



FEBRUARY 2025

CO-OP CURRENT



From Lanterns to Light: The Electrification Journey of Peden Farms

Peden Farms has been part of South Central Indiana since 1941, when Richard and Rachel Peden first settled in the area. Over the past eight decades, the farm has grown right alongside the community, and a big part of that growth was the arrival of electricity, which completely changed farming and life in the region.

The story of electricity at Peden Farms really started in the 1940s, when South Central Indiana REMC (then known as Morgan County REMC) began bringing power to rural areas. Joe Peden, Richard and Rachel's son, remembers the big moment when the farm was finally electrified. For Joe, it wasn't just a convenience - it was a game changer. He recalls the excitement of watching the farm "light up" for the first time, a moment made possible by the hard work of local farmers.

Back then, getting electricity to rural areas took a lot of effort and teamwork. Richard and his neighbors had to dig the hole for the farm's first electric pole, which became a symbol of the cooperative spirit that defined the community. This was especially important since resources were limited after the Great Depression and World War II, and electricity was rationed with wiring only in essential parts of homes. Still, that first step set the stage for electricity to spread across farms.

Before that, Joe used a candle-lit lantern to get his chores done. "Electric power is a lot safer than a candle in a metal lantern," he said, laughing as he remembered how dangerous and tricky things were back then. Once the farm got electricity, it made a huge difference - Peden Farms could use new equipment, work more efficiently, and keep going long after sunset. It was a revolution in farming. Electrification didn't just



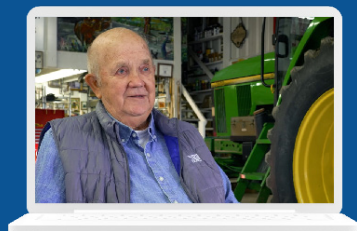
Each year, SCI REMC employees volunteer their time at Peden Farms, with lineworkers also presenting a live-line safety demonstration for the children.

change the farm - it also had a lasting impact on the community. As Peden Farms expanded with the ability to have more animals and more-enhanced equipment, Richard and Rachel Peden began hosting schoolchildren by offering them a hands-on look at farm life. This eventually became the Peden Farms Children's Festival, where SCI REMC employees volunteer annually, helping with hay-bale rides and demonstrating live-line safety. After Richard and Rachel died, Joe took the reins.

Joe also decided to get involved with SCI REMC. In 2006, he was elected to the Board of Directors for SCI REMC, where he served until 2018 and represented the cooperative at Indiana Electric Cooperatives for six years.

The farm's story is a testament to how electricity and teamwork can transform both agriculture and the people behind it. "That's part of our family - the REMC family," Joe said, reflecting on the deep connection between the farm and the cooperative.

WATCH THE ENTIRE INTERVIEW WITH JOE PEDEN





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KNOW WHERE IT GOES

SCI REMC'S OPERATION ROUNDUP FUNDED Spencer First Church of the Nazarene

WITH A \$500 GRANT

Spencer First Church of the Nazarene applied for an Operation RoundUp grant to help fund materials for the Spencer Community Garden. The Spencer Community Garden allows the community to adopt a pot and plant their own vegetables or flowers. The grant funds were utilized to purchase mulch and a new storage shed.

"Families from Owen County signed up to plant in a garden bed. The garden has fostered a community spirit, offering an opportunity to grow fresh produce, connect with neighbors, and enjoy the outdoors."

Photos provided by Spencer First Church of the Nazarene.

The Operation RoundUp Program accumulates and disburses funds for charitable purposes to individuals, families, groups, and organizations located in the service area of South Central Indiana REMC. The source of funds is the REMC's members who voluntarily participate.



LEARN MORE ABOUT OPERATION ROUNDUP

sciremc.com/community/operation-roundup/

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