

# The Wire

McDonough Power Cooperative • Macomb, Illinois 61455



*Mike Smith  
President and CEO*



## McDonough Power holds 82nd annual meeting of members

**M**ember-owners of McDonough Power Cooperative gathered at The Crossing in Macomb on Aug. 20 for their 82nd Annual Meeting of Members. They were treated to a porkchop sandwich dinner and some sweet surprises in the form of kettle corn and lemonade shake-ups before the start of the business meeting. Entertainment prior to the meeting was provided by the group Crossover.

Jeff Moore, McDonough Power chairman of the board, welcomed members and reported that the board has authorized the return of \$400,000 in capital credits to the members. Moore encouraged any members considering their own solar installations to talk with the cooperative, not to discourage installation but to ensure members know the facts about the benefits promised from the solar installers. **539JN2-266B**

Moore also thanked members for their participation and generosity in the Operation Round-Up program. He said,

“The program continues to be a shining star providing grants to organizations that serve our friends and neighbors. It goes to volunteer fire departments, food banks and a host of others.” He reminded members that the Coats for Kids program is going strong and is supported by the co-op’s sale of scrap wire. CoBank, the cooperative’s lender, and its Sharing Success program, has helped increased donations through its matching grant program.

The 2019 LaVern and Nola McEntire Lineworker’s Scholarship was presented to Zachary Suter of Spaulding by Mike Smith, McDonough Power president and CEO. McEntire, who was unable to attend, was a lineman for McDonough Power from 1949 to 1991. He and his wife endowed a scholarship to help pay for costs to attend the lineworker’s school conducted by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives

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

309-833-2101

[www.mcdonoughpower.com](http://www.mcdonoughpower.com)

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



## DIRECTORS

Jeff Moore, Chairman

Walt Lewis, Vice Chairman

Steve Youngquist, Secretary

David Lueck, Treasurer

Jerry Riggins

Mike Cox

Bob Dwyer

Steve Hall

Steve Lynn

John D. McMillan, Attorney

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*"Annual Meeting" continued from page 20a*



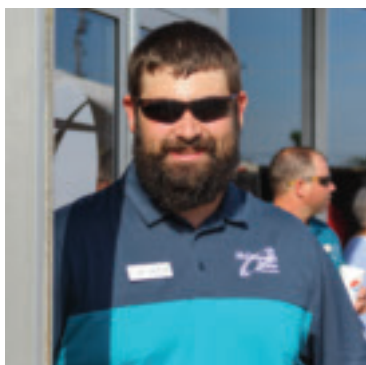
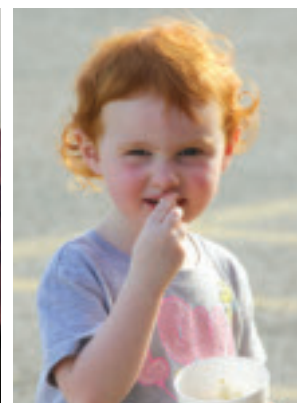
in conjunction with Lincoln Land Community College, Springfield.

Smith then discussed why he loves the cooperative business model and the principles by which it is governed. "We are non-profit and have a long history in rural America that is driven by service before profit," Smith said. "We are committed to our community and those we serve." **4233B1-538C**

Smith said he likes renewable energy and believes in wind, solar, hydro and

geothermal power. "By and large, there is a place for renewable energy in a utility's portfolio." He also encouraged members to do all they can to conserve energy by looking at adding insulation, better windows and better construction.

During the meeting, members re-elected three directors to the board. Michael Cox, District 1, Macomb; Walt Lewis, District 3, Blandinsville; and Steve Hall, District 7, Roseville, will serve new three-year terms.





# Smart devices: They're definitely smart, but not always secure

For many of us, buying and using technology to make our homes smarter and interconnected is as tempting as walking through a candy store as a kid.

Although not found in every household, many U.S. homes have one or two components, such as a smart security system complete with cameras, a smart thermostat or a know-it-all “voice assistant,” such as Amazon’s Alexa. The rest of our homes range from doing things the old-fashioned way (no smart devices at all) to having a home decked out in every smart technology one could imagine. **6326AA28-750C**

According to Statista, a company specializing in market and consumer data, North Americans are forecast to spend \$63 billion in the smart home market in 2022. That’s nothing to sneeze at. (But if we do, millions of Americans may hear Alexa say, “Bless you.”)

Although convenient – who doesn’t want real-time glimpses of who is ringing our doorbell or to hear Google Assistant recite a recipe – smart devices come with their own set of security concerns.

Canada’s CBC News hired hackers (ethically responsible ones of course) to hack a family’s smart home and they got in, literally. “All it took was a white van, a team of three hackers and a phishing email to remotely unlock ... the front door.”

This eye-opening scenario is not intended to scare people; rather we encourage you to give your smart

devices serious thought before diving in. Security measures for smart devices are similar to the steps we should take in our daily life to protect us against seedy scammers and hackers everywhere.

For example, be leery of emails or calls asking for personal information such as login info or passwords. Although everyone loves to use the same passwords like “abc123” for everything, doing so can make your smart devices vulnerable. (Note: it’s not a good idea to use “abc123.” Be creative and make them hard to crack.) And although it seems obvious, never use the factory-set password; change it immediately.

Many tech companies are considering (and others have already switched) to two-step authentication for the smart devices they sell. Although the extra step can feel like a pain, the two-step process is a good thing; it is a valuable step in keeping you and your family safe and your conversations private.

Without the code provided in the second security step, outsiders can’t access your device or account — even if they guessed your SweetHomeAlabama1973 password (or whatever).

For more in-depth technology advice, consult an IT professional. For more information about electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org). If your password is actually SweetHomeAlabama1973, we apologize; it was used for illustrative purposes only.

## Keep cyber invaders at bay

### Smart device technology tips

Although not an exhaustive list and not written by security experts, Safe Electricity and McDonough Power recommend these basic tips to make your smart devices less hackable and more secure:

1. NEVER click a link in an email claiming to be from a security- or smart-home related company, even if it looks official. Scammers and hackers get sign-in information and passwords this way, which they can use to hack your smart technology.
2. Although tempting, don’t use all the same passwords for all of your devices.
3. Absolutely change factory-set passwords provided by the manufacturer.
4. Make your passwords complex and challenging.
5. If you do receive an email from your smart device manufacturer, see if the email address the company used is the same as the one they have used to contact you in the past. These emails should be general in nature and should never ask for personal or login information.
6. Never give out login or password or other personal information in an email, over the phone or for any other reason, unless you are the one contacting the company directly via verified phone number or other trusted method of contact.
7. Regularly update the device’s software so it is protected by the latest security.
8. Unless the hacker makes him/herself known, it can be hard to detect if a smart device has been hacked until the obvious happens.
9. If it has been hacked, your gadget might be slower than usual, unresponsive or compulsively reboot.
10. If you are tech savvy, keep watch on the IP addresses that access the devices.

*Disclaimer: Tips are designed to increase awareness. For expert and in-depth technology advice, contact an IT professional or manufacturer. For more information about electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).*

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Heating requires more energy than any other system in your home, typically making up about 42% of your energy bill. With proper equipment maintenance and upgrades like additional insulation and air sealing, you can save about 30% on your energy bill.

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



# By the community, for the community

*October is National Co-op Month*

*By Anne Prince, NRECA*

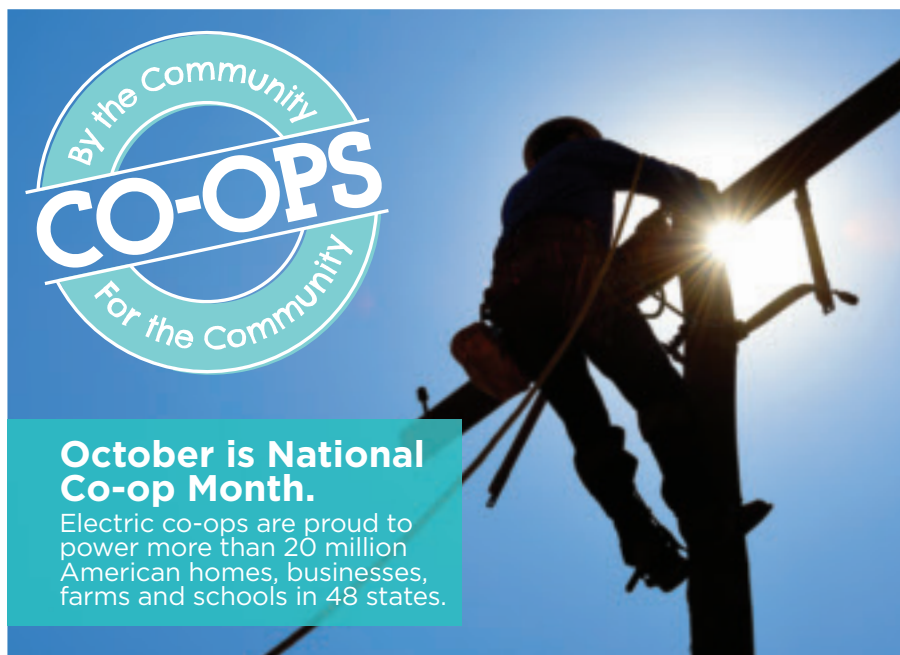
When you think of October, pumpkins, Halloween and beautiful fall foliage naturally come to mind. But October is notable for another reason – it's National Co-op Month! This is the time of year when cooperatives across the country, including McDonough Power Cooperative, celebrate who we are and, more importantly, the members we serve.

Cooperatives are different than other types of businesses. When the market declines to offer a product or service, or does so at a high price, co-ops intervene to fill the need.

Similar to how McDonough Power was built by members who came together to bring electricity to our community, cooperatives are conveners for the common good. Your electric co-op exists to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy to you, the members of the co-op. Equally important is our mission to enrich the lives of the members we serve.

As a co-op, we are well-suited to meet the needs of the community because we are locally governed. McDonough Power's leadership team and employees live right here in the community. Our board of directors, who helps set long-term priorities for the co-op, live locally on co-op lines. These board members have been elected to the position by neighbors like you.

We know our members (that's you!) have a valuable perspective. That's why we are continually seeking your input. Whether through community events, our social media channels or the annual meeting, we want to hear from you.



Our close connection to the community ensures we get a first-hand perspective on local priorities, thereby enabling us to make more informed decisions on long-term investments, such as community solar programs, equipment and technology upgrades and electric vehicle programs.

Another feature that sets our co-op apart from a traditional utility is one of our core principles, "Concern for Community." We support and actively participate in local organizations, provide Operation Round-Up grants and shop local when we can. We participate in the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, where we take our community's brightest young people to Washington, D.C. for a week-long

immersion to experience democracy in action. **532RM56-900C**

Ultimately, the larger community benefits from these programs because of you and your neighbors. You empower the co-op through your membership and through your participation in and support of these programs.

We hope you will think of McDonough Power as more than your energy provider, but instead as a local business that supports this community and powers economic development and prosperity for the people.

We will continue to learn from our members about their priorities so that we can better serve you – because your electric co-op was built by the community, for the community.



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.