



*Mike Smith*  
President and CEO

## New faces in our cooperative family

**W**e have been busy the past few months filling our team and would like to make a few introductions!

### Meet Angela Derenzy

Angela joined us in May as a Member Service Representative. She's typically the first person you will see when you walk in our front door. Angie is married to Brad and they have a son, Kasey. She enjoys spending time with family and friends, scrapbooking, gardening and shopping. **4131D2-1116C** Prior to joining our team, she worked right across the street at State Farm Insurance – for 20 years! Angie is well-versed in offering world-class service and we are so glad she made the jump across the street. Stop in and meet Angie.



### Meet David Lutz

David is no stranger to the cooperative world and definitely not to McDonough Power. David worked for McDonough Telephone Cooperative for 12 years where he was a Technical Services Specialist. While in that position, he provided IT services to McDonough Power and could be seen around our office on a weekly basis. Let's just say – he already knew where to find the candy stash! David joined us in June as our Warehouse/Metering Technician and comes with a variety of skills. In his free time, he enjoys boating, camping and firearms. A little fun fact about David – he was the guy in the CFL Charlie costume at our annual meeting a couple of years ago.



### Meet Gabe Williams

Gabe has assisted McDonough Power with storm repairs, construction of new services and service upgrades while working for Croft Electrical Contractors, so he's no stranger to our service territory. Gabe comes to us as an Apprentice Lineman and started the latter part of July. He is originally from Rushville and enjoys fishing, hunting and playing golf. Let's just hope he doesn't have to fish or hunt his ball while golfing!



**Happy  
Labor**

**DAY**

**Our office will be closed  
Monday, September 2  
for Labor Day.**



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



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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative  
The power of human connections



*Pictured left to right: Denise McIntyre, Cheryl Britt, Sylvia Arnold, Cyndy Hunter, Steve Hall MPC Director, Janet Steiner, Steve 'Flint' McCullough, June Friend MPC ORU Trustee, and Dan Byers MPC ORU Trustee.*

## Operation Round-Up lends a helping hand

Trustees for the McDonough Power Operation Round-Up program met recently to lend a helping hand in the amount of \$1,800 in Warren County.

The grant recipient, The Helping Hands of Roseville, IL, is a client choice, free food pantry operated by volunteers who serve the food-insecure residents of Warren County. The grant will allow them to purchase approximately 70 cases of canned tuna and chicken. The shelf stable meat will enable its clients to serve their nutritional needs for protein over a longer period of time than frozen meat. Helping Hands of Roseville is located on the north side of the Roseville Community Center and is open on Mondays and Thursdays. For more details about the organization, visit them online at [helpinghandsofroseville.org](http://helpinghandsofroseville.org).

This brings the total amount of grants awarded in the community to \$85,449.65 since 2016.

Operation Round-Up is just what the name implies. McDonough Power simply "rounds up" the electric bill of participating members to the next highest dollar. That spare change is overseen by a board of trustees, who are also McDonough Power members. Local groups

and organizations can then apply for grants from this fund. **545D3A-274B**

Those eligible to apply for the funds include non-profit groups or organizations located within the McDonough Power service territory, which covers portions of the following counties: Fulton, Hancock, Henderson, Knox, McDonough, Schuyler and Warren. Grants are available for local volunteer fire departments, youth programs, 4-H, senior citizen programs and other community service projects. The fund will NOT be used to pay any electric or utility bills or be used in any way to support or oppose any political candidate or campaign.

For more information on Operation Round-Up visit us at [mcdonoughpower.com](http://mcdonoughpower.com). The next deadline to submit applications is October 7.



# What causes a transformer to catch fire?

**B**efore we talk about what can cause a transformer to catch fire, let's take a step back and consider the transformer itself.

Last time you drove by a substation, you may have wondered what all is in there. Or, if you have an inquisitive 4-year-old, he or she probably asked all about it on the way to preschool.

Part of all that metal equipment behind the substation fence includes transformers. In your neighborhood or on your street, the transformer is either located in a barrel-type housing high up on a power pole or in the green utility boxes every fifth yard or so.

In all cases, the transformer is used to “step down” or decrease voltage from high powered to lower-powered lines.

Transformers can malfunction and let the world know it with a bang. They can explode and catch on fire for two major reasons: from a lightning strike or from damaged wires or equipment somewhere else on the electrical pathway.

Although transformers have built-in protective devices, they may not trigger fast enough to prevent an explosion. (Protective circuits are fast — they respond almost immediately — but they are not as fast as lightning.)

The result, especially for the large substation transformers, is often a bluish-green flash that can be seen from far away at night. **10129C1-469B** The event can also interrupt electrical service to any homes or businesses fed by the transformer.

After a transformer catches on fire:

- Stay away!
- Please be patient until we can restore service. Our crews must shut down the incoming line first and then repair the destroyed hardware.

- If a transformer near your home catches on fire, DO NOT try to put out the fire yourself (water and electricity don't mix). Call 9-1-1 to report the fire.
- Power not directly impacted by the transformer fire may need to be shut off temporarily during repairs to prevent stress on the electrical system.

For more information about power line or transformer safety, contact us at 309-833-2101. For more information about electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).



## Members receive \$403,874 in capital credits

**C**apital credits are a big part of what makes us, as an electric cooperative, different than other electric utilities. You see, as an electric cooperative, we are a member-focused organization that works to efficiently deliver affordable, reliable and safe energy to our consumer-members.

Capital credits are earned by each of our members each year that we earn more revenue from our members than was needed to run the cooperative and provide service. That excess revenue, or margins, become capital credits allocated to the membership after an auditing firm completes an audit of our finances.

We maintain records of all the capital credits earned by each member. The capital credits stay with us for a time before being returned to our members. They are an investment by our membership into our long-term operation and are what enables us to operate and pay for our day-to-day operations.

Each year, your board of directors looks at our overall financial health and determines what portion of credits to return to the membership. This year, they voted to return \$403,874, which pays out the remainder of credits earned by members in 1990, all of 1991 and 1992 and a portion of what was earned in

1993. We've returned over \$3.5 million in capital credits to our members in the past 10 years!

If you were a member who received service from us in 1990, 1991, 1992 or 1993 you should have received your capital credit refund check in August.

We want to be able to return capital credits to every member, so please give us your address when you move away.

For more information on capital credits, visit [www.mcdonoughpower.com](http://www.mcdonoughpower.com), email [memberservices@mcdonoughpower.com](mailto:memberservices@mcdonoughpower.com) or call 309-833-2101.



## A “controlled” burn can quickly turn chaotic

A “controlled burn” can quickly become an uncontrolled one, so take precautions before burning on your land or in a ditch. Controlled burns are used for various reasons, including vegetation and weed management.

If the area you choose to burn is near a utility pole or if it spreads more quickly and farther than you thought it might, your controlled burn could get expensive.

Fire damage to a power pole is usually evident by blackening and scorch marks, but even slight discoloration can cause serious problems. **10324B8-354A** In some cases, the pole can look like it has little damage on the outside, all the while burning from the inside out.

In all cases the result is the same: the utility pole is compromised and will most likely need to be replaced, compliments of the person who started the burn. The fees passed on to the person who caused it are substantial—usually in the thousands of dollars.

The damage could also cause a power outage or other serious service issues including energized lines falling near or on the ground, creating a potentially deadly situation.

### So, what can you do to prevent burn-related damage to a power pole?

1. Plan your burn before you begin.
2. Check the forecast for weather conditions, such as wind direction and speed, as well as humidity (as a general rule, relative humidity should be 40 percent or higher).
3. If there are power poles in the planned burning area, clear all vegetation and weeds at least four feet around the base of the pole.
4. Wet the base of the pole with water before beginning your burn.

If your fire gets out of control, gets too close to a power pole, or if the pole catches on fire, call 9-1-1 and McDonough Power Cooperative’s emergency number at 309-837-1400. Once a fire breaks out, NEVER spray water near the pole, power lines or any other utility equipment. Electricity and water do not mix, and you could cause a short circuit that could cause serious injury or death.



## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Cookware Tip: Copper-bottomed pans heat faster on the stove. In the oven, ceramic and glass dishes are better than metal. With ceramic and glass dishes, you can turn the oven down about 25 degrees, and your meal will cook just as quickly.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)



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.

For more information about electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).