



*Mike Smith  
President and CEO*

## 85th Annual Meeting of Members

The aroma of grilled hot dogs and pork chops filled the air the evening of Aug. 17 as McDonough Power Cooperative hosted its members for the co-op's 85th Annual Meeting of Members. Held at The Crossing church, members enjoyed supper, live music by Aaron Lee and a "Top Gun" movie theme. All registered members received a \$10 bill credit on their September energy bill and a giveaway item at the door.

After Boy Scout Troop #315 presented the colors and led the pledge of allegiance, Board Chairman Walt Lewis called the business meeting to order and acknowledged a quorum was reached.

During Lewis' remarks, he stated, "One of our goals over the last several years was to improve reliability to our members. Each year, the number of outage minutes to each member and the number of members affected are trending lower. 5425C5A-254A Much of this has to do with our partnership with Spoon River Electric Cooperative and their right-of-way work throughout our service territory."

Lewis then discussed the co-op's community involvement. "Through our Operation Round-Up program and our partnership with CoBank's Sharing Success program, McDonough Power has returned more than \$51,000 back to area organizations since our annual meeting just one year ago."

Operation Round-Up is funded by McDonough Power members who round up their monthly bill to the nearest dollar to donate to the fund. The Sharing Success



*During the meeting, Walt Lewis, Steve Hall and Mike Cox were re-elected to the board of directors.*

program is funded by a \$10,000 matching grant from one of the co-op's primary lenders, CoBank.

Lewis also announced that the board voted to retire \$477,052 of patronage capital to be returned to members who had service 1999-2001. Those members should expect a refund check in the mail. Since 2007, McDonough Power has returned nearly \$4.9 million back to its members.

"There is an old saying in the cooperative world that says, 'Cooperatives were born in politics and will die in politics,'" McDonough Power President/CEO Mike Smith began in his address to the membership. "It is true that cooperatives, like McDonough Power, began with FDR's Rural Electrification Act in 1935."

"As for the dying in politics part of that statement? I believe it means that political legislation can dictate the rules of how utilities operate from the power plant all the way to each of our member's meters. Let me be clear, cooperatives like McDonough Power are thriving and built

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## 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.



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## “Annual Meeting” continued from 18A

with a nonprofit business model that is built to last, and we fully plan to be around another 85 years!”

The problem McDonough Power is facing? Power supply and how energy is generated, which is the effect of Illinois’ legislative ruling to close Prairie State Power Campus by 2045. Smith welcomed Eric Hobbie, president/CEO of Prairie Power Inc. to the stage where together they discussed strategic plans to prepare co-op members for the changing times.

Following Smith’s CEO address, he welcomed Rachel Hood, the 2022-23 Illinois Association FFA State President to the stage. Rachel, a 2022 graduate of Rushville-Industry High School and daughter of Steve and Lisa Hood, stole the

show – illustrating her FFA journey and describing what is on her agenda for the year ahead.

Smith also announced the LaVern and Nola McEntire Memorial Lineworker’s Scholarship. LaVern was a former lineman at McDonough Power and created the scholarship fund. This year, Nolan Ernst of Nokomis was recognized as this year’s recipient. He will attend the lineworker school at Lincoln Land Community College in Springfield.

During the meeting, an election was held, and three members were re-elected to new three-year terms to the co-op’s board of directors. They include Mike Cox, District 1; Walt Lewis, District 3; and Steve Hall, District 7.

## It pays to attend your annual meeting!

Each member received a \$10 bill credit and an attendance gift just for registering. **12128D3-1059B** A few who stayed for the business meeting won additional prizes, including Macomb Area Chamber of Commerce Bucks, Casey’s Gas Cards, McDonough Power Bill Credits and a hot air balloon ride.

Congratulations to the following:

- Larry Moore
- Harold Miller
- William Sibley
- Eloise Swisher
- James Lutz
- Mary Chapin
- Charles Lewis

- Long Farm
- Henry Richardson
- Janice Reineke
- Duane Hart
- Richard Smart
- Gary Barr
- Hire Township Hall
- Hutchins Legacy Farms
- Paschal Family Farm

Additionally, three GRAND PRIZE winners were awarded \$200 McDonough Power Bill Credits!

- Kenneth Kessler
- Mark Garrett
- Melanie Allen



# Operation Round-Up gives back

Giving back is the cooperative way! More than \$165,000 has been given back to the communities we serve since the inception of the program in 2016. Recently, a little over \$7,000 was awarded to six area organizations who benefit our communities, thanks to our members who contribute less than \$12 per year. Those benefiting from this round of funding include:



**Buchanan Center for the Arts** received \$2,500 for their AMUSE: Art Mobilized Under Science & Energy project. The AMUSE Art Cart is a mobile trailer that will be utilized to provide art instruction throughout Warren County. Funds from the grant will be used to purchase supplies and materials for the classes and to cover the instructor fees.



**Blandinsville-Hire District Library** received \$200 for their Recycled Bench Project, an initiative to teach the value of recycling to summer reading program participants as well as the community. Read all about the “Save the Planet: One Book and One Kid at a Time” on the library’s Facebook page.



**Big Brothers Big Sisters of McDonough County** was granted \$1,200, which will give four matches the opportunity to visit the Chicago Field Museum. The trip will allow the matches the opportunity to experience the diverse cultural and educational atmosphere that they typically would not have the means to. **8120SL39-864C** The goal of the trip is to inspire both mentors and mentees to work toward furthering a positive mentoring relationship.



**Vermont Christian Church** is a little closer to purchasing new playground equipment with a \$1,500 grant. The new set will replace worn-out equipment that has been well-loved for nearly 20 years by the entire community. They are still working toward their goal to fund the entire project. If you would like to make a donation toward the renovation of the playground at the Vermont Christian Church, please call Diane Martinez at the church office at 309-784-5621.

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**St. Paul School** received \$345.46 to add flexible seating in Mrs. Swedell’s first-grade classroom. Research shows that students can focus and do their best when they are comfortable, and with 26-plus little busybodies this school year, this is a necessity.



**Loving Bottoms Diaper Bank** will keep warm this winter with a \$1,450 grant. Funds will be applied towards the cost of a heating unit for their warehouse in Galesburg where volunteers sort, package and distribute orders going out to their partner agencies.



Operation Round-Up funds are administered by nine member-volunteer trustees. These funds are available to tax-exempt organizations within the McDonough Power Cooperative service territory encompassing portions of Fulton, Hancock, Henderson, Knox, McDonough, Schuyler and Fulton counties. For more information or to download an application form, visit [mcdonoughpower.com](http://mcdonoughpower.com). The next entry deadline is Oct. 3, 2022.

## What would you do if you encountered a downed power line?

While typically not an everyday occurrence, overhead power lines, padmount transformers (green boxes) or other electrical equipment can become damaged due to storms, fires, car accidents, animal interference or from a car slipping off the road, for example.

(Spoiler alert: Do not do any of these things.) If you were in an accident involving a downed overhead power line, would you get out of the car and run? If you saw a car accident involving a downed line or damaged green box, would you run to the scene to help? If you saw a downed line across a road, would you approach it or try to move it?

Any of these actions can cause serious injury or electrocution (death). Downed lines and other damaged

equipment can energize the ground, nearby people and objects. Never go near a downed power line or try to move it with an object. Electricity can jump from a wire or object to you to find the quickest path to ground.

The safest place to be after an accident involving a downed power line is inside your vehicle or cab. Unless your vehicle is on fire or giving off smoke, here is what you should do:

1. Stay inside your vehicle or cab.
2. Call 9-1-1 and report that there are downed or damaged power lines.
3. Try to remain calm.
4. Wait for the utility crew to arrive to de-energize the power.
5. Do not get out until someone from the utility says it is safe to do so.

If you must get out of the vehicle because it is on fire, cross your arms over your chest and make a clean, solid jump out, then intentionally hop with your feet together as far away as you can. If you are unable to make solid hops, shuffle with your feet close together.

When you exit, do not touch the vehicle and the ground at the same time. You could become electricity’s path to ground from touch potential (touching something energized and the ground at the same time). **6326WW12-750B**

Hopping helps avoid step potential (placing each foot at a different voltage). When electricity escapes into the ground, it is likened to ripples in a pond, with each ripple representing a different voltage.

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