

L-R: Mike Morris, vice president, Polk-Burnett board; Jeremy Browning, VP, generation, Dairyland Power Cooperative; Solar Sam; Ed Gullickson, president, Polk-Burnett board; and Steve Stroshane, Polk-Burnett general manager.

## Dairyland VP Jeremy Browning is special guest at 85th Annual Meeting



by General Manager Steve Stroshane

I'd like to thank all who attended our 85th Annual Meeting and Member Appreciation Day June 9. It was a picture-perfect day, with 630 members and guests at our office in Centuria. The event is always a great time to have fun, hear from you and share the benefits of co-op membership.

This year, we were pleased to welcome special guest Jeremy Browning, vice president of generation from Dairyland Power Cooperative, our wholesale power provider. Browning was introduced by Polk-Burnett Board President Ed Gullickson, who also serves on the Dairyland board.

Mr. Browning presented the keynote address on the state of the power market and its impact on local members. He began by providing an overview of Dairyland Power, a generation and transmission cooperative based in La Crosse. Dairyland's priority is generating and transmitting safe, reliable electricity to 24 distribution co-ops across Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa and Illinois, including here in our own service territory, Polk-Burnett Electric Co-op.

Mr. Browning also shared Dairyland's commitment to sustainability and a diverse generation portfolio. Dairyland's current energy mix is 39% natural gas, 37% coal and 22% solar, wind and other renewables. Browning explained that Dairyland is researching small modular nuclear reactors and energy storage technology, and that natural gas is essential for the transition to renewables. Dairyland has a carbon reduction goal of 50% by 2030, and renewable energy generation includes a hydroelectric station in Flambeau.

**"Sustainability means working to lower our costs and carbon footprint, without sacrificing safety or reliability for members. We understand the importance of grid reliability for your families, farms and businesses, and we must use a balanced, measured approach to carbon reduction. Innovation will drive the transition, and traditional resources will keep the lights on."** ~ Jeremy Browning, Dairyland Power Co-op

## Polk-Burnett performance is focused on reliability, service and cost controls

Ed Gullickson presided over the meeting and reported on giving back to members through Capital Credits, and giving back to the community through co-op scholarships and Operation Round Up.

In my review of co-op performance, I reported to members that Polk-Burnett delivers reliable electricity to 21,422 services and has 3,493 miles of power line; 1,894 are underground and 1,599 are overhead. Revenue for electric operations was \$35.4 million, with 59% (\$20.8 million) going to purchase wholesale power from Dairyland Power. "The remaining 41 cents is what we have to work with to keep your lights on," said Heather Gerber, finance and accounting manager. Inflation forced Polk-Burnett to increase electric rates in March, but prices in the power market have been lower than expected and we've passed those savings back to members with power cost adjustment credits.

Guests at the annual meeting also saw the co-op's new Ford F-150 Lightning electric truck and learned about two local solar developments, including the new Georgetown array scheduled to open late fall. Kids received \$5 DQ cards, took pictures with Polk-Burnett's Solar Sam mascot and had a chance to experience a day in the life of a co-op lineworker, trying on safety gear and riding in a bucket truck high above the event. Adults received anniversary and appreciation gifts, and entered prize drawings for bill credits and electric yard tools. Lunch was served at 11 a.m., with the meeting following at 1:30 p.m.



## Three incumbents re-elected to co-op board

Results of the 2023 board election were announced at 85th Annual Meeting.

*Three incumbent directors were re-elected, L-R: Ed Gullickson of Amery representing District 3, Cindy Thorman of Osceola representing District 1, and Mike Morris of Luck representing District 2.*

The election was conducted by mail and online by an independent election contractor. Ballots mailed to members April 28 and the deadline to vote was May 30. Voter participation was 12.6%, with 723 paper ballots and 173 online ballots received from 7,101 eligible voters.

Gullickson, Thorman and Morris will serve three-year terms on the board.

Directors meet monthly to make policy and budget decisions. They are elected by members, and each represents a district in the co-op's service territory. Overall, nine co-op directors serve on the electric cooperative board.

Other Polk-Burnett board directors are Joe Metro, Balsam Lake, District 4; John Ukura, Luck, District 5; Wilfred Owens, Frederic, District 6; Jerry Okonek, Spooner, District 7; Chuck Brookshaw, Webster, District 8; and Tom Swenson, Webster, District 9.

Polk-Burnett Electric Cooperative is owned and governed by the members we serve, and local board governance is one of the greatest advantages of our co-op business model.

We thank all of you who participated in our 2023 board election, 85th Annual Meeting and Member Appreciation Day!

*Annual meeting highlights, handouts and a list of prize winners are posted on [polkburnett.com](http://polkburnett.com). Printed reports are also available at co-op offices in Centuria and Siren.*



## Operation Round Up donates \$28,925 to community programs

Feed My Neighbor Food Pantry was one of 26 local nonprofits to benefit from the co-op's Operation Round Up program this summer. Co-op employees presented a \$1,500 grant to volunteers at the new food pantry in July.

It's located next to the Centuria Post Office and is open for all Polk County residents Monday 2 to 5 p.m., Tuesday 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., Thursday 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and Saturday 9 to 11 a.m.

"We thank our members for your participation and generosity," said Polk-Burnett General Manager Steve Stroshane. "We are proud to support our community through Operation Round Up, according to our cooperative principles."

See all summer Operation Round Up grant recipients and learn how your nonprofit can apply on polkburnett.com. The next application deadline is September 1.



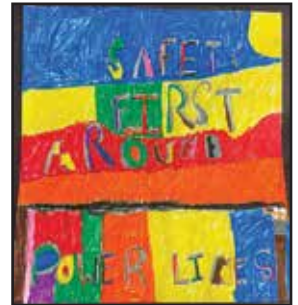
## Congratulations, safety poster contest winners

We would like to recognize local third graders, Lane Kuechenmeister of Frederic and Solomon Schradle of Clayton, winners of our 2023 Electrical Safety Poster Contest. Each received a \$25 VISA gift card for their talent and creativity, and their artwork was submitted to the state competition.



S. Schradle, Clayton

The contest was hosted by Polk-Burnett and the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association during Electrical Safety Month in May, and reminds everyone to be safe around electricity and electrical equipment at home and school.



L. Kuechenmeister, Frederic

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**ENERGY TIP**  
Ceiling fans cool people, not spaces. Turn them off when you leave the room.

**Energy tip: Ceiling fans**

Ceiling fans cool people, not spaces. Turn them off when you leave the room.

Ceiling fans can make a space feel 4 degrees cooler. You can raise the thermostat a few degrees when fans are in use with no change in comfort!

## Do the Summer Shift: Reduce electricity when demand and cost are highest, summer weekdays, 1 - 6 p.m.

Your action reduces the need for power generation, which lowers energy costs and carbon for everyone!

### Smart energy savings:

1. Do laundry in the morning or after 6 p.m. and use cold water.
2. Take advantage of free solar energy and dry clothes outside on a clothesline.
3. Start the dishwasher after 6 p.m. and run only full loads. Open after wash cycle to let dishes air dry.
4. Shut off unnecessary lights and electronics.
5. Avoid watering outside and running your well during peak times.
6. Charge EVs overnight.

Do The  
**SUMMER  
SHIFT**

SMART ENERGY SAVINGS

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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