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# The Wire

McDonough Power Cooperative • Macomb, Illinois 61455



*Mike Smith*  
President and CEO



Our office will  
be closed for  
Memorial Day  
Monday, May 28

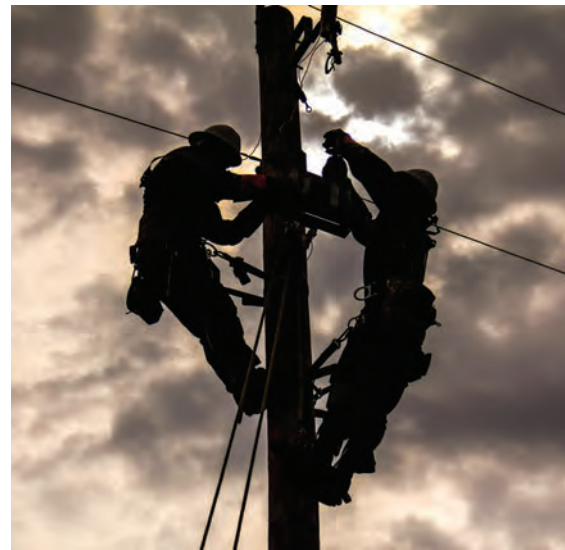
## Safety above all else

Safety is a universal word that is mentioned often and used loosely. Communities large and small as well as companies across all industries are committed to safety. Sports leagues, at every level, take safety seriously. Unfortunately, when it really counts, steps to keep the public, workers, athletes and loved ones safe are often ignored in the interest of expediency or convenience.

However, safety is a serious issue, especially when it comes to electrical safety. For, McDonough Power Cooperative, it's the number one priority. This is not empty talk. Over time, McDonough Power has created a culture of safety by putting our employees' safety and that of the community above all else. At its essence, McDonough Power's mission is to provide safe, affordable and reliable electricity to its member-owners. At the end of the day, we strive to deliver affordable and reliable electricity to our member-owners, but equally important, we want to return our workers home safely to their loved ones. To do this requires ongoing focus, dedication and vigilance. 51E6C8-1136B

Following leading national safety standards

Working with electricity is an inherently dangerous job, especially for lineworkers. McDonough Power has a safety team whose focus is keeping employees and the community safe around electricity. We established and follow safety protocols based on leading national safety practices for the utility industry. We require our lineworkers to wear specialized equipment when



working next to or with power lines. There are specific protocols that our lineworkers follow when dealing with electricity. Our safety team has regular meetings where they discuss upcoming projects from a safety perspective. They monitor and track near-misses of accidents to understand them, share "lessons learned" and improve in the future.

As importantly, we encourage all crews to speak up and hold each other accountable for safety. By cultivating a culture of openness and transparency, we promote problem-solving regarding safety rather than defaulting to a blame game. We examine the information and data gleaned from near-misses and accident reports to discern patterns and use safety metrics to improve in those areas where we have fallen short. As appropriate, we brief

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## Co-ops to Congress: Fund rural broadband

Congress has a good opportunity this year—actually, more than one—to jump-start rural economies and promote rural broadband deployment. The Trump administration and lawmakers on both sides of the aisle have expressed support for funding rural broadband to help bridge the digital divide, so the political climate is right for striking a deal that makes a significant down payment toward this goal.

The Bipartisan Budget Agreement enacted in February contained a \$20 billion “infrastructure initiative” for fiscal years 2018 and 2019. House and Senate appropriators could set aside some of this funding for broadband in spending bills for either of the two years.

In order to maximize the impact of those funds, America’s electric cooperatives urged Congress to dedicate some of this funding to the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Rural Utilities Service for rural broadband deployment, disbursing the funds through loans and grants to qualified organizations, including electric co-ops. **8120SL337-864C**

Another piece of legislation to be considered by Congress this year is the Farm Bill, which is reauthorized every five years. The bill sets the nation’s food and agriculture policy, affecting everything from what crops are grown to funding for food nutrition programs. But the bill also sets funding levels for many programs important to electric co-ops run by USDA—again, a

possible source of broadband funding.

Finally, there has been plenty of discussions on Capitol Hill and within the administration on moving legislation to deal with the nation’s aging infrastructure. Roads and bridges are often the first topic of any infrastructure conversation. But in the modern economy, gleaming roads and bridges are irrelevant if they lead to rural communities that lack high-speed internet access. Quality broadband service is a necessity, not a luxury, in the 21st century economy and should be addressed by any proposed infrastructure package.

Whichever path Congress chooses, the imperative of funding rural broadband can’t be understated.

Rural America faces stiff economic challenges. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, less than 15 percent of American businesses are located in rural areas and small towns. Inadequate broadband access is making this problem worse and contributing to the exodus of talented, young people.

Access to broadband also is essential for modern education, health care and business. But at least 23 million rural Americans lack access to high-speed internet. We can’t turn our backs on this digital divide.

For more than 75 years, America’s electric cooperatives have powered local economies across 56 percent of the nation’s landmass. As times and technology

change, broadband has become an indispensable part of electric utility operations – extending beyond the electric meter and into household energy management. These state-of-the-art energy efficiency services increasingly require access to high speed internet.

Now, nearly 100 electric co-ops are reinvesting in rural America by bringing high-speed internet access to rural homes, businesses and schools. This connectivity serves two key purposes: bridging the digital divide for co-op members and enhancing the co-op business operation network, allowing the co-op and members to adopt emerging energy management technology. These newly connected co-op communities are proven to create jobs, attract new employers and directly jump-start local economies.

The convergence of new technology and partnerships has made rural broadband deployment more achievable than ever. As electric cooperatives work to bring broadband to rural America, some have formed innovative partnerships with local telecom companies and others. McDonough Power Cooperative is working with MTC Communications, a subsidiary of McDonough Telephone Cooperative, in an effort to ensure that all of our members have access to high-speed internet.

Yet despite these advances, the high cost of rural broadband deployment remains the biggest obstacle to successfully closing the digital divide. Rural service territory is often rugged and remote, which drives up the cost of deployment. At the same time, there are fewer customers to defray the costs.

Our rural service territory averages 3.6 consumers per mile of line, and we realize that it is expensive to extend fiber to those densely populated areas.

That's why an expanded combination of federal grant and loan funding is essential. An infrastructure package, the Farm Bill and annual appropriations bills present opportunities to secure that necessary financial backstop.

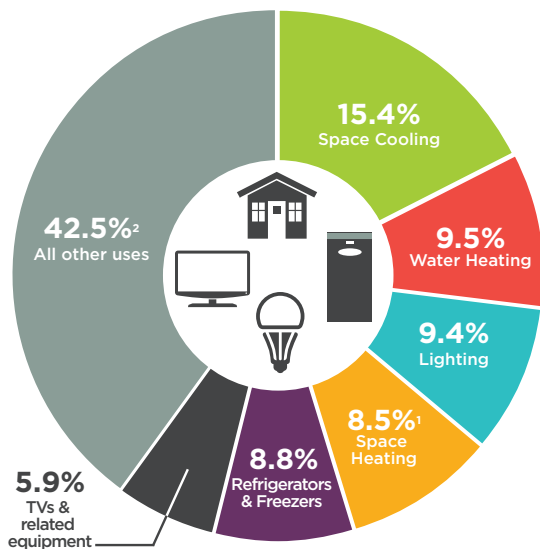
What's good for rural America is good for the entire nation. We can't afford to leave our rural communities behind. Now it is time for Congress to allocate the necessary funding so that all Americans can enjoy quality broadband service.

If you're interested in gaining access to high-speed internet access, call MTC Communications today at 309-575-3211.

## How Americans Use Electricity

Electricity is an essential part of modern life. Last year, the use of electricity in the U.S. was 13 times greater than electricity use in 1950.

The latest data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration shows the combined use of clothes washers and dryers, computers, dishwashers, small appliances and other electrical equipment accounts for 40 percent of electricity consumption in American homes.



AMERICA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

Source: EIA, Annual Energy Outlook 2018.

<sup>1</sup>Includes consumption for heat and operating furnace fans and boiler pumps. <sup>2</sup>Includes miscellaneous appliances, clothes washers and dryers, computers and related equipment, stoves, dishwashers, heating elements, and motors.

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

When streaming online content, use the smallest device that makes sense for the number of people watching. Avoid streaming on game consoles, which use 10 times more power than streaming through a tablet or laptop.

Source: energy.gov





## May is National Electrical Safety Month

This month, we encourage all members to take extra time to plug into safety.

**#ElectricalSafetyMonth**



AMERICA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

## McDonough Power Cooperative reminds members to plug into safety

In May, electric cooperatives across the country promote safety awareness to coincide with National Electrical Safety Month. Every year, thousands of accidents occur due to shock hazards, and McDonough Power, a not-for-profit electric utility, is committed to educating the public about potential electrical dangers in the home.

In 2016, 475,500 structure fires (including residential fires) were reported in the U.S., causing 2,950 deaths, 12,775 injuries and \$7.9 billion in property damage. According to the National Fire Protection Association, a residential fire was reported every 90 seconds. Many home fires occur when electrical equipment is outdated or improperly used. 532RM36-900C

"It is critical that the public understands their home's electrical system and the safety concerns associated with the latest residential technologies before bringing them into their homes," explains Mike Smith, CEO. "With newer technologies, such as solar panels, electric vehicles and more electrical gadgets in the home, people need to ensure they have an electrical system that's compatible with the increased load."

Through electrical safety awareness and education, we can all play a part in preventing electrical hazards and injuries in the future. Together, let's plug into safety this May.

## Safety above all else

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contractors on our safety protocols and set expectations for their engagement.

### Keeping the community safe

Because we live and work in the community we serve, we care about our neighbors. McDonough Power conducts electrical safety demonstrations in schools and for community events.

May is National Electrical Safety Month. According to the Electrical Safety Foundation, each year thousands of people in the United States are critically injured and electrocuted because of electrical fires, accidents and

electrocution in their own homes. Many of these accidents are preventable. There is much you can do to keep yourself and your community safe around electricity.

Don't attempt electrical DIY projects or overload your outlets. Report downed power lines, unlocked substations or padmount transformers that look amiss. Contact McDonough Power Cooperative for additional electrical safety tips. If you would like us to provide a safety demonstration at your school or community event, please contact us at 309-833-2101. Be mindful when it comes to electrical safety. Pause and take the extra time to plug into safety. 5320B7-252A

**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.

*Mother's Day*

*Sunday, May 13*