

# POWERLINES

June 2025



## Taking proactive measures to prevent power outages

by General Manager Steve Stroshane, top, and Operations Manager Jason Evenson, below



Construction of Polk-Burnett's electric distribution system began in 1938, when local farmers established the cooperative to bring electricity to rural farms and families. Today, we operate and maintain more than 3,500 miles of power line across 2,000 square miles, with 1,575 miles overhead and 1,940 miles underground. Our annual Work Plan directs investment in the construction and maintenance of our longstanding system to ensure we meet your power needs safely and reliably.

This month, we'd like to highlight three proactive maintenance programs that identify and resolve issues before they cause outages or safety concerns:

### 1. Pole testing

Power poles are inspected on a 10-year rotation to ensure they are strong enough to carry the attached equipment and electrical load. Contractors perform a visual inspection and test each pole for damage, with 10% of poles tested annually. With approximately 35,000 poles on the system, about 3,500 poles are tested each year. Poles that do not meet standards are replaced to ensure reliable electricity for co-op members. The five-year average rejection rate is 1.5%. In 2024, we identified 26 poles that required replacement.

### 2. Underground transformer inspection

Underground equipment is inspected on a seven-year rotation to verify the structural integrity of the steel or fiberglass enclosure, and make sure internal components are functioning properly and free of animal damage (snakes, rodents and ants often inhabit green transformer boxes). Contractors also ensure equipment is safely locked and secured. In 2024, we tested more than 2,000 underground transformers and repaired 47.

### 3. Danger tree scouting and removal

In addition to regular right-of-way clearing, we are always scouting the system for dead, dying and leaning danger trees. When found, danger trees are marked and trimmed or removed to eliminate threat to power lines. This reduces outages and blinks caused by fallen branches and trees during severe weather. In 2024, we patrolled 350 miles of line and removed 922 danger trees. If you spot danger trees on or near power lines, please contact us at 800-421-0283, ext. 389. Thank you!

For 87 years, Polk-Burnett's electric grid has served our community thanks to responsible planning, investment and proactive maintenance. You can trust that this resilient system will continue to serve for future generations.



## Proactive measure for homeowners: Move your service line out of harm's way (underground)



As we enter the summer storm season, we'd like to offer you a fee-based opportunity to move your overhead service line underground. Your service line connects your home to the transformer and the primary power line. Moving the line underground is one way homeowners can add protection from storm outages. Other benefits of underground lines are a cleaner appearance and eliminating the need for right-of-way clearing in your yard.

**There is a fee to move your service line underground.** Converting your line requires trenching or plowing and may require a padmount transformer box or pedestal. A co-op staking engineer will visit your site to determine the best route for an underground service line and will quote a cost for conversion. Contact us to get started, 800-421-0283, ext. 389.

## Summer rate in effect June through September

Polk-Burnett's summer rate is in effect for invoice dates June through September. Co-op electricity rates are based on 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.

### Rate increase begins in July

Last month, Polk-Burnett announced that a 3% electric rate increase will begin in July 2025 to cover the rising cost of building and maintaining the electric system. For residential, seasonal and small commercial members, bills will go up about \$3 for every \$100 spent, or \$55 annually for an average bill of 1,000 kWh. Large commercial members will see an increase of 4.7%.

*"Rate increases are never easy, but this is necessary to continue our investment in the electric grid and provide you with safe, reliable electricity," said Board President Ed Gullickson.*

Inflation is driving up the cost of the materials and equipment, especially wire, trucks, transformers and things made with metals (copper, aluminum, steel). Contractor services for right-of-way clearing, underground cable installation and underground utility locating have also escalated.

**Please call us at 800-421-0283 or visit our office or website if you have billing questions (ext. 335) or are looking for ways to save energy and money (ext. 318).**

July 2025 Rate Increase	Current	New
Daily Availability Charge	\$1.219	\$1.282
Summer kWh Energy Charge	12.30¢	12.57¢
Winter kWh Energy Charge	10.71¢	10.98¢



Co-op members: Considering solar for your home or business?  
Learn what you should know before you install

## FREE SOLAR ENERGY SEMINAR

Tuesday, July 15, 5 p.m.

Polk-Burnett Electric Cooperative, 1001 State Road 35, Centuria

Guest Speaker: Kris Schmid, Legacy Solar

Register on [polkburnett.com](http://polkburnett.com) or 800-421-0283, x318.

## CO-OP MEMBERS: GET A REBATE ON SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEMS UP TO \$600 FOR QUALIFYING INSTALLATIONS

Contact us for details: 800-421-0283, x318 or [polkburnett.com](http://polkburnett.com)



## Rebates for Polk-Burnett Propane customers

\$300 propane water heater  
\$300 propane furnace/boiler  
\$250 propane dryer  
\$250 propane fireplace  
\$250 propane kitchen stove/cooktop



Available through Polk-Burnett Propane and the Wisconsin Propane Education & Research Council to ensure safety and savings for propane customers!

Contact us at 800-421-0283, ext. 378 or 411 for eligibility details and rebate forms.

## See your co-op commitment to community in action



Polk-Burnett hosted National Electric Code **training for electrical contractors** at our Centuria office April 24. Thank you to 45 local contractors who attended to earn CEUs for licensing and learn updates about co-op programs and electric service connections. We're grateful for the contractors we work with to keep the lights on in our community.



Co-op employees conducted **high school tours** in April, sharing information about co-op careers, the energy grid and safe electricity. Students from Luck and Siren high schools gained an appreciation for the important work we do in the field and office to deliver reliable power and extraordinary service. In May, we participated in Career Skills Day for hundreds of local students at Polk County Fairgrounds.



FCCLA students at Luck High School will showcase their skills at events and competitions, thanks to a \$1,000 grant from Polk-Burnett's **Operation Round Up**. We're proud to support Luck's Family, Career and Community Leaders of America, a student organization that helps youth develop life skills. Operation Round Up also awarded \$1,000 each to food shelves serving Burnett County, Unity and Luck. This spring, \$16,500 was awarded to 14 nonprofits that improve our local quality of life. See all grant winners and learn how your nonprofit can apply on [polkburnett.com](http://polkburnett.com).

**Thank you, co-op members for rounding up; your generosity makes a difference!**



## Ease summer strain on the electric grid

**Do the Summer Shift:** Co-op members, shift energy use away from peak times when demand and cost are highest, **summer weekdays, 1 to 6 p.m.** It's easy: turn off lights, delay starting dishwasher and laundry, and raise AC a few degrees; a fan can help you feel 4 degrees cooler!

**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 up to nine summer peak alerts and three winter peak alerts. Enroll on [polkburnett.com](http://polkburnett.com) or 800-421-0283, ext. 335.

**Together we save energy and money!** As energy demand rises, find ways to use less energy during peak times to ease strain on the electric grid. Thank you!



Please **DON'T**  
post signs on  
power poles.



## Don't post on poles

**Please help keep lineworkers safe:**  
Don't post signs, birdhouses, satellite dishes or any objects on power poles. Thank you!

Staples, nails and tacks used to hang signs are dangerous for co-op lineworkers. Objects on poles can puncture protective gear, making lineworkers vulnerable to falls, cuts and electrocution.

## 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. 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)

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](http://polkburnett.com)



Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer | Member Owned | Community Focused

