

October 2022

National Co-op Month

Proud to be your trusted energy partner



Powerlines

Why are we talking about EVs and EV chargers?

by General Manager Steve Strohane

You've likely seen electric vehicles in the news lately. As your local provider of electricity, we are also talking about EVs. We know EVs are not for everyone, and we don't expect transportation to change overnight, but as we **forecast energy use and strategically plan for the future, we have a responsibility to consider how EV charging will impact the electric system and service to our members.** We are moving forward and adapting with caution and care, always considerate of our core values, equity, fairness and respect for all of our members. In everything we do and say, we exist to serve you and provide you with safe, reliable power at an affordable cost.

I'd like to thank you for your questions, concerns, positive and negative feedback about EVs. We value your opinions. Below are some of your questions and the reasons why we are talking about EVs and support their adoption:

Why do electric utilities want EVs?

First and most important for Polk-Burnett Electric Cooperative is that we want what our members want. We know we have members who want to plug in EVs, just like we know we have members who want to plug in electric water heaters. Electricity is becoming the fuel of choice for many appliances and equipment that historically were powered by fossil fuels. EVs are part of a shift to beneficial electrification, which satisfies at least one of the following conditions without negatively affecting the others:

1. Saves members money over time (lower fuel and maintenance costs);
2. Benefits the environment and reduces greenhouse gas emissions;
3. Improves members' quality of life;
4. Fosters a more robust and resilient grid (charging overnight, storing power for when you need it).



If the power grid is already stressed, why add more pressure by plugging in EVs?

In the past year two years, regional grid operators have raised concerns about not having enough energy for forecasted needs. EVs can actually help balance the grid by charging at home overnight, when energy demand and cost are low. Here's an example: An EV starts charging at 9 p.m. on a Polk-Burnett Level 2 smart charger installed in your garage. It will have a full charge by morning, and when drivers leave home with a full charge, there are very few times when you will need to charge outside of that overnight, off-peak window.

When regional energy demand rises, residential EV chargers can be controlled as part of the co-op's load management program, just like electric water heaters on our system. The co-op offers a charger rebate and off-peak rate in exchange for controlling the charger.

How do EV owners contribute to the gas tax for the roads we all use?

The federal gas tax is \$0.184 and the Wisconsin gas tax is \$0.309, making the total gas tax \$0.493 per gallon of gas. Instead of gas tax, EV owners currently pay an additional \$100 for an annual license sticker in Wisconsin. Hybrid owners pay an additional \$75.

Who pays for public EV charging?

Many Level 2 public chargers are free for EV drivers. You'll find Level 2 chargers at shopping centers, restaurants and hotels. One hour of charging adds about 20 to 25 miles to the car battery and uses 75 to 90 cents of electricity. The energy is billed to the owner of the charger. A Level 3 fast charger adds 150 to 400 miles per hour, and they are never free.



Why did Polk-Burnett install a public fast charger, and who pays for charging?

Polk-Burnett offers a Level 3 fast charger for public use at Marketplace Foods on Hwy. 8 in St. Croix Falls. The charging station provides about 150 miles of battery range for every hour the vehicle is plugged in. It operates with a credit card or ZEF Energy app for \$0.25/kWh. The charger was installed with a rebate from Dairyland Power Cooperative to help alleviate range anxiety in rural areas served by co-ops. To be clear, EV owners pay for fast charging, not Polk-Burnett members.

An EV might NOT be right for you if:

1. You tow or haul large loads. Although it will be interesting to see how this changes with new EV trucks.
2. You travel more than 250 miles per day. Traveling with an EV takes some planning, but if you plan your meal and bathroom breaks around charging stops, you can make charging time more efficient.
3. You don't have the ability to charge at home overnight. Charging at home is easy and inexpensive. If you don't have the ability to charge at home, EV charging will be more inconvenient, time consuming and expensive.

How long will it take to transition from gas to electric vehicles?

Some say we're moving to EVs too fast, and others say we're not moving fast enough. We hear both sides. We believe the transition will be slower here than in urban areas, but we want to make sure rural areas are not left behind. The choice is yours. If you decide an EV is right for you, we're here to help you charge in a way that's cost effective and protects the grid. If you're not interested in electric transportation, that's okay, too. Either way, we're proud to be your trusted energy partner.

Read more about EVs on our website, polkburnett.com/e-vehicles, including FAQs from an EV driver.



Happy Co-op Month!

Co-ops exist for one reason: to serve our members. We're proud to power your life.

Polk-Burnett Electric Cooperative was created by our community, for our community. Our mission is to provide reliable electricity, but the larger purpose of our cooperative is to make our corner of the world a better place.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you.

~ The employees and directors of Polk-Burnett Electric Cooperative



Lower winter rates begin October 1

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

- ✓ 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.

Wisconsin Energy Assistance Notice: Your household may be eligible for the Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program, based on income and size. For help paying your electric bill, contact West CAP, 715-265-4271.

Special member price on Marathon® water heaters, \$750!

Plus tax, when you participate in Polk-Burnett's load control program



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 have long-lasting tanks that will not rust or corrode; they are guaranteed not to leak for as long as you own your home (residential use).
- ✓ Marathon® 100-gallon water heaters are highly efficient and cost no more to operate than a standard 50-gallon tank.
- ✓ 2.5 inches of polyurethane insulation reduces heat loss for greater energy efficiency. It heats water just 10 to 15 minutes per day and maintains 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 save energy and money. Contact us to learn about a Marathon® water heater for your home, 800-421-0283, ext. 595.



Fall energy savers

Cold weather impacts your electric bills. Even the most efficient heating systems will see more use. Try these tips to lower your energy use and costs, while boosting comfort in your home:

- ✓ Change your furnace filters every month and vacuum heat vents.
- ✓ Open shades and curtains during the day to let in sunlight and solar heat.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Install insulating kits for electrical plugs on exterior walls.

For more energy savers, contact member services, 800-421-0283, ext. 595.

AVOID UTILITY SCAMS

Scammers will threaten you with everything from shutting off power to your home to legal action. Don't fall victim to these types of scams.

OCTOBER IS CYBERSECURITY AWARENESS MONTH

Beware of email and phone scams

WATCH OUT for telephone and email SCAMS. Don't be fooled by fraudsters claiming to be your electric co-op. Power is never disconnected by Polk-Burnett for nonpayment unless multiple notices have been sent. If you receive a suspicious, unexpected or threatening call, text or email about your electric bill (or a deal that's too good to be true), follow these tips:

- ✓ Take your time. Scammers create a sense of urgency, so people will act fast and hand over personal information and money.
- ✓ Be suspicious of requests for money or information that seems out of the ordinary.
- ✓ Confirm before you act. Hang up and call us directly to verify the request.

Please beware and share this warning with others. Together, let's prevent our friends and neighbors from getting caught in a scam. Thank you.

Thank you to all who attended Member Appreciation Day Aug. 12



Winners of Member Appreciation door prizes are:

\$50 Electric Bill Credit

Amy Thomsen, Amery
 Anthony Fahlen, Osceola
 Chris Daniel, St. Croix Falls
 Emmy Pieper, Dresser
 Gary DeGolier, Clear Lake

Marigen Kastle, Luck
 Pat LaForte, Osceola
 Robert Byers, Grantsburg
 Robert Stam, Amery
 Starr Warndahl, Frederic

Blower, Linda Kulbeck, Danbury
Chainsaw, Patty Kuhl, Amery
Weed Whip, Steve Novotny, Luck



Class of 2023: Win a \$1,500 co-op scholarship

Polk-Burnett will award 85 scholarships to high school seniors

- 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, 2023.

Funded with unclaimed Capital Credits that if not used for education would be forfeited to the state. Members may also donate future Capital Credits to support co-op scholarships. Call us to learn how!

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

