



**Mike Smith**  
President and CEO

## Coffee, Cars & Coats raises nearly \$1,100 for Coats for Kids program

The Coffee, Cars & Coats Car Show, held on Saturday, Oct. 5 at the former Farm King location, was a tremendous success. The event attracted over 50 cars and numerous attendees, raising nearly \$1,100 to support the McDonough Power Cooperative Coats for Kids program. Organized by Chuck and Kim Laird, the event showcased an impressive lineup of classic, vintage, custom and electric vehicles, while highlighting the importance of providing warm winter coats to children in need and honoring the dedicated lineworkers of McDonough Power Cooperative. **532RM3-900C**

The day was filled with excitement, featuring a DJ, coffee and donuts, and raffles that created a festive atmosphere for families and car enthusiasts alike. Participants donated coats and cash, enjoyed viewing the stunning vehicles, and had a chance to socialize with McDonough Power lineworkers, employees and board members.

"We are thrilled with the turnout and the generosity of our community," said Chuck Laird, event organizer. "Every dollar raised will help ensure that children in

our area have the warm coats they need this winter. Thank you to everyone who participated, volunteered and donated."

In addition, McDonough Power line-workers were honored with plaques and gift cards. "Their work goes beyond just repairing lines; it's about safety, reliability and service to others," Laird emphasized. "They face the elements — from extreme weather to high-risk situations — all to keep our lights on and our lives running smoothly. They are a vital part of our community, and their hard work doesn't go unnoticed. We are incredibly grateful for all they do."

This year's Coffee, Cars & Coats event was made possible by the generous support of local businesses and sponsors, including Chuck and Kim Laird, M & S Light and Sound, Casey's General Store, Farm King and a group of dedicated volunteers, demonstrating a strong commitment to community welfare.

"On behalf of McDonough Power Cooperative, I want to extend our heartfelt gratitude to Chuck and Kim for

**Continued on 18D ►**





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# Is a ductless mini-split system right for your home?

How would you like a personalized comfort zone within your home? One where the temperature is customized to your liking and may be different than the temperature in the shared living areas or other rooms in the house? This flexibility and customization are precisely why mini-split systems, also known as ductless air-source heat pumps, and their energy efficiency aspects are so popular.

Let's unpack some mini-split basics and explore whether this type of system is a good choice for your home heating and cooling needs.

A mini-split system is a type of HVAC equipment used for heating and cooling, allowing you to control the temperature in individual rooms or spaces. Similar to central heating and cooling, mini-split systems have two main components — an outdoor compressor and indoor air-handling unit(s). A narrow conduit links the indoor unit(s) to the outdoor compressor.

While central heating and cooling systems feature an indoor unit connected by long lengths of ductwork, mini-splits are typically ductless. This means energy is not lost traveling through long stretches of ductwork. Installing the air-handling unit in a desired room or area enables you to control the temperature more precisely, reducing energy consumption. That's because you're adjusting the temperature to a single room or space rather than the whole home.

## Is a mini-split system right for you?

Mini-split systems are a popular option in home additions, or to supplement heating and cooling in a space that may be furthest away from the main living area, such as a finished attic or basement. In these instances, it may not be feasible to install or extend the ductwork required in traditional central cooling and heating systems. In contrast, mini-splits are relatively easy to install, requiring a small hole for the conduit connecting the indoor and outdoor units. Most systems can handle up to four indoor rooms or zones connected to one outdoor unit. Each of the zones can be customized, because each includes

a thermostat that enables you to heat or cool the space as needed, saving energy and money over time.

## Cool solutions

Mini-split systems bring additional benefits. They are quiet, improve indoor air quality and are typically easy to install. Many come with remotes to make temperature control even easier, and because of their smaller size, mini-split systems have many placement options for indoor and outdoor units.

One of the greatest benefits of mini-splits is that they typically have a higher SEER (seasonal energy efficiency ratio) rating than traditional central heating and cooling systems. The higher the unit's SEER rating, the more energy efficient it is. **5310LGH13-260B**

## Additional considerations

However, according to the Department of Energy, "mini-splits cost about \$1,500 to \$2,000 per ton of cooling capacity. That's about 30% more than central systems (not including ductwork) and may cost twice as much as window units of similar capacity."

While the technology is improving and evolving, those in particularly colder climates may need a fuel backup to run a mini-split system. Aesthetics are another factor to consider, as some homeowners don't like the appearance of the indoor units, which are more visible than central air conditioning vents.

If you're considering an upgrade or additional heating and cooling equipment, talk to a qualified HVAC technician to learn if a ductless mini-split system could work for your home.



**Our office will be closed Monday,  
Nov. 11 for Veterans Day.**

# Stay safe and warm: Your winter home readiness guide

Preparing your home for winter involves several key steps to ensure safety, efficiency and warmth. Here are tips to help you prepare before the temperatures drop, and a few ways to stay safe if a power outage leaves you snowbound.

## Inspect your heating system

- Have your heating system professionally serviced.
- Replace air filters if needed.
- Ensure vents and radiators are unblocked for efficient heat distribution.

## Prepare pipes and water supply

- Insulate exposed pipes to prevent freezing.
- Drain and shut off outdoor faucets and irrigation systems.
- Know the location of your water shut-off valve in case of emergencies.

## Maintain smoke and carbon monoxide detectors

- Replace batteries in smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.
- Test detectors to ensure they are functioning properly.
- Prepare your home's exterior.
- Clear gutters and downspouts of leaves and debris to prevent ice dams.
- Trim trees and bushes away from the house to prevent damage from heavy snow.
- Ensure downspouts extend away from your home's foundation.
- Drain and store garden hoses to prevent freezing.
- Service and store outdoor equipment such as lawnmowers and trimmers.
- Gather winter tools such as snow shovels and ice melt.

## Increase home energy efficiency

- Seal gaps and cracks around windows and doors with weatherstripping or caulk.
- Set ceiling fans to rotate clockwise to circulate warm air.
- Lower your thermostat a few degrees to save on heating costs.



## Stock emergency supplies

At home, have enough nonperishable food and water for 72 hours in case of power outages or severe weather. Experts suggest storing one gallon of water per person per day.

Include these essentials in your emergency kit:

- First-aid kit
- Flashlights and batteries
- Warm clothing
- Blankets
- Phone chargers and backup charger sources

Gather important documents, medical supplies/medicines and medical records. Don't forget your pets. Make sure you have enough supplies for them as well.

## What to do if the power goes out

Winter weather is unpredictable, with high winds, whiteouts and ice storms. These conditions can cause hazardous roads and power outages.

If the electricity goes out due to a winter storm, you might be in for a prolonged power outage as crews work through the harsh weather to get the power back on.

If this happens, contact your electrical utility as soon as you can so they know you have lost power.

## Other actions you can take to stay safe

- **Avoid travel.** Stay inside and dress warmly in layered clothing.
- **Place a draft block** at the bottom of doors to minimize cold drafts from entering the house.
- **When using an alternative heat source**, follow operating instructions and be sure to ventilate properly. **9214C7-314B**
- **Keep grills, camp stoves and generators** out of the house, basement and garage.
- **Use a tarp and portable canopy** when using a portable generator if conditions are damp or wet.
- **Move fuel-powered generators** at least 20 feet away from the house.
- **Keep a close eye on the temperature in your home.** Infants and people over the age of 65 are often more susceptible to the cold. You may want to stay with friends or relatives or go to a shelter if you cannot keep your home warm.

For more information on keeping your family safe during and after a winter storm, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

A magnifying glass is positioned over a map of Illinois. The words "Member Prizes" are written in a bold, white, sans-serif font inside the circular lens of the magnifying glass. The background is a textured, warm-toned graphic that looks like a map or a grid.

**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.**

# May your holidays be merry and bright

As November kicks off, it's hard to believe we'll soon be gathering with family and friends to celebrate the holiday season. This festive time of year brings joy and warmth, but as the weather gets cooler and we spend more time indoors, the holidays can also bring increased energy use and a higher risk of electrical and fire hazards.

As your local electric cooperative, our team at McDonough Power cares about your wellbeing. This month, we'd like to share a few practical tips to help you stay safe and efficient during the holiday season.

## Safety first

Many families truly enjoy decorating their homes for the holidays. Before you deck the halls, always check electrical cords and light strands to make sure they aren't frayed or damaged. Having that peace of mind, knowing your holiday lights are ready to safely brighten your home. Also double check the lights you use outside to make sure they're rated for outdoor use.

Like many households, you may also enjoy holiday-scented candles. While festive, candles can create fire hazards and should never be left unattended. One of the best and easiest ways to safeguard your home is to test smoke alarms often. May we suggest you test yours on the first of each month, so it's easy to remember. Testing smoke alarms only takes a few seconds and could save lives, so make it a habit. **917B9A-310A**

## 'Tis the season for savings

Spending more time indoors with a few more guests in the home can really impact home energy use. By taking a few small steps to save energy during the holiday season, you can lower your bills.

Remind your family members to mind the thermostat. Since heating and cooling makes up the majority of home energy consumption, the thermostat is one of the best places for savings. Lower it a few degrees, especially when you have family or friends stopping by. Good company brings additional warmth to your home.

Your family can also save energy by decorating with LED holiday lights. LEDs are the most energy efficient lighting options available, and they last much longer than traditional bulbs.

There's no denying one of the best parts of the holiday season is the food — not just the meals but the time spent together in the kitchen. There are many ways to save in the heart of your home, but one of the best approaches is to cook with smaller countertop appliances, such as air fryers, slow cookers and toaster ovens. These handy appliances consume a fraction of the energy used to heat the oven, creating the perfect recipe for mealtimes and energy savings.

We hope you will implement some of these energy-saving and safety tips into your holiday plans. For additional advice, visit our website at [mcdonough-power.com](http://mcdonough-power.com). We're here to help you with safety and savings year-round.

From your friends at McDonough Power Cooperative, we hope your holiday season is merry and bright.



**We are thankful for you, our members!**  
**Our office will be closed Nov. 28 and 29.**  
**for the Thanksgiving holiday.**

## "Coffee" continued from 18A

organizing this event. Your dedication and hard work made a significant impact, and we are truly grateful for your support," said Kelly Hamm of McDonough Power. "Thanks to the event's success, we can provide 70 additional coats this winter."

## About Coats for Kids

The Coats for Kids program, run by McDonough Power Cooperative, provides warm winter coats to elementary school children throughout the cooperative's service territory. Each year, the program collaborates with local schools to distribute hundreds of coats, ensuring that no child has to face the cold without proper clothing.



**Kim and Chuck Laird, event organizers and 37-year members of McDonough Power.**