

POWERLINES

Polk-Burnett Electric Cooperative

February 2021

Be prepared for winter weather and power outages.

~ Photo by Safe Electricity



Electricity brings value every day

by General Manager Steve Stroshane

I work in the energy industry, so I often think about the electricity I use at home and work. But for many of you, I know that electricity isn't top of mind. We all expect the lights to turn on when we flip the switch and the computer to power up each morning. The only time electricity gets much notice is when the power goes out or when the monthly bill arrives.

Given how we depend on electricity to power our modern lifestyle, it's a great value, especially when compared to many other services and living expenses.

According to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) from 2014-2019:

- The average cost of rent increased nearly 4%.
- The cost of medical care increased 3%.
- The cost of education increased 2.6%.

The price of electricity from Polk-Burnett has stayed the same for 10 years! When you consider what electricity does for us, it's a tremendous value for our quality of life.

Understanding the daily availability charge

The daily availability charge covers your share of the cost to build and maintain power lines and the electric system that makes power available at your location. This charge is higher in rural areas because costs are shared by fewer members.

With 40% of our members being seasonal, we are often asked, "why do I have to pay the availability charge all year long when I only use my property three months of the year?" The answer is whether you use 1 or 1000 kWh per month, the poles, wire and other equipment from the substation all the way to your meter have to be installed, maintained and safely operated all year round.

We work hard to keep expenses down and improve efficiencies. I'm proud of our track record of providing the reliable service you expect and deserve as valued members of the co-op.

We're here to help you save energy and money

Rates may not have increased in a decade, but your bill may be higher because our lifestyles have changed. Consider how much hot water you use? How many TVs, routers and receivers are in your home?

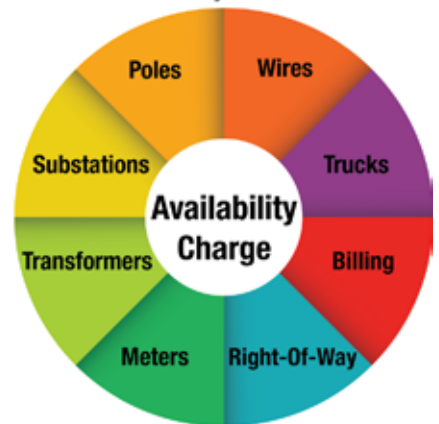
Do you use AC, humidifiers or space heaters? How about chargers for cell phones and tablets?

We encourage you to learn how much energy you use in your home. If you have questions about your account or are looking for ways to save, please give us a call or visit us online, <https://www.polkburnett.com/lower-your-bill>.

As your trusted energy adviser, we can help you save energy and money, 800-421-0283, ext. 595.

**NO RATE INCREASE
for Polk-Burnett members
since 2010!**

The cost of making power available at your location.



Shared equally by all 20,000+ co-op members.



Members invited to run for co-op board

Polk-Burnett holds elections each spring for co-op board directors. This year, board positions in co-op districts 7, 8 and 9 will be on the ballot. Members residing in those districts have an opportunity to get involved in co-op decision making by running for a seat on the board. Applications for the 2021 board election are now being accepted. The deadline to apply is March 5.

District 7 includes Webb Lake, Scott, Jackson, Chicog, Casey and Rusk townships. The incumbent director is Jerry Okonek of Spooner.

District 8 includes Swiss, Oakland, Union, Meenon and Sand Lake townships. The incumbent director is Chuck Brookshaw of Webster.

District 9 includes Marshland, Lincoln, Grantsburg, Wood River, Daniels, Siren, Anderson and Trade Lake townships. The incumbent director is Tom Swenson of Webster.

As a cooperative, Polk-Burnett is owned by its members and governed by a board of directors elected from its membership. Board directors serve a three-year term and attend monthly meetings to guide policy and budget decisions for Polk-Burnett Electric Cooperative.

All co-op members in districts 7, 8 and 9 will have the opportunity to vote in the 2021 co-op election. Ballots mail in early May and members can vote by mail or online. Election results will be announced at the co-op's annual meeting June 11.

Co-op members interested in running for a board position in district 7, 8 or 9 may contact the general manager's office for an application packet, 800-421-0283, ext. 313.





Spending more time at home? We can help you lower your energy costs and improve comfort in your home

\$350 OFF PERFORMANCE TEST FOR YOUR HOME PLUS UP TO \$1,000 REBATE ON 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 a report with the best ways to improve your home's energy performance.

800-421-0283, x595 | polkburnett.com



Brighten your yard from dusk to dawn

LED security lights for members of Polk-Burnett Electric Co-op

Energy efficient LED security lights installed on Polk-Burnett poles operate from dusk to dawn. Members are charged a monthly fee for the light and may be charged for installation. Polk-Burnett LED security lights are approved by International Dark Sky Association and were tested by a local lake association.

Visit our website or call for details: 800-421-0283, ext. 308, or polkburnett.com.



Keep away from power lines

They can look harmless, but always assume power lines are energized and deadly.

If a power line is down, the ground and anything or anyone touching it could be energized. Keep at least 50 feet away!

If you are in a car accident with power lines, do not exit your car unless it's on fire. Call 911 and wait until the power lines have been de-energized.

If you must exit the car, jump clear so no part of your body touches the car when you land. Keep both feet together and hop or shuffle at least 50 feet away.

Do not drive over wires; they may be live with high-voltage electricity.

Buy electricity when it's convenient for you

Did you know... Polk-Burnett has a prepay billing option where members can purchase electricity before you use it, the same as buying groceries or gasoline? This gives you flexibility and control. It allows you to manage your budget and purchase electricity when it is convenient for you. You choose the payment method, how much and when to pay. There are no additional costs. The same rates and monthly charges apply.

With Prepay Your Way, there are no deposits, no late fees and no due dates. You choose when to pay!



New license plate recognizes utility workers



The Wisconsin Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) announced a new specialty plate to honor the state's utility employees. Wisconsin's utility workers are among the essential employees making sure people all across the state have the power they need at home, work and school. The specialty plate, called *Keeping the Lights On*, is now available from the DMV for a one-time fee of \$15, and can be displayed on most cars, trucks and campers.

"Keeping the lights on is always a top priority, and this specialty plate shows our appreciation and recognizes the people who deliver reliable electricity to homes, farms and businesses all across Wisconsin, including the dedicated employees right here at Polk-Burnett Electric Cooperative," said Steve Strohane, general manager, Polk-Burnett.

Linda McAley, who recently retired after 45 years of service from Clark Electric Cooperative, Greenwood, WI, was the driving force behind the year-long effort to create the specialty plate. "Ensuring electric cooperative members have access to safe, reliable, affordable energy is a monumental task that is only possible because of the hard work of all co-op employees – from lineworkers to suppliers, from meter technicians to IT, from warehouse clerks and office staff, to the board of directors," she said. "I can't wait to see these plates out on the road."

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



Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer | Member Owned | Community Focused

