McDonough Power Cooperative
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The Wire

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McDonough Power Cooperative • Macomb, Illinois 61455

Pictured (L-R) are: Row 1 Erin Logsdon, Zoey Gray, Grace Ferguson, Alexandra Hays, Sierra Parker, Taylor Runquist, Nicole Malinowski, Mallory Lafary, Hannah Parsons, Rebekah Literski, Hannah Morris, Amy Thompson, Grace Bartlett and Kelly Hamm. Row 2 Les Fowler, Emily Phillips, Nathan Corman, Grant Depoy, Gareth Cordery, Sen. John Sullivan, Joshua Cook, Joseph Barlow, Kathryn Hays, Blaine Rench, Brandon Livingston and Nolan Groenewold.

Our office will be closed Monday, May 25 for Memorial Day.

Youth Day

Sen. John Sullivan met with students representing McDonough Power Cooperative during the Illinois Electric and Telephone Cooperatives Youth Day on Wednesday, March 25th in Springfield. More than 250 students from around Illinois had an opportunity to visit the State Capitol, view state government in action and question their legislators on key issues. They also were invited into the office of Secretary of State Jesse White and got the chance to meet David Nance, an Abraham Lincoln Presenter.

During lunch, Lieutenant Governor Evelyn Sanguinetti addressed students and chaperones and challenged them to take an interest in the political process and encouraged them to talk to their state senators and representatives about issues that interest them. Wyatt Reid, the 2014-15 Illinois Youth Leadership Council Representative from Rock Energy Cooperative, spoke about his experiences on the Youth to Washington tour and challenged attendees to maintain an interest in their cooperatives and the political process. While in Springfield, the students also visited the Old State Capitol and the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum.

Youth Day is designed to introduce young rural leaders to state government. There were 26 co-ops from across the state represented at the event.**11216C6-1066B**

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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative
The power of human connections

Pictured (L-R) Emily Phillips, Hannah Morris and Nathan Corman.

Youth to Washington Winners

Two finalists were chosen from the Youth Day participants to represent McDonough Power on a week long all-expense paid trip to Washington D.C. along with over 1,450 students from across the nation. Hannah Morris of Macomb High School and Emily Phillips of West Prairie High School will spend the week of June 12-19, 2015 visiting historically significant national sites, touring some of our most moving memorials, and browsing the campus of our nation's capital.

During their time in D.C., they will ride a riverboat down the Potomac, tour the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, and visit the Supreme Court. Nathan Corman of Monmouth-Roseville High School will serve as an alternate should one of the finalists decide not to attend.

McDonough Power Cooperative is proud to offer this opportunity to local high school students. We appreciate being able to introduce the youth to electric and telephone cooperatives as well as the state and national government.

Stay connected by updating your contact information

By Meghaan Evans

In the utility business, we know rough weather will occur, and sometimes power outages simply can't be avoided. But did you know there are steps you can take to ensure your electricity is restored as quickly and safely as possible? By keeping your contact information up to date, you can take full advantage of the services McDonough Power Cooperative offers.

If we don't have the correct phone number linked to your home address, it makes it much more difficult for you to report an outage after hours. **7119A7-104C**

Remember when you had to speak to a customer service representative in order to report a power outage? Waiting on hold could be frustrating and time consuming. Today, with the press of a button, you can easily report an outage. At McDonough Power Cooperative, we use the phone number you provide to link your service address to our after-hours dispatch system. For example, if you call us to report an outage, our automated system instantly recognizes your phone number and can determine the particular service address from which you are reporting an outage. Once you give our system a response, your outage is reported. It's that simple! But remember this only works if your current phone number is linked to your service address.

Updating your contact information is helpful because it also speeds up the power restoration process. With correct information, our outage management system can predict the location and the possible cause of an outage, making it easier for our crews to correct the problem.

Call us at (309) 833-2101, and make sure you're up to date.

Putting safety first this month – and throughout the year

It's May – and McDonough Power Cooperative is celebrating National Electrical Safety Month. While safety for our members is top priority year-round, Electrical Safety Month is a time to acknowledge the importance of safety excellence.

This year, we're focusing on electrical safety in the home. Electricity is the cause of over 140,000 fires each year, resulting in more than 500 deaths, 4,000 injuries and 1.6 billion in property damage, according to Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI).

There are many measures you can take to ensure the safety of your loved ones. Use these helpful tips from ESFI to safeguard your home.

In the kitchen

■ Vacuum refrigerator coils every three months to eliminate dirt buildup that can reduce efficiency and create fire hazards.

Ensure all countertop appliances are located away from the sink.

■ All appliance cords should be placed away from hot surfaces. Pay particular attention to cords around toasters, ovens and ranges. Cords can be damaged by excess heat.

■ The top and the area above the cooking range should be free of combustibles, such as hyposcleral and plastic utensils. Storing these items on or near the range may result in fires or burns. **11215B8-1066B**

Light the way to safety

■ The wattage of the bulbs you use in your home should match the wattage indicated on the light fixture. Overheated fixtures can lead to a fire.

■ Check lamp cords to make sure they are in good condition – not damaged or cracked. Do not attempt to repair damaged cords yourself. Take any item with a damaged power cord to an authorized repair center.

■ Extension cords should not be used to provide power on a long-term or permanent basis. Have additional receptacles installed by a professional to provide power where needed.

Be prepared

■ Nearly two-thirds of fire deaths result from fires in homes without working smoke alarms. Smoke alarms should be located on every level of your home, inside each bedroom and outside each sleeping area.

■ Test smoke alarms every month. Batteries should be replaced at least once a year – or sooner if indicated in the manufacturers' instructions. All smoke alarms should be replaced at least every 10 years.

■ Talk to your family about an emergency plan in the event of a fire in your home. If you have small children, include them in planning an emergency escape route they are more likely to remember the plan if they're involved in creating it.

■ Electrical safety awareness and education can save lives. For more tips and information about electrical safety, visit www.esfi.org.

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.

A buyer's guide to residential generators

By Tom Tate

Let's face it: rough weather happens. At McDonough Power, our goal is to restore power as quickly and safely as possible. But when a major storm hits power may be out for an extended period of time. Anyone who has experienced an extended power outage has likely mulled over the idea of buying a generator, but before you do – make sure you have all the facts.

The purchase and installation of a generator is an important and serious decision. Properly done, you gain peace of mind knowing your family can ride out any outage with some degree of comfort. But an incorrectly implemented generator can become deadly to you, your family, your neighbors and your electric cooperative's employees.

So, let's look at the decisions you'll need to make when it comes to purchasing a residential generator. First, do you want to back up your entire home or just portions? The biggest drawback to a permanently installed, whole-house generator is the cost. While the advantages are significant, it is a large expense for most folks to cover. The table below illustrates several characteristics of each alternative.

The next decision is sizing the generator to your particular situation. Online tools abound, so if you like to research, just type "generator sizing guide" into your browser and off you go. Or, contact an electrician to help you determine the size. All this being said, a nice portable generator size is at least 6,500 watts with a startup capacity of around 8,000 watts. When motor loads start, they draw more power than they use when running. This "in rush" of power gets them spinning. Afterwards, their demand for electricity decreases.

The third consideration is how to integrate the generator with your home. Permanent models have dedicated switching devices that handle this chore, while portable models require you to remove them from storage, set them up, connect them and start them up. Here is where the danger mentioned above comes in to play. Improperly connected generators can easily back feed into McDonough Power's grid. As electricity flows back into the lines, the transformers boost the voltage to lethal levels. Be sure to closely follow connection instructions, and contact us if you have any questions regarding connecting your generator safely.

Use of the generator can be as simple as plugging appliances directly into it. This is cumbersome and very limiting. Better yet, have a transfer switch installed by a qualified electrician. This device connects to the circuits you want to power. Connect your generator to the dedicated plug, follow the disconnect procedure and fire it up. Now you've got power for your home that's safe for all.

Next, a word about quality. With generators, you definitely get what you pay for. Cheap models are just that. They may last a couple of years, but after that, parts can be impossible to get. Few things are worse than your generator failing to operate when the lights are out. Definitely go for engines with recognizable brand names. They may cost more, but it will certainly be worth it. **10321B3-354A**

It's important to exercise your portable generator regularly. Don't worry, you don't need to walk your generator - it's not that type of exercise. Exercising means connecting load to it and turning it on to be sure it will run. While you're at it, why not let us know you have a generator? We can provide safety and connection tips if needed, and it will enhance our line crew's safety. For more information visit www.mcdonoughpower.com.

Residential Generators

WHAT TO KNOW BEFORE YOU BUY

INSTALLATION TYPE	PRICE	OPERATION [1]	CAPACITY	LENGTH OF OPERATION [2]
permanent	*expensive*	*automatic*	*whole house*	*can be indefinite*
portable	*more affordable*	*manual*	*typically partial* [2]	*depends on fuel tank size*

[1] Permanent generators start upon loss of grid power. They also exercise themselves automatically.
[2] Frequently powered: refrigerator, pumps (well, sump, septic), furnace, some lights, stove.
[3] Permanent generators use propane or natural gas, portable use gasoline. Permanent models offer significantly longer operating times.

Image of portable generator provided by SafeElectricity.org