



Helping members achieve your energy goals

by General Manager Steve Stroshane

"Free energy from the sun and lower electric bills!" I'm sure that got your attention. We're seeing more marketing like this, and more interest in home solar systems. The benefits of installing solar may seem like a no-brainer, but in reality, not every home (and homeowner's situation) is right for solar. For example, your roof may be shaded or you may be planning to sell your home in the next few years. Solar installation is a major decision that requires a significant investment and ongoing maintenance. If you decide solar is right for you, our member services team can help you through the process. We are also here to help members seeking other solutions, and recommend efficiency and conservation to achieve your energy goals.

The best way to save energy is not using it in the first place

I'm sure you've heard the saying, "the best way to save energy is not using it in the first place." It's true. We love to sell reliable electricity, but we also recognize that helping you reduce energy consumption benefits our members.

1. It's good for your pocketbook! Cutting back on energy use directly translates to lower energy bills.
2. It's good for the environment. Lower energy demand means less power plant emissions.
3. It improves comfort in your home. Energy efficient homes keep you warm in the winter and cool in the summer.



We recommend a few simple steps to help you get started saving energy:

1. Turn off lights and electronics when not in use.
2. Use programmable thermostats and put lights on timers.
3. Choose energy-efficient appliances and lighting. (We can help with EnergySense rebates!)

Your first investment should be tightening your home

While it may not sound as exciting as solar, sealing air leaks around your home should be a priority to achieve your energy goals. Applying new or replacing old weather stripping and caulk around doors and windows can make your home more comfortable and reduce energy waste.

If your home is too warm during summer or chilly during winter even after you've tightened it with weather stripping and caulk, you may need additional insulation. Insulation is considered a more expensive efficiency upgrade, but it can make a big impact on lowering energy use and costs. Typically, insulation costs can be recouped in a few years and your home will immediately feel more comfortable. Another upgrade is replacing old, leaky windows with new energy efficient windows.

If your energy goals include saving money, improving comfort in your home or protecting the environment, but you're not sure where to start, your best bet is to enlist the help of an expert to conduct a **home performance test**. A certified energy rater will use a blower door fan and infrared camera to identify heat loss and determine home energy improvements where you can get the best return on your investment.

Polk-Burnett offers rebates on home performance tests and improvements made as a result of the test. Give us a call for a list of energy raters to get started, 800-421-0283, ext. 595. It's important to have the test done first to qualify for rebates on recommended weatherization, insulation and other energy efficiency upgrades. *Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your trusted energy expert.*



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.



Thank you for switching to paperless billing!

Your decision to enroll in paperless billing saves printing and postage costs for the co-op, and helps us reduce expenses, which means less costs passed on to members.

If you'd like to join the 8,000 members who've switched to paperless billing, call us at 800-421-0283, ext. 335.

You'll receive a monthly email when your statement is available, and you can access your account anytime on your computer or mobile device on SmartHub. *You can also opt to receive your Powerlines newsletter by email or on SmartHub. Thank you!*

Be prepared for storms and power outages

We work hard to prevent power outages, but storms are always a threat. If your power goes out:

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

Co-op dispatchers and crews are here for you 24/7!

Linemen respond to hazards first, then substations and major distribution lines, followed by smaller tap lines and individual service lines.

Keeping you informed

Visit our Outage Center on polkburnett.com for a live outage map and watch Facebook for updates on major outages.

If we have your cell number, we'll send you an outage text alert.

September
is National
Preparedness
Month



\$135,000 in scholarships to Class of 2024

Polk-Burnett Electric Cooperative will award \$1,500 scholarships to 90 high school seniors whose parents are members of the co-op. A total of \$135,000 will go to students in the Class of 2024. Scholarship candidates are also invited to apply for our co-op Youth Tour of Washington, D.C. The application is open now through January 1, 2024, on polkburnett.com.

"Since 1987, we've awarded more than \$1 million in scholarships," said Polk-Burnett General Manager Steve Strohane. "Giving back to our community and youth is part of our mission as a cooperative."

Polk-Burnett's scholarship 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 co-op members who donate Capital Credits to the scholarship fund. If you would like to donate your Capital Credits to the co-op's scholarship fund, please call us or visit our website for an enrollment form.

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, contact West CAP, 715-265-4271.

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 crew 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.



Be safe: Call 811 before you dig

Are you planting this fall? Installing a fence? Or building a deck? Before you dig into a home improvement project, have utility lines marked. One call helps protect you from injury and expense.

Contact Diggers Hotline three working days before you dig to have buried utility lines located, 800-242-8511, 811 or diggershotline.com. It's free!

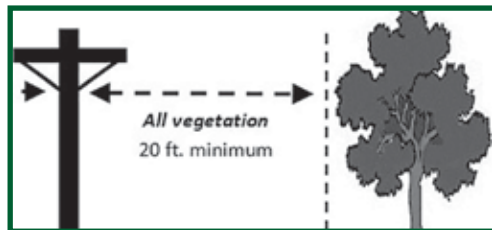
Note: Diggers Hotline does not mark private utility lines.

Contact your co-op for a list of local electricians that provide this service.

Fall planting guide

Thank you for keeping trees out of the right-of-way. The right-of-way (ROW) is a strip of land under power lines. Co-op employees and contractors work throughout the year to clear vegetation in the ROW that may disrupt your electric service or cause harm to people.

Keeping power lines clear of trees and brush reduces power outages and blinks, and gives lineworkers better access to maintain and repair power lines. ROW clearing also improves safety for your home and family, and helps prevent forest fires by ensuring that tree branches do not become energized due to contact with power lines.



Power lines carry high-voltage electricity that can be dangerous—even deadly. Never trim a tree in the ROW or near power lines, and do not allow kids to climb trees close to power lines.

If you see vegetation near power lines that needs to be trimmed or removed, please contact us.

For planting guidelines, visit polkburnett.com or call 800-421-0283, ext. 308.

If you use a stove for heat, have a plan for power outages



Stoves that burn wood, gas, corn, pellets and other fuels are used by some co-op members for primary and back-up heat. REMEMBER, MOST STOVES DEPEND ON ELECTRICITY TO OPERATE AND DISTRIBUTE HEAT.

It's important to know your stove:

1. Will a power outage affect your stove?
2. Will your stove overheat during an outage?
3. Will your stove restart when power is restored?

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

