



Comeback for energy tax credits

Feds revive incentives for efficient home upgrades

By Megan McKoy-Noe

Ready to boost your home's energy efficiency without breaking the bank? The American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 revived energy efficiency tax credits to the tune of \$500.

The credit offsets the cost of upgrades such as super-efficient water heaters and furnaces, boilers, heat pumps, central air conditioners, building insulation, windows, and roofs.

This marks the third extension of the incentive initiated by the federal Energy Policy Act of 2005. The last round expired in 2011; the new legislation covers 2012 upgrades along with projects undertaken in 2013. If you've already received an energy tax credit, you're out of luck—there's a lifetime cap of \$500. Full details on qualifying upgrades and individual caps are at www.energystar.gov/taxcredits. Here are a few ways to lower your electric bill and save at tax time.

Insulating Factors

Recoup up to 10 percent of the cost of upgrading a home's envelope. The tax credit is capped at \$500 for all improvements; labor costs are not covered. Eligible upgrades are:

- Insulation materials
- Systems designed to reduce a home's heat loss/gain
- Exterior doors
- Skylights and windows (\$200 maximum for upgrades between 2006-2013)
- Qualifying metal or asphalt roofs

Heating and Cooling

Replacing your home's heating or cooling system? You could qualify for a tax credit ranging from \$50 to \$500 for units put in place between Jan. 1, 2012, and Dec. 31, 2013. Eligible improvements are: **1122C2-1052A**

- High-efficiency water heaters (energy factor of at least 0.82 or thermal efficiency of at least 90 percent; \$300 cap)
- Electric heat pump water heaters with an energy factor of at least 2.0 (\$300 cap)
- Advanced main air circulating fan (\$50 cap)
- Qualifying central air conditioner (\$300 cap)
- Biomass stove (select fuels; \$300 cap)

Tax Credit Basics

Energy tax credits are non-refundable—they can increase your refund by reducing the taxes you owe, dollar for dollar, and can be carried forward to reduce taxes in following years. You don't get a separate check for the credit amount.

File for energy tax credits with IRS Form 5695. Be sure to keep a Manufacturer Certification Statement (a signed statement from the manufacturer certifying that the product or component qualifies for the tax credit)

for your records. Eligible upgrades must be made to a taxpayer's primary residence by Dec. 31, 2013.

Rebate Locator

Some states offer further subsidies or rebates for efficiency projects. For a complete list of federal, state, and local energy efficiency assistance, visit the Database of State Incentives for Renewables and Efficiency, a project funded by the U.S. Department of Energy, at www.dsireusa.org.

Sources: Database of State Incentives for Renewables and Efficiency, Tax Incentives Assistance Project

Megan McKoy-Noe writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.



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Changes to geothermal & air-to-air heat pump rebates

McDonough Power is making changes to the rebates offered on the installation of geothermal and air-to-air heat pumps effective June 1, 2013. **525HH124-951B**

	Current Rebate	New Rebate
Geothermal	\$125/ton (max \$500)	\$250
Air-to-Air Heat Pump	\$300	\$250

*New rebates are limited to one (1) unit per household.

Don't fall victim to a new scam

McDonough Power is always looking out for our member's best interests. In that light, we recently became aware of a scam that affected one of our sister co-ops in Ohio and we want to be sure our members don't fall victim to something like this in Illinois.

A member of an Ohio electric co-op recently received a call about renewing his subscription for the statewide association's magazine. Thankfully, that member questioned the caller because he believed he received the magazine for free. When pressed for information, the caller hung up and the member made his cooperative aware of the situation.

Illinois Country Living magazine is just one of the many benefits of your membership in our cooperative. You will never need to renew your subscription unless you were to move out of co-op territory and still wished to receive it. **527SG4-950B**

We here at McDonough Power will NEVER ask you to pay for your publication. If you receive a call asking for credit card or personal information please hang up and give us a call. Don't fall victim to identity thieves using the familiar name of your cooperative to steal your personal information.

MEMBER PRIZES

Every month we will have four map location numbers hidden throughout The Wire. If you find the map location number that corresponds to the one on your bill (found above the usage graph), call our office and identify your number and the page that it is on. If correct, you will win a \$10 credit on your next electric bill.





Member service portal

Take control of your account – online

McDonough Power is pleased to introduce its Member Service Portal designed to give members more access and control with their accounts. Launched in December, the Member Service Portal has many advantages for members, according to Kelly Hamm, Energy Services Manager.

You can access the portal by clicking on the “Click Here to Pay Your Bill Online” link on the cooperative’s website at www.mcdonoughpower.com.

The new portal offers convenience to members who want to modify their account information, sign up for alerts and reminders, or set up eBill – as well as paying their bill online. **5326D3A-572A**

Just a few of the features include:

■ **Account reminders** – Never forget to pay your bill again by signing up



for the reminder service. An alert will be sent to you via email or text message to tell you a payment is due. You can schedule your payment reminder to notify you days ahead of your due date. And, if you happen to miss the due date, a past due reminder can be sent.

■ **Account notifications** – If you’re concerned about someone changing

your McDonough Power account information without your knowledge or want to know your bill has been paid, you can set up alerts. With the alert service, we can notify you via email or text message when your payment has been received and processed or when a change (address, phone number, contact name, etc.) has been made to your account.

■ **Budget or levelized billing** – If you’re looking for a way to avoid fluctuations in your bill caused by winter and summer or other use changes, consider budget or levelized bill. You can now sign up for either one on the portal.

■ **eBill** – Want to eliminate paper bills? Now you can sign up for eBill service right from the member services portal.

■ **COMING SOON** – Within the “My Usage” tab members will be able to view monthly, daily, and hourly usage with integrated weather data. More details will be available once this is launched.



Tip of the Month

Keep energy efficiency in mind as the ground thaws and you plan spring landscaping. Properly selected and planted trees, shrubs, and bushes can create a windbreak that lowers home heating bills in the winter and insulates your home year-round. Before you start, check on the right plants and techniques for your climate at EnergySavers.gov.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy





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TOO YOUNG TO
START SAVING
ENERGY.**



Find out how your local electric cooperative can help you lead by example at TogetherWeSave.com.



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Have you updated your phone number with us lately?

Have you updated your phone number with us lately? We are noticing that many members are gradually moving away from landlines and switching to mobile. Giving us your current phone number(s) will allow us to keep you in the loop in the event that we need to communicate with you. The only time we will use your number is to contact you in regards to your account, notification of a planned outage, or as a courtesy if we notice that we haven't received payment from you.

Please complete and return to our office at: 1210 W. Jackson St., P.O. Box 352, Macomb, IL 61455 or via email memberservices@mcdonoughpower.com

Member Name: _____

Account Number: _____

911 Address (of the location this account number is associated with)

Street Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Primary Phone Number: _____

Secondary Phone Number: _____

