

February 2026

POWERLINES



Introducing Cedar Lake Substation: Enhancing reliability and meeting growing energy demand

by Steve Stroshane, left, general manager, and Jarod Boerst, right, co-op engineer

We are excited to announce the completion of the Cedar Lake Substation in the Town of Star Prairie, which was successfully connected to the grid in December 2025. This marks a significant milestone for Polk-Burnett Electric Cooperative, as it is our first new substation to go online since 2001. Cedar Lake Substation will help meet growing energy needs for members in East Farmington, Somerset and Star Prairie areas.

The substation receives electricity from Dairyland Power Cooperative's high-voltage transmission lines. All substations within our service area are owned by Dairyland, and we are responsible for delivering power from the substation to you, our local members.

The primary benefit of our investment in Cedar Lake Substation is improved reliability. This new infrastructure reduces high energy demand at Farmington Substation and helps restore outages faster, with approximately \$25,000 per year in operating cost savings.

Relieving Pressure on Farmington Substation

Farmington Substation is currently serving one of the most heavily loaded circuits in our system. Backup support comes all the way from Trap Rock Substation on County M, east of Osceola.

Farmington ranks third on our list for substation growth, providing electricity to 2,150 homes, farms, and businesses. The substation has grown by about 1,000 member accounts since the year 2000.



We will transfer 875 locations to our new Cedar Lake Substation, reducing the load on Farmington to about 1,275 locations served.

During the hot Labor Day weekend of 2023, the demand for electricity at Farmington peaked at 7,500 kW. By transferring 3,000 kW of summer peak load to Cedar Lake, we will reduce Farmington's peak to a more manageable 4,500 kW.

Co-op line crews played a vital role in the construction of Cedar Lake Substation. Pictured left, they reconfigured high-voltage power lines. Electricity is delivered over high-voltage transmission lines from generation facilities to substations. From there, it is distributed over local power lines to member homes, farms, and businesses.



Faster Outage Restoration

Cedar Lake Substation is equipped with advanced technology that simplifies the switching procedure and allows us to quickly re-route power during outages. This means that members can be served from neighboring Farmington and Sand Lake substations if necessary.

For example, some of you may recall the winter storm in December 2020, which brought freezing rain and strong winds. It caused power lines to gallop and collide, *left*, resulting in a four-hour outage for 825 members. With Cedar Lake Substation online, we can now re-route electricity from another substation and restore power in minutes, making a significant impact on a cold winter night for affected members.

Another example comes from July 2024, when a car accident involving a guywire led to an eight-hour power outage for 875 co-op members. With the new Cedar Lake Substation in service, incidents like this can be managed quickly to get your lights back on. Cedar Lake Substation is important for modernizing the grid and meeting your electricity demand. This investment in our local grid helps us build a brighter, more resilient future.

Roses are red, violets are blue...

You light up our days and are at the heart of everything we do!

We're grateful to have earned an American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI®) score of 87 on a 100-point scale, based on member feedback from our December survey. The annual member satisfaction survey was emailed to 14,695 members, and 1,384 were returned for a 9% response rate.

In addition to scoring four standard ACSI questions about your satisfaction, members shared 754 comments. We read every comment and respond to members to answer questions and resolve problems.

Surveys give members a voice and help us learn what's working and what we can do better for our members and community. *Thank you for your feedback and high scores. It is greatly appreciated!*

All who submitted a survey were entered into a drawing for a \$50 bill credit. Congratulations to the following winners:

Earl Jansen, Balsam Lake
Mikayla Mack, Clear Lake
Chloe Schaar, Osceola
Jim Schorzmann, Spooner
Mark Taczala, Siren

Eugene Leatherman, St. Croix Falls
Kari Meyers, Luck
Jason Schmidt, Osceola
Bryan Shobe, Dresser
Raymond Wiedmeyer, Webster



American Customer Satisfaction Index

Compared to publicly measured energy utilities in the ACSI® survey of customers rating their own energy utility. Results based on data provided by Polk-Burnett Energy Cooperative, collected between December 1 - 9, 2025. ACSI did not regulate the survey administration or sample size. ACSI and its logo are registered trademarks of the American Customer Satisfaction Index LLC. For more about the ACSI, visit www.theacsi.org.

Stay warm.
Stay safe.



Should I use a space heater or turn up the heat?

Drafty room? Before reaching for a space heater, consider if it's better to turn up the thermostat. Space heaters are designed to warm small spaces, not your entire home. If you find yourself relying on a space heater, it may be time to address your home's energy efficiency. Try these tips to improve comfort in your home, and save energy and money:

- ✿ Seal air leaks with caulk and weatherstripping to prevent drafts.
- ✿ Add insulation. Attic insulation gives you the biggest return on your investment.
- ✿ Check your heating system; it could be time for a new filter, a service check or upgrade.
- ✿ Use programmable thermostats to heat when and where you need it.

Once your home is sealed and insulated, a space heater can be used to increase warmth in specific rooms, without turning up the heat for the whole house. A space heater, like a ceiling fan in summer, improves comfort in a small area, but it's not a whole-house solution.

Always follow these safety rules when using a space heater:

- ✿ Make sure space heater has an auto shutoff if it tips over.
- ✿ Plug space heater directly into outlet, never an extension cord.
- ✿ Place space heater on a level, non-flammable surface, away from rugs, curtains and furniture.
- ✿ Never leave space heater unattended when in use. Unplug when leaving the room or going to bed.



Be aware that running an electric space heater will increase your electric bill. For tips, rebates and incentives to improve energy efficiency and comfort in your home, contact our member services team, 800-421-0283, ext. 595.

Save the date **Electronics Recycle Day** **Friday, April 24**

FREE for co-op members! Watch for more information in your March Powerlines.



New for 2026: Larger rebate for co-op members on energy efficient heat pumps

Today's electric heat pumps – air source and geothermal – provide high efficiency heating and cooling in an all-in-one system that can help lower your energy bills and improve comfort in your home.

EnergySense rebates can help co-op members make the switch to an energy efficient heat pump. Give us a call to compare heating and cooling options, and learn about our new, larger rebate on heat pumps for co-op members, 800-421-0283, ext. 318. (No DIY units.)

Deadline to apply for 2026 co-op board election is March 6

This spring, Polk-Burnett will hold an election for co-op board directors in districts 1, 2 and 3. Members in those districts have an opportunity to get involved in co-op decision making by running for a seat on the board. Directors serve three-year terms and represent all co-op members at monthly meetings to guide policy and budget decisions. If you are interested in appearing on the 2026 board election ballot, contact the general manager's office, 800-421-0283, ext. 313. The deadline to apply is March 6.



Learn about the board of directors and see map of co-op districts on polkburnett.com.

Convenient bill pay option, including Pay-by-Cash at local retailers



For your convenience, Polk-Burnett offers many ways to pay your electric bill, including payment on our website and SmartHub app, by phone, through the mail or in our office during business hours or secure drop box.

Members can also set up auto pay through your bank or credit card. **We recommend auto pay from your checking or savings account.** It's the easiest way to pay your electric bill: No paper, no stamps, no need to update expired credit cards! Enroll on SmartHub, polkburnett.com or give us a call. We're happy to assist, 800-421-0283, ext. 335.

Do you know you can also pay your electric bill at **Dollar General, Family Dollar** and **Walmart**? Just present the barcode from your SmartHub account. If you don't have a SmartHub account, we can help you enroll or provide a barcode for you. *Please note that there is a \$1.50 convenience fee, paid to the retailer, to use this service.*

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Let's stay connected

Make sure you receive your Capital Credits and the best service from our field crew and office staff. Keep your contact information up to date on SmartHub, polkburnett.com or 800-421-0283, ext. 335.



Get social with us

Does it seem like many of the friends and organizations you follow on Facebook don't appear in your newsfeed anymore? Facebook used to be a place to connect with people and businesses you chose to follow, but now the algorithm decides for you. Frustrating, right?

But there is something you can do! Make sure to search for Polk-Burnett Electric Cooperative whenever you visit Facebook. Then, be sure to like and share our posts. You'll help co-op stories reach more people and increase the chance that we'll show up in your feed from time to time.

You'll find so much value on our Facebook page, from energy savers and rebates to co-op and community events, photos from the crew and always important outage updates. Search for our page and visit daily to see what's new!

Thank you! We love co-op Super Fans!



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



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