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The Wire

McDonough Power Cooperative • Macomb, Illinois 61455



Cooperatives participate in Youth Day

Senator Jil Tracy and Representatives Norine Hammond and Randy Frese met with students representing McDonough Power Cooperative and McDonough Telephone Cooperative during the Illinois Electric and Telephone Cooperatives Youth Day on Wednesday, March 29 in Springfield. More than 240 students from around Illinois had an opportunity to visit the State Capitol, view state government in action and question their legislators on key issues. **743D8-606C**

During lunch, Comptroller Susana Mendoza addressed students and chaperones and challenged them to take an interest in the political process and encouraged them to use their voice and reach out to their representatives and senators. Sophia Marcolla, the 2016-17 Illinois Youth Leadership Council Representative from Adams Electric Cooperative, spoke about her experience on the Youth to Washington tour and the importance of leadership. While in Springfield, the students also visited the Old State Capitol and Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum.

At the end of the day the students were interviewed for the chance to

participate in the Youth to Washington Tour from June 9-16, 2017. Those selected to represent McDonough Power Cooperative on the week-long all-expense paid trip to Washington D.C. include (Pictured Right) Darrin Ross of United High School and Ethan Hunt of West Prairie High School. Mariah Garzee of Bushnell-Prairie City High School will serve as an alternate if one of the others is unable to attend.

Pictured with the legislators is Daniel Prefountain, Addison Crum, Madison Ruiz, and Madeline Groenewold of Rushville-Industry High School; Noah Cox, Mariah Garzee, Matt Rauschert, and Emma Bradford of Bushnell-Prairie City High School; Samantha Weidman, Jared Bolon, Madison Glasgow, and Tyler Lewis-Bresnahan of Monmouth-Roseville High School; Ethan Hunt, Nate Blankenship, Courtney Butterfield, and Samuel Blackledge of West Prairie High School; Nicholas Torrance, Theodore Li, Emily Hance, and Erbin Zejnuloski of Macomb High School; Darrin Ross of United High School; Kevin White and Annie Sholl of Illini West High School; Tori Olson and Nathan Wetzal of West Central High



School; Kelly Hamm of McDonough Power Cooperative and Les Fowler of McDonough Telephone Cooperative.

Youth Day is designed to introduce young rural leaders to state government. There were 25 co-ops from across the state represented at the event.





1210 West Jackson Street
P.O. Box 352
Macomb, Illinois
61455-0352

309-833-2101

www.mcdonoughpower.com

Office hours:
7 a.m. - 4 p.m. - Weekdays



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Power strips versus surge protectors

By Tom Tate

As the proliferation of electronics impacts our daily lives, we realize there simply are not enough outlets in our homes. This is particularly true for older homes. As a result, we end up with a number of “outlet expanders,” more commonly known as power strips.

Power strips are generic and fulfill a very simple function. They are inexpensive, and the quality, I suspect, is on par with the price.

Keeping this in mind, let’s look at factors to consider when purchasing a power strip or a surge protector, the power strip’s more talented cousin.

Important tip: Make sure you know the amperage rating of the outlet into which you are connecting the strip and other equipment. A residential circuit can overload if you are not careful.

Purchasing a power strip:

- Look for power strips with a built-in circuit breaker. If you connect too many electronics and devices, the strip will kick out the circuit breaker rather than causing the breaker in your electric panel to trip.
- Pay attention to the orientation of the outlets. The typical design is along the length of the strip, facing the bottom or end of the strip. I recommend power strips with the outlets perpendicular to the length of the strip.
- Get a smart strip. These are becoming more common and less expensive. With smart strips, one outlet serves as a master, receiving power all the time. The other outlets do not receive power until the master device is turned on. This is ideal for home entertainment setups. **11128B4-1004A**

If you are connecting expensive electronics, you may want to consider a surge protector. Here, price is even more important because a cheap surge protector can be worse than none at all for two reasons. One, they use cheap, small surge fighting components. Two, these components can fail and the strip still will provide power,



all without any indication that its protective side is gone.

Like power strips, there are some key factors to consider when buying a surge protector.

- Go for a significant joule (jewel) rating. This is a measure of how much energy it can withstand.
- Cable and internet connection protection. You may want to consider this for your entertainment and computing needs as surges can enter via any wired connection. Be sure the protector is designed to handle a digital television. Otherwise, it can cause pixilation if it’s only designed for analog signals.
- Indicator light that shows if protection has burned out.
- The same outlet orientation as previously mentioned.
- Power conditioning feature (for PCs, this is a nice-to-have feature but not a necessity).
- A smart capability as mentioned above.

Power strips and surge protectors are worth the investment when you follow these simple suggestions. Don’t get “burned” by purchasing cheap, inefficient strips and protectors. Pun intended.

Tom Tate writes on cooperative issues 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.

This May, take the time to plug into safety

By Anne Prince

This month, we'd like to take a moment to reflect on the importance of safety. May is Electrical Safety Month, and McDonough Power Cooperative will be sharing safety tips and reminders throughout the month to help raise awareness about the dangers of electricity. We all depend on electricity to power our lives, but accidents can happen when electricity is improperly used.

Our responsibility to you

McDonough Power's concern for safety extends beyond our employees. We care deeply about the safety of our members, and this month, we encourage you to plug into safety. According to the Electrical Safety Foundation International, thousands of people in the U.S. are critically injured and electrocuted as a result of electrical fires, accidents and electrocution in their own homes.

To promote safety education in our

local communities, we host live line demonstrations and present to schools and student groups. We frequently provide electrical safety content in the Illinois Country Living, and we encourage the public to contact us if they see a downed power line or any other type of dangerous electrical situation. We strive to provide our communities with safe, reliable and affordable electricity and to serve as your trusted energy advisor, now and well into the future.

Our responsibility to employees

It is no accident that safety is a top priority at McDonough Power. We are committed to a culture of safety that is integral to our daily operations. In fact, McDonough Power is part of the Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program (RESAP) that follows specific guidelines and protocols for electrical safety that are considered leading practices. Our lineworkers are required to wear

personal protective equipment at all times when on the job. This includes special fire-resistant clothing that will self-extinguish, limiting potential injuries from burns and sparks. Insulated and rubber gloves are worn in tandem to protect from electrical shock. Our safety team regularly discusses important safety issues pertaining to work within the building as well as out in the field.

As your friends and neighbors, it is our duty and responsibility to raise awareness about the importance of electrical safety. Take a moment to plug into safety. Please visit <http://www.esfi.org> for tips about how to keep you and your loved ones safe. **11128B4C-1004A**

Anne Prince 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.

May is National Electrical Safety Month

We're committed to electrical safety excellence – for our members and employees.



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



Keep warm summer air outside where it belongs! Add caulk or weather stripping to seal air leaks around leaky doors and windows.

Source: U.S Department of Energy



Efficiency tips for outdoor shops and barns

By Meghaan Evans

There are many benefits to having an energy efficient outdoor shop or barn. Aside from saving energy, an efficient outdoor building can keep the environment around your structure healthy and safe; save money on your water bill; keep your animals happier and healthier; and save you from costly structural repairs.

Whether you are looking to build a new structure, or make changes to an existing structure, there are many ways you can make your outdoor shop or barn more energy efficient.

Are you planning to build a new structure on your property? Follow these tips to achieve energy efficiency:

- Location matters. If possible, carefully consider where you build your shop or barn. Consider drainage, sun exposure and how the building may affect your neighbors.
- Start with a sustainable design plan. A sustainable design plan, according to the U.S. General Services Administration, includes the ability to use environmentally preferable

products; protect and conserve water; enhance indoor environmental quality; and optimize operational and maintenance practices.

- If you are hiring a contractor to help build your structure, make sure you look for companies who specialize in “green” buildings and energy efficient practices.
- Choose efficient building methods. Pole barns offer reliable shelter without costly excavation, concrete foundations or general site disruption.

Follow these tips to make energy efficient upgrades to an existing structure:

- Replace indoor lighting with energy efficient LED bulbs.
- Ensure your existing structure has adequate insulation levels.
- Choose outdoor lighting designed to be energy efficient, and install motion detectors to reduce energy consumption when not in use.

- Plant trees around your metal shed or barn. In colder climates, trees act as a windbreak, and in warmer climates, trees have a natural cooling effect that can reduce temperatures in your metal building 3 to 6 degrees Fahrenheit. **11225C5-1002C**
- Consider adding a ceiling fan to circulate air. Typically, there is a 2-degree Fahrenheit temperature increase for every one-foot increase in ceiling height. A ceiling fan can help keep warm air close to the ground in the winter, and circulate fresher, cooler air in the summer. Not only will this help with energy costs, it will also help keep the air in the building from becoming hot and stagnant, which will keep harmful bacteria from building and will keep insects at bay.

Meghaan Evans 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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