



July storm recovery costs co-op \$1.6 million

by General Manager Steve Strohane

Believe it or not, we're still working to repair and clean up from the July storm that caused widespread damage and power outages across Polk County. I predict that storm recovery will take a year or more for the co-op and many local property owners. The event was truly devastating. Below are facts and figures that highlight the co-op's response:

- Co-op members out of power Friday night, July 19: 9,000
- Co-op members restored within 12 hours by Saturday morning: 5,000
- Co-op members restored within 36 hours by Sunday morning: 6,500
- Co-op members restored by end of the week, Saturday, July 27: All
- Number of substations down and restored: 6
- Number of broken poles replaced: 325
- Number of damaged transformers repaired or replaced: 114
- Miles of right-of-way that need(ed) tree clearing: 348

Total cost of storm restoration: \$1.6 million (as of October 1)

As many of you know firsthand, rebuilding after storm damage is expensive. We had to purchase a lot of new material and co-op crews worked many hours of overtime to restore your power in a timely manner. State and federal officials approved disaster declarations, which means the co-op can request financial assistance from FEMA. We will also submit qualifying expenses to our insurance provider. We are thankful for any reimbursement, as we do not carry reserves or budget for storm recovery.

Right-of-way clearing: While the initial restoration is complete, much work remains to fix areas with temporary repairs, clean up damaged material and repair damaged equipment. One of the largest jobs is re-clearing downed trees from the rights-of-way and removing danger trees that were damaged, but have yet to fall into the lines. A clear right-of-way improves safety, reduces power outages and blinks, and gives linemen access to power lines for maintenance and repairs. We estimate an additional \$200,000 to \$400,000 of tree clearing work remains.

Storm hardening: Since 2004, part of the annual construction program has included storm hardening our system. This means converting overhead lines to underground. We complete 10 to 20 miles each year and plan to increase that amount in future years.

Grateful for your support: It has been a difficult year for the central part of our service territory, as weakened trees from the July 19 storm continue to cause outages. We thank our members and community for your patience and support during storm restorations, and as we work together to rebuild. Our number one goal is always safe, reliable power. We hope Mother Nature is mild this winter, but know that we are here for you as your source for reliable power and information in all types of weather. In a post-storm survey, members requested more communication. *If you would like to receive outage texts, see below to enroll. We're happy to offer this for you!*

Happy Thanksgiving

We are grateful for your support and patience, and hope your family is recovering from the storm.

Be prepared for winter storms and power outages

Polk-Burnett works year round to strengthen its system and prevent power outages, but winter storms are always a threat. Ice, snow and wind can damage power lines and cause power outages.

If your lights go out this winter:

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

OUTAGE MAP

KEEPS YOU INFORMED WHEN THE LIGHTS GO OUT

- ✓ See outage location.
- ✓ If help has been dispatched. ✓ How many affected.
- ✓ Estimated restoration time.

polkburnett.com | SmartHub
Facebook.com/polkburnett

Keep your electric service line out of harm's way

Fee-based conversion of your electric service line from overhead to underground

In the wake of last July's storm, members may want to convert individual electric service lines from overhead to underground. This is an option for co-op members for an additional fee.

Your service line connects your home to the transformer and primary power lines.

Benefits of underground service

1. Reduces outages, blinks, and damage to your meter socket and mast caused by tree branches and severe weather.
2. Eliminates the need for right-of-way clearing under individual service line on your property.
3. Looks better! No more power lines over your yard.

Your power may still be affected by an underground fault or outage down the line, but overall reliability improves.

Underground installation fee

Members pay for the service line to your home, and investing in an underground service line can be more expensive to (re)build. Installation requires trenching or plowing, and may require a padmount transformer box.

Contact us to get started

A co-op staking engineer will determine the best route for an underground power line on your property, and we will quote your cost for conversion. Call us now for installation next spring.

OUTAGE TEXT ALERT

ENROLL ON POLKBURNETT.COM

WE'LL SEND YOU A TEXT:

- ✓ If the power goes out at your location.
- ✓ With estimated time of restoration, when possible.
- ✓ When the power is restored.
- ✓ The cause of the outage, when possible.

Help us make the season bright for local kids

Local children will have a brighter holiday season again this year, thanks to Polk-Burnett Electric Cooperative's 14th-annual holiday gift drive. Co-op members and the public are invited to join Polk-Burnett employees and directors by donating new, unwrapped gifts for children. Donations will be collected December 2 through 9 at Polk-Burnett offices in Siren and Centuria during office hours.

"Our annual gift drive demonstrates our cooperative values and ongoing support for our local youth and community," said Joan O'Fallon, Polk-Burnett communications director. "We invite you to join us and thank you for your generosity. Together, we can make the season bright for local kids."



14th Annual Polk-Burnett Holiday Gift Drive

Donate **NEW, UNWRAPPED** gifts

DECEMBER 2 - 9, 2019
Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Polk-Burnett Centuria, 1001 State Road 35
Benefits Operation Christmas, Polk County

Polk-Burnett Siren, 7298 State Road 70
Benefits Interfaith Caregivers, Burnett County

CO-OP VALUE: CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY

Polk-Burnett Electric Cooperative invests in our local quality of life.



Get a \$5 electric bill credit when you sign up for SmartHub and switch to paperless billing

Take control of the electricity you use and the money you spend on your electric bill with Polk-Burnett's SmartHub app.

1. Access account from computer or mobile device
2. Track your electricity use
3. View and pay your electric bill
4. View and report power outages



Free download from your app store or polkburnett.com | 800-421-0283

Farm animals can be sensitive to electricity



Animals are more sensitive to electric currents than humans. If you notice sensitive behavior in cows and livestock on your farm, such as a tendency to shy away from objects or a

hesitancy to enter stalls or milking parlors, contact your electric cooperative. You may have stray voltage issues caused by poor grounding or defective electrical equipment.

For assistance, call 800-421-0283, ext. 322.

EnergySense REBATE DEADLINE January 1, 2020

For items purchased in 2019.

polkburnett.com
800-421-0283, ext. 595



SPECIAL CO-OP MEMBER PRICE FOR MARATHON WATER HEATERS WHEN YOU PARTICIPATE IN LOAD CONTROL

CO-OP MEMBER PRICE: **\$750**, plus tax (regular price: \$1,500!)

CO-OP MEMBER PRICE FOR NEW HOME CONSTRUCTION OR GAS REPLACEMENT: **\$250**, plus tax

A 100-gallon Marathon® water heater is an investment that pays for itself in energy savings, and 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 than standard 50-gallon tank to operate
- Guaranteed not to rust or corrode as long as you own your home

800-421-0283, x595 | polkburnett.com



Sons and daughters of co-op members in the Class of 2020:

YOU COULD WIN A \$1,250 CO-OP SCHOLARSHIP

Visit polkburnett.com for application. Hurry, deadline is Jan. 3, 2020.



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

