McDonough Power Cooperative
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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# The Wire

McDonough Power Cooperative • Macomb, Illinois 61455

**Mike Smith**
President and CEO

Office closed for
**VETERANS DAY**

Wednesday, Nov. 11
— Honoring All Who Served —

Office closed for Thanksgiving
Nov. 26 & 27

## Holiday cooking: Save energy in the kitchen

During the holiday season, you may spend more time prepping, cooking and baking for family and friends. A few small changes can help you save energy, lower utility costs and keep your kitchen running efficiently.

Saving energy in the kitchen starts with using the right appliance for the job, keeping equipment in good condition and making simple changes to everyday cooking habits.

### Cooking and prep

- **Use small appliances when possible.** Choose an air fryer, microwave, slow cooker or toaster oven for small meals or side dishes. They often use less energy than a full-size oven.
- **Keep the stovetop clean.** Clean burners and surfaces help heat transfer evenly.
- **Match the pan to the burner.** Using a small pan on a large burner wastes heat. Choose a burner that closely matches the size of the pan.
- **Cover pots and pans.** Lids keep heat inside, help water boil faster and allow food to cook evenly at lower settings.
- **Keep the oven door closed.** Use the oven light instead of opening the door to check on food. Opening the door lets heat escape and makes the oven work harder.
- **Thaw frozen foods ahead of time.** Move frozen foods to the refrigerator in advance to avoid microwave defrosting.
- **Cook more at once.** Bake multiple dishes together when possible and make larger portions to freeze for later.
- **Cut food into small pieces.** Small pieces of vegetables and meat cook faster and more evenly than large ones.
- **Skip the self-cleaning cycle.** Use it sparingly, since it requires very high heat and uses extra energy.
- **Turn down the thermostat while cooking.** Cooking and baking can warm your home quickly, especially when guests are gathered.

### Refrigeration

- **Let leftovers cool slightly.** Allow hot foods to cool before refrigerating (but do not leave them out too long). This keeps your refrigerator from working harder to cool warm food.
- **Check the door seal.** Make sure the refrigerator door closes tightly. Test the seal by closing the door on a dollar bill. If it slides out easily, the gasket may need to be replaced.
- **Prevent frost buildup.** Too much frost can make the freezer work harder to maintain the right temperature.
- **Keep it full but not crowded.** Refrigerators work best when cold air can circulate. **7235B1A-108A**

### Dishwashing

- **Run full loads.** Wait until the dishwasher is full before running it to make the most of each cycle.
- **Skip heated dry.** Use the air-dry or eco-mode setting to dry dishes while reducing energy use.

Small changes in how you cook, cool and clean up can help save energy, no matter the season.

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*The power of human connections*

# Unclaimed Capital Credits

***Please scan the QR code to access our online searchable database of unclaimed capital credits. Simply enter a name to see if capital credits are being held for you, or for a family member, friend or associate. If you find a name you recognize, please contact McDonough Power Cooperative at 309-833-2101 for more information. Thank you for helping us ensure that every member receives the capital credit benefits they are entitled to.***

# Optimize your HVAC system for "heating season"

As November settles in and temperatures begin to drop, your HVAC system will soon become one of the hardest-working appliances in your home. Before your system undergoes all that extra work this winter, now is a great time to ensure it is optimized and ready to go.

Start with something simple. One of the easiest and most effective measures you can take is checking filters. A clogged or dirty filter makes it harder for air to move through your system, which can cause it to work longer and harder than necessary. Check filters regularly and replace them according to the manufacturer's recommendations. Vents matter, too. Look around your home to make sure furniture, curtains, rugs and other household items aren't blocking any supply or return vents.

If you have a heat pump, your outdoor unit also deserves extra attention this time of year. Falling leaves, limbs and other debris can collect around the unit and restrict airflow, so keep the area around your outdoor unit clear. Be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning recommendations. If you have a traditional central air conditioning system, your outdoor unit will likely remain idle during winter months, but it's still good practice to keep it clear of debris.

Don't overlook what you can't see. With forced-air systems, ductwork plays an essential role in delivering heated air throughout your home. Leaks, gaps or disconnected sections can allow conditioned air to escape before it reaches the rooms where you need it. If you've noticed rooms that never seem to be comfortable or unusually high energy use, ask an HVAC professional to inspect your ductwork. **8120SL295-864C**

Fall is also an ideal time for a professional tune-up. A technician can inspect your heating system, identify potential problems and make sure it is operating safely and efficiently before the coldest weather arrives. Regular professional maintenance can also help extend the life of your equipment.

Finally, take more control of your energy use by proactively managing your thermostat. There's no reason to heat an empty house. Lowering the temperature when you're asleep or away can help reduce energy use. Better yet, a programmable or smart thermostat can make those adjustments automatically, taking one more thing off your to-do list.

Your home heating system has an important job this winter. Giving it a little extra attention this fall will help the system operate more efficiently, reduce unnecessary energy use and potentially prevent an inconvenient breakdown on a cold winter night. **8221A6A-852A**

## TIPS TO AVOID ENERGY SCAMS

Stay alert for fraudulent utility calls. Scammers can spoof caller ID to make a phone call appear to come from your electric utility—even when it doesn't. They may threaten disconnection, demand immediate payment or ask for personal information. Don't rely on caller ID alone to verify a caller's identity. If you receive a suspicious call, hang up and contact your utility using the phone number printed on your bill or listed on the official website.

*Source: FTC*

**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.**

# POWERING YOUR FUTURE — 20 SCHOLARSHIPS, $3,000 EACH

At McDonough Power Cooperative, we believe the key to a brighter future lies in empowering the next generation. That's why electric cooperatives across Illinois are committed to investing in youth through scholarships that honor the legacy of our cooperative family while fueling the dreams and goals of tomorrow's leaders.

The electric cooperatives of Illinois will award **20 scholarships of $3,000 each** to outstanding students as part of the **Thomas H. Moore Illinois Electric Cooperatives (IEC) Memorial Scholarship Program.**

"This program is about more than financial aid — it's about empowering students," said Mike Smith, manager of McDonough Power. "While honoring those who came before us, we are investing in the future. Illinois' electric cooperatives are always looking for ways to spark positive change in our communities, and supporting youth through scholarships is one of the most impactful ways we can help shape tomorrow."

## Scholarships available:

- **Twelve scholarships** will be awarded to high school seniors whose parent(s) are members of an Illinois electric cooperative.
- The **Earl W. Struck Memorial Scholarship** will be awarded to a student whose parent is an Illinois electric cooperative employee or director, honoring a legacy of service within the cooperative family.
- **Six scholarships** will be awarded to students enrolling full-time at an Illinois community college whose parent(s) are electric cooperative members. **532RM88-900C**
- The **LaVern and Nola McEntire Memorial Lineworker's Scholarship** supports students pursuing a career in linework through enrollment in the lineworker program at Lincoln Land Community College. Eligible applicants include children of cooperative members, relatives of employees or directors, and individuals who have served or are currently serving in the armed forces or National Guard.

The general scholarship application deadline is Dec. 31, 2026, and the lineworker scholarship application is due by April 30, 2027. For more information, visit **mcdonoughpower.com/community/scholarships/**. Information has also been shared with area high school guidance counselors.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for the next wave of bright minds in our co-op communities," said Smith. "These scholarships ensure that our future is powered by knowledge, service and a shared commitment to excellence. Together, we can light the way to a brighter tomorrow."

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Adjust your water heater settings to save energy. As cooler weather arrives, your water heater may be working harder to keep up with longer, hotter showers. Check its temperature setting and consider lowering it to 120°F, which the U.S. Department of Energy recommends for most households. Lowering the temperature can reduce energy use while also helping prevent scalding. Always check the owner's manual before making adjustments.

*Source: Dept. of Energy*