

POWERLINES

April 2026



January cold lingers with \$1 million power cost adjustment

by General Manager Steve Stroshane

As we look forward to spring flowers and warming temps, I'd like to explain how a cold snap back in January is impacting the cost of power today.

In February, Polk-Burnett received news of a power cost adjustment (PCA) of just over \$1 million on our wholesale power bill from Dairyland Power Cooperative. The PCA is an additional \$1 million, above our cost of power. Normal PCAs are passed through to member electric bills, either as a charge or credit, per board policy. However, this wasn't a normal PCA. Read on to see why energy prices skyrocketed and how we worked to lower the impact for our members.

Winter storm Fern unleashes cold and snow

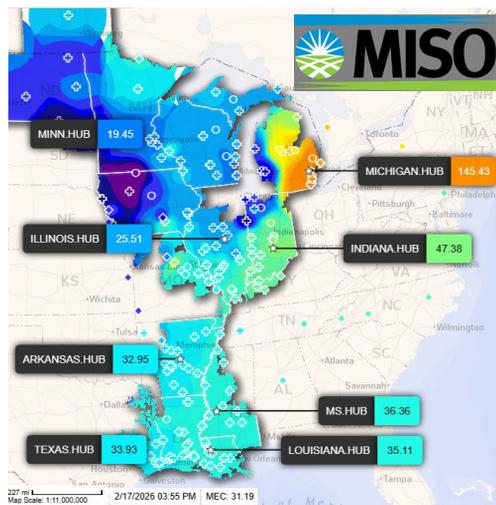
It's not unusual for northern Wisconsin to be cold in January. We're prepared to handle a stretch of 20-below temps. But this last January, an Arctic blast impacted a large part of the country, from the Midwest to the South and East Coast. Do you remember pictures in the news of Washington, D.C. blanketed in snow, Nashville coated in ice and freezing temperatures all the way down to Texas and Florida? Even here at Polk-Burnett, where we are used to the cold, we set a new winter peak for energy use across our system in January 2026.

The high demand for heat and electricity stretched the grid throughout the region, and energy market prices rose sharply. The price of natural gas, used to fuel residential heating and power plants, increased 250%!

Bad timing for coal plant outage

To make matters worse, Dairyland's J.P. Madgett coal plant shut down Jan. 15 to Feb. 5 for an unplanned repair of the system that collects and removes bottom ash (tons of coal ash were stuck at the bottom of the boiler and required blasting to break free). With the 387-MW plant out of service, Dairyland had to buy more electricity than planned on the energy market, which came at a high price as temps dropped and energy demand soared across the region.

Dairyland is our wholesale power provider. We buy power from Dairyland and distribute it to you, our local members.



Conservation and load management reduced demand

On Saturday, January 24, the Midwest Independent System Operator (our regional grid operator that serves from Manitoba to Louisiana) initiated a Max Gen event to manage the shortage of electricity and high prices, caused by high demand. Both MISO and Dairyland appealed to the public to conserve energy, and devices in our load management program were controlled across our system. We thank our members who participate in load management; this program is critical for shedding energy load when demand and prices are high.

Local solar helped power the grid and offset high market prices

To our advantage, the cold stretch was also bright and sunny, and our four solar arrays (SunTuria, Georgetown, Luck and Viola) helped reduce our wholesale power demand and cost by generating electricity locally. Our investment in local solar not only relieves high summer demand, but also offsets power market costs all year long. Solar energy produced locally reduced the amount of electricity we had to buy from Dairyland at a higher cost.

MISO map: You can view current MISO grid conditions, fuel mix and energy market prices on misoenergy.org.

Lowering the financial impact of January's market-driven increase for our members

As I shared above, our power cost adjustment from Dairyland was just over \$1 million for the month of January. Normally, PCAs from Dairyland are passed through to members, per board policy. But this wasn't normal. PCAs on our Dairyland power bill for all 12 months of 2025 totaled \$529,000, not even close to our January PCA of \$1 million.

Instead of passing the full amount to our members, we researched many options and worked within our budget to pay down and absorb \$831,000, which is 76% of the January PCA from Dairyland. This lowers the power cost adjustment to 1.17¢ per kWh for members, instead of the full 4.6¢. The PCA from Dairyland was spread over two months on March (0.55¢/kWh) and April (0.62¢/kWh) electric bills. We know higher bills are never welcome, but we hope this eases the burden.

As a cooperative, we are committed to keeping electricity rates as low as possible for members, with the goal of recovering actual costs, not generating profit. We shared a refresher on electric bill charges on the back page and we're here to help if you're looking for ways to lower your energy use, 800-421-0283, ext. 595.

This month we celebrate **Lineworker Appreciation Day** and recognize the men and women who keep the power flowing.

When storms roll in or the lights go out, Polk-Burnett lineworkers are ready when it matters most.

They take pride in powering our community, our homes and our lives, day and night, rain or shine.

Today and every day, we thank lineworkers for their service and commitment. #ThankALineworker

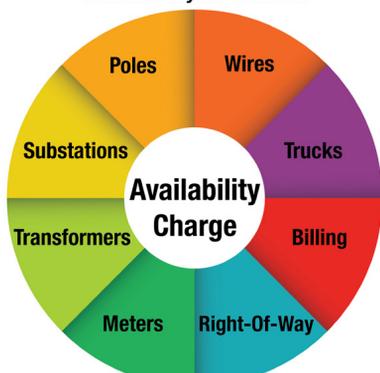
READY WHEN IT MATTERS MOST

LINeworker APPRECIATION DAY
APRIL 13, 2026

Reliable power with efficiency
and extraordinary service



The cost of making power available at your location.



Understanding your electric bill

As a not-for-profit cooperative, Polk-Burnett sets rates to provide electricity at the cost of service, not to generate profit. For transparency, your electric bill is itemized into three charges:

1. Availability Charge: Covers costs to build and maintain the electric system. Whether you use electricity a little or a lot, this is the investment needed by each member to bring power to your location. This charge is higher in rural areas because costs are shared by fewer members. At Polk-Burnett, six members per mile of line share costs versus 20 to 40 customers at utilities in areas with higher population density.

2. Energy Charge: Covers the cost of electricity you use.

3. Power Cost Adjustment (PCA): Either a charge or credit

that fluctuates as the cost of power goes up or down. The wholesale energy market is volatile, usually higher in summer and winter, and lower in spring and fall.

[Learn more about PCAs and rates on our website.](#) [Scan QR code >](#)



Want to lower your energy costs? Learn how with a home performance test

Co-op members, have your home tested by a certified energy rater to identify heat loss, evaluate insulation and learn the best ways to improve your home's energy performance.

We offer a \$350 rebate toward a certified home performance test and up to \$1,000 rebate on subsequent home energy upgrades. Call us to find a local energy rater and learn more, 800-421-0283, x318.



Safety: 5 signs that you should replace an electrical outlet

Outlets are designed to provide safe and reliable power, but older or damaged outlets can become a hazard. Do you have electrical outlets that need to be replaced? Here are five signs of trouble:

1. Loose connections. Over time, internal connections can become loose or worn out. If an outlet feels loose or wobbly when you plug something into it, you should replace the outlet.

2. Damaged plates. If the outlet plate is cracked, damaged or discolored, it may indicate damage to the electrical components behind the plate. In these cases, it's often safer to replace the entire unit rather than just the plate.

3. Flickering lights. If you notice lights flickering when plugged into a specific outlet, it could indicate an issue. Loose connections or faulty wiring within the outlet can disrupt the flow of electricity.

4. Two-pronged outlets. If you have older two-pronged (non-grounded) outlets, it may be time to upgrade. Grounded three-pronged outlets provide better safety and protect against electrical shocks.

5. Standard outlets in damp areas. If you have standard outlets located in the kitchen, bathroom or outdoors, you should upgrade them to ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) outlets. A GFCI is a fast-acting circuit breaker that shuts off power in case the outlet comes into contact with water, protecting against electrical shock.

Consider upgrading to smart outlets. They can save energy by automatically cutting power to unused, plugged-in electronic devices. They also give you remote control of plugged-in devices through your smartphone or voice assistant. Just install the smart outlet and connect to the accompanying app.

Replacing an outlet can be a DIY project. But always remember safety first! If you feel uncertain about any electrical issue or replacing an outlet, contact a qualified electrician.

Plan to attend our 2026 Member Appreciation Day & Annual Meeting Friday, June 5

April is safe digging month, call before you dig

Are you digging into a home improvement project this spring? Planting a tree or garden? Building a fence? Always call 8-1-1 three days before you begin, so underground utilities can be marked. Be safe! Damage to underground utility lines can cause injuries and outages. Thank you!



Know what's below.
Call before you dig.

Renewable blocks from your co-op make it easy to go green

Co-op members can purchase renewable energy blocks through our Evergreen program. No panels or turbines on your property. No equipment or installation cost. No maintenance. We make it easy!

Subscribe to one block or enough to power your whole house; 100 kWh blocks are 50¢ per month added to your electric bill. See our website or call for information.



Herbicide reminder for members

Polk-Burnett proactively maintains the right-of-way under power lines to keep power flowing safely to your home. Removing trees and brush on each side of high-voltage power lines reduces blinks and outages, improves access for outage repairs, reduces risk of fire and life-threatening electrocution, and meets state and federal requirements.

An important part of our right-of-way program includes herbicide application under power lines. Licensed contractors apply a low-volume herbicide to the leaves of woody stemmed vegetation in June through October. We notify members with a postcard or email prior to work on your property.

If you choose to decline the use of herbicide on your property, please complete the no-herbicide form on our website by **APRIL 30** or contact our right-of-way department, 800-421-0283, ext. 389.

Questions? Call us at 800-421-0283, ext. 389, or visit our website. [Scan QR code >](#)



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.

Follow us on Facebook. Sign up for our SmartHub app.

800-421-0283 • polkburnett.com



Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer | Member Owned | Community Focused



A Touchstone Energy Cooperative