

## Youth Day



**Kelly Hamm**  
Energy Services  
Manager / Youth  
Tour Coordinator



**Pictured L to R: Mark Sullivan, Prem Thottumkara, Emily Cooper**

Senator John Sullivan and Representative Rich Myers met with 10 students representing McDonough Power Cooperative as well as 5 area high schools including Bushnell-Prairie City, Monmouth-Roseville, West Prairie, Rushville-Industry and Macomb during the Illinois Electric and Telephone Cooperatives Youth Day on Wednesday, April 1, in Springfield. Students had an opportunity to view state government in action and tour the State Capitol, Illinois Supreme Court and the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum. 532D2-900C

The day was sponsored by the Illinois electric and telephone co-ops and is designed to introduce young rural leaders to state government as well as educate them about cooperatives.

Of the 10 students, 2 finalists and one alternate were chosen 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. Mark Sullivan

of Rushville-Industry High School and Emily Cooper of Bushnell-Prairie City High School will spend the week of June 12-19, 2009 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 river boat down the Potomac, tour the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, and visit the Supreme Court. Prem Thottumkara of Macomb High School will serve as an alternate if either finalist is unable to attend.

McDonough Power Cooperative is pleased to be involved in this program. "We feel like educated citizens are better citizens. And better citizens are better co-op members." states Kelly Hamm, McDonough Power Youth Tour Coordinator.

## MAP LOCATION GAME

Every month we will have four map location numbers hidden throughout The Wire. If you find your map location number, 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.



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## It Takes a Cut Above To Stay a Step Ahead

For millennia, trees have been appreciated for their shade, planted for their fruit, harvested for their wood and venerated by countless poets and philosophers.

Trees contribute to our health, beautify our neighborhoods, help regulate our atmosphere and can even reduce our electric bills, if carefully planned and planted.

However, trees can also cause headaches for their human neighbors. Their roots can damage foundations.

They can topple in storms and destroy buildings. And, their high-reaching limbs can interfere with the reliable delivery of electricity to your home.

Stormy weather can blow tree limbs into distribution lines, causing outages, and even toppling the trunks entirely, breaking poles and creating hazards.

Limbs and leaves in contact with power lines can conduct electricity, creating a potentially dangerous condition for anyone who comes near. Tree-to-line contact also contributes to what electric system professionals call "line loss." The term refers to electricity created at a generating plant that does not reach its destination, an inefficiency that increases costs for us and for you.

The cooperative has programs to keep trees under control while leaving them healthy and strong.

McDonough Power has contracted with Spoon River Electrical Cooperative (SREC) to clear transmission rights of way. They employ professionals trained to work around high-voltage lines safely and preserve the plants. SREC personnel are licensed by the Illinois Depart-

ment of Agriculture and are exceedingly experienced. 532RM3-900A

Cooperatives that keep their rights of way clear can demonstrate the benefits in reliability and savings to their members.

This winter, heavy ice and gusty winds hit the majority of our southern service territory, resulting in power blinks and extended outages in some areas. However, in the northern region where extensive tree trimming had been completed, there were no significant outages.

National electric codes prescribe 10 or 20 feet of clearance between trees and power lines, depending on voltage. With thousands of miles of line to maintain and thousands of tree limbs to clear, crews might not get to the trees near your home or business every year. But right-of-way crews know how much and how often to trim trees to keep your electric system safe and reliable.

If you decide to plant a tree for you and future generations to enjoy, or to provide cooling shade for your home, you can help make our crews' tasks easier. Before turning over even a shovelful of dirt, look up for power lines. Think about the mature height of the tree you are planting. Don't plant trees that could eventually reach up and touch power lines.

And, please, if existing trees are close to the lines and need trimming, don't try to tackle the job yourself. Every year, amateur tree trimmers are hurt or killed when trying to clear limbs near power lines. Call the professionals at your co-op.

**"A society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in."**

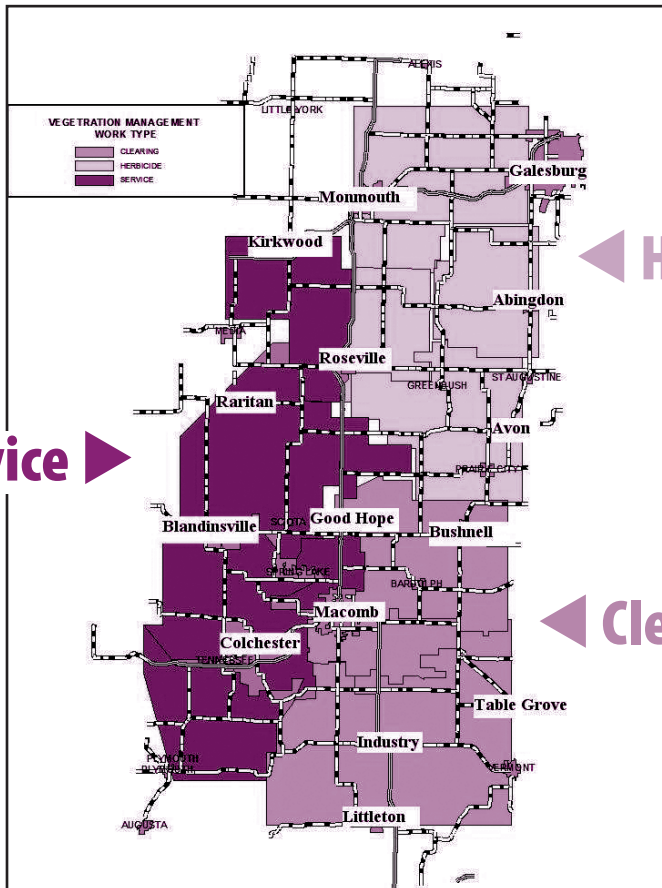
**-- Greek Proverb**

### Energy Efficiency *Tip of the Month*

When washing clothes, use less water by running full loads. In addition, approximately 80 percent of the energy used by washing machines heats water, so by using cold water and cold-water detergents you can cut a load's energy use in half.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

# Vegetation Management Program



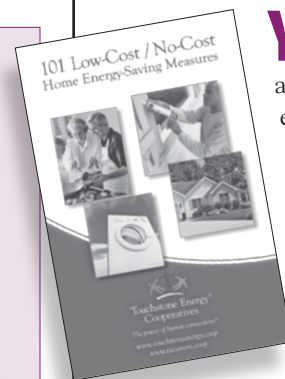
**Service** ▶

◀ **Herbicide**

◀ **Clearing**

Starting May 15th contracted crews from Spoon River Electric Cooperative will begin cutting, trimming and spraying of vegetation that is interfering with electric service. This program is ongoing and is necessary to deliver safe, low cost and reliable electric service to your home. See the map below for more information pertaining to the work scheduled for you area. If you have any questions or concerns regarding specific trees or chemicals used on your property please contact McDonough Power at 833-2101.

## Home Energy Savings Booklet Available



Your cooperative has available to you an energy savings booklet entitled "101 Low-Cost/No-Cost Home Energy-Saving Measures." This booklet was produced by Touchstone

Energy® and contains a list of low-cost/no-cost energy saving tips to help you better manage your home's energy costs. Pick one up today at your cooperative's main office in Macomb or click on the Energy Savers icon on the cooperative's website [www.mcdonoughpower.com](http://www.mcdonoughpower.com).



May 10 is Mother's Day



# What Causes High Meter Readings?

You just received your monthly billing statement when you notice that it is significantly higher than the previous month. What do you do? Your first inclination is to call McDonough Power Cooperative and have them check your meter for accuracy. Rarely is the meter the problem. Following are just some of the potential causes for your higher meter reading:

- **Lifestyle:** The size of your household has increased or someone is staying at home more. You have added a new swimming pool or hot tub in your back yard. You have had “guests” stay for an extended period. Hobbies that include the use of power tools, ovens and other high electrical resistance tools or appliances are being used. Using uninsulated buildings.
- **Lighting, refrigeration, appliances and cooking:** Lighting, refrigeration, cooking and appliances account for 56 percent of the total energy usage in the normal household. Using the computer, entertainment center, stove, hot water, hair dryer or washing machine and clothes dryer more or the use of lighting has increased. The location of refrigerators and freezers is very important. Never place a refrigerator or freezer in direct sunlight or in unconditioned space such as a breezeway, garage or out-building. The refrigerator or freezer will have to work extra hard to overcome the excessive heat in the spring, summer and fall. Make sure that the refrigerators and freezers have adequate ventilation.
- **Equipment maintenance:** If your appliance is more than 15 years old, the efficiency of that appliance may be decreasing significantly and requiring more energy to do its job. It is important to clean or replace the condenser, coils or filters on your appliances regularly. You may need to replace the appliance itself. Many times old electrical wiring will have loose connections resulting in increased electrical usage and create potential safety hazards.



The refrigerator is the biggest energy user in your kitchen.

- **Seasons:** The additional heating or cooling load will cause an increase in electric usage. Heating and cooling average around 44 percent of the total energy usage for the normal household. Using space heaters, fireplaces, livestock heaters or vehicle block heaters in the winter can dramatically increase your energy consumption. Running a dehumidifier or watering of lawns, gardens and animals in the summer months will increase your energy usage.
- **Weather:** Lightning may have damaged the well pump, sump pump or appliance increasing the running of the pump or appliance. If underground wiring-insulation is damaged, an increase in electrical usage may occur when the ground is saturated with moisture. 532CWL12-900A
- **Construction or remodeling activities:** Has there been any underground excavation recently? If you have underground wiring, the electrical wires may have been nicked resulting in a direct short. Many times room additions are completed without proper sizing of HVAC for additional heating and cooling loads.

Once you have located the source of your problem, you may need to call your electrician immediately. For further assistance in learning about appliances and their electrical usage, call McDonough Power at (309) 833-2101. We will be happy to assist you with your questions.