



**Mike Smith**  
President and CEO

## Operation Round-Up awards \$12,600 in community grants

The Operation Round-Up board of trustees met on July 21 and approved \$12,600 in grant funding to support seven impactful local initiatives. These funds — made possible through the generosity of McDonough Power Cooperative members who voluntarily round up their monthly electric bills — help meet vital needs across the region.

The following organizations received funding: **446A3-1283A**

- **United Intermediate School** (Monmouth) – \$600  
For health and wellness programming to benefit students.
- **Bushnell Prairie City CUSD #170** (Bushnell) – \$3,000  
To assist with the B-PC Elementary Community Build Playground project.
- **Feed My Lambs Mission** (Abingdon) – \$2,500  
To support weekend snack packs for children in need.
- **Warren Achievement Center** (Monmouth) – \$2,000  
For the Achiever Medical Fund, which helps purchase uncovered medical items for residents.
- **McDonough District Hospital Foundation** (Macomb) – \$2,000



Toward the purchase of a pediatric crash cart for the Post Anesthesia Recovery unit.

- **Buchanan Center for the Arts** (Monmouth) – \$500  
For supplies and materials for the Dia de Los Muertos community celebration.
- **Youth for Christ – Western Illinois** (Macomb) – \$2,000  
To support teen transportation and scholarships for youth programming.

The next round of Operation Round-Up funding will take place in October. Applications are due by Oct. 6, 2025. If you know of a local nonprofit, school or community group with a meaningful project, please encourage them to apply. Full details and the application can be found at [mcdonoughpower.com](http://mcdonoughpower.com).

*Together, small change is making a big difference!*





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## Something new coming soon — SmartHub!

**W**e understand how busy life can get and managing your account can sometimes feel complicated. With our new SmartHub tool, it won't be.

We believe you deserve to have a tool that allows you to save time and money while giving you complete control to manage your entire account anytime from anywhere.

In November, McDonough Power will be switching software providers and launching SmartHub, a service which allows you instant access to your account online or through our mobile app.

Features like billing and payment options, usage monitoring, and alerts and notifications will help put you in control of your account. Let's take a look at some of those features.

### Billing and payment options

No more waiting for your bill to arrive in the mail. You can view and pay your bill at anytime from anywhere.

We believe finding time to pay your bill should be easy and convenient. You will save time with SmartHub **AutoPay** by setting up monthly automatic payments to eliminate the possibility of a missed payment or service disconnect.

By activating the SmartHub **Paperless Billing** option, you can stay organized

and access your bill online or through the mobile app. Help reduce your carbon footprint and never misplace your paper bill again!

### Usage monitoring

Like you, we realize how frustrating it can feel to open your paper bill at the end of the month to a higher-than-expected amount. Save money with SmartHub **Usage Monitoring** by eliminating the guess work and instantly accessing your monthly usage to make the right decision about your account.

### Alerts and notifications

Utilizing SmartHub allows you to stay up to date on important account notifications, and coming in 2026 — outage communication, with the **Alerts and Notifications** feature. You deserve to have real time updates in the event of an outage or service interruption without being left in the dark. Again, outage communication is coming at the latter part of 2026.

Stay tuned — you will be able to begin registering in November, and we will have more details as information becomes available. **11236A2A-1002A**

SmartHub will help you save time and money by managing your account anywhere at anytime.

## Saving energy during peak times benefits all

Conserving electricity during peak energy use times not only lowers your monthly bill — it can benefit our entire community.

“Peak times” refer to periods of the day when the demand for electricity is highest. Think early mornings when people are getting ready for work or school and evenings when families return home, cook dinner and unwind with electronics. When everyone uses energy at once, it adds pressure on the electric grid.

McDonough Power Cooperative works around the clock to ensure that electricity flows to your home whenever you need it. Behind the scenes, an enormous and intricate system is at work — one of the most complex machines in the world: the U.S. power grid. The grid is made up of three major interconnections that span the country, each managing supply and demand through regional authorities to keep the lights on and our economy running smoothly.

Electricity comes from a diverse mix of sources — hydropower, natural gas, coal, solar, wind and more. Some power plants can respond quickly to spikes in demand, while others are less flexible.

Once energy is generated, it travels through high-voltage transmission lines to local utilities, like McDonough Power, which then delivers it to your home or business through distribution power lines.

When electricity demand surges during peak times, it's more expensive to generate or purchase power. If supply can't keep up, the risk of outages increases. That's why using less energy during peak hours is more important than ever. It not only eases strain on the grid but also helps you save money.

So how can you “beat the peak”? Start by adjusting your thermostat a few degrees during peak hours. Smart thermostats can automate this for you. Delay using energy-hungry appliances like ovens, clothes washers and dishwashers until later in the evening. Charging your electric vehicle overnight instead of right after you get home can also help.

Small actions taken by many households can lead to big results. When we all work together to reduce energy use during peak times, we protect our power grid, help control costs and ensure reliable electricity for our communities.

### Safety Tip

Interested in buying a Level 2 charger for your electric vehicle? Have the charger installed by a qualified licensed contractor. Charging stations that draw more power than your home can handle or those that are not wired correctly can overheat and cause a fire.



Safe  
Electricity.org



## Capital credit returns coming in September

As a member-owner of McDonough Power, you'll see your share of the co-op's success!

Capital credits are the margins left over after expenses — allocated back to members each year based on electricity use. This year, over **\$301,000** is being retired to members who received electric service in **2004 and 2005**.

If you're a current member from those years, watch for a **bill credit on your September statement**. Former members will receive a check by mail. **9210A8-314B**

This new bill credit method reduces costs and helps us return even more value to you.

### Questions?

Call us at **309-833-2101** or visit **mcdonoughpower.com** to learn more.

## 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.

# AI tools for electric cooperatives

Artificial intelligence (AI) is becoming an increasingly popular tool for many industries and even in our daily lives. AI is a hot topic — sometimes exciting, sometimes a little scary. It has the potential to bring many opportunities — and a few challenges — to the electric utility sector. But, machine learning takes time, and we're still in the process of determining how AI can really be utilized. **6326AA23-750C**

Many electric cooperatives are already exploring emerging technologies like AI, virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR). Most of AI's current applications are task-specific — like using chatbots to answer common questions from co-op members or analyzing data to better understand members' needs.

Contrary to what Hollywood would have you believe, AI can't think for itself. Its abilities depend on how it's programmed, the quality of its training and the data it receives. AI is essentially about learning from patterns and making decisions based on that input — not about having thoughts or opinions of its own.

Because AI interacts with both internal systems and external networks, cybersecurity is a top priority. As McDonough Power looks to adopt

tools powered by AI and other tech, we will ensure our systems are safe from potential cyber threats. Strong digital defenses are essential to using any new technology safely.

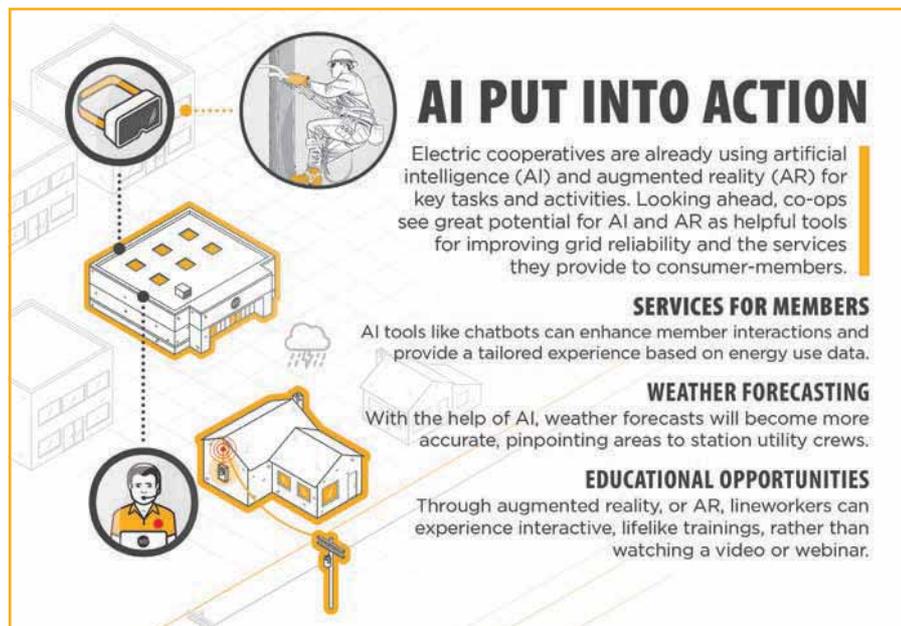
As we consider emerging AI tools, our focus won't be so much on the technology itself as on solving real problems. If AI can streamline a process, predict an issue or improve service for our members, it's worth considering. As the technology evolves, AI may eventually be built into smart meters to help members track their energy use more effectively. It could even help our staff better manage the local grid or predict storm damage to deploy crews more efficiently.

Another exciting area is Augmented Reality/Virtual Reality (AR/VR). Many electric utilities are currently testing AR for training, giving lineworkers a hands-on experience to prepare for dangerous situations before facing them in real life. In the future, smart glasses may help crews instantly identify and troubleshoot equipment in the field.

Ultimately, AI, AR and VR are tools that can help utilities like McDonough Power serve their communities better — making energy more reliable, services faster and operations more efficient.

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Take advantage of “shoulder months,” which refer to the transitional periods between peak heating and cooling seasons. During the fall, these milder weeks typically occur between September and November. Shoulder months offer a great opportunity to reduce home energy consumption as the need for extensive heating or cooling is reduced. Look for simple ways to boost indoor comfort without running your heating and cooling system. Use ceiling fans and open windows on breezy days to ventilate your home. On cooler days, add a layer of clothing and avoid running the heat.



**AI PUT INTO ACTION**

Electric cooperatives are already using artificial intelligence (AI) and augmented reality (AR) for key tasks and activities. Looking ahead, co-ops see great potential for AI and AR as helpful tools for improving grid reliability and the services they provide to consumer-members.

**SERVICES FOR MEMBERS**  
AI tools like chatbots can enhance member interactions and provide a tailored experience based on energy use data.

**WEATHER FORECASTING**  
With the help of AI, weather forecasts will become more accurate, pinpointing areas to station utility crews.

**EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES**  
Through augmented reality, or AR, lineworkers can experience interactive, lifelike trainings, rather than watching a video or webinar.

