



#POWER ON

# POWERLINES

POLK-BURNETT ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE October 2020

**HAPPY CO-OP MONTH!**



## Power On: October is National Co-op Month

by General Manager Steve Stroshane

As your local electric cooperative, our top priority has always been to provide you with reliable electricity. Because we are a co-op, our mission enriches the lives of our members and serves the interests of our local community. I believe our member and community focus have never been more critical than in recent months.

The COVID-19 virus has tested our co-op, our community and nation, creating both challenges and opportunities. Over the past several months, we've all had to operate and live our lives differently.

I'm proud of our employees, who have stepped up to ensure that your power supply and member service have been constant during a time when much is uncertain. You can always count on us to be here for you.

Last March, Polk-Burnett quickly modified operations to safeguard business continuity. We closed our lobbies to protect our community and keep our employees safe and healthy. We separated employees at co-op locations in Centuria and Siren, and some staff transitioned to remote work thanks to the co-op's technology department.

Polk-Burnett Electric Cooperative and Polk-Burnett Propane Services are essential services because of the critical need for power and propane in our community. We are fully staffed to continue normal operations. Our drive-thru, phone lines and website remain open to serve you.

### More flexibility to interact with us online

If you haven't had the chance yet, I encourage you to try our electronic options for payments and transactions, including phone, website, auto pay and SmartHub. Use our SmartHub app to contact us and report issues, such as outages, danger trees on power lines, and water heater and security light repairs. All online services are free, convenient and safe. We've adjusted to the pandemic by giving you the flexibility to interact with us on your own schedule.

We also have a secure drop box at both Centuria and Siren office locations. Polk-Burnett member service representatives are here to help you during business hours. Our outage line is available 24/7. Please report outages on SmartHub or to 800-421-0283, and see Outage Center on polkburnett.com for outage map and outage text enrollment. Follow us on Facebook, too.

We certainly miss seeing you in person, but as you can see, we've found new ways to stay connected. I tell you about all of these efforts not to boast, but as an example of how much we care about this community. This is our hometown, too.

Please continue to reach out to us in the way that's best for you: in person at our drive-up window, over the phone or online. *Happy Co-op Month!*



No matter what life or Mother Nature brings, our members always come first!



Polk-Burnett is proud to provide energy for all the things you love!



We are committed to a brighter future. Do you know 20% of your energy supply comes from renewables?



As a co-op, we are shaped by the local community we serve.



Do you know Polk-Burnett was built locally in 1938? We're led by local members of our community.

**FREE POST-IT PAD & LETTER OPENER**  
**for Members during Co-op Month!**  
**Plus, coloring books for kids!**  
**Centuria & Siren Drive-Thru**  
 Business hours in October. While supply lasts.  
**Thank you for your membership!**

## October is Cybersecurity Month

Polk-Burnett wants you to be safe when using technology to connect to the co-op and other organizations online. Please be aware of these safety tips and red flags to protect your personal information and devices:

### Think before you click on emails and hyperlinks

- Always hover over a link first to be sure it is safe.
- Delete emails that are suspicious or from unknown sources.
- Don't click on links or attachments from unknown sources.

### Lockdown your login

- Create strong passwords. Phrases work well.
- Change passwords regularly.
- Use two-factor authentication when possible.

### Watch for red flags

- Emails that are unexpected or from unknown sources.
- Emails with typos.
- Emails and phone calls with a sense of urgency (pay now, buy now!) or deals too good to be true.

**Public Wi-Fi is not secure.**  
 If you must connect, use a VPN or a personal/mobile hotspot.

**Unknown sender?**  
 If you're not expecting the email, do not respond or click any links or attachments.



## Lower winter rates begin October 1

- ❖ The winter rate is 10.1¢ per kWh; winter billing dates are October through May. Winter rates are lower because demand and wholesale power costs are lower.
- ❖ The summer rate is 11.6¢ per kWh; summer billing dates are June through September. Summer rates are higher because demand and wholesale power costs are higher.

As a co-op, we charge actual costs and pass the winter savings on to you.

## 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

☎ Burnett 715-349-7600

☎ Dunn 715-232-1116

☎ Polk 715-485-8480

☎ St. Croix 800-606-9227

☎ Washburn 715-468-4747

## Off-peak receiver test is November 18

Load-control radio receivers will be tested Wednesday, November 18, 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.

## Simple steps to fight winter chills and high bills

Winter weather makes a big impact on electric bills. Even the most efficient heating systems see more use in extreme weather. Try these steps to control your energy use and costs, while boosting comfort in your home:

- ❖ Change your furnace filters every month.
- ❖ Open shades and curtains during the day to let sunlight and solar heat in.
- ❖ Keep fireplace damper closed when not in use.
- ❖ Add or replace weather stripping around doors and windows.
- ❖ Seal leaks around pipes, wires and chimneys with caulking.
- ❖ Seal holes and cracks in floors, ceilings, foundation and siding with caulking.
- ❖ Replace worn door stops.
- ❖ If you have storm doors and windows, install them.
- ❖ Install insulating kits for electrical plugs on exterior walls.
- ❖ Be sure walls, ceilings and attic have enough insulation.
- ❖ Vacuum heat vents.
- ❖ Insulate hot water pipes and metal electric hot water tanks.
- ❖ Adjust thermostats in unoccupied rooms.
- ❖ Turn off lights and electronics in unoccupied rooms.

For more energy savers, speak to the member services team at Polk-Burnett Electric Cooperative, 800-421-0283, ext. 595.



### Class of 2021: 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 1, 2021.**

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

## Special member price on Marathon® water heaters

When you participate in Polk-Burnett's load control program

Co-op member price: **\$750** plus tax

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:

- ❖ Marathon® water heaters are long-lasting tanks that will not rust or corrode; they are guaranteed not to leak as long as you own your home, (residential use only).
- ❖ Marathon® 100-gallon water heaters are highly efficient and cost no more to operate than a standard 50-gallon tank.
- ❖ Insulated with 2.5 inches of foam, they minimize heat loss, and heat water for just 10 to 15 minutes per day to maintain water temp when no hot water is being used.
- ❖ The lower element is titanium for superior resistance to lime buildup.
- ❖ The bowl-shaped tank drains completely, preserving the life of the elements.

Polk-Burnett's EnergySense program helps members make smart energy choices for the environment, your home and pocketbook. *Contact us to learn about a Marathon® water heater for your home, 800-421-0283, ext. 595.*



**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

