

POWERLINES

December 2026

A holiday message on the gift of local governance and your membership *by General Manager Steve Stroshane*

Happy holidays! In the spirit of the season, I'd like to reflect on one of the most meaningful benefits of belonging to an electric cooperative: *democratic member control*. This isn't corporate speak to us, it's an important cooperative principle that simply means, ***our leaders are members, just like you***. At Polk-Burnett, our members elect the directors who guide the co-op.

Our nine directors are members who live in the communities we serve. They are your neighbors—and when the power goes out at their homes, they're affected, too. They understand firsthand the importance of safe, reliable electricity and the responsibility to keep bills as affordable as possible.

Polk-Burnett was founded in 1938 to bring electricity to rural areas. Since then, our co-op has grown and changed alongside our communities, shaped by the needs of the people we serve. We remain owned by our members and governed by a board elected from the membership.

Our directors help set the co-op's direction and priorities. They meet monthly to make decisions on rates and policies, review the annual budget, and guide investments in our local electric system. They also represent member interests in discussions with our wholesale power provider, Dairyland Power Cooperative, helping ensure our system is prepared to meet your energy needs.

Co-op governance is an important responsibility in a complex, rapidly changing energy industry. Our directors bring valuable experience and local insight to the role, and all nine have advanced their knowledge through the Credentialed Cooperative Director program. Their work helps keep our lights on today while planning for the future of our communities.

I'm grateful to our board directors for their time, leadership and commitment to our co-op and our community. Their service helps us stay true to our mission: delivering safe, reliable power to your homes, farms and businesses with efficiency and extraordinary service.

Local member control is more than a cooperative principle. It's a valuable benefit of membership—and a reminder that this co-op belongs to all of us.

Members also play an important part in local governance.

Voting in director elections, attending the annual meeting and sharing feedback through surveys are all ways to make your voice heard.

Your participation helps keep the co-op connected to the people who matter most: you, our members.



Run for a seat on your electric co-op board

Your electric co-op plays a vital role in our community by 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 2027, co-op members will elect board directors in districts 7, 8 and 9. If you are enthusiastic about democratic member participation and shaping the co-op's future through board service, contact the general manager's office, 800-421-0283, ext. 313.

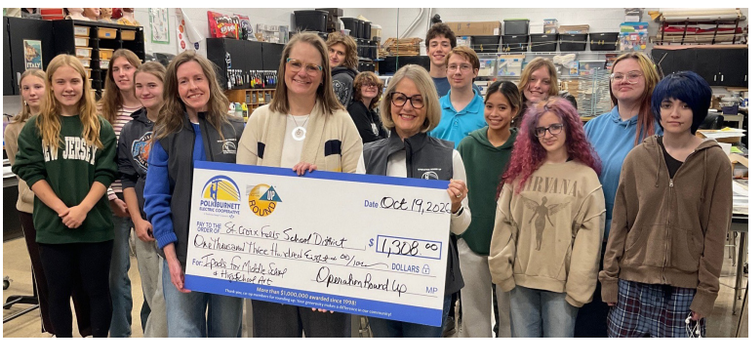
Merry Christmas! ***Thank you for trusting us to power the moments that matter most.***
~ from all of us at POLK-BURNETT ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Thank you, members, for your gift of rounding up

When you contribute to Operation Round Up, you are giving a gift to your community. Rounding up averages $6 per year (between 1¢ and 99¢ per month). When thousands of members round up and contribute together, it makes a big impact. This fall, Operation Round Up awarded $18,845 to 16 local nonprofits; that's the cooperative difference in action! Thank you for your generosity to support local schools and parks, children and families, the arts and education.



Village of Webster, Gandy Dancer Railroad Park, $1,000.



St. Croix Falls School District, art education, $1,308.

See all Operation Round Up grants and learn how your nonprofit can apply on our website, polkburnett.com.
Contact the co-op office to join thousands of members who round up their electric bills or to make an additional donation this holiday season or anytime, 800-421-0283, ext. 335.



'Tis the season for savings

Spending more time indoors with extra people in your home can increase your energy use and electric bills. Holiday entertaining means extra cooking and baking. Holiday houseguests use more hot water for showers, laundry and dishwashing. Many holiday decorations use electricity, and lights are on longer with fewer daylight hours. Below are a few seasonal tips to help you save:

- Heating and cooling make up a large part of your home energy bill. Lower your thermostat a few degrees when hosting family and friends. Good company brings additional warmth to your home.
- Decorate with LED holiday lights. LEDs are the most energy efficient lighting option, and they last much longer than traditional bulbs.
- The best part of the holiday season are the meals, not just the food, but the time spent together in the kitchen. Cooking with small appliances, such as air fryers, slow cookers and toaster ovens, use a fraction of the energy needed to heat the oven.

Rebates can also help you save energy and money, while improving comfort in your home. See details below, visit our website or give us a call, 800-421-0283, ext. 318, for energy savings all year long.

Deadline for EnergySense rebates is January 1



- $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 $1,050 member price on Marathon water heater

The deadline to submit rebate form is January 1, 2027, for 2026 qualifying purchases.



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.

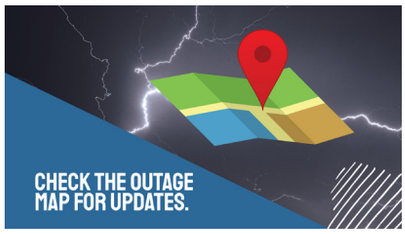
Give us a call or visit our website for details, 800-421-0283, ext. 318, polkburnett.com.

Deadline for co-op scholarship applications is January 1

Sons and daughters of co-op members in the Class of 2027: You could win up to $2,000 for college!

Learn more and apply on polkburnett.com by January 1, 2027.

Co-op scholarships are funded with unclaimed Capital Credits and by members who donate Capital Credits. Thank you!



Be prepared for winter outages

Co-op crews work to strengthen the grid and prevent outages, but winter snow, ice and wind can damage power lines. If your lights go out:

- Check circuit breakers, fuses and see if neighbors have power.
- Report outages 24/7 on SmartHub or 800-421-0283.
- Stay away from fallen power lines and trees on lines. Report these hazards.
- See live outage map on polkburnett.com. Major outages are also updated on our Facebook page.
- If we have your cell number on your electric account, we'll send you a text alert when you have an outage at your location. We'll also text you the outage cause and estimated restoration time, when possible. Keep your cell number up to date on your account through SmartHub or call our billing office, 800-421-0283, ext. 335.



Our goal is to restore power safely and quickly, while keeping you informed.



5 tips for a safe and happy holiday season

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

1. Many of us bring holiday treasures out of storage, often they are handed down through generations and lack modern safety features. Carefully inspect to make sure everything is in safe, working order and throw away or repair items with brittle, damaged or broken wires; worn switches; corroded metal parts; or broken, unstable bases that can tip over.
2. Extension cords are designed for temporary use and should never be used as a permanent or long-term solution.
3. Never tamper with safety features. There are reasons why some devices have plugs with three prongs instead of two, and some have one prong that's wider than the other. If your plugs don't fit, that means they are not designed to work together.
4. When using a ladder, always look up for overhead power lines. Carry your ladder so it is parallel to the ground. Before placing it upright, look around to ensure you are a safe distance from power lines.
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.



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.

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

POLK-BURNETT ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative