

# POWERLINES

Polk-Burnett Electric Cooperative | July 2021



## SunTuria Solar: Celebrating four years of clean, local energy

by General Manager Steve Stroshane

This fall, we celebrate the fourth anniversary of SunTuria Solar! We've learned a lot since it was dedicated behind our co-op office in Centuria on November 3, 2017.

The 1.25-MW array generates about 2.2 million kWh of electricity annually, enough to power about 200 homes. The annual production varies depending on how cloudy or snowy a year is. It is also affected by events that require maintenance, such as a lightning strike that requires a fuse to be replaced. Overall, the array is operating as expected.

The 10-acre solar array has 4,840 panels that operate on a tracking system, which follows the path of the sun to increase energy production—about 14% more electricity than fixed panels. The tracking system also has some self-protection programming that puts the array in what is called stow condition. In the case of high winds, the panels will lean into the wind to prevent the panels from being torn from their mounts. If deep snow is detected, the panels will not move to prevent them from getting caught on a snow drift.

SunTuria Solar was built and is owned by ENGIE America (formerly SoCore Energy) on land leased from the electric co-op. Polk-Burnett and our power provider, Dairyland Power Cooperative, purchase the energy output.

The site behind Polk-Burnett in Centuria was ideal for solar construction, but it posed some electrical challenges. Due to the high output of the array, we needed to upgrade a mile of power line near the office. The power from SunTuria flows into Polk-Burnett's distribution system and the Sand Lake Substation, south of Hwy 8 on County Road Y in Garfield Township. On the way to the substation, it powers the 190 member locations on that circuit. Once it reaches the substation, it is distributed among the other 1,900 members who receive electricity from the Sand Lake Substation, just the same as if the power had been generated and transmitted from a distant power plant.

The ground under the array was restored as native prairie to reduce soil erosion and storm water runoff, while providing pollinator habitat for bumble bees, honey bees and butterflies. We are currently seeking a honey bee partner. We also offer solar tours for schools and community groups. Since it's opening, we've had no concerns and SunTuria Solar has made a positive impact in our community.

### Electricity is cleaner

This renewable energy project provides clean, solar energy to help meet the energy needs of Wisconsin and our local membership. Our power mix from Dairyland is currently about 20% renewables and growing. Dairyland is expanding renewable generation to reduce its carbon footprint and ensure safe, reliable power at a competitive rate. SunTuria Solar is one of 18 solar arrays at co-ops across Dairyland's system. In addition, our G&T energy provider has power agreements with the 149-MW Badger State Solar Facility in Wisconsin, the 98-MW Quilt Block Wind Farm in Wisconsin, the 80-MW Barton Wind Farm in Iowa and the 52-MW Tatanka Ridge Wind Facility in South Dakota.

SunTuria Solar is the first and only utility-scale solar in Polk and Burnett counties. But we're certain it won't be the last. As solar becomes more reliable and cost-effective, we will continue to see additional developments in our region.

Electric cooperatives are forward-thinking organizations. We believe solar will play a part of our future and we support the sustainable growth of alternative energy for our local membership.

For members interested in solar and wind generation, we offer rebates or you can purchase renewable energy blocks through our Evergreen program without owning turbines or panels.

Please join us for our solar energy seminar August 12 (see back) and let us know if we can help answer your questions about solar energy. The future is bright!

Track SunTuria Solar energy output on [polkburnett.com/sunturia-solar](http://polkburnett.com/sunturia-solar).

## MEMBER APPRECIATION DAY

FRI., AUG. 13, 2021, NOON - 3 P.M.

POLK-BURNETT ELECTRIC CO-OP, CENTURIA

Pork Sliders, Cheese Curds, Root Beer Floats, Kettle Corn, Mini Donuts

Bucket Rides • Music • Lineman Selfie Photos • Meet Solar Sam

Free Insulated Tote  
& LED Nightlight  
for Members

Drawing for \$50  
Electric Bill Credit  
(10 winners)

\$5 DQ Card  
for First 100 Kids  
Co-op Coloring  
Books





## When we all work together to conserve energy, we all win

Please help reduce electricity when demand and cost are highest: Summer weekdays, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Your actions reduce the need for power generation, which lowers energy costs and carbon emissions for everyone!

### A little efficiency goes a long way:

1. Do laundry in the morning or after 7 p.m. and use cold water whenever possible.
2. Take advantage of free solar energy to dry your clothes outside on a clothesline.
3. Start the dishwasher after 7 p.m. Run only full loads and open after wash cycle to let dishes air dry.
4. Shut off lights and electronics.
5. Turn thermostat up. When you use a ceiling fan to keep cool, you can increase your thermostat 4 degrees with no change in comfort.
6. Replace incandescent bulbs with LEDs; old bulbs waste energy and generate unwanted heat.
7. Avoid watering outside and running your well during peak times.
8. Charge EVs overnight.
9. Set water heater to 120 degrees.



**Beat the Peak** is a voluntary program that asks you to conserve energy when the electric grid experiences peak demand. We'll send participating members an alert by text, phone or email. Peak demand most often occurs from 2 to 6 p.m. on the hottest days of summer and from 5 to 8 p.m. the coldest days of winter, with no more than nine peak days in the summer and three in the winter.

Enroll on [polkburnett.com](http://polkburnett.com) or 800-421-0283. Thank you!

**We're ready for summer storm season. Are you?**  
 Enroll to receive power outage text alerts on [polkburnett.com](http://polkburnett.com). See **Outage Center**.  
 Report outages to 800-421-0283. We're ready to respond 24/7.

## Propane prebuy contracts available late July



- ✓ Prebuy contracts lock in a price on a fixed number of gallons.
- ✓ Minimum prebuy purchase is 300 gallons with payment due August 20.
- ✓ If contracting isn't an option, sign up for our budget plan by August 20.

800-421-0283, ext. 378 or 411 | NEW! Online accounts are now available!  
 View past deliveries, account balance and make payments. Sign up on [polkburnett.com](http://polkburnett.com) under Propane Center menu.

## Congratulations, safety poster contest winners



We are honored to recognize Alex Benson, Siren Elementary, and Lindi Koerper, Webster Elementary, winners of our 2021 Electrical Safety Poster Contest. Each received a \$25 VISA gift card and their artwork was submitted to state competition, where they each received honorable mention.

The contest for local third graders reminds everyone to be safe around electricity and electrical equipment at home and school.



Alex's poster is left and Lindi's poster is right. See full-size posters on [polkburnett.com](http://polkburnett.com).

What you need to know before installing solar at your home

## FREE SOLAR ENERGY SEMINAR

Thursday, August 5, 6 p.m.

Polk-Burnett Electric Cooperative, 1001 State Road 35, Centuria  
 Guest Speaker: Kris Schmid, Legacy Solar

Register on [polkburnett.com](http://polkburnett.com) or 800-421-0283, x595.

## CO-OP MEMBERS: GET A REBATE ON SOLAR & WIND ENERGY SYSTEMS UP TO \$750 FOR QUALIFYING INSTALLATIONS

Learn more about solar on [polkburnett.com](http://polkburnett.com)

Home of SunTuria Solar. Call for a school or community tour.

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](http://polkburnett.com)



Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer | Member Owned | Community Focused

