



Preparing first responders for EVs

by General Manager Steve Strohane

Over the past two years, I'm proud to report that Polk-Burnett Electric Cooperative has provided electric vehicle (EV) safety training for 170 first responders in our community. Above, 75 first responders from Burnett County participated in EV safety training at our Siren office in April, and 95 Polk County first responders joined us at our Centuria office in April 2023.

Whether you like EVs or not, both the co-op and our communities have a responsibility to be ready for them. For us, it means being prepared to provide reliable electricity for all the ways our members power your lives, including charging EVs, if that's your choice. As I write this column, we already have more than 65 co-op members with residential chargers on our lines.

For our first responders, being prepared means having the latest knowledge so they can respond with confidence to emergencies that involve EVs. We never know when the life of a loved one might depend on it!

We believe that our first responders are essential for our safety and quality of life in our hometowns, and EV training is one way the co-op can help. Our EV safety training for first responders was offered as part of our co-op commitment to community, and prioritized safety and community readiness.

The course covered electric vehicle and battery technology, responding to EV accidents and disabling EVs, towing, unlocking and operating EVs, fire suppression, submersion and extrication techniques. The three-hour training included hands-on engagement with different types of EVs, including our Ford Lightning truck, *pictured below and story right*.

We thank our instructor, Mike Klimkosky from EVsafe, a southern Wisconsin-based training organization. Klimkosky combines EV expertise with more than 30 years of experience as a first responder.

Thank you, first responders, for your dedication to safety

The following organizations attended our EV safety training:

Burnett County, April 2024: Grantsburg, Jackson, Scott, St. Croix Hertel, Siren, Webster, Webb Lake and Danbury fire departments, St. Croix Tribal Police and Siren Police.

Polk County, April 2023: Amery, Apple River, Allied, Centuria, Cushing, Frederic, Lorain, Luck, Milltown, Osceola and St. Croix Falls fire departments, Polk County Sheriff's Office, Northwestern EMS and Lakes Region EMS.



Polk-Burnett delivers safe, reliable electricity to power your homes, businesses, farms, as well as your electric vehicles. Co-op EV charging programs encourage off-peak, overnight EV charging. Let us know if we can help you plug in.



**STOP AND SEE US
AND THE LIGHTNING EV
AT LUCKY DAYS CAR SHOW
SATURDAY, JULY 20!**



20 local nonprofits receive \$20,244 from Operation Round Up

Our Operation Round Up program donated \$20,244 to 20 local nonprofits in April, including \$1,000 to the **Inter-County Cooperative Publishing Association's Foundation** for a children's newspaper that champions reading skills, *pictured*. See all spring grant winners on polkburnett.com and learn how your nonprofit can apply.

Thank you, co-op members! Your generosity makes a big difference in our community!

Funding for Operation Round Up is donated by members of Polk-Burnett Electric Cooperative who round their monthly electric bill up to the next even dollar amount. Grant recipients are selected quarterly by a committee of co-op members, with financial donations awarded to nonprofit organizations that enrich our local quality of life.

Nonprofit organizations interested in applying for a grant or co-op members who'd like to round their bill up in support of Operation Round Up may contact 800-421-0283 or polkburnett.com. The next application deadline is September 1.

Ford Lightning after one year on the job

by Member Services Mgr. Todd Schulte

Polk-Burnett leased a 2022 Ford F-150 Lightning EV in spring 2023. The sticker price was \$58,000. An EV tax credit reduced our lease payment about 15%.

After one year and 12,000 miles, the all-electric pickup has proven to be a good work truck, with plenty of range to travel throughout our co-op territory on any given day, and then is plugged in each night to be ready for the next workday.

The Lightning is a base model AWD with a battery range of 230 miles. Actual range depends on outdoor temperature and driving style. Cold winter weather really cuts the battery range, but it hasn't been a problem, as long as we know this and plan for it.

The Lightning is charged up overnight when demand and cost for electricity are lower. Some have questioned if EVs will overwhelm the electric grid. We recommend overnight charging because it uses off-peak electricity. Off-peak charging helps balance the grid by drawing power when demand is low. It follows the same principle as our water heater program.

We use a 7.2 kW Level 2 charger in the co-op garage. We get 2.3 miles of range for every 1 kWh of electricity. The cost to charge is about \$4.75 per 100 miles. Charging is less than the cost of gas and saves us money.

Maintenance has been minimal and also saves the co-op money. We rotate the tires every 10,000 miles and fill windshield wiper fluid. There is no need for oil changes on an EV.

The Lightning has a very comfortable ride, meets our work needs and saves money. It's also practical; co-op employees use it to deliver water heaters to members, supplies to crews in the field, and back and forth between our offices and substations.

The experience of owning, charging and driving an EV also helps us understand the technology, so we can be a resource for our members who choose to drive electric. Overall, it's a smart investment, and as an early adopter, we've had no problems.



Lauren Sobczak is our 2024 Youth Tour delegate

Lauren Sobczak of Amery was selected as Polk-Burnett Electric Cooperative's delegate for the 2024 Youth Tour of Washington, D.C. June 16-22. She is the daughter of co-op members Mariann and Kevin Sobczak.

Lauren will join more than 1,500 high school students from electric co-ops across the country at Youth Tour this month to learn about cooperatives, the rural electric program, U.S. history, government and democracy. They will meet with congressional leaders and tour Capitol Hill, national monuments and museums. The tour is hosted by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) and the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association (WECA), with local sponsorship by Polk-Burnett Electric Cooperative.

"Polk-Burnett is pleased to support youth leadership opportunities for our members, according to our cooperative principles," said General Manager Steve Stroshane. "We congratulate Lauren and know she will represent our co-op and community well."

To be selected as Polk-Burnett's Youth Tour delegate, Lauren demonstrated community service, and wrote essays about the value of cooperatives in our community and why she wants to represent her local electric co-op for the Youth Tour of Washington, D.C. She is also the winner of a 2024 co-op scholarship and will receive \$1,500 for college next fall.

Lauren attended high school and played hockey at Deerfield Academy in Massachusetts, graduating in spring 2024. She is enrolled at Middlebury College in Vermont this fall, where she will play hockey and softball, and study international relations and economics, with a minor in Spanish. Her Youth Tour application included community service as a coach for Amery Youth Hockey Association, youth softball camp and Special Olympics. Lauren was also a Sunday school helper, an Amery Fire Explorer and volunteered for Feed Our Starving Children, The Salvation Army and Books for Africa.

Polk-Burnett's Youth Tour program does not affect electric rates; it is funded with unclaimed Capital Credits that would be forfeited to the state if not used for education, and by the generosity of members who donate their Capital Credits. Visit polkburnett.com to learn more about Youth Tour and donating future Capital Credits 800-421-0283.



Co-op seeks members with unclaimed Capital Credits

Polk-Burnett is looking for members who have unclaimed Capital Credit checks issued in 2019 and 2020. The checks were returned by the post office as undeliverable, were never cashed, or there was no valid address to send funds to.

If these members are not located by July 12, the unclaimed funds will be forfeited to the Federated Youth Foundation and used by the cooperative for educational or charitable purposes as directed by our bylaws.

[See list of unclaimed Capital Credits on \[polkburnett.com\]\(http://polkburnett.com\)](#)



Summer rate in effect June to September

Your summer rate is 12.3¢ per kWh, for invoice dates June to September. Your winter rate is 10.71¢ per kWh, for invoice dates October to May. Rates are set to reflect actual costs. Polk-Burnett pays a higher summer rate for wholesale power because members use more electricity systemwide during the hot days of summer, making demand and cost rise. For help lowering your energy bill, visit polkburnett.com or call member services, 800-421-0283, ext. 595.

You can help lower energy costs and carbon



Do you know that Polk-Burnett does not own power plants? We buy electricity from Dairyland Power Cooperative at a rate based on the Midwest energy market, and then distribute it to you, our co-op members. You can help us keep our wholesale cost of power from rising:

Do the Summer Shift: Shift your electricity use away from the hours when regional grid demand and cost are highest. Reduce electricity 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. weekdays this summer.

Beat the Peak: We'll send you a peak alert by text, email or phone asking you to reduce electricity when demand and cost are high. Participants receive about nine summer peak alerts and three winter peak alerts. Enroll on polkburnett.com or 800-421-0283.

Together we save! When you reduce electricity during peak times, you reduce the wholesale cost of electricity, which helps hold rates down. You also reduce the need for power generation, which cuts carbon and is good for the environment. Thank you!



AC notice for members in load management

During peak demand periods, air conditioners/heat pumps enrolled in the co-op's load management program are cycled every 15 minutes, with up to nine peak events per summer from 2 to 6 p.m. Participating members may also experience economic-driven control periods 6 to 10:30 p.m. Load control reduces the co-op's cost for power during times of peak demand and benefits all members. Historically, control periods are on the hottest days of the summer; they are based on electricity demand throughout the entire Midwest region and may occur when local weather conditions are not extreme. Thank you! [Sign up for load control notifications at \[polkburnett.com/load-management\]\(http://polkburnett.com/load-management\)](#)



Help us protect the Karner blue butterfly

Polk-Burnett follows eco-friendly practices to help protect the Karner blue butterfly. We've marked habitat sites under power lines, and ask co-op members and employees to tread carefully in these areas this summer. This will help the DNR preserve and study the endangered butterfly. The Karner blue butterfly is often found near purple lupine plants in sandy soil. Thank you!

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

