

The Wire

McDonough Power Cooperative • Macomb, Illinois 61455



Walt Lewis
Board Chairman

Annual Meeting Please join us!

This year's Annual Meeting theme is **Member Powered**, and we invite you to join us as we celebrate the history of your cooperative while looking ahead to the future. We remain committed to meeting your needs, and we're excited to share how we're planning for what's next. **8423C4-674B**

Your co-op board and employees have planned a fun and informative evening for you and your family on **Wednesday, September 2nd**, at **The Crossing in Macomb**.

Event Schedule

- **Doors open at 5:00 p.m.** for registration and dinner, which continues until 6:15 p.m.
- Each registered membership will receive a **\$10 bill credit** and a **special gift**.
- Enjoy a delicious **pork chop dinner** grilled by the West Prairie FFA and served by the Scotland Clever Clovers 4-H Club.
- Meet your co-op employees and directors, and enjoy **live music by Shannon "Woody" Wood**.

The business meeting begins at 6:30 p.m. and will last about an hour. It will include:

- The **director election**
- Updates from myself, our Board Treasurer, and the President/CEO
- **Prize drawings**, including **three grand prizes**

Be on the lookout for your **annual meeting booklet**, which will be a separate mailing. You'll want to bring the registration card on the booklet to the meeting to speed up the check-in process. We hope you'll join us for this special evening.

I look forward to seeing you there!

Warm regards,
Walt Lewis
Board Chairman





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Making their mark

Local students represent
McDonough Power
Cooperative in D.C.



Students representing electric and telephone co-ops across the state recently returned home following Youth Tour, a tradition spanning decades that sends students to Washington, D.C., for an unforgettable weeklong trip.

This year, 49 students sponsored by 25 Illinois electric and telephone cooperatives took part in the 2026 Youth Tour, held June 15-22, to visit the nation's capital for an immersive experience designed to educate and inspire the next generation of cooperative and civic leaders.

McDonough Power sponsored two students within its service territory. These students included Timothy Todd and Meg Carson. They joined more than 2,000 students representing 44 states for the annual event. **315C6-1116C**

"Electric and telephone cooperatives across the state are investing in the next generation through Youth Tour," said Brooke Gross, Member Services Manager and facilitator of youth programs at the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperative. "It gives students a chance to see our nation's history and government up close. Just as importantly, it helps them discover their own potential as leaders."

Central to the Youth Tour experience is the formation of a mock student-run cooperative called Chip 'n' Pop Co-op. Students began their journey at the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives, headquartered in Springfield, where they selected the

co-op's board of directors. The board later interviewed and selected a co-op manager.

Throughout the week, the co-op handled snack sales, decision-making and budgeting — giving participants a hands-on look at how cooperatives operate. All students were members of the co-op.

Co-op leadership included manager Josephine Meyer, Tri-County Electric Cooperative; board chair Elizabeth Hampton, Shelby Electric Cooperative; vice chair Brenna Hays, Wabash Communications CO-OP; secretary-treasurer Isabella Smith, Menard Electric Cooperative and board members Iris Mount, SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative and Reece Whitley, Wayne-White Counties Electric Cooperative.

"Being part of this co-op helps students understand what makes a cooperative different," said Gross. "It's all about working together and making decisions that serve everyone — not just one person or company."

Over the course of the week, students visited historic landmarks, including Gettysburg, Arlington National Cemetery and the U.S. Capitol, where they had the opportunity to meet U.S. Senator Dick Durbin. They also strolled the National Mall and explored the Smithsonian museums.

Midweek, students took part in the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Youth Day, where they joined hundreds of other teens from across the country to hear from national leaders and learn how to use their voices back home.

In addition, a student was selected to represent Illinois on the national Youth Leadership Council (YLC). Those interested in becoming Illinois' YLC representative filled out an application, and five were selected to be interviewed for the position.

Corn Belt Energy Corporation's Colton Leonard was selected as the 2026-2027 YLC representative for Illinois. He will represent the state at national and state meetings and events in the year ahead.

"It's so awesome that the co-ops are able to do this for us all," Leonard said.



"Everyone comes from so many different perspectives, and getting to meet other individuals is just so empowering."

The week concluded with a farewell dinner and dance, and by the time students returned home on June 22, many said they felt changed by the experience.

"D.C. has been such an amazing experience so far and we are only halfway through our trip! Meg and I are seriously having the time of our lives, and I just wanted to let you know how appreciative we are of you providing us with this opportunity. Tonight we had Youth Day where we shared a space with delegates from 46 different states." — Timothy Todd

High school students who live within the service area of McDonough Power are eligible to participate in the annual program. To learn more about Youth Tour, go to youthtour.coop or facebook.com/ILYouthTour.



Carrie Van Vleet



My name is Carrie Van Vleet, and I am excited to introduce myself as the new Energy Services Manager at McDonough Power Cooperative.

I am a longtime resident of West Central Illinois and have spent the past 14 years working in alumni relations at Western Illinois University, where I built meaningful relationships and created opportunities for WIU alumni to connect back to the University. Throughout my career, I've enjoyed helping others, fostering strong connections, and serving the communities I care about.

As I begin this new chapter, I look forward to working with our members and helping them better understand the programs and services available through their cooperative. I'm eager to learn more about the communities we serve and to contribute to the cooperative's mission of providing reliable service and exceptional member support.

Outside of work, I'm a proud mom to two amazing children, Carter and Everley. Much of my free time is spent cheering them on at their activities and enjoying time with family and friends. When I'm not on the sidelines or driving to practices and events, I enjoy golfing, staying active through fitness, and traveling. **91E19B5-464B**

I am grateful for the opportunity to join the McDonough Power Cooperative team and look forward to meeting many of you in the months ahead.

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.

Capital Credit: Allocation & Retirement

As a member-owned electric cooperative, McDonough Power is proud to share how your ownership in the co-op continues to bring value back to you. Each year, after covering expenses and reinvesting in our system, any remaining margins are allocated back to you — our members — as capital credits.

At the June board meeting, McDonough Power's directors approved the allocation of **\$1,147,679 in 2025 margins**, divided as follows:

- **\$686,071** from McDonough Power Cooperative operations (COOP)
- **\$461,608** from our generation and transmission provider, Prairie Power, Inc. (G&T)

This allocation reflects your share of the co-op's margins based on the amount of electricity you used in 2025. It's important to note that G&T margins are currently non-cash, meaning they are earnings on paper that have not yet been paid to the co-op. As such, G&T margins will be allocated but not retired until the co-op receives those funds. This amount can be found on the bill that was received in August.

Additionally, the board approved a **capital credit retirement of \$314,023**, which will be returned to members who received electric service in **2005 and 2006**. For current

members, this retirement will appear as a **credit on your electric bill received in September** — a change we implemented to reduce administrative costs and return more value to the membership. Former members from those years will receive a check by mail, so it's important to keep your mailing address updated with us.

Key Notes for 2026 Capital Credit

To increase transparency and improve efficiency, we've made the following changes:

1. **Separate Allocations** – Capital credit allocations are broken out into two categories:
 - **COOP:** Margins from McDonough Power's local operations **4410D6-1201A**
 - **G&T:** Margins from our power supplier
2. **Bill Credit Retirements** – Capital credit retirements for active members will be issued as credits on your electric bill. This streamlines the process, saves money, and helps us operate more efficiently.

If you have questions about your capital credits, past or present, we're here to help. Call us at **(309) 833-2101**.

Get straight A's in battery safety

Prevent e-bike and e-scooter battery fires

As students head back to school, e-bikes and e-scooters are becoming as common as backpacks. They are popular ways for students to get to class, work and activities. These devices are powered by lithium-ion batteries — the same type used in laptops and smartphones. A few smart habits can help prevent battery fires and keep riders safe.

Charge smart

Improper charging is one of the leading causes of lithium-ion battery fires. Help reduce the risk by following these tips:

- Use only the charger that came with the device or one approved by the manufacturer.
- Charge the battery on a flat, dry surface away from anything that can catch fire.
- Plug a charger directly into a wall outlet. Avoid extension cords and power strips.
- Do not charge batteries near doors, in hallways or anywhere they could

block an exit or create a tripping hazard.

- Charge one high-powered device per outlet to reduce the risk of overheating.
- Unplug the battery when it's fully charged or set a timer to remind you.

Store batteries safely

- Keep batteries at room temperature when possible.
- Avoid charging or storing batteries in extreme temperatures, below 32 F or above 105 F.
- Never leave batteries in direct sunlight or inside a hot car.
- Store e-bikes, scooters and batteries away from exits and flammable materials.

Recycle responsibly

- Never put lithium-ion batteries in the trash. They can spark and start a fire.

- Take used or damaged batteries to a certified battery recycling location. Contact your local waste department or visit batterynetwork.org to find a recycling site near you.

Stop using your battery if you notice:

- Unusual odors.
- Changes in color or shape.
- Smoking or leaking.
- Strange noises.
- It no longer holds a charge.
- It feels unusually hot.

Damaged or defective batteries can overheat, catch fire or explode. If a lithium-ion battery starts to smoke or catch fire, move away and call 911. If it is safe to do so, use water to cool the battery and the surrounding area.

Stay safe this school year by practicing smart battery habits and help prevent fires before they start. Find more back-to-school safety tips at SafeElectricity.org.

Source: *National Fire Protection Association*