



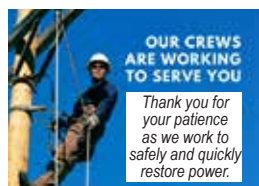
## Are you ready for the next big storm?

by General Manager Steve Stroshane

We have seen our share of severe weather in northern Wisconsin, including the July 2019 Polk County tornado and straight-line wind storm, the July 2011 Burnett County blowdown and the June 2001 Siren tornado. Just last March, an ice storm resulted in power outages and tree damage across our service territory, so it's not just summer that packs a punch. Mother Nature is a tough opponent in all seasons. That's why I encourage everyone to be prepared.

In recognition of National Preparedness Month in September, I'd like to share a few practical steps from the co-op and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to keep you and your family safe:

1. Assemble a disaster kit with food that won't spoil, water, batteries, flashlights, first-aid supplies, phone chargers with power banks and a battery powered radio.
2. Have a plan for communicating with family and friends (through a third-party, a calling tree or social media).
3. Have some extra cash available, because cash machines may not work during power outages.
4. Fill your car with gas (or charge the EV battery). Like cash machines, gas pumps may not work during outages, either.
5. Store important documents in a safe place, such as a safe deposit box at your bank.
6. Make sure you have enough medication and medical supplies on hand. If you have a baby at home, have enough formula, diapers and supplies to weather an outage for several days or more.
7. Families with pets should bring pets indoors during a storm and create an emergency kit with pet food, bottled water, pet medications and supplies. If your pets are microchipped, make sure your contact information is up to date in case they get lost or wander off during severe weather.



### If your lights go out

1. Check circuit breakers, fuses and the neighbors.
2. Report outages on SmartHub or 800-421-0283.
3. Keep away from fallen power lines, and trees and branches near lines. Report these hazards.

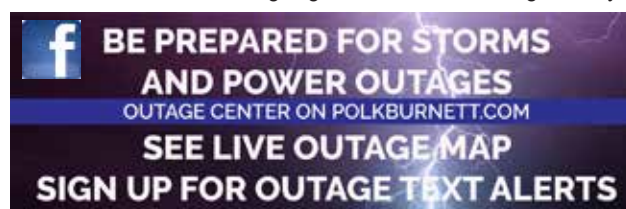
Co-op dispatchers and crews are here for you 24/7. Lineworkers respond to hazards first, then substations and major distribution lines, followed by smaller tap lines and individual service lines.

### Have a backup plan if you have a critical need for power

It may take many hours or even days to complete repairs and restore power to all members following severe storms. Members who must have electricity for farms, business or medical needs, should be prepared with an emergency backup plan, such as making arrangements to move to an alternative location, using a generator or installing battery backup on important electrical devices.

### Keeping you informed

Visit our Outage Center on [polkburnett.com](http://polkburnett.com) for FAQs, a live outage map and what to do if your power goes out. You can also enroll to receive outage text alerts and follow our Facebook page for outage updates.



### Generator safety tips

A generator can be a wonderful tool during an outage, especially to help keep your food fresh and water available. But, it can also be extremely dangerous if used improperly. Did you know that it's against the law and a violation of electrical codes to connect a generator to your home's electrical circuits without a generator transfer switch (automatic-interrupt device)? Without a transfer switch, a generator can become a fire hazard if it's running when your electric service is restored by Polk-Burnett. Improper connection to your home's electrical circuits endangers our line crews working to restore power in your area. Please use generators with caution and contact an electrician for safe installation in your home.

### Are you ready for action? We are!

Whether it's rolling the trucks to restore a power outage, upgrading the system or doing routine maintenance, co-op employees are ready for action. We're prepared and we have a plan. I'd like to thank you for supporting us and the work we do. I'd also like to thank our employees in the field and office who work to keep your lights on!

Two employees to recognize this month are our outgoing and incoming operations manager. First is **Ed Johansen**, who faithfully served Polk-Burnett for 31 years, beginning as a lineworker, then becoming line superintendent and ending his co-op career as our operations manager. We thank him for his dedication and wish him a happy retirement!



Next, I'd like to introduce **Jesse Seering, our new operations manager**. Jesse comes to us from Xcel Energy and brings strong utility experience, leadership and project management skills to Polk-Burnett. Most recently, Jesse was responsible for Xcel's gas and electric distribution scheduling across eight states, including Wisconsin and Minnesota. His team ensured that planning, materials, equipment, permits, locates and customer communications were conducted successfully and safely. Jesse is a member of Polk-Burnett and lives in rural Polk County. He will assist us in our mission to provide you with reliable electricity with efficiency and extraordinary service.

### Like storm preparation, the co-op has a plan in case we're faced with a shortage of energy on the electric grid

As a first step, when the regional grid experiences peak demand, we relieve some of the pressure by controlling electric A/C, heat, water heaters, irrigation and EV chargers for members in our load management program. We also send peak alerts to enrolled members, and post alerts on our website and Facebook, asking you to voluntarily conserve electricity.

If the supply of energy can't keep up with the demand, we would initiate our Emergency Load Reduction Plan, where we would ask all members to shut down non-essential equipment and warn that rolling outages or blackouts may be possible. We hope this never happens, but we all should be prepared for the possibility.

In the event of any outage, our goal is to restore power quickly and keep you informed. Our mission to provide you with safe, reliable electricity is at the forefront of all we do.

**#POWERON**



## Cut energy costs and improve comfort in your home

**\$350 OFF performance test for your home, and up to \$1,000 REBATE on subsequent home energy upgrades**

Have your home tested by a certified energy rater, using a blower door fan and infrared camera. The energy rater will identify heat loss, evaluate insulation and provide you with a report with the best ways to improve your home's energy performance. Contact the co-op for a list of qualifying energy raters and rebate details: 800-421-0283, ext. 595 or [polkburnett.com](http://polkburnett.com).



## Thank you for rounding up, your generosity makes a difference

Polk-Burnett's Operation Round Up awarded \$20,730 to 16 nonprofits serving our community in July, including \$2,000 each to food shelves in Amery, Frederic and St. Croix Falls.



See all summer grant winners and learn how your nonprofit can apply, [polkburnett.com](http://polkburnett.com).

Funding for Operation Round Up is donated by members of Polk-Burnett Electric Co-op who round their monthly electric bill up to the next dollar amount. Thank you, members for your generosity!

## Have a safe harvest: Keep equipment clear of power lines



1. Use a spotter when operating machinery near power lines.
2. Use care when raising augers and truck beds near power lines.
3. Keep equipment at least 10 feet from power lines.
4. Inspect height of farm equipment and know clearance.
5. Always lower extensions when moving loads.
6. Never move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.
7. If a power line is sagging or low, call us at 800-421-0283.

If contact is made with a power line, stay inside the equipment. Warn others to stay away and call 911. Do not exit until the utility says it is safe. The only reason to exit is if the equipment is on fire. In this case, jump with feet together, then hop away. Do not touch ground and equipment at the same time.

## Notice: Wisconsin Energy Assistance

Your household may be eligible for the Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program, based on income and size. For help paying your electric bill, residents of Barron, Burnett, Dunn, Polk, St. Croix and Washburn counties:

**Contact West CAP, 715-265-4271**

(West Central Wisconsin Community Action Agency)

### CLASS OF 2023

## CO-OP COMMUNITY SERVICE SCHOLARSHIP & YOUTH TOUR AWARDS

Show your co-op spirit and win a

# \$1,500

co-op scholarship!

# 85

Scholarships awarded for co-ops' 85th anniversary!

### Good for technical school, college or university

For high school seniors whose parents or legal guardians are members of Polk-Burnett Electric Cooperative

### Plus, you could win a trip to Washington, D.C.

Visit [polkburnett.com](http://polkburnett.com) for eligibility, official rules and online application. APPLY ONLINE. DEADLINE TO APPLY: JANUARY 1, 2023.

## Congratulations, safety poster contest winners

We are honored to recognize the winners of our 2022 Electrical Safety Poster Contest. Each received a \$25 VISA gift card and their artwork was submitted to state competition.

The contest for local third graders reminds everyone to be safe around electricity and electrical equipment at home and school.



M. Demulling  
New Richmond



A. Greenberg  
Amery



P. Polzin  
Luck



H. Lundquist  
Frederic

See full-size posters on [polkburnett.com](http://polkburnett.com).

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.

Like us on Facebook. Follow us on Twitter.

**800-421-0283 • [polkburnett.com](http://polkburnett.com)**



Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer | Member Owned | Community Focused

