

# Powerlines

April 2025



Celebrating Lineworker  
Appreciation Day  
April 14, 2025

Thank you for keeping the lights on!

## Our work for you doesn't stop *by General Manager Steve Strohane*

This April, we celebrate Lineworker Appreciation Month, Earth Day, Safe Digging Month and spring! As we move into a new season, I'd like to share an update about our first quarter performance and what to expect going forward.

Like many of you, we're watching closely to see how new local, state and federal energy policies will affect us. But day to day, our work is unchanged. Locally, our lineworkers, engineers and right-of-way specialists are in the field year-round, building and maintaining the system that delivers reliable power to your homes and businesses. I want to assure you that our critical work for our members and community doesn't stop; for 87 years, we've adapted to change, the ebb and flow of seasons, and energy legislation and regulation. In the first two months of 2025, our operations crew had already designed 17 miles of line and constructed four miles of line as part of our \$6.1 million work plan investment

Over the winter and into early spring, lineworkers and right-of-way specialists patrol our overhead power lines looking for maintenance issues. The problems they find and correct prevent future power outages.

I'd like to recognize our Polk-Burnett lineworkers and operations crew for their skill and commitment to keeping the lights on. The next time you flip a switch, take a moment to remember those who make it possible, regardless of weather conditions!

*You play an important role in ensuring safe, reliable power, as well. Always contact Diggers Hotline before you dig (we've seen an average of 20 outages per year caused by dig-ins the past three years!) and never plant in the right-of-way under power lines.*

*I invite you to read more about our right-of-way program and Diggers Hotline on the back page.*

Work is also progressing on the new Cedar Lake substation to serve growing areas around East Farmington, Star Prairie and Somerset. The substation will be owned by Dairyland Power Cooperative, with electricity supplied by Dairyland's high-voltage transmission lines.

Also in partnership with our power supplier, Dairyland Power Cooperative, we are beginning the update of our load management program in 2025. (Existing load management receivers are no longer manufactured and replacement parts are hard to find.) New load management receivers will be installed at participating member homes over the next few years. Our load management program helps reduce energy demand and cost by pausing electricity to participating devices (such as electric water heaters, boilers, baseboard and storage heat) during peak demand periods, typically the hottest and coldest days of the year. This reduces the need for costly peak power generation. When we can lower the peak, all members benefit from lower wholesale power costs.

We're always looking for ways to lower costs. But we're seeing higher prices across many areas of our electric operations, especially for equipment and materials made with steel, aluminum and other metals. We were able to absorb the increases last year, but the board is considering a rate increase this year to help cover the rising costs of delivering power.

At the beginning of 2025, I shared a list of expectations with co-op employees. These expectations ensure we are working strategically and responsibly to fulfill our mission to you:

- > Focus on safety.
- > Focus on reliable power and extraordinary member service.
- > Be involved in the community.
- > Work cooperatively with neighbor co-ops, especially mutual aid during storm restoration.
- > Focus on the future. This includes using data to make smart business decisions and adopting new technology when it improves our ability to work efficiently and restore power faster.

Next, Board President Ed Gullickson will share a report from our wholesale power provider, Dairyland Power Cooperative. This will provide you with a broader view of what we're seeing in the energy industry and how it impacts us locally.



### Dairyland report from Polk-Burnett Board President Ed Gullickson

I'm proud to represent Polk-Burnett on Dairyland Power Cooperative's board of directors. Dairyland is the generation and transmission (G&T) cooperative that provides power required by Polk-Burnett members 24/7/365.

Dairyland is part of MISO, the Midcontinent Independent System Operator, which manages the flow of electricity across 15 states and Manitoba, Canada. One critical aspect of providing reliable power across the MISO footprint is building new power generation facilities. The other is efficiently delivering electricity where it is needed. In Sept. 2024, the 102-mile Cardinal-Hickory Creek transmission line was energized between Dubuque, Iowa and Middleton, Wisconsin.

Beginning in 2026, Dairyland announced that its service area will expand to include Oconto Electric Cooperative with 10,000 members in Wisconsin and Norris Electric Cooperative with 20,000 members in Illinois. Based in La Crosse, Dairyland supplies wholesale power to co-ops and municipal utilities in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa and Illinois.

At Polk-Burnett, we depend on Dairyland and MISO for reliable power generation and transmission in our region. Dairyland generates electricity with traditional and renewable resources, including John P. Madgett Coal Generating Station in Alma, RockGen Natural Gas Energy Center south of Madison and the Flambeau Hydroelectric Station in Ladysmith.

*Mark your calendars for our 87th Annual Meeting June 6 to learn more about co-op performance and let us know if we can assist you with energy-related questions and services, 800-421-0283.*

## Energy use survey helps plan for future energy needs



We're partnering with Dairyland Power Cooperative, our G&T power supplier, this month to conduct a survey that asks members about energy use in your home. A randomly selected group of residential members will be asked to participate. If you receive a survey in your mail, please take 10 minutes to answer the questions about appliances, energy efficiency and opinions on a handful of energy topics. Then, return your completed survey in the postage-paid envelope or you may opt to complete the survey online using a link provided in the survey mailing.

*Thank you in advance! Survey responses will help Dairyland plan for future energy needs.*

## Renewable blocks from your co-op make it easy to go green

Co-op members can support renewable energy by purchasing renewable energy blocks through our Evergreen program. No panels or turbines on your property. No equipment or installation cost. No maintenance. We make it easy! Subscribe to one block or enough to power your whole house; 100 kWh blocks are 50¢ per month added to your electric bill. See our website or call for more information.



## Co-op members: Get rebates on energy efficient heat pumps



Today's electric heat pumps (air source and geothermal) provide high efficiency heating and cooling in an all-in-one system that can help **lower your energy bill** and improve comfort in your home.

EnergySense rebates can help co-op members make the switch to an energy efficient heat pump, just in time for the A/C season! Check with your tax advisor for tax credits that may also be available.

Give us a call to compare heating and cooling options for your home, 800-421-0283, ext. 318 or visit [polkburnett.com](http://polkburnett.com).

## Help protect the Karner blue butterfly



Polk-Burnett follows eco-friendly practices to protect the Karner blue butterfly. We mark habitat sites under power lines, and ask co-op members and employees to tread carefully in these areas each spring and summer. The Karner blue butterfly is often found near purple lupine plants in sandy soil.



## April is Safe Digging Month

Are you digging into a home improvement project this spring? Planting a tree or garden? Building a fence? Always call 8-1-1 three days before you begin, so underground utilities can be marked. Be safe! Damage to underground utility lines can cause injuries and outages. Thank you!



## A clear right-of-way is a priority for safe, reliable power

Polk-Burnett is responsible for maintaining the right-of-way under power lines to keep power flowing safely to your home. Right-of-way maintenance is intended to keep tree branches and brush away from high-voltage power lines. This reduces blinks and outages, improves access for quicker outage repairs, and reduces risk of fire and life-threatening electrocution. We notify members with a postcard prior to work on your property. Thank you for your cooperation



## Annual herbicide notice for members

Polk-Burnett's mission is to provide members with safe, reliable power as efficiently as possible. An important part of this mission is our right-of-way program, which includes herbicide application to control growth of woody stemmed vegetation under power lines.

In 2025, Polk-Burnett will continue its herbicide program to control vegetation in the electric right-of-way. Trained, licensed contractors will walk the rights-of-way with a backpack container and use a hand wand to apply a low-volume herbicide; only the leaves of woody stemmed vegetation are targeted. The application is scheduled to begin in June and will conclude in October.

If you choose to decline the use of herbicide, please complete and return form below by **May 16** to:

Polk-Burnett, Rights-of-Way Department, 1001 State Road 35, Centuria, WI 54824.

If form is not received by May 16, 2025, herbicide application may occur on properties not currently in our database.

### IT IS NOT NECESSARY TO COMPLETE THIS FORM OR CONTACT US IF:

- 1) You are served by **underground** power lines. Polk-Burnett does not apply herbicide to areas with underground lines.
- 2) You have already sent this form or contacted Polk-Burnett in the past to decline the use of herbicide.

Visit [polkburnett.com/herbicide-faqs](http://polkburnett.com/herbicide-faqs) to see if your property is already on the No Herbicide list.

Please do not apply herbicide on my property(s). I understand that if I have multiple properties where I do not want herbicide application, I must notify Polk-Burnett of all locations, so they can be properly identified. I understand that I must place signs (provided by Polk-Burnett on request) beneath the power lines to identify my property boundaries and that future right-of-way maintenance will be performed by mowing.

Save paper and postage: Properties can be added to the No Herbicide list on [polkburnett.com/herbicide-faqs](http://polkburnett.com/herbicide-faqs)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Location Number or Account Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Parcel ID Number from County Tax Record: \_\_\_\_\_

Property Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address (Optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

If you do not know how the right-of-way on your property is maintained or if you have questions about herbicide application, call us at 800-421-0283, ext. 389. We're happy to help. To learn more about herbicide application, and view product labels and material safety data sheets, visit [polkburnett.com/right-way](http://polkburnett.com/right-way).

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.

Follow us on Facebook. Sign up for our SmartHub app.

800-421-0283 • [polkburnett.com](http://polkburnett.com)



Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer | Member Owned | Community Focused

