



Polk-Burnett's Operation Round Up program supports Interfaith Caregivers of Burnett County and the important work of this local nonprofit, including building wheelchair ramps, making home repairs, delivering firewood and providing transportation assistance for individuals and families. A \$1,500 grant was presented October 14 by co-op employees, who volunteered to cut, split and stack firewood for Interfaith Caregivers.

Thank you, co-op members, for rounding up! Your generosity makes a difference to people and programs in our community! See all fall Operation Round Up grants and learn how your nonprofit can apply on polkburnett.com.



Powering investment and prosperity in local communities by General Manager Steve Strohane

As a member-owned electric cooperative, Polk-Burnett was created to serve the needs of local residents. First and foremost, Polk-Burnett strengthens our local communities by doing what we do best – providing reliable power with efficiency and extraordinary service. Beyond the business of electricity, our employees and directors share a passion for our community, and giving back has always been a cornerstone of our cooperative business model.

We support our community according to our cooperative principles through Operation Round Up and employee volunteerism (pictured above with Interfaith Caregivers, Burnett County), youth scholarships, sponsorships and economic development. This month, in the spirit of giving and the holidays, I'd like to highlight economic development and share how our investment in this area powers prosperity and improves our local quality of life.

The spark that brings people and ideas together

Electric cooperatives across the country are integral to community and economic development as a provider of power, an employer and a catalyst for growth. Polk-Burnett actively participates in the community and builds relationships with people and organizations. We are proud to serve on the boards of Polk County Economic Development Corporation (PCEDC) and Burnett County Development Association (BCDA).



The goal of these organizations is to help our communities thrive through business attraction and expansion, the creation of good jobs, increasing our tax base and improving the overall business climate of our counties. Today, the pillars of economic development have expanded to include housing, entrepreneurship, workforce training, transportation and childcare.

Both PCEDC and BCDA are made up of representatives from business and industry, municipalities and county boards. Together, these organizations and the co-op act as the spark to bring people and ideas together. We help identify resources and opportunities, and establish priorities to ensure local leaders understand the greatest local needs.

Lately for example, we're hearing more about the need for housing and childcare, as well as developing a new generation of workers. We are also seeing a new interest and growth in rural communities. Remote and in-person employees are choosing to work in rural locations that fit their lifestyle. I agree; there's no better place to live, work, raise a family and retire!

Partnering on projects that benefit the co-op and community

Our leadership and collaboration with others in economic development also includes investing in local projects that benefit the co-op and community. As an electric cooperative, we have access to the USDA Rural Economic Development Loan program. These loans can be used by local organizations for site development, infrastructure, property and equipment purchases, new construction, as well as expansion and renovation of existing facilities. In addition to creating good jobs and increasing our tax base, many of these projects also grow electricity sales, which helps the co-op and our members.



USDA financing is competitive and may only provide a portion of what's needed, but supplemental loans can save organizations significant interest expense. Over the decades, Polk-Burnett has assisted with the development of industrial parks in St. Croix Falls and Osceola, as well as expansion loans for more than a dozen businesses on co-op lines. In recent years, we've collaborated with local communities to build three new fire stations to enhance safety for rural families.

Congratulations, local business award winners

In October, Polk-Burnett helped sponsor Polk County EDC's Annual Awards Breakfast, where four local businesses were recognized with awards for excellence. I'd like to congratulate:

- ★ Cushing Cooperative, Cushing, Agriculture Excellence Award
- ★ St. Croix Pickleball & Recreational Sports Facility, St. Croix Falls, Business Service Award
- ★ Precision Stainless, Dresser, New Business of the Year Award
- ★ Nobles Worldwide, St. Croix Falls, Business of the Year Award



Polk-Burnett is proud to serve electricity to three of these award winners, which helps them fulfill their mission of excellence in Polk County. One of the most fundamental ways we support business and industry, as well as your family, is with reliable access to power.

If you are interested in commercial or industrial expansion in our co-op service area, please contact us. We believe economic development leads to an improved quality of life for all who live and work here.

~ Merry Christmas and happy holiday season to you all!

Owned and guided by the members we serve to benefit our local community.

Happy Holidays from all of us at Polk-Burnett Electric Cooperative!

Run for a seat on your electric co-op board

Your electric co-op plays a vital role in our community, providing reliable electricity to thousands of homes and businesses. A dedicated board is responsible for setting policies and rates, and approving the annual investment in our local electric grid. Directors serve three-year terms and attend monthly board meetings, along with co-op events and conferences. In spring 2025, co-op members will elect board directors in districts 4, 5 and 6. If you are passionate about shaping the co-op's future, contact the general manager's office to learn more about running for a seat on the board, 800-421-0283, ext. 313.



Class of 2025: Deadline to apply for a co-op scholarship is January 1.

Up to 95 scholarships awarded to high school seniors whose parents are electric co-op members. See how you could win \$1,500 for college next fall and apply on polkburnett.com.

Improve energy efficiency and comfort in your home with EnergySense rebates for co-op members

- ◆ \$350 off home performance test, then up to \$1,000 rebate on energy upgrades
- ◆ Rebates on HVAC, geothermal and air source heat pumps
- ◆ Rebates on appliances and lighting
- ◆ Rebates on renewable energy systems and EV chargers
- ◆ Special \$850 member price on Marathon water heater



EnergyStar certification is required for co-op appliance rebates. When shopping for energy efficient appliances, compare **EnergyGuides** for lower operating costs. Look for the **EnergyStar certified stamp** to identify products that meet high energy efficiency standards. Electric dryers and dehumidifiers may not have EnergyGuides, but EnergyStar certification can be verified at www.energystar.gov.

Deadline to submit rebate forms for 2024 qualifying purchases is January 1, 2025.

Give us a call or visit our website for details, 800-421-0283, ext. 318, polkburnett.com.

Give the gift of power and light

Gift certificates from Polk-Burnett Electric Co-op make great gifts for Christmas, birthdays, anniversaries and all special occasions. They can be purchased in any amount at co-op offices in Centuria and Siren.



4 ways to save energy in the kitchen this holiday season

Many of us use more electricity during the holidays and electric bills may be higher as a result. Holiday cooking and entertaining means extra cooking and baking. Holiday guests use more hot water for showers, laundry and dishwashing. Your lights are on longer with shorter daylight hours, and don't forget holiday lights use energy, too. Below are four ways to save in the kitchen and around your home this holiday season:

1. Cook with smaller appliances, such as slow cookers, air fryers and toaster ovens.
 2. Unplug devices that draw energy when you're not using them, like coffee makers and microwaves.
 3. Clean stove burners so they'll heat better, and always match the pan size to the burner size.
 4. Only run full loads of dishes. Let dishes air dry instead of using the heated dry cycle.
- Bonus: Set holiday light timers, and turn off lights and space heaters when you leave the room.



All of us at Polk-Burnett want you to get the most value for your energy dollar. Visit our website or call us for more ways to save energy and money all year long, 800-421-0283, ext. 595, polkburnett.com.

5 tips for safe and happy holiday cheer

Below are important safety reminders as you celebrate the holidays with friends and family:

1. Inspect holiday lights and decorations for damage. Throw away if cords, wires and switches are frayed or broken.
2. Don't overload extension cords and plugs.
3. Extension cords are made for temporary use and should not be used long term. Keep cords away from water and wet ground.
4. Candles can be a fire hazard and should never be left unattended!
5. Childproof (and pet-proof) your home for the holidays. Make sure decorations, light strings, Christmas tree and candles receive a high level of safety scrutiny.



Farm animals may 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, contact Polk-Burnett, 800-421-0283, ext. 401.



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



Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer | Member Owned | Community Focused

