire

Wildfires move fast, but research shows that most homes don't ignite from an unstoppable wall of flames. They ignite from embers — tiny burning pieces of wood or vegetation that can travel over a mile in the wind and land on or near your home. The good news? There are steps you can take to help your home withstand nearby flames.

The most important area to focus on is your Home Ignition Zone — your house and its 200-foot perimeter. Think of it in three layers: closest, middle and outer. Let's walk through what to do in each.

### 1. The Immediate Zone (0-5 feet from your home)

This is the most important zone. Start here. Your goal: Create a clean, non-combustible buffer.

- Clear leaves, pine needles and debris from roofs and gutters.
- Repair missing or loose shingles and roof tiles.
- Screen vents with 1/8-inch metal mesh to block embers.
- Repair damaged window screens and replace broken windows.
- Remove mulch, firewood, plants, leaves and anything that can burn from around the house.
- Don't store anything under decks or porches; screen openings to prevent debris buildup.
- Keep the 5 feet closest to buildings, structures and decks clear of flammable materials. Swap mulch for gravel or crushed stone.

### 2. The Intermediate Zone (5-30 feet)

This is your landscaping safety zone. The goal is to slow and reduce fire.

- Keep grass trimmed to 4 inches or shorter.



- Trim limbs off tree trunks for at least 10 feet above the ground.
- Space tree canopies at least 18 feet apart (more if on a slope).
- Make sure mature trees are 10-20 feet away from the home.
- Remove shrubs and low branches below trees to prevent fire from climbing.
- Clear plants and grass around propane tanks.
- Create fuel breaks with walkways, gravel paths, patios or driveways.

### 3. The Extended Zone (30-200 feet)

The goal here is to interrupt the fire's path and keep flames small and on the ground.

- Remove piles of leaves, fallen branches and dead plants.
- Remove small conifer trees growing between larger mature trees.
- Clear vegetation around sheds and outbuildings.

Continued on 18B

# 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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jdewees@srecoop.org

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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

# SOLAR ENERGY POP QUIZ

Solar energy is amazing because it allows us to use electricity generated from natural sunlight. Complete the quiz below by matching the solar energy terms in the word bank to the correct description.



- \_\_\_\_\_ A star at the center of our solar system that provides light and heat.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Flat devices often placed on rooftops that collect energy from the Sun and help power homes and businesses.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Tiny particles of energy that travel through space and reach Earth in about eight minutes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The basic building block inside rooftop equipment that converts sunlight into usable power.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The type of energy that runs appliances, lights and electronics in your home.

### Word Bank

- A. Solar Cell
- B. Electricity
- C. Solar Panels
- D. Sun
- E. Photons



Answer Key: 1) D 2) C 3) E 4) A 5) B

## Wildfire continued from 18A

- Leave at least 12 feet between canopy tops for trees 30 to 60 feet from the home.\*
- Leave at least 6 feet between canopy tops for trees 60 to 100 feet from the home.\*
- Leave early if you feel unsafe — don't wait to be told.

You don't need to fireproof your entire property to make a difference. The small details closest to your home could determine whether it withstands a wildfire. One weekend of cleanup and some thoughtful upgrades can dramatically shift the odds in your favor and bring peace of mind for seasons to come.

*\*Distances suggested are based on National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) guidelines. However, the spacing required could be significantly greater due to slope, tree species and other site-specific conditions.*

*Sources: National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), Smokeybear.com*

## Access and emergency prep

When every minute counts, make it easy to get help.

- Clearly mark your home address with numbers visible from the road.
- Know two ways out of your neighborhood.
- Have a predetermined meeting place.
- Make a wildfire evacuation plan (include your pets and livestock.)



Planting trees and landscaping are common projects during the spring and fall. As we spend more time outdoors planning improvements to our property, it is important to consider how new trees and plants may impact the nearby utility infrastructure.

Trees are valuable for many reasons—beauty, shade, wildlife habitat, erosion control, and environmental benefits. However, planting the right tree in the right place is essential to ensure long-term safety, reliability, and reduced maintenance.

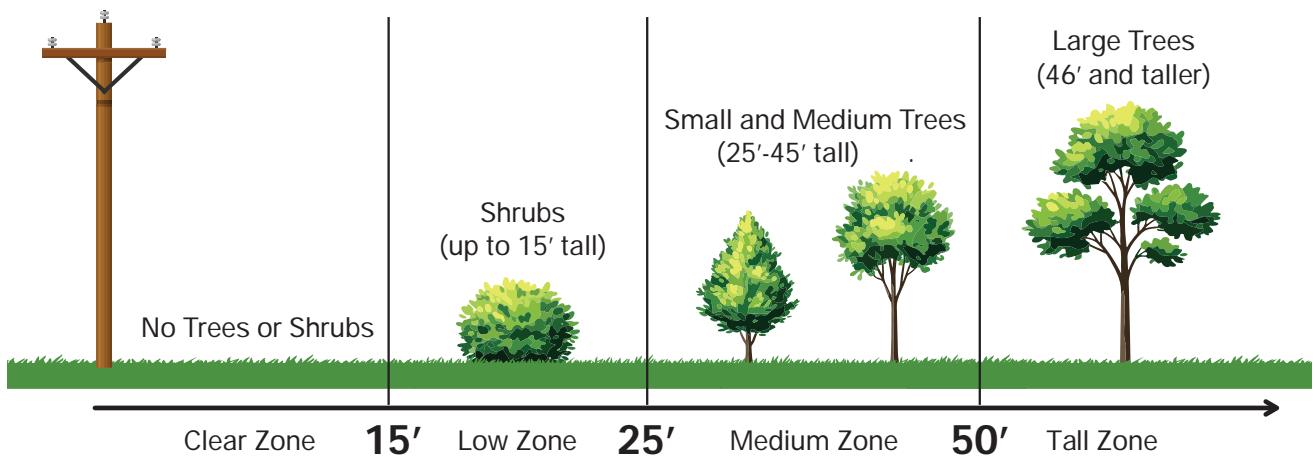
Before planting, always look up and check for overhead power lines. Trees planted too close to electrical lines can become hazards as they grow, leading to safety risks, outages, and the need for trimming or removal. A tree that is only a few feet tall today could reach 40–50 feet in maturity, potentially interfering with power lines and affecting service for you and your neighbors.

Understanding the mature height and spread of any tree or plant—and choosing an appropriate location—helps protect your investment and ensures it can grow safely for years to come. No one wants to lose a healthy, established tree because it became a risk to electric reliability.

Spoon River Electric Cooperative is committed to member safety, system reliability, and environmental stewardship. Thank you for helping us maintain a safe and dependable electric system by planting the right tree in the right place.

*Scott Skopec, Utility Line Clearance Manager  
ISA Certified Arborist, ISA Certified Utility Arborist*

## Plant the **RIGHT TREE**



*A minimum of 15 feet clearance should be left between a power line and any branches no matter the zone.*



## ATTENTION 2025-2026 SENIORS!

### *Spoon River Electric Cooperative is Awarding Four \$1,000 Scholarships to High School Seniors*

High school students who are seniors during the 2025-2026 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, the \$1,000 Scott Parrish Memorial Scholarship, and the \$1,000 Terry Beam Memorial Scholarship, which will be awarded at this year's Annual Meeting on June 4, 2026.

Applications must be turned in by May 8, 2026 to be considered. Official rules and descriptions of scholarships below.

#### OFFICIAL RULES

- **Applying students and their parent/legal guardian must be present at the Annual Meeting, June 4, 2026 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 2025-2026 school year and begin college undergraduate studies in the 2026-2027 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 2026-2027 academic year.
- Scholarships are for one year and are non-renewable.
- Past Spoon River Electric Cooperative scholarship winners are not eligible.

#### SCHOLASTIC, SCOTT PARRISH MEMORIAL & TERRY BEAM 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.
- The Terry Beam Memorial Scholarship will be awarded to a student pursuing a vocational trade program.
- Finalists will be notified by phone or e-mail with a time and place for a personal interview.
- Those not chosen as 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, Parrish & Beam 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**

*Applications can also be found online at: [srecoop.org/scholarship](http://srecoop.org/scholarship)*