



Mike Smith
President and CEO

Twelve 2020 IEC Memorial Scholarships available

McDonough Power CEO Mike Smith has announced that the Illinois electric cooperatives in 2020 will award 12 scholarships in 2020 to financially assist deserving students in the electric cooperative family. The 12 scholarships, \$2,000 each, will be awarded through the Thomas H. Moore Illinois Electric Cooperatives (IEC) Memorial Scholarship Program.

Six scholarships will be awarded to high school seniors who are the sons or daughters of an Illinois electric co-op member. A seventh scholarship, the Earl W. Struck Memorial Scholarship, will be awarded to a student who is the son or daughter of an Illinois electric cooperative employee or director. Four additional scholarships are reserved for students enrolling full time at a two-year Illinois community college who are the sons or daughters of Illinois electric cooperative members, employees or directors. **9336C7-362C**

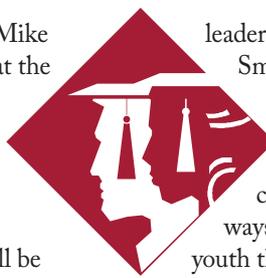
The 12th scholarship, the LaVern and Nola McEntire Lineworker's Scholarship, will help pay for costs to attend lineworker school conducted by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives in conjunction with Lincoln Land Community College, Springfield, Ill. Sons and daughters of co-op members, relatives of co-op employees or directors, and individuals who have served or are serving in the armed forces or National Guard are all eligible for this scholarship.

"We hope to assist electric cooperative youth while honoring past rural electric

leaders with these scholarships," says Smith. "McDonough Power and the other Illinois electric cooperatives are always seeking ways to make a difference in our communities. One of the best ways we can do that is by helping our youth through programs like this one.

In addition, we are very pleased to offer the electric lineworker's scholarship. It will benefit not only electric cooperative youth but also those fine men and women who have served their country through their military service and may now be wanting to become a trained lineworker."

Information has been shared with area high school guidance counselors and is also available for download at the cooperative's website at www.mcdonoughpower.com.





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What are GFCIs? Are they required outdoors?

Did you know that ground-fault circuit interrupter or GFCI protection is required for all outdoor outlets, which are also known as outdoor receptacles? The National Electric Code (NEC) began requiring GFCI installation on all outdoor outlets in 1975. Today, that rule stands with one uncommon exception – when homeowners have what is called a dedicated branch circuit for outdoor outlets. **446A3-1283A**

GFCIs serve as important electrical system protection since they automatically trip as soon as anything goes wrong in a circuit. When working properly, they keep us from getting shocked or electrocuted. This is especially important around the home where water and electricity have the chance to mix, such as in bathrooms, basements, kitchens, garages and, of course, outdoors.

If you are planning a new outdoor space (or a remodel in any area of your home) that requires additional outlets, consult a licensed electrician. Outdoor outlets must be installed in outdoor-rated electrical boxes and must have special covers based on their type and location, among other requirements.

If you are still not convinced about the importance of GFCIs, consider this easy-to-understand explanation by This Old House:

A ground fault happens whenever electricity escapes the confines of the wiring in an appliance, light fixture, or power tool and takes a shortcut to the ground. When that shortcut is through a human, the results can be deadly. About 200 people in the U.S. alone die of ground faults each year, accounting for two-thirds of all electrocutions occurring in homes.

The ground-fault circuit interrupter (was invented) in 1961. Most of the time, (the) invention does nothing; it just monitors the difference in the current flowing into and out of a tool or appliance. But when



that difference exceeds 5 milliamps, an indication that a ground fault may be occurring, the GFCI shuts off the flow in an instant — as little as .025 second.

So, with the advent of the GFCI, how do people become electrocuted by ground faults? Probably for one of several reasons:

- Their GFCIs are not working properly. Test GFCIs monthly to make sure they are working and if not, have new ones installed.
- They live in an older home built prior to GFCI requirements or in a dwelling that is not up to code.
- They took on an electrical DIY project and were not qualified to do so.

“Take GFCIs seriously. Oftentimes, they are only as reliable as the person who installs, services and tests them,” said Energy Education Council Board Member Sam Adair.

For more information about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

Heating assistance for seniors and disabled individuals

Low income households that meet the following guidelines in Hancock, Henderson, McDonough and Warren counties are eligible for help in paying home heating bills this winter through the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Seniors (60+) and disabled individuals can apply starting Oct. 1. Families with children 5 or under and disconnected households can apply starting Nov. 1. The general low income population can apply starting Dec. 1.

The Western Illinois Regional Council-Community Action Agency (WIRC-CAA) in Macomb administers the program in the four-county area. Individuals can call 309-837-2997, or come to the office at 223 South Randolph in Macomb to schedule an appointment. Local outreach sites are also available for filing an application.

Reconnection assistance will be available to households disconnected from an energy source needed for heating, or if a delivered-fuel supplier has refused to deliver AND the tank contains 20 percent or less. For renters, if utilities are included in the rent, then the rent amount must be greater than 30 percent of the household's gross monthly income to receive assistance. Households



that receive emergency funding must meet a "good faith" requirement within the past 90 days of the application date.

A household may qualify to receive energy assistance if the gross income for all household members for the 30-day income period beginning with the date of application does not exceed the following levels. **539C6-266B**

- \$1,561 for a one-person household
- \$2,114 for a two-person household
- \$2,666 for a three-person household
- \$3,219 for a four-person household
- For each additional household member add \$553

Persons applying for assistance must provide the following information to document eligibility for the program: proof of gross income for all household members for the 30-day income period beginning with the date of application; a complete and current copy of the heating and electric bills or a statement from the energy suppliers (if the household is responsible for paying its own bills); and social security cards for all household members. If additional information is needed, the household has 15 days to provide the necessary documentation.

The Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP) is available for LIHEAP eligible households who are customers of one of the following utilities: Ameren Illinois and Nicor Gas. Under PIPP, eligible households pay a percentage of

their income; receive a monthly benefit toward their utility bill and, arrearage reductions for every on-time payment they make, if applicable. Starting Oct. 1, 2019, PIPP applications will be taken on a first come, first served basis each month until available funding per county, per utility and priority enrollment group is met. Applications for PIPP are taken from Oct. 1-Dec. 31, or until funding is exhausted.

The amount of assistance is determined by choice of program between Direct Vendor Payment (DVP) or Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP), household size and total income, type of fuel and whether the household pays its own heating bills, or if the heating cost is included in rent payments. Funding is distributed on a first come, first served basis until each county's allocation is depleted.

Assistance payments are made to the energy supplier or to the household, according to the program guidelines. Funding may be applied toward current bills, past-due bills, late charges and reconnect fees.

A household that resides in public subsidized housing must have a "subject to surcharge" clause in their lease to be eligible for energy assistance. The applicant, however, must have monthly rent costs greater than 30 percent of the household income.



Seniors and disabled individuals can begin calling as of September 16 to schedule appointments for heating assistance starting October 1

We're thankful for our sister cooperatives

When you think about McDonough Power Cooperative, you probably associate us with the local community. And you would be right. Our leadership team, board of directors and employees all live and work right here in the community we serve. But you may not realize that McDonough Power is actually part of a much larger cooperative network that brings additional value, tools and knowledge that benefit you, the members of the co-op. **532RM85-900C**

Cooperation among cooperatives

When a severe weather event is predicted for our region, we call on our sister co-ops in areas unaffected by the approaching storm. Through this system of mutual aid, we coordinate with other co-ops to bring additional trucks, equipment and manpower to our area. We work together and share resources in order to restore power to our community. And McDonough Power reciprocates by assisting other electric co-ops when they request help.

A defining characteristic of a cooperative is “cooperation among



cooperatives.” This is a way that co-ops work together to meet bigger challenges such as power restoration after a severe weather event.

Another area in which McDonough Power benefits from cooperation among cooperatives is cybersecurity. Through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association’s (NRECA) “Rural Cooperative Cybersecurity Capabilities Program” (RC3), we are able to access training, resources and tools to strengthen our efforts to combat cyber threats.

McDonough Power’s ability to tap into the larger electric cooperative network and access tools, products, resources and leading practices from

across the nation ultimately makes our co-op and our community stronger.

Global impact

Communities across the globe have benefitted from the lessons learned and experience of co-ops in electrification of rural areas in the U.S.

NRECA International has provided access to reliable and affordable electricity to 120 million people in 43 countries. This effort is made possible through the support of electric co-ops McDonough Power in this state and across the country.

Hundreds of lineworkers, engineers and other co-op employees have served as volunteers to bring first-time access to electricity and train local partners to help utilities be sustainable in their own communities.

November is a time of year for reflection and giving thanks. We are grateful for our sister co-ops that enable us to better serve you and our broader community. When electric co-ops collaborate, we strengthen each other and the communities we serve – and that is something in which to be truly thankful. Happy Thanksgiving, everyone.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Trim your holiday energy costs by choosing energy efficient LED lights! LED holiday lights use less energy and can last up to 40 seasons. They're also easier to install – you can connect up to 25 LED strings without overloading a wall socket!

Source: energy.gov



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.