

October 2023

PowerLines



Local governance is the co-op way

by General Manager Steve Strohane

Fall is a favorite time of year in Wisconsin. It's a time when many of us look forward to cooler weather, football and pumpkin spice treats. For the co-op, October is also when we recognize National Co-op Month and the seven cooperative principles that guide us. This month, I'd like to focus on Cooperative Principle #2: democratic member control, and share what it means to all of us at Polk-Burnett and to you, as a co-op member.

Co-op directors are members

As a cooperative, Polk-Burnett is owned by the members we serve and governed by a board of directors elected from the membership.

Polk-Burnett has nine directors who do significant work on behalf of the membership. They play an essential role in determining the direction and priorities of the co-op, keeping your lights on today and planning for our community's energy needs of tomorrow.

Directors attend monthly board meetings. They are responsible for setting electric rates and policies, and approving the annual budget and improvement plans across our electric distribution system.

Directors represent our interests with state and national industry groups, as well as with our wholesale power provider, Dairyland Power Cooperative. They also participate in regulatory and legislative efforts at state and federal levels to champion affordable and reliable electricity for rural co-op members.

Directors serve in a highly complex and rapidly changing energy industry. They are experienced and knowledgeable in the business of the co-op. We're proud to say that all have received advanced education to become Credentialed Cooperative Directors, with the exception of our newest director, who is working toward certification now.

Co-op directors are local residents

Board directors are permanent residents of the co-op district where they are elected to serve. Like directors on a school or town board, co-op directors must live in the community where they are elected. Local directors represent the interests of all members, they understand and respond to local and industry issues according to our co-op mission, principles and values.

Meet your co-op board directors

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank our board directors for their service to the co-op and our community. Our directors navigate changes in the energy industry, technology and member expectations to meet the long-term needs of all Polk-Burnett members. We are grateful for their leadership and support!



- District 1, Cindy Thorman, Osceola
- District 2, Mike Morris, Luck
- District 3, Ed Gullickson, Amery
- District 4, Joe Metro, Balsam Lake
- District 5, John Ukura, Luck
- District 6, Wilfred Owens, Frederic
- District 7, Jerry Okonek, Spooner
- District 8, Chuck Brookshaw, Webster
- District 9, Tom Swenson, Webster

Over the next few months, we'll introduce you to our co-op directors, sharing a brief biography and their experience on the Polk-Burnett board.



Cooperative Principles

1. Voluntary and open membership
2. Democratic member control
3. Member economic participation
4. Autonomy and independence
5. Education, training and information
6. Cooperation among cooperatives
7. Concern for community

Co-op Values

1. Honesty, integrity and an excellent reputation
2. Exceptional member service
3. Respect and appreciation for employees
4. Commitment to safety and environmental stewardship
5. Commitment to community and cooperative principles

Co-op mission

To benefit member-owners by providing reliable electricity with efficiency and extraordinary service.

Co-op Fast Facts

1. Polk-Burnett Electric Co-op is member and community focused.
2. Polk-Burnett is governed by a local board of directors elected from the membership.
3. Polk-Burnett is not for profit. Electric rates cover the cost of business and are not marked up to make a profit.
4. When revenue exceeds the cost of doing business, members get money back as Capital Credits.
5. Polk-Burnett maintains 3,493 miles of power lines across 2,000 square miles.



Get to know Co-op Board Director John Ukura

John Ukura is our newest co-op director. He was elected in 2022 in District 5. John and his wife live on Bone Lake outside Luck and are active in the community. John serves as treasurer for the Luck Lions Club and is a volunteer for the Bone Lake Management District. Recently, he became a mentor for Kinship of Polk County, where he said it's been rewarding to participate in outdoor recreational activities with his mentee.

John said his first year on Polk-Burnett's board has been a great learning experience. "As a retired electrical engineer, I understand the technical details, but I've had to learn industry terminology and accounting principles. I now better understand the unique challenges faced by rural electric co-ops. The co-op is much more than just another investor-owned business you pay monthly. I've been impressed with the support it provides the community and its member focus. The co-op encourages and listens to member feedback and takes action."

John enjoys discussing the pros and cons of electric vehicles with members and how utilities can responsibly transition to a lower carbon future. "As board directors, it's our responsibility to safely and reliably deliver power to our members at the lowest possible cost."

If you are an EV enthusiast, look for John on our new Facebook group, *NW Wisconsin EV Club*.

HAPPY CO-OP MONTH ♥ THANK YOU FOR BEING A MEMBER!



Lower winter rates begin October 1

As a co-op, we pass the winter savings on to you. Rates are based on actual costs.

- ✓ The winter rate is 10.71¢ per kWh; winter billing dates are October through May. Winter rates are lower because demand and wholesale power costs are lower.
- ✓ The summer rate is 12.3¢ per kWh; summer billing dates are June through September. Summer rates are higher because demand and wholesale power costs are higher.

Wisconsin Energy Assistance Notice:

Your household may be eligible for Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance, based on income and size.

For help paying your electric bill, contact West CAP, 715-265-4271.

OCTOBER IS FIRE SAFETY MONTH. KEEP YOUR HOME AND FAMILY SAFE. INSTALL SMOKE DETECTORS AND CHECK BATTERIES OFTEN!



SPECIAL CO-OP MEMBER PRICE ON MARATHON WATER HEATER 100-GALLON ON LOAD CONTROL



\$750, plus tax

A 100-gallon Marathon® water heater is an investment that pays for itself in energy savings. When you install it on the off-peak rate, it's one of the most cost-effective ways to heat water for your home.

- Costs no more to operate than 50-gallon tank
- Durable and built to last with corrosion-free tank



800-421-0283, x595 | polkburnett.com



Class of 2024: Win a \$1,500 co-op scholarship

Polk-Burnett will award up to 90 scholarships to high school seniors.

- Applicants must demonstrate community service.
- Parent/Guardian must be a member of Polk-Burnett Electric Co-op.
- Student must be going on to an accredited college, tech school or university.

APPLY ON POLKBURNETT.COM BY JANUARY 1, 2024.

Funded with unclaimed Capital Credits

that if not used for education would be forfeited to the state.

Donate your future Capital Credits to support co-op scholarships. Call us to learn how!



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

Safe Electricity.org



Nails can seriously hurt lineworkers

Picture lineworkers, repairing storm damage in the dark and cold. Their priority is restoring power safely and quickly. The last thing they should worry about is getting cut or caught on a staple or nail. Sharp objects on power poles can puncture their protective gear, exposing them to high-voltage wires. Nails and staples can cause cuts, and can snag clothing, resulting in falls.

Please don't post signs or objects on power poles.

Thank you for keeping lineworkers safe!

OCTOBER IS CYBERSECURITY MONTH



Watch out for utility scams

If you receive a suspicious or unexpected phone call, text or email demanding money, threatening to disconnect your power or offering a deal, hang up and login to SmartHub or call the co-op directly to verify the status of your account, **800-421-0283**.



GIVEAWAYS! For members during Co-op Month in October Plus, co-op coloring books for kids!

VISIT US IN CENTURIA OR SIREN DURING BUSINESS HOURS. One item per member. Giveaway subject to change.

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.

800-421-0283 • polkburnett.com



Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer | Member Owned | Community Focused

