

# The Wire

McDonough Power Cooperative • Macomb, Illinois 61455



**Mike Smith**  
President and CEO



## Annual Meeting 2024

### Powerful Past Future Focused

McDonough Power Cooperative hosted its members Wednesday, Aug. 7 at The Crossing in Macomb for the co-op's 2024 Annual Meeting of Members, themed "Powerful Past — Future Focused." Cooperative members enjoyed pork chops and hot dogs grilled by the Macomb Bomber Boosters and served by the Scotland Clever Clovers 4-H Club, as well as a live performance by the Troublesome Ridge Bluegrass Band. All registered members received a gift and a \$10 bill credit.

Board Chairman Walt Lewis opened the meeting by thanking attendees for their participation and proceeded with a moment of reflection led by Mike Smith and Boy Scout Troop #315, who presented the colors and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Steve Hall, Secretary of the Board, read the Official Notice of the Meeting, which included the minutes from the 2023 Annual Meeting. The minutes were approved without opposition. Treasurer Mike Cox presented the Treasurer's Report, highlighting a clean audit of 2023 and the cooperative's financial health. The report was approved by the membership. **539JN2-266B**

Lisa Hood, Nominating Committee Chair, then reported to audience members that the Nominating Committee met June 5 to nominate candidates for election to the board at the Annual Meeting. Those nominees included Jennifer Emerick (District 2), Ryan Litchfield (District 5) and Robert Dwyer (District 8). Also seeking consideration were Brandon Cousins (District 2), Bryson Bedwell (District 2) and Crystal Dobbs (District 5).

Bylaw changes and the election of directors were next on the evening's agenda, conducted by Attorney John D. McMillan. Bylaw amendments proposed addressed the need for a distinction between cash and non-cash margins regarding the refund of capital credits. The bylaw change was approved by the membership, and Dwyer was reelected for a 3-year term upon unanimous vote while the votes for districts 2 and 5 were tabulated.

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Office hours:  
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## DIRECTORS

Walt Lewis, Chairman

David Lueck, Vice Chairman

Mike Cox, Treasurer

Steve Hall, Secretary

Courtney Chandler

Bob Dwyer

Ryan Litchfield

Jeff Moore

Bryson Bedwell

John D. McMillan, Attorney

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# Go above and beyond for a safe harvest

**M**odern farming often relies on data and equipment with GPS and auto-guidance systems. However, even with these modern conveniences, farm workers must remain vigilant. That's because farming is considered one of the most dangerous jobs.

Massive machinery is indispensable to farming, but the same impressive size, height and extensions make them particularly vulnerable to contacting power lines. That's why staying alert, focused and knowledgeable about potential hazards and safety procedures is crucial.

During a busy harvest season, the familiar sights around the farm can easily fade into the background, and farm workers can overlook the power lines overhead. However, failing to notice them can lead to deadly accidents.

### 360-degree awareness

Awareness of your surroundings — around, above and below — and planning safe equipment routes can significantly reduce the risk of accidents. Even with GPS and auto-steering, it's imperative that farm workers keep a close eye on the equipment's location and be ready to take action if necessary. **328A3-534C**

Exposed underground powerlines, defective wiring in farm buildings and extension cords are also hazards. Grain bins can pose a potential danger as well. The National Electrical Safety Code requires power lines to be at least 18 feet above the highest point on any grain bin with which portable augers or other portable filling equipment are used. If you plan to install new grain bins or you're concerned about the proximity of power lines to existing grain bins, contact us at 309-833-2101.

### Smart harvest safety tips

To ensure a safer harvest season, [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org)

recommends the following tips to avoid electrical accidents on the farm:

- **Exercise caution near power lines.** Be careful when raising augers or the bed of grain trucks around power lines.
- **Use spotters when operating large machinery near power lines.** Ensure the spotters do not touch the machinery while it is moving near power lines.
- **Lower equipment extensions, portable augers or elevators before moving or transporting equipment.** Do not raise equipment, such as ladders, poles or rods into power lines. Remember that nonmetallic materials like lumber, tree limbs, ropes and hay can conduct electricity, especially when damp, dusty or dirty.
- **Never attempt to raise or move power lines to clear a path.** Doing so could result in electric shock or death.
- **Avoid using metal poles inside bins.** Don't use metal poles to break up bridged grain inside or around bins.
- **Hire qualified electricians.** Ensure that qualified electricians handle work on drying equipment and other farm electrical systems.

While rare, the only reason to exit equipment that has come into contact with overhead lines is if the equipment is on fire. However, if it happens, jump off the equipment with your feet together and without touching the machinery and the ground at the same time. Then, still keeping your feet together, hop to safety as you leave the area.

## 5 Tips for a Safe Harvest

Electrical safety during harvest season requires vigilance and proactive measures. Follow these tips to reduce the risk of electrical accidents.

1. Maintain at least a 10-foot distance from power lines when operating equipment like grain augers, elevators and other tall machinery.
2. Use a spotter to navigate safely around power lines and other electrical equipment.
3. Ensure all farm workers are trained on electrical safety procedures.
4. Regularly inspect all electrical equipment and machinery for signs of wear and damage.
5. Keep first aid kits and emergency contact numbers in an easily accessible location.



# Operation Round-Up grants \$6,500 in the community



**G**iving back to the community is one of our cooperative principles. Thanks to our generous members who elect to round up their bill each month, we're able to help in big ways. This quarter, four grants were awarded to organizations that simply make our community better. Those lucky recipients include:

## ■ **Youth for Christ - Western Illinois - \$2,000 - Free Pancake Breakfast**

Youth for Christ provides a free pancake and donut breakfast to teenagers on Macomb High School late start days — approximately 16 times per year. Their goal is to provide a free meal for all Macomb teens in a safe and fun environment.

## ■ **Mt. Calvary Church of God in Christ - \$2,000 - Summer Lunch Program**

Mt. Calvary provides hot meals to individuals facing food

insecurity. Their primary focus is serving youth; however, they are committed to welcoming parents of the children they serve, unsheltered adults, and other individuals in need of a hot meal.

## ■ **University Baptist Church - \$2,000 - Macomb Personal Care Closet**

University Baptist found a niche need that was not being fulfilled in our community. They open their Care Closet two days a month to provide personal hygiene products and household cleaning supplies to those in need. **525HH14-951B**

## ■ **Buchanan Center for the Arts - \$500 - BCA Artist in Residence Program**

BCA Artist in Residence Program is a yearlong public art and education project designed to provide art experiences in rural spaces. The program includes the creation of a mural, gallery talks and art classes.

BCA is very involved in the community and in creating art in public spaces — be sure to check them out on the square in Monmouth.

If you have a charitable organization that serves the communities we live in, check us out online at [mcdonoughpower.com](http://mcdonoughpower.com) (scan the QR code) or stop in our office for an application packet. The deadline for the next round of funding is Monday, Oct. 7.



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Lewis followed with the Chairman's Report, sharing highlights from the past year, including financial recovery efforts for the 2023 derecho, successful financial audits, and the allocation of margins back to members. He also addressed the evening's bylaw changes. "The decision you made tonight on the bylaw change ... has an impact on the fiscal health of your cooperative," he said. "Our goal is to make sure that McDonough Power remains financially strong for decades to come."

Lewis also emphasized the co-op's commitment to community, through programs like Operation Round-Up and Sharing Success, which have provided significant funding to local initiatives. "Since 2016, we have awarded over \$200,000 in grants to nonprofit organizations in the communities we serve," he said. "This would not have been achievable without the generosity of [our members]." The program is funded by McDonough Power members who round up their monthly bill to the nearest dollar, donating the extra funds to the program.

President Mike Smith then took the stage, welcoming attendees and guests, presenting service awards and announcing scholarship and Youth Tour winners. He also thanked the directors who were stepping down for their many years of service. "I want to extend my appreciation to Jerry Riggins and Steve Lynn for their unwavering support of our employees and the McDonough Power membership," he said. "It has been an honor working alongside them."



Smith later addressed House Bill 5021, the "Municipal and Cooperative Electric Utility Planning and Transparency Act." "This legislation, if enacted, would fundamentally alter our cooperative's operations, impacting our commitment to reliability, affordability and safety," he explained. "Notably, it mandates renewable energy portfolio requirements that pose significant challenges given current energy realities. ... These changes threaten the cooperative model we've proudly upheld for

86 years — one that prioritizes member involvement and transparency."

Following his report, the results of the contested elections were announced. Bryson Bedwell (District 2) and Ryan Litchfield (District 5) were elected to 3-year terms. **11211D4-1054A**

The meeting adjourned following the drawing of prizes, including three grand prizes of \$250, for active members of the cooperative.

**CAR SHOW**

# COFFEE, CARS & COATS

A BENEFIT FOR MCDONOUGH POWER COOPERATIVE'S COATS FOR KIDS PROGRAM AND TO RECOGNIZE THE SERVICE OF OUR LINEMEN!

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Questions? **CHUCK LAIRD | 309.255.2877**

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**Member Prizes**

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