McDonough Power Cooperative
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

www.mcdonoughpower.com

The Wire

McDonough Power Cooperative • Macomb, Illinois 61455

Mike Smith
President and CEO

Operation Round-Up funds our communities

Your small change is a big deal! Operation Round-Up Trustees approved five grants, totaling $5,500 at their quarterly meeting in July.

Bushnell ESDA (Emergency Services Disaster Agency) received $450 for the purchase of a prescription drug drop-off box that will serve the citizens of the Bushnell Fire Protection District. The unit will be installed at Bushnell City Hall.

West Prairie Elementary School was granted $800 for its Get Kids Moving with Heart Rate Monitors initiative. Currently it has 12 heart rate monitors that must be shared and rotated from student to student. With this gift, it will be able to buy enough for the entire physical education class to wear at the same time. Elementary teacher Dawn Torrance applied for the grant. "I believe that if we teach our students to be healthy life-long learners, they will be great role models and for others in our community," she said.

Loving Bottoms Diaper Bank provides diapers to social service organizations that are already helping families with services and programs. The diaper bank began in the home of their founder, Lee Ann Porter, in 2015. Today, it operates out of a warehouse and dispensed 75,000 diapers last year. It received $250 so it can upgrade to industrial shelving for the warehouse.

Warren Achievement Center, located in Monmouth, provides many opportunities for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities to learn and be active members of the community. It received $2,000 for its Achiever Medical Fund, which is used exclusively for uncovered medical costs for their Achievers. **7417A1A-606B**

Bridgeway Foundation received $2,000 toward the purchase of a computerized stencil and decal cutting system. Bridgeway serves hundreds of persons with disabilities each year, and successfully supports them to find and maintain competitive jobs within the community.

OPERATION UP ROUND®

For more information on Operation Round-Up visit mcdonoughpower.com. The next deadline to submit applications is October 1.

McDonough Power Cooperative

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All Co-op Electric Outages 837-1400

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative
The power of human connections

CoBank Sharing Success Grants

McDonough Power Cooperative is pleased to announce this year's recipients of the CoBank Sharing Success Grants. McDonough Power Cooperative Cares – Coats for Kids Program, the Warren County Agricultural Fair and the McDonough County 4-H Building and Grounds Corporation will split the $10,000 donation.

McDonough Power matched local dollars with grant funds from CoBank which operates a $3 million charitable fund designed to benefit cooperatives and the charitable groups they support throughout rural America.

Thanks in part to this grant, McDonough Power's Coats for Kids program has been providing warm winter coats for over a decade to area pre-k through seventh grade students in need throughout the co-op's service territory.

Due to the lack of state funding, the Warren County fair organization is in need of money to upgrade and maintain its fairgrounds. The grant funds will be used to help upgrade the livestock housing barns with new sheep, goat and swine pens, in addition to exterior painting.

For McDonough County 4-H, many events and opportunities take place during the fair to educate not only the adults, but the youth of our local area about the ag industry. Also due to the lack of state funds, it needed funding to rewire the show and cattle barns.

Under the program, CoBank matches contributions by its cooperative members to the charitable organizations of their choice on a dollar-for-dollar basis up to $5,000. CoBank requires that the charitable organization is established as a non-profit under section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Service code. Other potentially eligible organizations include schools, churches and government organizations, as long as the donation serves a public purpose and is consistent with the program's purpose and guidelines.

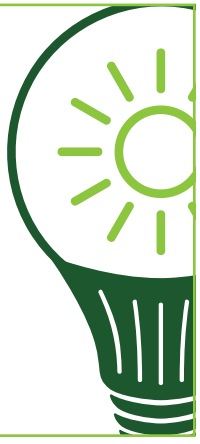
CoBank, a non-profit, cooperatively owned bank, assists rural America with loans and other financial services to agribusiness and rural electricity, water and communication providers in all 50 states. **8323A6-652C**

"This is a great example of cooperatives working together to support communities, and we are proud to support such worthwhile organizations," said McDonough Power's Energy Services Manager Kelly Hamm. She explained that McDonough Power is guided by seven cooperative principles, which include "Cooperation among Cooperatives" and "Concern for Community."

Energy Efficiency
Tip of the Month

Turn off kitchen, bath and other exhaust fans within 20 minutes after you're done cooking or bathing. When replacing exhaust fans, consider installing high-efficiency, low-noise models.

Source: energy.gov



From trial size to supersized:
Solar surges in rural communities

By Tracy Warren

Five years ago, many people in the electric industry viewed solar energy as a kind of "boutique" resource—more an energy accessory than a real power supply option. But in the last half-decade, as the costs to install solar went down and electric utilities gained experience with this unique energy resource, there has been a dramatic transformation, and solar energy has made the jump to the big leagues.

At local electric cooperatives, consumer-members were asking questions about whether this new technology would be suitable either for their own home or for the cooperative.

Given the high cost to install solar, electric co-ops had questions about the economic feasibility of solar and its effect on the electric system. Even with federal tax incentives, the cost of solar was not competitive with other resources such as wind and natural gas.

Engineers also had questions. What happens to the system when the sun doesn't shine? Or even more tricky: what happens on those days when multiple clouds sail by, making a strobe light out of the sun?

To answer these questions, co-ops started installing small arrays, analyzing costs and efficiency. Five years ago, compared to other resources, many concluded solar was still simply too expensive.

The cost of panels and equipment was not the only reason solar was expensive. There were also soft costs, like training, business processes and software. There was little standardization among solar projects—every project was unique. Engineers and resource planners, unfamiliar with this technology, needed training and technical assistance. Financial partners still needed convincing when it came to invest in large-scale solar projects.

As the solar industry started growing, thanks in part to tax credits and other policy incentives, the cost of solar panels and other equipment started declining; the economics started changing.

In 2014, 17 electric co-ops joined with their national trade organization, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), to collaborate on solar installations in 10 states whose combined solar capacity would be 23 megawatts. The goal of the project was to make solar more affordable for electric co-ops by driving down the soft costs.

The project, which received funding from the Department of Energy, aimed to create a network of experts within the cooperative community. By sharing information and expertise, co-op experts could make solar installations easier and less financially risky for other co-ops to follow suit. **8331B9-672B**

Over the course of this project, the cost of solar fell dramatically. For example, one co-op that built a solar installation at the beginning of the project and another one two years later, found the cost was half what it had been two years earlier. In 2013, the cost was $4.50 per watt of installed solar, and in 2016, the cost was $1.74 per watt.

As more electric co-ops gained experience and shared information about what worked and what didn't, the risks that come with innovation and change also went down. Solar became more doable for cooperatives large and small.

With the decline in costs and the increase in knowledge and understanding, solar has taken off in rural communities. The proof is in the numbers. Today, America's electric co-ops own or purchase more than nine times as much photovoltaic solar power as they did in 2013. And by the end of 2019, the combined solar capacity of America's electric cooperatives is expected to surpass a gigawatt.

Tracy Warren writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the NRECA, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives. From growing suburbs to remote farming communities, electric co-ops serve as engines of economic development for 42 million Americans across 56 percent of the nation's landscape.

Invest in thirty days of safety

September is National Preparedness Month

How prepared are you and your family for disasters or emergencies? The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) designates National Preparedness Month as the time to assess and prepare for a number of possible situations: floods, wildfires, severe storms like tornados and hurricanes, and prolonged power outages from natural disasters.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), about 46 percent of people think a natural disaster is likely to happen within their community. The reality is that most people will experience the impacts of some natural event year to year.

"Understand the most likely natural disasters for your area and take steps in advance to weather them safely," says Molly Hall, director of the Energy Education Council. "Prepare by assembling an emergency kit with essentials. Monitor news and weather for impending events. Be prepared to take cover or evacuate when appropriate. Stay engaged online with related websites and social media pages during a disaster." **9333C7-666A**

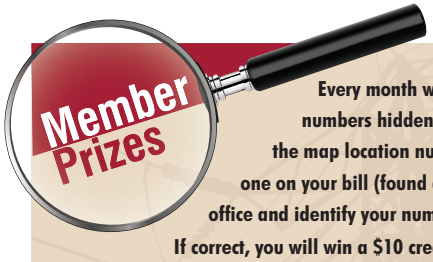
Be prepared for prolonged loss of power. If you have a portable generator, make sure you know how to use it safely. Place it safely away from the home. Never run a generator inside or near windows.

Floods and power outages can affect local water supplies, so keep at least three days of drinking water in your emergency kit. Your supplies should also include non-perishable food and any needed openers, a radio or weather radio, and a flashlight with extra batteries. Don't forget first aid, other medical essentials, extra blankets and seasonal items.

Once your kit has been assembled, it's time to create or review your family's emergency communication plan. Know how each of you will stay safe and get in touch if you're not together when disaster strikes. Establish a meeting place if separated during a disaster. Include measures for pets in your emergency plans.

Keep up to date with current public health and safety emergency plans in your community. Keep a list of emergency phone numbers. Consider getting involved with community programs that help others prepare to stay safe.

"Since natural disasters can quickly and seriously impact quality of life and health, proper planning and preparation is key to staying safe," Hall says. For more information, visit SafeElectricity.org.



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.

Tips for a Safe Harvest

Harvest season brings hard work and can be an exhausting, but rushing the job to save time can be extremely dangerous (even deadly!) when working near overhead power lines. We urge farm operators and workers to keep the following safety tips in mind:

- **Use care when operating large machinery near power lines.**
- **Inspect the height of equipment to determine clearance.**
- **Always keep equipment at least 10 feet away (in all directions) from power lines.**
- **Remember to lower extensions when moving loads.**
- **If a power line is sagging or looks to be dangerously low, please call us immediately.**

Source: SafeElectricity.org

AMERICA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES