

Understanding electricity supply and demand



by General Manager Steve Stroshane

We know you expect reliable electricity from your electric co-op. When you need electricity to charge your phone or light up your kitchen, it's available with the flip of a switch. Behind the scenes, a network of people anticipated that you would need electricity and planned to provide it before you even used it. So how do you always receive the exact amount of electricity you need every minute of every day, from the coldest winter morning to the dog days of summer? This month, I'd like to share how we work to deliver on that promise with MISO and Dairyland Power Cooperative, our La Crosse-based power provider.

Electricity traffic managers and the energy market

We're all connected to the electric grid. Electricity is delivered to our homes and businesses through a complex network of electric generation sources and thousands of miles of electrical lines that power our lives.

Electricity is generated at power plants using traditional sources, like coal and natural gas, or renewable sources, like solar, wind and hydropower.

In most parts of the country, regional transmission organizations and independent system operators coordinate the amount of electricity that's generated and how much is sent to where it is needed. They are like energy traffic managers who forecast when you, your neighbors and our entire community will need more power. Then, they take steps to ensure there's enough to meet our communities' needs. This whole process is managed through an electricity market, where electricity is bought and sold like other common goods and services.

Electricity demand varies throughout the day. For example, we need more electricity in the mornings, when you're starting your day and in the evenings, when you're cooking dinner, running appliances and watching TV.

Because the supply and demand of electricity constantly changes, the challenge is to plan for and purchase enough electricity to be available at every minute of every day.

What happens if supply can't keep up with demand?

If there is an imbalance in the system and the supply of energy can't keep up with the demand, this could lead to rolling power interruptions or a blackout. We all remember when the Texas power grid could not meet demand, and prices soared during extreme cold and storms last winter. Unlike Texas, our Midwest electric grid is interconnected, winterized and balanced with generation sources that include natural gas, coal and renewables, which results in greater stability.

When the regional grid experiences peak demand and a higher power cost, we relieve some of the pressure by controlling electric A/C, heat, water heaters and irrigation for members in our load management program. We also send Beat the Peak alerts to enrolled members, asking you to voluntarily conserve electricity. (You can enroll on our website.) Peak alerts are also posted on our website and Facebook page. In the event of a **critical** shortage of electricity, we would initiate our Emergency Load Reduction Plan, where we would ask all members to shut down non-essential equipment and warn that rolling outages or blackouts may be possible.

In the event of any outage, we are here for you. Our goal is to restore power quickly and keep you informed. Our mission to provide you with safe, reliable electricity is at the forefront of all we do. Part of our efforts to improve reliability and service in 2022 is an investment of almost \$6 million for our **electric grid and meter upgrade**. I invite you to read more about this project on our website; just enter the phrase into the search bar on polkburnett.com.

Polk-Burnett, Dairyland and MISO

Polk-Burnett is one of 24 electric cooperatives that are members of Dairyland Power Cooperative. We have an agreement to purchase power from Dairyland on behalf of our members. Dairyland is a generation and transmission cooperative (G&T), which means it generates and acquires the power needed by member co-ops and transmits electricity to our local substations. We take it from there and distribute it to you, our members.

Dairyland is a member of MISO (Midcontinent Independent System Operator), an independent, not-for-profit organization responsible for operating the power grid across 15 states (including Wisconsin) and Manitoba, Canada.

In addition to managing the power grid in our region, MISO administers the buying and selling of electricity.

The price for electricity changes throughout the day, depending on supply and demand.

Beat the Peak



Throughout the day, energy use fluctuates based on consumer demand. These times when people use more electricity at the same time are called peak hours. Because demand for electricity is higher during peak hours, the cost is also higher.

Peak demand most often occurs from 2 to 6 p.m. on the hottest days of summer and from 5 to 8 p.m. the coldest days of winter.

When you shift your energy use to hours when demand is lower, you can help lower demand and costs. Here are easy ways to help:

1. Lower your thermostat a few degrees in winter and raise in summer.
2. Wash full loads of clothes in cold water during non-peak hours.
3. Run the dishwasher during non-peak hours, and air dry instead of using heated dry cycle.
4. Shut off lights and electronics.
5. Use microwave and small cooking appliances instead of oven.
6. Avoid watering outside and running your well during peak times.
7. Seal air leaks. Caulk around doors, windows and wherever pipes and wires enter the house.

Every little bit helps. When we all do our part to conserve energy, we can save money and our whole community benefits by putting less pressure on the electric grid. Reducing power generation also cuts carbon and is good for the planet. Contact us for more ways to save. **Thank you!**



84TH ANNUAL MEETING OF CO-OP MEMBERS
Friday, June 10, 2022, 1 p.m., Online
Registration opens May 1



Four ways to save energy when working from home

Today, more Americans are working from home than ever before. If you are punching the clock from home, here are four easy ways to reduce your energy use and save on your electric bills:

1. Use a smart power strip for computers, monitors and routers. Smart power strips ensure your devices are not drawing power when they're not in use. Smart strips also give you an option to select which devices should stay on.
2. Unplug equipment you don't use every day, such as printer and scanners. If left plugged in, these devices will draw energy even when not being used.
3. Choose ENERGY STAR-certified office equipment with power-saving features. They will run cooler and last longer.
4. Let the sunshine in this winter. Take advantage of natural sunlight and warmth by opening curtains during the day.

Working from home doesn't have to take a toll on your energy bills. Whether you're working remotely or not, these practical tips can help everyone reduce energy use. *Let us know if we can help, 800-421-0283, ext. 595.*



Tips to ditch the space heater

Portable space heaters are designed to heat small spaces. They are not meant for an entire home, which can really make an impact on your energy bills. If you're using a space heater to compensate for problems in your home, like drafty windows or an inefficient heating system, space heaters are not a practical solution. Your best bet is to improve the overall efficiency of your home. The best place to start is with a **home performance test**.

Caulking and weather stripping around windows and exterior doors are low-budget, easy ways to save energy. Depending on the size of your home, adding insulation can be a great next step. The co-op offers rebates on home performance tests and improvements made as a result of your test. Taking proactive energy-saving measures rather than relying on space heaters can reduce your heating bills for years to come!

If your home is already energy efficient and you want to add a little warmth to a room, a space heater may work for you. Only use a space heater for small spaces that you are occupying. Place heater on a level surface and keep away from children and pets.

We know it's cold out, but remember that space heaters can be a fire hazard and can greatly increase your energy bills. Let us know if we can help you find more energy efficient ways to improve comfort in your home.

Home performance rebate for co-op members

Have your home tested by a certified energy rater, using a blower door fan and an infrared camera. The energy rater will identify heat loss, evaluate insulation and provide a report with the best ways to improve your home's energy performance.



\$350 OFF HOME PERFORMANCE TEST
UP TO \$1,000 REBATE ON SUBSEQUENT HOME ENERGY UPGRADES

For rebate forms and information, visit polkburnett.com or call 800-421-0283, ext. 318.

Members invited to run for co-op board

Polk-Burnett holds elections each spring for co-op board directors. This year, board positions in co-op districts 4, 5 and 6 will be on the ballot. Members residing in those districts have an opportunity to get involved in co-op decision making by running for a seat on the board. Applications for the 2022 election are accepted through March 4.

District 4 includes the towns of Balsam Lake, Apple River, Beaver, Clayton and Almena. The incumbent director is Joe Metro of Balsam Lake.

District 5 includes the towns of McKinley, Maple Plain, Georgetown, Johnstown and Crystal Lake. The incumbent director is Jeff Traynor of Balsam Lake.

District 6 includes the towns of LaFollette, Dewey, West Sweden, Lorain, Roosevelt, Luck, Clam Falls and Bone Lake. The incumbent director is Wilfred Owens of Frederic.

As a cooperative, Polk-Burnett is governed by a board of directors elected from its membership. Directors serve a three-year term and attend monthly meetings to guide policy and budget decisions.

All members in districts 4, 5 and 6 will have the opportunity to vote in the 2022 co-op election. Ballots mail April 29 and members can vote by mail or online. Election results will be announced at the co-op's annual meeting June 10.

Co-op members interested in running for a board position in district 4, 5 or 6 may contact the general manager's office for an application, 800-421-0283, ext. 313.

For a district map and more details about board elections, visit polkburnett.com.



Brighten your yard from dusk to dawn



LED security lights for members of Polk-Burnett Electric Cooperative

Energy efficient LED security lights installed on Polk-Burnett poles operate from dusk to dawn. Members are charged a monthly fee for the light and may be charged for installation. Polk-Burnett LED security lights are approved by the International Dark Sky Association and were tested by a local lake association.

Visit our website or call for details: 800-421-0283, ext. 308 or polkburnett.com

IF YOU RECEIVE AN EMAIL SURVEY, WE APPRECIATE YOUR FEEDBACK TO HELP US IMPROVE.

All members who submit a survey will be entered in a drawing for a \$50 bill credit.

Polk-Burnett is your local Touchstone Energy Cooperative. Reliable power with efficiency and extraordinary service.

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Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer | Member Owned | Community Focused

