McDonough Power Cooperative
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The Wire

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COOPERATIVE ACTION NETWORK

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Please join us in Taking Action

Every day we rely on electricity. We depend on the refrigerator to keep our food fresh, air conditioning and heating to keep us comfortable and, of course, lights on a daily basis. We also depend on electricity to re-charge our electronics. Whether it's a phone to keep in touch with relatives, a tablet for students' homework or the laptop on which we stream movies, these devices all have become integral to our daily routine.

At work, we rely on electricity to power our computers, phones, lights and productivity. Without this consistent, reliable and affordable power source, businesses would relocate, jobs would be lost and prices of goods and services would increase.

That's why McDonough Power Cooperative is concerned about the latest proposed regulations on existing power plants from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This round of rules impacts the power plants on which we rely every day. **431A1-570A**

Cooperatives are different from other electric utilities. We are owned by our member-consumers. When we look at our power options, we are not driven to make a profit. We strive to provide the most affordable and reliable electricity possible to our members. That's why we made an investement in the Prairie State Energy Campus to keep costs affordable and supply our own power.

Owning our own, independent plants has allowed cooperatives to keep costs affordable. For co-ops, "energy independence" in part means independence from expensive, profit-driven power.

However, these new regulations could endanger this independent supply of affordable electric power. Electric cooperatives, like McDonough Power, are small businesses. We're not large utilities with several different power plants operating with a variety of fuel sources. We built power plants when it made sense for our members. But the way the new rules are written, we might have to close our plant and lose our independence.

The EPA has drafted a regulation that adversely and disproportionately affects electric cooperatives. That's why we are telling the EPA that this regulation simply does not work for us.

When the EPA drafted regulations limiting greenhouse gases from new power plants, the agency received more than five hundred thousand emails opposing the regulation. Today we ask you once again, please join us. Visit www.Action.coop again and tell the EPA you cannot afford these new regulations.

Your voice was heard last time. The EPA took note of electric cooperatives, and our collective voice showed that co-op consumers were engaged.

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Electricity remains a good value

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All Co-op Electric Outages 837-1400

Mike Smith
President and CEO

In today's world, you won't find many items that cost less than $5. You can purchase a gallon of milk, a gallon of gas or a Big Mac® meal from McDonald's. But did you know that an average day's worth of electricity costs less than $5?

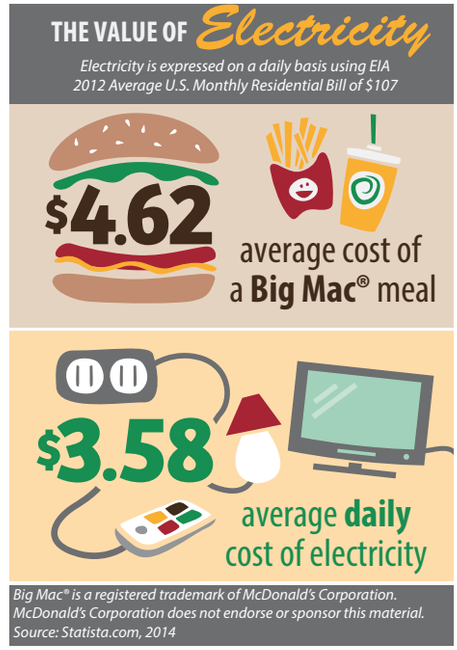
Even in our country's shifting energy climate, electricity remains a good value. In fact, electricity has the lowest cost per day of any of the items listed above. And not all of those items are necessary for daily life! **532RM9-900A**

As president and CEO of McDonough Power Cooperative, I urge you to think about your daily necessities (electricity and gasoline, to name a couple), and then think about the cost of the special treats we allow ourselves to purchase on a weekly basis (maybe even on a daily basis for some items!). We don't often question the cost of a Big Mac® meal – it costs over $1 more to buy a Big Mac® meal than it does to purchase a day's worth of power. And yet, we frequently become upset if our electricity rates rise.

It makes sense; we have become increasingly reliant upon electricity. Electricity has, for many of us, gone from a luxury commodity to a necessity and an expectation. We expect the lights to come on when we flip the switch, and we expect our power to stay on during the best and worst conditions. How else would we keep our food fresh, our homes cool in the summer or warm in the winter? It is easy to cut a Big Mac® out of your spending routine here and there to save a few dollars. But we cannot simply cut electricity out of our budgets if times get tough or we decide that we want to scale back our spending in order to save.

Perhaps that is why it is so upsetting to us when our rates increase, even if only in small increments. It is nearly impossible for us to think about what our lives would be like if we did not have electricity. If at times it doesn't seem that electricity is affordable, remember – even as the demand for electricity grows – annual cost increases still remain low, especially when compared to other consumer goods such as medical care, education, gasoline and, yes, even Big Macs®. Electricity is still a great bargain. And also remember this: as the president and CEO of McDonough Power, your local electric cooperative, I am committed to making sure that you and your family always have safe, reliable and affordable electric service in your home.

So the next time you crave a Big Mac®, remember your electric bill, and think about what a great deal you're getting for your dollar!



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Source: Statista.com, 2014. Big Mac® is a registered trademark of McDonald's Corporation. McDonald's Corporation does not endorse or sponsor this material.

Our office will be closed Monday, September 1 for Labor Day.

Avoiding Electrical Dangers during Harvest Season

After working in a field on a neighbor's farm, Jim Flach parked his equipment and stepped out of the vehicle. Flach received a severe electric shock that ultimately resulted in his death a few months later. His equipment was unknowingly touching an overhead power line, and he became a path to ground for an electrical current as he set his foot to the ground. Safe Electricity urges farmers and agricultural workers to have a safe harvest season by taking precautions around power lines.

The rush to harvest can result in farmers working long days with little sleep. Before working in a field or around shops or grain bins, always take the time to note the location of power lines, so that you can make sure to remain a safe distance from them.

Power lines can pose a major hazard for farmers. Typically, power lines over streets and rural areas have a minimal clearance of 18 feet and 12.5 feet over residential private property.

To stay safe around overhead power lines, Safe Electricity urges farm operators and workers to:

- Always use a spotter when operating large machinery near lines.
- Use care when raising augers or the bed of grain trucks around power lines.
- Keep equipment at least 10 feet from lines—at all times, in all directions.
- Inspect the height of the farm equipment to determine clearance.
- Always remember to lower extensions to the lowest setting when moving loads. **6315B1-708A**
- Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.
- If a power line is sagging or low, call the local utility immediately.

If contact is made with a power line, remember, it is almost always safest to stay on the equipment. Make sure to warn others to stay away, and call the local utility provider immediately. The only reason to exit is if the equipment is on fire. If this is the case, jump off the equipment with your feet together and without touching the ground and vehicle at the same time. Then, still keeping your feet together, "bunny hop" away.

If you see someone's equipment in contact with a power line, the best help you can give is at a safe distance. During one of these situations, make sure to yell out to, signal, or call the equipment operator to make sure he remains in the vehicle, and notify the local utility.

For more farm and electrical safety information, visit SafeElectricity.org.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

When it's hot outside, appliances and lighting can actually heat up our homes more than we think. To save energy, minimize the activities that generate additional heat, such as burning open flames, continuously running a computer, or using hot-hair devices like curling irons. This will ultimately keep your house cooler.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

Are you grounded? GFCI outlets can help!

By Amber Bentley

Did you know there are different types of electrical outlets? Each are designed for different purposes; however, there is one specific type that stands high above the rest—the ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) outlet. GFCIs have saved thousands of lives and cut the number of electrocutions in half since the 1970s. If your home lacks GFCI outlets, don't fret—you can learn how to "get grounded."

GFCIs are the most efficient outlet in protecting from electrical shock. If it senses a loss of current, the outlet switches off power to that circuit. These devices can either be installed in your electrical system or built into a power cord. The third hole at the bottom of the outlet is known as the "ground" slot, and it monitors electrical currents that flow through the left "neutral" slot and the right "hot" slot on each outlet. A GFCI can react faster than a blink of an eye to any imbalance of power by immediately shutting off the electrical current. These outlets are now a requirement in all places where water could potentially come into contact with electrical products such as bathrooms, garages, outdoors and kitchens. GFCIs are not exclusive to three-prong outlets. They can be installed into standard outlets, and there are even portable devices available when installation is not practical.

GFCIs should be tested at least once a month to ensure they are working effectively. The first step you need to take is to test an item, such as a lamp, that visibly powers on when plugged in. Push the "reset" button to prepare the outlet then push the "test" button. Did your lamp turn off? If it did, the GFCI is working properly. Now, hit the "reset" button once again to power it back on. If your lamp did not power off, then you should contact a certified electrician to correct the problem.

Next time you have a free moment, take the time to look around your house. If you're not "grounded," consider updating your electrical outlets to GFCIs.

Sources: Electrical Safety Foundation International, Consumer Product Safety Commission

Taking Action *Continued from page 16a.*

That's why we're asking you to take action again. The EPA needs to understand the impact that these regulations have on the people at the end of the power lines. Electric cooperative members are uniquely situated to help the EPA understand that these regulations will cost Americans more money.

These regulations also will cost Americans jobs. These regulations will not work for rural Americans.

Please, also ask your friends and neighbors to join us. Ask them to visit www.Action.coop and tell the EPA co-op consumers cannot afford regulation. We can balance environmental needs with affordability and reliability.

America needs a healthy economy. America needs jobs. America needs manufacturing. And affordable, reliable electricity is the linchpin to these vital assets. **4232C8A-538C**

COOPERATIVE ACTION NETWORK

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.