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# The Wire

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McDonough Power Cooperative • Macomb, Illinois 61455

## Recap of your cooperative's 78th annual meeting



Members of McDonough Power Cooperative were updated on power supply, infrastructure and right-of-way projects, and programs the co-op is participating in to enrich its community and others in need at the organization's 78th Annual Meeting of Members held Thursday, Aug. 27 at The Crossing in Macomb.

President/CEO Mike Smith addressed the Clean Power Act that is requiring states to cut carbon emissions significantly thus forcing a shift in how power is produced in the U.S. "Part of the problem is that this was done by regulation and not legislation, which means those who actually generate power really didn't have much voice when it came time to put the details into the plan," said Smith. He added that the Clean Power Act will be challenged in court and will play out over several years. Coal, which as recent as 2014 was still producing 45 percent of the power generated in the U.S., would be phased out in favor of low- or no-carbon emitters.

To help the co-op comply with the Act, Prairie Power, Inc., McDonough Power's generation and transmission cooperative (G & T), has a stake in the Prairie State Generating Campus in Marissa, the cleanest and most efficient coal-fired plant in the state and the last coal plant that will be built in Illinois in the foreseeable future. In addition, the G & T has invested in new natural gas generation 6315B1-708A

near Winchester, which is slated to go online later this year, two solar farms and a wind farm. All of this, coupled with keeping a close eye on the energy markets and investing wisely, has allowed Prairie Power, Inc. members to have a more diverse energy portfolio. Smith said, "We still strongly believe that diversity of fuel: coal, natural gas, nuclear, renewables and the market all play a role in price stability."

Commitment to community is one of seven principles that are the foundation of cooperatives. During the meeting, Smith discussed, and the members in attendance voted to approve a benevolent program called "Operation Round-up." The program allows members who participate to round their bills to the next dollar, with the difference going into a fund monitored by a committee of volunteer members. According to Smith, the program is estimated to cost the average member \$6 per year, or 50 cents per month. One hundred percent of the funds collected will be used for a quantified need in the community such as a town's tornado warning program, a "jaws of life" tool for a volunteer fire department or for someone in need. The committee would determine the best use of the money. Smith made it clear that the money would not be used for delinquent bills or political causes.

Another community assistance program discussed was McDonough Power's participation in the National Rural Electric Cooperative's international

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## DIRECTORS

- Steve Lynn, Chairman
- Jerry Riggins, Vice Chairman
- Steve Youngquist, Secretary
- Jeffrey Moore, Treasurer
- Mike Cox
- Robert J. Dwyer
- Steve Hall
- Walter Lewis
- David Lueck
- John D. McMillan, Attorney

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program. “The purpose for the international program mirrors the original mandate for the Rural Electrification Act of 1935, to improve the life of people through the power of electricity,” explained Smith. The program has helped improve the quality of life for rural communities in 42 countries. McDonough Power Journeyman Lineman Joe Wernsman, who recently spent three weeks in rural Haiti building line and helping bring power to impoverished areas, was honored at the meeting for his commitment to helping others. Smith said, “I believe that little by little, what seems like a small contribution by some can ultimately pay big dividends in the future for others.”

Board Chairman Steve Lynn addressed the renovation of the co-op’s long-time headquarters, saying several local contractors were used in the project allowing the money to benefit the local economy and community. “This was a project that was long overdue, but now we have the advantage of the state-of-the-art facility that will better serve our membership for future generations,” said Lynn.

This year’s LaVern and Nola McEntire Lineman Scholarship was awarded to Cody Tebbe of Highland. The one-year, \$1,500 scholarship will help to defray the costs to attend the lineworker’s school

conducted by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives in conjunction with Lincoln Land Community College in Springfield. 525HHS7-951A

Lynn also highlighted some infrastructure and right-of-way clearing projects the co-op is engaged in. The new Woodland Substation on Wigwam Hollow Road replaced one that had received serious water damage. When the substation was energized, a phasing project was also completed to allow power load to be moved from station to station without disruption of member service. A pole replacement schedule continues and the line clearance program, a joint program with Spoon River Electric Cooperative, is now in its eighth year. “Our goal is to be around the system every four years clearing trees and brush to prevent potential outages and to improve reliability to the fullest extent possible.” said Lynn.

During the treasurer’s report, Jeff Moore reported that the co-op saw \$359,126 in operating margins for the year.

During the meeting, Robert Dwyer of Roseville, and Steve Lynn and Jerry Riggins, both from Macomb, were re-elected to the co-op’s board of directors, which demonstrates the “democratic member control” cooperative principle.

## 2015 Annual Meeting Board Director Elections

**M**cDonough Power is a democratically controlled electric cooperative and the Annual Meeting offers members an opportunity to vote on candidates to represent them. At this year’s meeting, three incumbents were re-elected to serve. In the photograph from left to right are



Bob Dwyer of Roseville representing District 8, Jerry Riggins of Macomb representing District 2 and Steve Lynn of Macomb representing District 5.

# Membership matters

By Meghaan Evans

October is National Cooperative Month, and for the many different types of co-ops in the U.S., it's the time of year to celebrate what membership truly means. You could be a member of a lot of different places a gym, a 4-H club, a food of the month club the list goes on and on! But what makes being a member of a co-op different?

The simple answer to that question is that when you are a member of a co-op, you are also an owner. You own a stake in our business, and just like any stakeholder, there are many benefits to your membership. As a member of

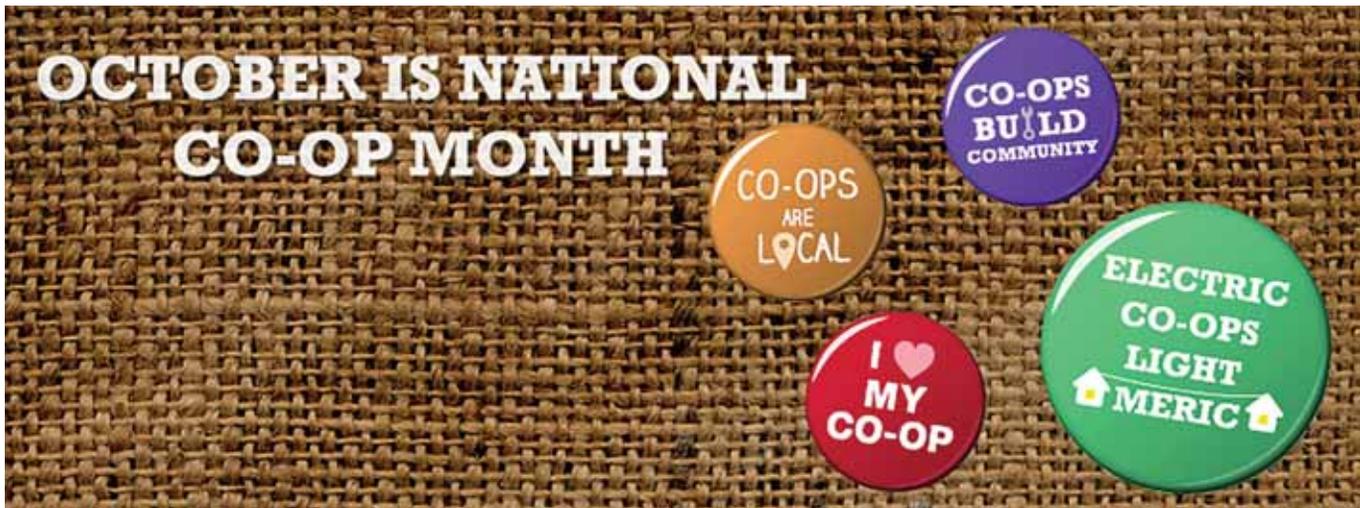
McDonough Power Cooperative, you have a say in the representatives who are elected to serve on the co-op's board of directors. You have an opportunity to make your voice heard every year at our Annual Meeting. You get a say on policy issues your electric cooperative supports or opposes. You can even help to determine how your profits are redistributed.

Our bottom line is providing you with safe, reliable and affordable electricity. Sure, we have to think about expenses, overhead and other aspects of daily business, but when we have a little left over, we send it right back to you.

And returning capital credits to you is a major part of why being a co-op member matters. 5329D3-252A

As your local electric co-op, we get to be a part of this community. When we think about membership, we think about all of the ways we can give back to you, our members and that's what matters most to us.

*Meghaan Evans writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va. based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.*



## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Don't let vampires suck the life out of your energy efficiency efforts! Unplugging unused electronics – otherwise known as “energy vampires” – can save you as much as 10 percent on your electric bill.

**Source: U.S. Department of Energy**



## 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.

# Operation Round Up® Begins in November

The membership voted at the Annual Meeting on August 27 to proceed with the Operation Round Up program, which will launch with the bill received in November 2015.

## What is Operation Round Up®?

It's a charitable program unique to electric cooperatives designed to provide financial assistance to local school programs, philanthropic groups, non-profit organizations, rescue squads, volunteer fire departments and other deserving causes that benefit members within McDonough Power's service area.

McDonough Power will "round up" your monthly electric bill to the next whole dollar. For example, a bill amount of \$65.48 would be rounded up to \$66.00. The additional 52 cents would be your Operation Round Up contribution for that month.

The concept behind the program extends the principle on which electric co-ops were built over 75 years ago neighbor helping neighbor to benefit the communities in which we live and work. Donations are only a few cents a month and average about \$6 to \$12 a year. It's small change, but it delivers big benefits to local community and charitable organizations.

## How Donations Are Collected

Because donations are automatically collected through your monthly electric bill and will show as a separate line item, it's easy to contribute on a regular basis. You can track your tax-deductible Operation Round Up donations by simply keeping the top portion of your bill.

## Who Administers the Funds?

The small change you contribute to Operation Round Up is deposited

into McDonough Power Cooperative Cares account. An independent, volunteer Trust Board consisting of McDonough Power members will carefully review grant applications and determine who receives funding. Trust Board members volunteer their time, and except for optional mileage reimbursement, receive no pay or compensation for serving on the board.

## Who will benefit from Operation Round Up®?

The program can help replenish food supplies for local food pantries, help support senior citizen hospice programs, purchase supplies and equipment for rural fire departments and emergency response services, provide funds for community programs and help children of all ages by supporting community youth activities and school programs. The funds will not be used to pay members bills, nor will they be used for political purposes.

Electric cooperatives across the United States have been offering this program since 1989 to help co-op consumers reach out to worthy causes in the community and work together to help others.

We will begin taking grant applications in 2016. Be watching our various media outlets – Illinois Country Living, [www.mcdonoughpower.com](http://www.mcdonoughpower.com), Facebook and local newspapers for details on where your donations are going.

## How to Participate

If you wish to participate in the program do nothing and you will automatically be enrolled. Beginning



November 2015, your contribution will be automatically included on your bills.

If you DO NOT wish to participate (and have not let us know), please contact the office to opt out. You will be able to opt in or out at any time.

No matter how you pay your bill by check, automatic draft or online through eBill – should you want to contribute more than the "rounded up" amount during the year, you can make an additional contribution by writing a separate check made out to McDonough Power Cooperative Cares and mailing it to McDonough Power. 536A1-202B

## When your small change can make a BIG difference

For less than \$1 a month, you can make a difference in someone's life. It may seem like small change, and it is, but when you multiply that by thousands of McDonough Power members participating in Operation Round Up, it makes a big difference.

You might have questions about Operation Round Up. We have some answers. If you need any further information than what is provided, please contact us at 309-833-2101 or check out our website at [www.mcdonoughpower.com](http://www.mcdonoughpower.com).