



POWERLINES

October 2026

HAPPY CO-OP MONTH



Local voices shape co-op vision and strategy to provide power with purpose by General Manager Steve Stroshane

When you hear the word *cooperative*, what comes to mind? We hope you think of Polk-Burnett, your local electric cooperative. As a co-op, we are member owned and locally controlled. Decisions are *not* made in corporate boardrooms hundreds of miles away to benefit investors; they are made right here in Centuria, Wisconsin, by local employees and directors elected from the membership. This month, I'd like to share how we plan, budget and make decisions to meet your expectations for reliability, affordability and service.

Our mission is to benefit members by providing reliable electricity with efficiency and extraordinary service.

Listening to our members and community

Polk-Burnett follows a strategy execution system that uses a balanced scorecard and key performance metrics to pursue excellence and achieve breakthrough performance across our entire organization. I'm proud to say we have closed value gaps and attained top scores over the past decade, but we are always looking for ways to improve, making sure we identify and respond to challenges and opportunities on the horizon.

The first and most important step in strategy execution is listening to our members and community. We create opportunities to connect with members to learn what's working, what's important to you and what we can do better. Whether you respond to our surveys or social media posts, reach out to us by phone or email, stop by our office or visit us at the annual meeting, we are always happy to hear from you. We also conduct regular research to identify internal *strengths* and *weaknesses*, and external *opportunities* and *threats*.

Our vision

Our vision describes our desired state, where we want to be. It guides our work and resources toward high-level outcomes that benefit our member-owners. Our local co-op vision directs us to:

1. Reduce outage time to an average of 45 minutes or less per member, per year.
2. Be in the top 25% for low electric rates, compared to other Wisconsin utilities at 1,000 kWh.
3. Earn high member satisfaction scores, equal to or greater than the national Touchstone Energy average.
4. Keep employees safe and productive on the job through training and alignment with our mission and goals.
5. Be involved in our community.

Our vision is widely understood and shared by employees; it is reaffirmed and acted upon by co-op leadership and is measured for accountability and success.

Strategic action plans

Each August, we begin a strategic planning process to determine action plans and budgets for the year ahead. Strategic action plans identify where and how progress can be made to resolve weaknesses, reinforce strengths and respond to opportunities and threats. Action plans are developed in key areas:

1. Electric operations, reliability and power supply
2. Member service, communication and outreach
3. Financial strength and competitive rates
4. Technology and innovation
5. Human resources, employee safety, training and professional development

Financial forecasts, budgeting and investments are aligned to support strategic action plans. In addition to annual planning, we have long-range plans for electric grid improvements, right-of-way clearing, trucks, technology, employee succession, and co-op buildings and grounds.

Key performance indicators (KPIs) are carefully measured in each strategic area to ensure accountability—staying on target, on time and on budget.

Focus on technology

Technology is integrated into all action plans and is the backbone of providing exceptional service and reliable power. Like all modern organizations, we use computerized business systems for accounting and paying bills, tracking inventory, communication, and managing your member accounts and billing information. From substations to the meters on your home, technology enables us to efficiently operate the electric grid, and even helps us identify outages across 3,500 miles of power line before trucks roll!

People make the difference

Technology, strategy and vision are important, but they mean little without the people who bring them to life. Our co-op employees are highly qualified and dedicated to our mission. They give their very best every day, consistently looking for ways to work safely and efficiently. They are guided by our co-op values and deliver extraordinary service.

As a cooperative, we are not motivated by profit, but by service. We are local. We live in the communities we serve and want to help them thrive. Because we are local, we have the passion and flexibility to focus on what matters most to our members and communities.

This October, we invite you to join us in recognizing Co-op Month and our cooperative business model. We never lose sight of the fact that our members own the co-op, and our purpose is to serve you. ***Happy Co-op Month!***



The co-op invested \$5 million into grid upgrades in 2026. Our work plan includes converting miles of power line from overhead to underground to improve your reliability.



Lower winter rate begins October 1

Co-op electric rates are based on actual costs, and when we receive winter savings from our wholesale power supplier (Dairyland Power Cooperative) we pass the savings on to you!

The winter rate is 10.98¢ per kWh; winter billing dates are October through May. Winter rates are lower because demand and power costs are lower in the winter. The summer rate is 12.57¢ per kWh; summer billing dates are June through September. Summer rates are higher because demand and power costs are higher in the summer.

Wisconsin Energy Assistance

Your household may be eligible for the Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP), based on income and size. For help paying your electric bill, contact West CAP, 715-598-4750 or westcap.org.

Save energy and money with rebates for co-op members

- Up to \$750 for qualifying solar energy systems; let us help with cost-effective sizing and grid connection.
- Up to \$500 for Level 2 EV charger on load control; let us help you charge in the most cost-effective way.
- \$350 off home performance test, then up to \$1,000 on home energy upgrades.
- Rebates on geothermal and air source heat pumps, appliances and lighting.
- Special member price on Marathon water heater, just \$1,050 on load control.

Give us a call for rebates to save energy and money, and improve comfort in your home! 800-421-0283, ext. 318, or polkburnett.com.

That's the cooperative difference!



FALL INTO ENERGY SAVINGS

Contact us for more energy-saving tips!

Prepare now to lower your winter energy bills

These simple steps can help you save money on your heating bill and stay cozy this winter:

- Add or replace weather stripping around doors and windows.
- Seal leaks around pipes, wires and chimney with caulk.
- Install storm doors and windows if you have them.
- Vacuum heat vents and replace furnace filters.
- Close chimney damper when not in use.
- Turn off electronics and lights when you leave the room.

For more cost-saving ideas, contact our member services team, 800-421-0283, ext. 318 or visit polkburnett.com.

October is fire safety month. Keep your home and family safe. Install smoke detectors and check batteries often!

CLASS OF 2027

CO-OP COMMUNITY SERVICE SCHOLARSHIP & YOUTH TOUR AWARDS

High school seniors whose parents are active members of Polk-Burnett Electric Cooperative:
Show us your community service and you could win a co-op scholarship

up to **\$2,000!**

For technical school, college or university

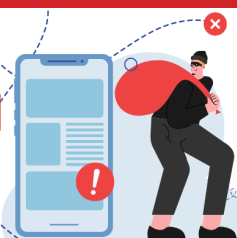


Plus, chance to win a trip to Washington, D.C. Youth Tour, June 17-23, 2027.



Visit polkburnett.com for eligibility, official rules and online application. APPLY ONLINE. DEADLINE TO APPLY: JANUARY 1, 2027.

BEWARE OF SCAM CALLS



October is Cybersecurity Awareness Month

Be skeptical of unexpected messages, especially those urging immediate action or asking for personal details.

Do not provide immediate payment or personal information by phone or email.

Do not click on suspicious links or open unexpected attachments.

Hang up on scammers and delete fraud email.

Call Polk-Burnett (or other service providers) directly using phone number on your bill.

Better yet, use SmartHub!
It's a safe, convenient way to pay your electric bill, track energy use and report outages.

TIP: Save Polk-Burnett's local 715 phone number in your contacts, so if we need to call you about your electric service, we won't show up as spam or an unknown contact, 715-646-2191.

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

