

# POWERLINES

November 2024



## 5 things you might not know about power restoration

by General Manager Steve Stroshane and Operations Manager Jason Evenson



Our number one goal is keeping the lights on for you. Given our reliance on electricity today, there is never a good time to be without it! But we all know that winter weather is tough on equipment and the electric grid. We wish we could snap our fingers and instantly restore a power outage like you see in the movies, but in real life, it takes a lot more effort and people to make that happen. This month as we begin another winter season, we'd like to shed some light on our restoration process to help you understand what's happening behind the scenes.

### 1. We need information from you

Our connection to your electric meter can tell us if the power is out at your home or business, and over the years, technology has advanced to the point where our system can even predict if the outage affects a larger area. But, we still rely on members to help us identify and assess the situation. Please continue to report outages on SmartHub or 800-421-0283. Phones are answered 24/7. When calling, have your address, account number or location number ready and let us know if you have seen or heard anything that may have caused the outage, such as sparks, loud noises or trees on the power lines. This will help our field crew find the problem quickly to get your power restored.

### 2. We always assess the situation first

Every outage is different; we don't know how dangerous it is or what equipment might need to be repaired or replaced until a co-op crew arrives on the scene. Often, lineworkers need to patrol the lines. When your outage is reported, we first assess the situation and then we make a plan to fix the problem safely and efficiently.

### 3. It's a team effort

You should know that every one of our Polk-Burnett employees is working to get your power restored as soon as possible. While engineers and field crews are surveying damage, our member services team is taking your calls and keeping you informed, our right-of-way crew is clearing downed trees and brush, and our dispatchers are organizing work efforts. When your power goes out, we all work together.

### 4. Work is prioritized by restoring the largest numbers first

Our first priority is public safety, then our work is prioritized by the largest number of members we can get back on in the shortest amount of time. Our outage restoration process begins at the substation, where power is supplied into Polk-Burnett's system. Substations serve up to 3,500 members. When a major outage occurs, lineworkers inspect substations first to determine if there is a problem with that equipment or with the transmission line feeding into the substation. After these repairs have been made, crews work on main distribution power lines serving larger areas. Then, we begin repairing smaller lines to individual members.

### 5. Sometimes it's a waiting game

A portion of our power grid is connected to other electric utilities, outside of our control. Polk-Burnett substations are connected to transmission lines that are owned by Xcel, Northwestern Wisconsin Electric and Dairyland Power Cooperative, and serve our entire region. If an outage is due to a problem on their transmission system, we must wait and let them do the repairs.

#### Members with a critical need for electricity should have an emergency backup plan

It's important to know that following severe storms, damage across the electric system may be extreme, and it may take many hours or even days to complete repairs and restore power to all members. Members who must have electricity should be prepared with an emergency backup plan. Your plan may include making arrangements to move to an alternative location, using a portable generator or installing battery backup on important electrical devices.



#### Know what to do if your lights go out this winter

Co-op crews work to strengthen the grid and prevent power outages, but they are inevitable from time to time. Winter storms, ice, snow and wind are always a threat. Outages are also caused by animal contacts, car accidents and power supply that impacts entire substations.

If your lights go out this winter, know that your co-op is working to restore power quickly and safely, while keeping you informed.

#### What can you do to help in an outage:

- Check circuit breakers, fuses and the neighbors.
- Report outages on SmartHub or 800-421-0283.
- Stay away from fallen power lines, and trees and branches near lines. Report these hazards.
- See outage map on polkburnett.com to see extent of system outages and how big of an area is impacted.
- Look for updates on Facebook for major outages.
- Make sure we have your updated contact information.

If we have your cell number, we'll send you a text alert when you have an outage at your location. Keep your cell number up to date on your account through SmartHub or our billing office. Thank you!

Keeping trees and brush away from power lines is one important way we strengthen the grid and prevent outages. Thank you for your cooperation with our right-of-way clearing program. It makes a difference!

*How are we doing?* We're conducting a member survey to ask for your feedback about our performance. If you are contacted via email in early December, please share your thoughts.

All who participate will be entered into a drawing for a \$50 bill credit; 10 will be awarded. Thank you!

# It pays to be a co-op member

Polk-Burnett Electric Cooperative returned **\$1,656,230** to 17,559 active members and 7,523 former members in November 2024.

Instead of returning profits to distant stockholders, Polk-Burnett returns Capital Credits to the people we serve.

**If you bought power from Polk-Burnett in 2001-2003 and/or 2021, you'll get money back!**

**Your Capital Credits are based on electricity purchased those years.**

As a co-op, Polk-Burnett operates at cost.

Any revenue left after expenses is returned to members.

Capital Credits are a direct benefit of your co-op membership!



**CAPITAL CREDITS**  
Cash Back for Co-op Members

## SEE YOUR NOVEMBER ELECTRIC BILL FOR CAPITAL CREDITS



### Unclaimed Capital Credits go to scholarships for co-op kids

Polk-Burnett Electric Co-op will award up to 95 \$1,500 scholarships to high school seniors whose parents are members of the electric co-op. These scholarships do not affect your electric rates; they are funded with unclaimed Capital Credits that otherwise would be forfeited to the state, and by the generosity of co-op members who donate Capital Credits.

Since 1987, Polk-Burnett has awarded more than \$1 million in scholarships. Giving back to the community and youth is part of our mission as a cooperative.

If you know co-op students graduating in the Class of 2025, please invite them to apply on polkburnett.com.

**Co-op members may donate future Capital Credits to the co-op scholarship fund; contact our billing office, 800-421-0283, ext. 335, or enroll on polkburnett.com, under the Capital Credits menu.**



### Want to make sure you receive your Capital Credits? Keep contact information up to date

You can make sure you receive your Capital Credits and the best service from Polk-Burnett by keeping your account information current, especially your phone number. There are also times when we need to contact you about a power outage at your location. Thank you!



### Hunters, be safe, stay away from utilities

Do not shoot at power lines or utility equipment.

Never place deer stands or decoys on utility poles or equipment.



### School and community groups invited to tour SunTuria Solar

Do you know... Polk-Burnett has a 10-acre solar array with 4,840 panels right here in our Centuria backyard? We invite school and community groups to visit SunTuria Solar; it's a great field trip!

The 1.25 MW array is the first utility-scale solar array in Polk County. As an early developer of solar energy in our area, we are eager to share information and knowledge with our community. SunTuria Solar provides clean, renewable energy at a fixed rate, replacing electricity from fossil fuel sources. Beyond the environmental and economic benefit, SunTuria Solar provides an educational opportunity for our local schools, teachers and students.

If you have a group that would like to tour SunTuria Solar, please let us know. Especially if you are interested in electricity, energy efficiency and renewable energy. Learn more on polkburnett.com or call 800-421-0283, ext. 333.



### 100-gallon Marathon water heaters just \$850 on load control

When you install on our off-peak rate, it's one of the most cost-effective ways to heat water in your home!

Costs no more to operate than a 50-gallon tank. Durable and built to last with corrosion-free tank.

Learn more on polkburnett.com or call us at 800-421-0283, ext. 318.



### Help make the season bright for local kids 17th Annual Polk-Burnett Holiday Gift Drive

Donate NEW, UNWRAPPED gifts

NOV. 25 - DEC. 9, 2024 | Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Polk-Burnett Centuria, benefits Operation Christmas in Polk County  
Polk-Burnett Siren, benefits Interfaith Caregivers in Burnett County

**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

