



Mike Smith
President and CEO



McDonough Power holds 2023 Annual Meeting of Members

McDonough Power Cooperative hosted its members for the co-op's 2023 Annual Meeting of Members, where cooperative members enjoyed pork chops and hot dogs prepared by the Knights of Columbus and served by the Clever Clovers 4-H group, as well as live music by JustUs. All registered members received a \$10 bill credit on their September energy bill. **424B7-574C**

After Boy Scout Troop #315 presented the colors and led the Pledge of Allegiance, Board Chairman Walt Lewis welcomed members. He then called the business meeting to order and acknowledged a quorum was reached.

Lewis reiterated the words of Treasurer Mike Cox. "We are still operating from a strong financial position despite an increase in our power supply cost last year of over 10% from the previous year." He assured members that the Cooperative's goal continues to be keeping the cost of power as affordable as possible.

He also updated members on the co-op's continued commitment to community

through Operation Round Up. "Since the program began in 2016, over 100 local organizations have benefited from the generosity of our members," he said. The program is funded by McDonough Power members who round up their monthly bill to the nearest dollar to donate to the fund.

Lewis then mentioned the Sharing Success program, which is funded by a \$10,000 matching grant from one of the co-op's primary lenders, CoBank. Recipients of donations this year include Warren and McDonough County food banks, Western Illinois Museum and the cooperative's Coats for Kids program. "Neighbor helping neighbor is what the cooperative model is all about," he said. Lewis also announced that the board voted to retire just under \$370,000 in capital credits this year. Those members should expect a refund check in the mail.

He also addressed the storm that recently affected every part of the Cooperative's service area. "We always appreciate all of your patience during these



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Courtney Chandler

Bob Dwyer

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Annual Meeting continued from 18A

major events, and we will always do our best to get service back to you. We were able to bring additional crews to assist in the recovery efforts and each worked daylight to dark with our crews."

McDonough Power President/CEO Mike Smith was next to take the stage. "As our chairman mentioned earlier, we received the largest increase in wholesale power cost that I have seen in my 16-year tenure," he said. "The primary drivers in that increase are the price volatility of natural gas, the decrease in base load generation in Illinois and overall price inflation."

Smith added that the price volatility of natural gas is driven by market forces that are not always visible. "Pipeline constraints also play a role. The volatility of natural gas prices will continue to play a large role in electricity prices, because we are using much more of it than ever before to generate electricity as coal continues to be phased out in Illinois," he said. "Our goal has been and will always be to reach a balance of

affordability with the greatest reliability possible." **435FN16-1212C**

Smith also discussed the LaVern and Nola McEntire Memorial Lineworker's Scholarship. LaVern "Mac" was a former lineman at McDonough Power and created the scholarship fund. This year, Deaven Malott of Astoria was recognized as the 2023 recipient. He will attend the lineworker school at Lincoln Land Community College, 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 (left to right) Courtney Chandler, District 9; Jeff Moore, District 6; and David Lueck, District 4.

Everyone that attends is a winner – receiving a \$10 attendance credit and a small gift.

Staying for the business meeting increases your chances of winning big. Congratulations to those who won bill credits and Macomb Area Chamber bucks in our prize drawing!

Alicia McMillan
Anna Galbraith
Carl Pershing
Carolyn Collins
Charles Lewis
Daniel Voorhis
Harold Thompson

Janice Reineke
Kendall Herron
Long Farm
Lonnie Cavett
Lorena Saurbaugh
Marion Cornelius
Richard Krohe

Ron Graham
Stan Dixon
Stephen Bacon
Stephen Gregory
Steve Arnold
Tim Fross
Walter Farms

Congrats to our Grand Prize winners – each won a \$200 bill credit!

- Paschal Family Farm
- Robert Andersen
- St. Patrick Church



Share information that saves lives during Teen Driver Safety Week

Eight people die in distracted-related crashes on American roads each day, according to the National Safety Council (NSC). National Teen Driver Safety Week is observed the third week of each October (Oct. 15-21, 2023), which is a good time to talk to the teens in your life about safety on the open road, including the hazards of distracted driving and downed power lines.



Distracted driving

There were 3,522 people killed by distracted driving in 2021*, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Lead by example and, as the NSC touts, "Just Drive."

Texting while driving is the most alarming distraction behind the wheel, since sending or reading a text takes your eyes off the road for approximately 5 seconds. Other distractions include sifting through music, checking social media, using navigation, eating, talking on the phone, taking selfies, drinking a beverage or using an app.

Distracted driving is preventable. Teens and adults alike can follow these five easy tips to help them concentrate on just driving:

1. That text can wait. Do not text while driving.
2. Make responding less tempting by blocking texts while behind the wheel.
3. Do not eat while you drive.
4. Rely on playlists instead of searching for music.
5. Set up navigation before you leave or have a passenger navigate.

Downed power lines

Although no one wants to think about teens being in car accidents, it does happen. Severe storms can damage utility equipment, such as power lines/ poles and padmount transformers (green boxes). Have discussions with teens about what to do if there is a downed power line or damaged equipment.

Here is how the ground or objects can become energized without any visual indication:

- The energy spreads like ripples on a pond. **8117A7-858C**
- If you walk or run from one voltage "ripple" to another, your feet experience a difference in voltage (this is called step potential).
- If you touch something at one voltage and step on or touch something at a different voltage, your hands (or your hand and foot) experience a difference in voltage (called touch potential).
- Your body becomes electricity's path to ground when electrical current enters your body at one point and exits at another.

What to do

If you are in a car accident, stay inside your vehicle, call 911 and report that there is damaged electric utility equipment. If you are a bystander, do not approach the scene to help. Stay at least 50 feet away and do not lean on or touch anything.

Downed lines or other damaged utility equipment can look lifeless and harmless and still be live. Downed lines and other damaged electrical apparatuses do not have to be sparking, moving, sizzling or giving off flames to be energized.

Learn other electrical safety tips at SafeElectricity.org.

*2022 statistics not available as of the writing of this article.

4 SAFETY TIPS

TEEN DRIVERS NEED TO KNOW



1 THAT TEXT CAN WAIT

When texting while driving, the shortest amount of time a person takes his or her eyes off the road is five seconds. At 55 mph, that is like driving the length of a football field with your eyes closed.

2 don't get out

If you are in a car accident involving a power line or padmount transformer ("green box"), stay inside the vehicle and call 9-1-1. Unless the car is on fire or giving off smoke, do not get out. If there is a fire, make a solid jump from the vehicle without touching it and hop with your feet together as far away as you can.

3 respect work zones

One work zone crash occurs every 5.4 minutes. Remind teen drivers to consider anyone doing their job in or near the road as someone they know and love. Encourage them to move over and slow down for workers.

4 Don't Drive Distracted

Texting is not the only form of distracted driving. Driving and doing anything else is multitasking. Eight deaths occur EVERY DAY due to drivers who drive distracted.

Learn more: [Safe Electricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org)

**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.

Playing it safe online

In today's world, most of us don't leave the front door unlocked. We protect our homes, loved ones and valuables from intruders with locks, alarms and other security measures. Cybersecurity is no different. It's the practice of protecting other valuables such as your identity, banking and health records and other sensitive information from digital attacks and theft.

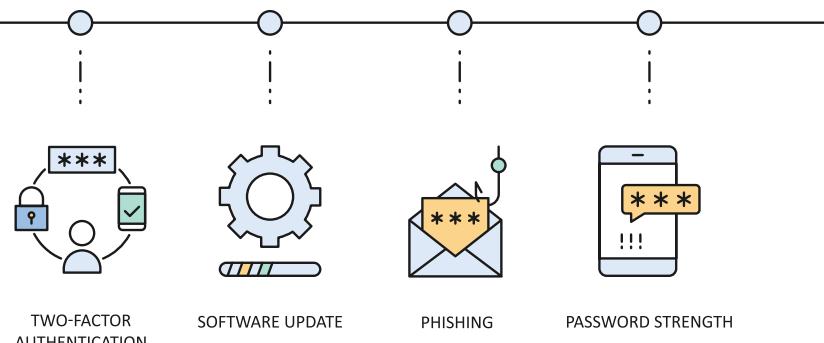
In addition to pumpkin-spice lattes, crisper air and Halloween festivities, October is the time of year we recognize Cybersecurity Awareness Month. While taking necessary steps to protect our personal information is a year-round practice, at McDonough Power Cooperative, we use this time to share helpful cybersecurity reminders.

Given our increased reliance on internet-connected devices and gadgets, this month, we'd like to share a few cybersecurity tips and let you know how McDonough Power is working to boost our own cybersecurity efforts.

According to the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency (CISA), an agency of the United States Department of Homeland Security that is responsible for strengthening cybersecurity and infrastructure protection, these are the four best ways to keep you and your family safe online. **7319D8-600C**

1. Implement multi-factor authentication (also known as two-step verification) on your accounts.

The additional layer of protection makes it much harder for criminals to access your information. Even if a hacker obtains your password, they may be unable to access your accounts if multi-step verification is enabled.



2. Update your software. This is one of the easiest ways to protect your personal data. When downloading a software update, make sure it's coming straight from the company that created it. Beware of fake pop-ups that request urgent downloads. Better yet, turn on automatic updates.

3. Think before you click. Most successful cyberattacks start with phishing emails. Don't take the bait when cyber criminals go phishing. Avoid emails (or texts) that look too good to be true, oddly urgent, poorly crafted or include unusual requests.

4. Create strong passwords, using long, unique and complex words or phrases. Consider using a password manager to save time, work across all devices, protect your identity and notify you of potential phishing websites.

stays online and that it's difficult (if not impossible) to take back. Just as you would guard your money or valuables, children need to learn to guard their personal information, especially on social networks. As a parent or guardian, help your children learn about and use the privacy and security settings on social networks and gaming sites.

Keeping the electric grid and your data secure

We're doing our share on the cyber front. Part of offering excellent service is keeping that service secure and reliable. For McDonough Power, reliability means repairing wear-and-tear, upgrading our equipment to withstand storms and severe weather, and using technology and best practices to keep our system secure from cybersecurity issues.

We also work together with co-ops across the country to develop new technologies and infrastructure, learn from each other and keep the grid's network secure.

While we can't stop a storm or predict every disruption, as a co-op, we do everything we can to keep the lights on and our members protected. Because if we all do our part, our interconnected world will be safer and more secure for everyone.

For the young people in your household

Just as you would talk with your children about safety in the physical world, discuss ways to stay safe online. Help them understand the public nature of the internet. Young people need to know early on that what is shared online

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



Did you know using your dishwasher is more energy efficient than washing a load of dishes by hand? To maximize efficiency, wash full loads in the dishwasher and don't block the arms or other parts that move while the appliance is in use.

For additional savings, turn on the "air dry" setting instead of using the "heat dry" setting and use a rinse aid to help dishes dry faster without spotting and streaking. *Source: Dept. of Energy*