



**Mike Smith**  
President and CEO

## McDonough Power Cooperative Operation Round Up program awards \$4,186

Through Operation Round Up, participating cooperative members' bills are rounded to the next whole dollar. That extra change rolls into a charitable fund to support local organizations. Grants are awarded quarterly. **6226C9-150C**

Recipients of the latest round of funding include Shepherd's Gate Clothes Closet and Western Illinois University Infant and Preschool Center.

Under the umbrella of Macomb Foursquare Church, Shepherd's Gate Clothes Closet received \$1,500 towards their mission: new socks and underwear. According to Shepherd's Gate Director Rhonda Brown, "The Clothes Closet has exploded in the last year and is in constant need of underwear and socks." The closet provides donated clothing and accessories free of charge to families in need. Donated undergarments are not always in the best condition and can't be passed on. "In October of 2023 we served more than 600 people in need, and we are blessed to be able to offer new socks and underwear to them," stated Brown.

their Infant and Preschool Center. Funds from the grant will be used to provide two outdoor canopies in their outdoor classroom, a signature feature of the WIU Infant and Preschool Center. The outdoor classroom hosts many activities and learning experiences for children including rest time and an eating area. Lori Smith Akon, assistant professor in the Health Sciences Department, stated, "The center is part of a global program called "1,000 hours outside," and the major goal is to help encourage outdoor time and develop a love for spending time outdoors, rather than being consumed by electronic screens." Preschool Director Sherri Moon is ecstatic about the shade canopies and looks forward to the opportunities for increased outdoor time — whether it's rocking babies or doing science and art projects with the toddlers.

"Our local communities benefit when we work together and we are proud to support these two local organizations," said Kelly Hamm, McDonough Power energy services manager and Operation Round Up program coordinator.

Since 2016, McDonough Power Cooperative members have invested nearly \$197,000 back into their local communities through Operation Round Up. The funds are awarded to organizations that make a direct impact in the communities of McDonough Power members. The next grant application deadline is April 1, 2024. For more information, visit [mcdonoughpower.com](http://mcdonoughpower.com).



The Western Illinois University Foundation received \$2,686 on behalf of



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## A balanced team for reliability

The winningest basketball teams in history are ones that are consistent and have players with varying abilities. Some are better at shooting three-pointers; some are best at defense. Having a balanced mix of skills makes the team a powerhouse on the court. The way to keep electricity reliable is a bit like that, too.

The power team first requires a foundation of consistent sources that can be put in the game any time they're needed. Having enough "always available" fuel sources like natural gas and coal can ensure consistent power generation.

Just like a team needs different players for different situations, our power grid requires multiple sources to keep the grid running. Relying solely on one player to win every game is not an effective strategy — if they get injured, you'll likely lose. Similarly, using a single fuel source for electricity generation poses a significant risk to energy reliability. Natural disasters, geopolitical tensions or unforeseen disruptions can severely impact the supply chain of a particular fuel. A diverse mix of energy sources acts as a safeguard, ensuring that the grid remains operational even in the face of unexpected challenges.

A diverse energy mix also enhances grid flexibility by accommodating the intermittent nature of renewable energy sources like solar and wind. Think of solar power like a team's inconsistent three-point shooter. It's awesome when the sun is shining bright, but what if it's nighttime

or a cloudy day? That's where the other players, like wind, hydro, nuclear, natural gas and coal, can step up and keep the team scoring.

Diverse fuel sources contribute to the stability and reliability of the electric grid. The different sources have varying characteristics, including generation patterns, responsiveness and storage capabilities. This diversity allows for a more balanced and resilient energy system that can adapt to fluctuating demand and unforeseen circumstances. Having a mix of these energy sources is like having a team with different skills to handle various situations and scenarios. **5329A9A-252A**

A diverse set of energy sources is essential, but that's not the only thing we need to have reliable electricity — or a winning team. Basketball teams are always trying out new plays or training rookies to create a versatile lineup. Similarly, electric cooperatives are constantly innovating to maintain reliability for tomorrow, but creating new ways to make our power sources more efficient and reliable takes time, money and advances in technology that aren't necessarily ready yet.

As we continue to work on the innovations of tomorrow, the key to keeping our electricity reliable right now is ensuring a diverse "team" of fuels. Each one brings something special to the table, and together, they make sure we have the power we need, whenever we need it.

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Lengthen the life of your clothes dryer with regular cleaning. Clean the lint filter after every load, which improves air circulation and safety. Check the lint trap opening and use a vacuum to remove any lint that's fallen inside the opening.

If you use dryer sheets, check the lint filter for residue buildup. Remove any residue with hot water and a nylon brush or toothbrush. Over time, dryer sheets can leave a film on the filter, which can affect the performance of the motor.





# Youth Tour, a decades-long tradition

In June 2024, more than 1,800 youth delegates representing electric and telephone cooperatives from across the nation will converge in Washington, D.C., for Youth Tour, an annual tradition that has spanned 60 years.

“Youth Tour is a great opportunity that changes high school students’ lives,” said Kelly Hamm, Youth Tour coordinator for McDonough Power Cooperative. “After touring our nation’s capital, meeting congressional representatives and learning firsthand how our government works, they return home with valuable knowledge that helps prepare them for the future and friendships that will last a lifetime.”

During the week-long trip, students will have the opportunity to visit Capitol Hill and meet with their elected officials, and visit historical and cultural sites including Gettysburg, Arlington National Cemetery, the Supreme Court, memorials and museums.

Youth Tour is rooted in politics. It was born from a speech at the 1957 National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) annual meeting by Texas Senator Lyndon B. Johnson, who later became president. “If one thing comes out of this meeting, it will be sending youngsters to the national capital where they can actually see what the flag stands for and represents,” he said.

Illinois electric cooperatives did just that and began sending students to Washington, D.C., in 1959. In 1964, NRECA began to coordinate Youth Tour as the national event that it is today. Electric and telephone cooperatives of Illinois are still participating in this character-building experience.

Youth Tour in Illinois begins on Youth Day. 1974 marked the first annual Illinois Electric and Telephone Cooperatives Youth Day, and ever since, co-ops across the state have sent high school students within their service territories to Springfield to meet their elected officials, tour the city and learn more about the cooperative program.

McDonough Power Cooperative sponsors two students from each high school within its service area on an



all-expense-paid trip to Springfield on March 20, 2024, in Springfield. Each year, more than 300 students across Illinois get an up-close look at state government in action.

The annual Youth Tour occurs every June. This year, selected participants will board buses in Springfield on June 14 and will return on June 21. McDonough Power will sponsor two of these students on the weeklong, all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C.

These students will join dozens of others from across the state and create lifelong friendships along the way. The Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives coordinates the daily planning for all events and sites of interest for the tour, which travels via two chartered buses.

“Youth Tour is important to the electric and telephone cooperatives of Illinois, because educated citizens are better citizens,” Hamm explained. “It familiarizes students with the historic and political environment of our nation’s capital, and visits with elected officials give them a better understanding of government.” **6210A2-108B**

During the trip, students have the opportunity to be selected to

represent Illinois on the NRECA Youth Leadership Council (YLC). One student from each state is selected by their peers to represent the state during Youth Tour and at NRECA’s annual meeting. This role helps to build leadership and public speaking skills, as well as develop life-long friendships with representatives from other states.

While we’ve already worked with each school to select participants for Youth Day in Springfield, we would like to let everyone know that even if a student attends Youth Day but is not selected for the trip to Washington, D.C., there is still a chance to go. The Willie Wiredhand Program, named after the electric cooperative mascot, gives students another opportunity. It allows students to pay for the trip on their own. There is a “toolbox” available to help raise the funds needed to participate, which includes information on pricing, suggestions on community fundraising, deadlines, etc. Go to [aiec.coop/www](http://aiec.coop/www) to learn more.

For more information about the trip, go to [aiec.coop/youth-programs/youth-to-washington-tour](http://aiec.coop/youth-programs/youth-to-washington-tour). To follow the trip each year, visit the Illinois Youth Tour Facebook page at [facebook.com/ILYouthTour](https://facebook.com/ILYouthTour).

# Play it **SAFE** around **POWER** **LINES**



**D**igging holes, climbing trees, flying kites — outdoor play often creates beautiful childhood memories. Before hitting the great outdoors, though, discuss electrical safety with your children.

## Flying fun

While flying kites, model airplanes, remote-control flying toys and drones, stay in large, open areas (such as parks or fields), far away from power lines. If an item gets caught in a power line, teach children to never try to retrieve it. Instead, an adult should call their electric utility for help.



## General outdoor safety tips

Other important safety guidelines for kids and adults alike include:

- Never throw objects at power lines.
- Stay far away from downed, damaged or low-hanging power lines. An adult should call 911 to report a downed or damaged line.
- Be cautious after a severe storm that caused a power outage. Downed power lines could be hidden under water, snow or storm debris. Wait to go outside until power has been restored. **10312C8-354A**
- Do not climb, sit or play on pad-mount transformers (green boxes).
- Do not climb trees that have overhead power lines near or running through them.

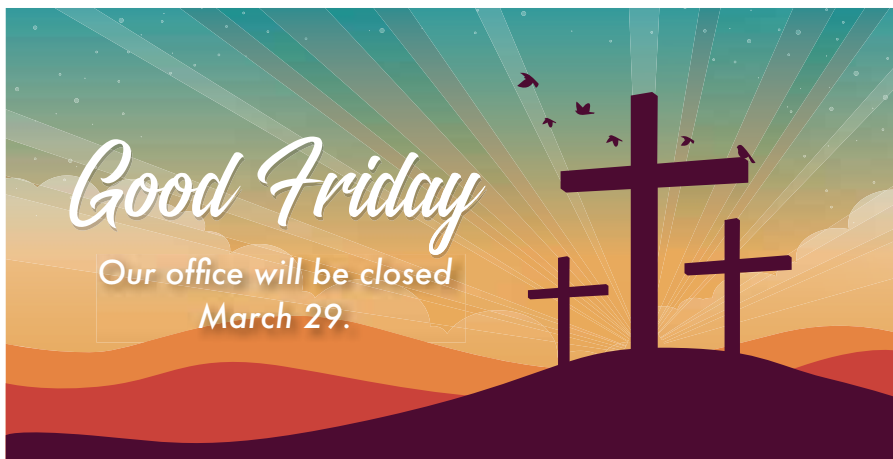
## Poolside

When spending time by the pool, look overhead when using pool skimmers or other long objects to be sure

you are not getting close to an overhead power line. If you are swimming and feel a prickly or tingling sensation, do not stay in the pool. There could be a stray electric current from a downed power line or a damaged electrical device. Also, never play in a flooded street or ditch; a downed power line could be hidden by the water and fallen debris.

## Prevention is key

Electric shock and injuries are often preventable. Empower your family with electrical safety knowledge to avoid preventable electric injuries. For more information about electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).



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