

# POWERLINES

POLK-BURNETT ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE | OCTOBER 2019



## Your electric co-op is by the community, for the community

by General Manager Steve Stroshane

When you think of October, our colorful fall foliage naturally comes to mind. But October is notable for another reason – it's **National Co-op Month!** This is the time of year when cooperatives across the county, including Polk-Burnett, celebrate who we are and more importantly, the members we serve.

Cooperatives are different than other types of businesses. When the market declines to offer a product or service, co-ops intervene to fill the need. Polk-Burnett Electric Cooperative was formed in 1938 to bring electricity to rural areas in our community that were not served by for-profit utilities. Our cooperative model puts the needs of our members first – **Polk-Burnett exists to power our local community** and enrich the lives of the members we serve. This is different than investor-owned utilities, which has ratepayers instead of members and is run mainly for the benefit of shareholders.

As a co-op, we are well-suited to meet the needs of the community because **we are locally governed**. Polk-Burnett's leadership team and employees live right there in the community. Our board directors, who help set long-term priorities for the co-op, live locally on co-op lines and have been elected by neighbors like you.

Our close connection to the community gives us a first-hand perspective on **local priorities** and enables us to make informed decisions on long-term investments, such as equipment and technology upgrades to improve reliability and service, our EnergySense rebate program to help members conserve energy and save money and the 10-acre SunTuria Solar array dedicated in 2017.

Another feature that sets us apart from a traditional utility is our core principle, **Concern for Community**. We partner with our local chambers of commerce and economic development organizations. We work closely with our schools to provide power line safety demonstrations, solar tours and school-to-work training.

Last year, we awarded \$57,500 in **scholarships** to the Class of 2019 using unclaimed Capital Credits, and \$57,071 in **Operation Round Up** grants to 72 local nonprofits. In addition, Polk-Burnett helped finance the new **Alden Fire Station** with a \$694,880 zero-interest pass-through loan from the USDA's Rural Economic Development Loan program. This provides \$350,000 in savings for fire district taxpayers and improves our local quality of life.

*Ultimately, our local communities benefit because of you!  
You empower the co-op  
through your membership and support.*



**HAPPY CO-OP MONTH!**

Receive a **FREE ICE SCRAPER** for Co-op Month!

Stop in our Centuria or Siren office during business hours in October.



## Lower winter rates begin October 1

- ▶ The winter rate is 10.1¢ per kWh; **winter billing dates are October through May.** Rates are lower in winter because demand and wholesale power costs are lower.
- ▶ The summer rate is 11.6¢ per kWh; **summer billing dates are June to September.** Rates are higher in summer because demand and wholesale power costs are higher.

As a co-op, Polk-Burnett charges what it costs and passes the winter savings on to you.

**Here's a bright idea: Instead of returning money to shareholders, Polk-Burnett returns Capital Credits to the local people we serve.**

*Any revenue left after annual expenses is allocated and returned to members. Capital Credits are distributed annually and are a direct benefit of cooperative membership.*

## Co-op returns \$1,075,585 in Capital Credits

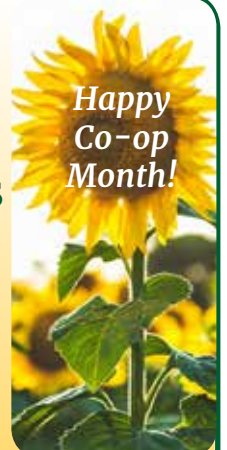
**If you were a Polk-Burnett member in 1991, '92, '96, '97, '99 and/or 2016, you'll get money back! Watch for credit on your October electric bill.**

Polk-Burnett Electric Co-op will return more than \$1 million in Capital Credits this year, including \$872,429 to members who purchased electricity in 1996, '97, '99 and/or 2016, and \$203,156 from our power provider, Dairyland Power Cooperative, to members who purchased power in 1991 and/or '92.

Capital Credits will be distributed to 16,544 active members and 8,029 former members.

The distribution amount is based on how much electricity was purchased by the member those years.

Active members will receive a credit on October electric bills. Former members will be mailed a check of \$10 or more; lesser amounts will be left to accrue for future payouts. *Members also have an option to donate Capital Credits to the co-op scholarship fund; please contact our billing office, 800-421-0283, ext. 335.*





## Halloween energy savers: Pull the plug on energy vampires

Save energy in your home by locating and unplugging energy vampires. These are the electronics and appliances that use energy even when they are turned off or not in use.

**Your electronic devices may not use much power when they are switched off, but even small losses add up. Energy vampires are responsible for an estimated 10% of the electricity that you use every month. The only way to stop that energy drain is to pull the plug.**

One way to identify energy vampires is to start with devices that have remote controls—TVs, DVRs and audio equipment. And don't forget about gaming consoles and computers, monitors and printers. Another thing to check is chargers for cell phones, iPods, tablets and laptops, which use energy even when they're not charging. If the device has an indicator light or clock that stays on, even when turned off, it's drawing power.

One easy solution is to plug your computer system, home entertainment system and other devices into a power strip. Then, with a single flip of a switch, you can really turn off everything plugged into the strip. Don't forget to unplug any appliances—such as coffee makers and toaster ovens—when you aren't using them.

For more tips to save energy and lower your electric bill, call member services, 800-421-0283, ext. 595.



### Class of 2020: Win a \$1,250 Co-op Scholarship

Polk-Burnett will award 54 scholarships to high school seniors who make a difference.

- Applicants must demonstrate community service.
- Parent/Guardian must be a member of Polk-Burnett Electric Co-op.
- Student must be going on to an accredited college, tech school or university.

**APPLY ON POLKBURNETT.COM BY JANUARY 3, 2020.**

*Funded with unclaimed Capital Credits that if not used for education would be forfeited to the state.*

## Notice: Wisconsin Energy Assistance

Your household may be eligible for the Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program, based on household income and size. Contact your county energy assistance office:

☎ Barron 715-537-6340  
☎ Polk 715-485-8480

☎ Burnett 715-349-7600  
☎ St. Croix 800-606-9227

☎ Dunn 715-232-1116  
☎ Washburn 715-468-4747

## Off-peak receiver test is November 20

Load-control radio receivers will be tested Wednesday, November 20, 5 to 11 p.m. Testing ensures equipment is working properly for the winter heating season. Members with an off-peak meter do not need to do anything, but you may notice an interruption in off-peak electric service during testing.



### SunTuria Solar at Polk-Burnett in Centuria Group tours available: See 4,840 panels on 10 acres!

We'd like to invite your school or community group to tour SunTuria Solar. Our project engineer will share a lesson about solar energy and the development of SunTuria Solar – the first utility-scale solar array in Polk and Burnett counties!  
**800-421-0283, ext. 333 \* polkburnett.com**



## Watch out for phone and email scams

In recognition of Cybersecurity Month in October, we'd like to remind co-op members to watch out for phone and email fraud. If you receive a threatening or suspicious call or email from someone demanding money or information, don't believe it.

If you are ever in doubt, call your co-op or other service providers directly. Also, please alert the police if you are targeted for a cybercrime.

## 7 tips for a safe harvest: Keep farm 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.



**Did you know that you can buy renewable energy from the co-op?**

**100 kWh blocks are just \$1 per block per month**  
*Added to your monthly electric bill*

**Visit our website to buy one block or enough to power your whole house!**

**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

