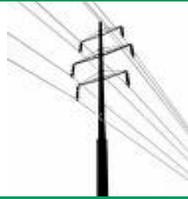




This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



CATSKILL HI-LINE

Bi-Monthly Newsletter

Volume 80 — Issue 2
March / April 2024

Message from the desk of CEO John Gasstrom

As we wrap up Ladder Safety Month, also known as March, and head into Safe Digging Month (April), we welcome the arrival of Spring. And with spring, also comes Lineworker Appreciation Days (see p 5), although every day this past winter was one in which we have appreciated our valuable lineworkers, tree crew, and all other support staff very much! We have certainly seen more odd weather of late, and also the impact of invasive species. Currently, the Emerald Ash Borer (or EAB) has been devastating our region, as many other parts of the country have already seen. When this beetle native to Asia lays its eggs on the bark of one of the North American ash tree species, it will often result in the complete death of that tree. The challenge for the power industry is that those trees die standing in place...until we get a strong windstorm that knocks them over, and into the power lines.

How do we combat this? Well, we try to maintain an aggressive schedule of trimming our power line rights-of-way. However, often the trees that are killed by the EAB are outside of the fifteen feet to either side of the line that we normally trim. Only if we detect a "danger tree" (one that is likely to fall and create a power disruption) outside of the rights-of-way, are we permitted to cut it. These trees can be difficult to spot using normal means, resulting in dead trees that we don't know about until later falling into the power lines. To make it even more difficult, these trees are often more dangerous and tricky to remove due to the nature of the damage done by the EAB.

Another method of addressing this problem is through the use of technology. Did you know that living trees give off a "heat signature" that can be detected by satellites? DCEC is currently applying for grant funding to acquire satellite data that would allow us to identify dead ash and other danger trees that threaten power reliability. This data would allow us to systematically target and remove danger trees before they fall and



DCEC Lineworkers replace a bad crossarm in Gilboa

KO 2-32-16

create a power outage or other damage.

As we go forward into spring and celebrate the upcoming growing season, please see our Tree Planting Guide elsewhere in this issue. Today's good deed of planting a tree can result in problems years down the road if that tree grows up and ends up too close to the lines. Plant wisely!

Cooperatively Yours,

John Gasstrom



Powering Our Rural Communities

5 North Depot Street, PO Box 471, Delhi, NY 13753
Phone: 607-746-2341 or 866-436-1223

Fax: 607-746-7548
Pay-by-Phone 844-209-7162
OUTAGES: 607-746-9283

Selecting a tree? Know its mature height before deciding where to plant

If you are considering planting a tree, carefully select its location before you begin digging. Once you have a tree selected, call 8-1-1 before putting a shovel to the ground. The “UDig – New York” number is a free service that locates and marks public underground utilities in your yard or on your land. Call several business days before you plan to dig. Locators will mark public underground utilities such as electric, gas, water, cable, and fiber. However, the service does not mark privately owned lines or pipes, which is why ****Members must call DCEC as well to locate secondary lines – U-Dig New York does not have secondary line information.****

If trees are planted in the wrong location, they can be expensive to maintain and even dangerous. A mature height of fewer than 15 feet is recommended if planting near lines. Refer to DCEC’s tree planting guide to learn about trees that are generally not tall enough to interfere with lines. Trees should never be planted directly under power lines, near poles or too close to electrical equipment.

Other tree tips:

- If your established trees are growing into power lines, contact us to ask about them. In some cases (depending on the tree’s location), we will come out and trim the tree. If it is your responsibility, do not take on the task yourself. Only tree trimmers who are line-clearance certified are legally allowed to prune & trim trees within 10 feet of power lines.

- It is important to have trees trimmed as limbs can fall on power lines during bad weather, resulting in power outages or blinking lights. Broken or drooping limbs could cause a fire.

- Tall-growing trees with a mature height greater than 45 feet should be planted at least 45 feet away from lines to avoid future pruning. Some of these trees include oak, white and blue spruce, most pines, and most maples.

- Be sure no one climbs a tree near power lines. If branches are touching the wires, the tree could be energized. Even branches that do not touch power lines could become energized if a child’s weight is added. In addition, a child could climb high into the tree and be able to reach the line.

Plant the RIGHT TREE in the RIGHT PLACE

The larger the tree, the farther it should be from a power line. Avoid planting beneath power lines, near poles or close to electrical equipment.

Remember, know what’s below by calling 8-1-1 before you dig.

CALL DCEC AT 607-745-2341 TO LOCATE SECONDARY LINES!

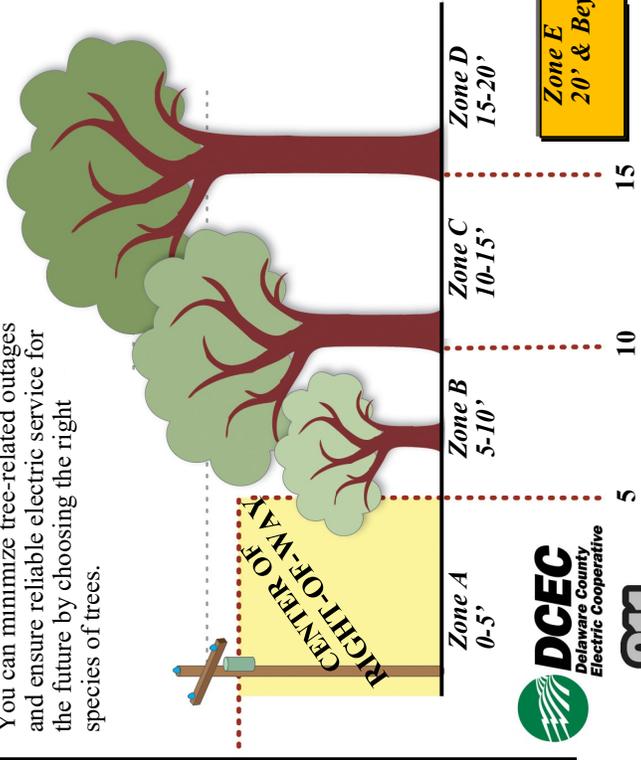
DE 4-25-13

TREE PLANTING GUIDE

Planting Distances from the Center of Right-of-Way

PLAN before you plant

You can minimize tree-related outages and ensure reliable electric service for the future by choosing the right species of trees.



Know what's below. Call before you dig.

Zone	Distance from the Center of Right-of-Way	Max Mature Tree Height	Example of Acceptable Species for Zone
ZONE A	0 to 5 feet	Zero – there is a no-planting zone within 5 feet of the center line of the right-of-way.	Grass, Sedum, Dragon's Blood, Pachysandra, Wildflower seed
ZONE B	5 to 10 feet	8 feet tall	Black Chokeberry, Blue Crop Blueberry, Jersey Blueberry, Silky Dogwood, Blue Ray Blueberry
ZONE C	10 to 15 feet	15 feet tall	Common Lilac, Elderberry, Rose of Sharon, Forsythia, Arrowwood
ZONE D	15 to 20 feet	30 feet tall	Arkansas Black Apple, Red Crabapple, Red Bud, Macoun Apple, White Flowering Dogwood, Cortland Apple, McIntosh Apple, American Hazelnut
ZONE E	20 feet and beyond	N/A	American Larch, Concolor/White Fir, Native Birch, Norway Spruce, Red Oak, Sugar Maple, White Pine, White Spruce, Fraser Fir, American Arborvitae, Wild Black Cherry, Catalpa, Colorado Blue Spruce, Douglas Fir, Paw Paw, Red Mulberry, Scotch Pine, White Walnut, Balsam Fir, Black Spruce

Call before you dig to locate underground utilities
 Call UDig NY, by dialing 811.
 Also, you must call DCEC at (607) 746-2341, because secondary lines are not listed with UDig New

Annual Arbor Green Tree & Shrub Sales

The Delaware County Soil and Water Conservation District (DCSWCD)

April 13, 2024 — Tree and Shrub Handout at SWCD Office

**** Order deadline—March 4. There will also be some overstocked trees and shrubs available for purchase on the April 13 handout day**

For additional information please visit: www.dcswwcd.org

The Schoharie County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD)

March 29, 2024—Order Deadline

April 19—20, 2024—Tree and Shrub Handout at Cobleskill Fairgrounds

For an order form and additional information please visit: www.schohariesoilandwater.org/trees

The following tree species have weak wood and should always be planted at distances away from the pole line that exceed the mature height of the tree:

- Alder, Red
- Austrian Pine
- Basswood
- Boxelder
- Catalpa
- Poplar
- Silver Maple
- Tulip Tree (Yellow Poplar)
- Willows, including all sub-species



Operations Update

The DCEC Rights-of-Way crews will be cutting, trimming, and mowing in the Gilboa area starting with Meeghan Road and Shew Hollow. This area was last cut out in 2016 as part of DCEC's 8-year cycle cut. This cycle is designed to help provide safe, reliable electric service to all our members. There is a direct correlation between tree cutting and outages, and by cutting all our Rights-of-Ways every 8 years, we strive to keep any outages at a minimum.

The DCEC crews will also be focusing on removing many Ash trees due to the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) infestation. Our area has been somewhat sheltered from the effect of the EAB, but impact is being seen in Masonville, Tompkins, and Jefferson. These areas are really starting to show the effects and damage being caused. We are trying to identify danger trees and actively working to cut trees that could potentially hinder the reliability of our system.

The Line crews have been actively working on many jobs all over our service territory. Many of the poles being changed are deficient and a nice upgrade to the DCEC system. Mike Pietrantoni, the Working Superintendent of our line crews, brought in one of the original poles from one of the first lines DCEC crews built in the early 1940's. The pole was in very poor condition and in desperate need of replacement.

The upgrade at Sportsfield Specialties continues with crews installing a 500KVA pad mount transformer recently for that project. With the strange winter we have had this year, many of the poles that need to be worked are inaccessible due to the large amount of rain we have received. We have many projects on the schedule for this year and expect another busy building season for 2024.

-James G. Small, Manager of Operations, Job Training & Safety

**WHEN YOU FIND YOURSELF
IN THE DARK, WE'VE GOT YOUR BACK.**

HA 4-47-7

**To our heroes
in hard hats,
thank you for
keeping the
lights on.**



#ThankALineworker 4/8 & 4/18

The “invisible” work of electricity becomes visible when bad weather, natural disasters, and other accidents cause the lights to go out. **So who comes to fix it?**

These first responders are the front-line workers that go out into the elements to bring our lives back to normal. Line workers are the backbone of the electrical infrastructure and their job is often over-worked and under-appreciated. When everything is working fine, things are normal; but when the power goes out we almost expect them to be there immediately and want the lights back on now.

April 8th (NRECA Coops) and April 18th (National) are Lineworker Appreciation days. We use electricity so much we hardly know what to do without it, so take a second when you throw that switch and remember DCEC has Line and Tree workers out there working everyday to keep your coffee hot and your ice cream cold.



We salute all DCEC Line Crew & Tree Crew members and their families who support them striving to keep you, your families, and businesses in the light.

KO 2-22-32



SAFETY TIP: ALWAYS STAY AWAY FROM DOWNED POWER LINES and be alert to the possibility that tree limbs or debris may hide an electrical hazard. Treat all downed or hanging power lines as if they are energized and dangerous. Lines do not have to be arcing or sparking to be live. Warn others to stay away and contact DCEC.



Rights-of-Way cleared in Andes by DCEC Tree Crew

Where to find your service class on your bill

As the Cooperative carefully considers updates to the “Monthly Fixed Charge,” we have received some questions about service classes:

What IS my service class?

Where do I find my service class on my bill?

Most of our residential members fall into **SC-1** or **SC-2**. Our billing department periodically checks in to make sure all members are in the appropriate service class for their usage and may update your service class if usage changes.

To find out what service class you are in, take a look at your monthly bill. In the example below, the service class is circled in red. This bill shows that the member is in **101/Residential SC-1**.

To learn more about our rates, visit: www.dce.coop/electricity-rates-0



DCEC
Delaware County
Electric Cooperative

5 North Depot Street, P.O. Box 471, Delhi, NY 13753-0471

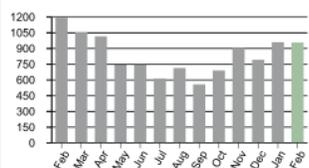
Phone: (607) 746-2341 - Fax: (607) 746-7548
Automated Payment System: (844) 209-7162
Toll Free: (866) 436-1223
Website: www.dce.coop
Email: billing@dce.coop

"POWERING OUR RURAL COMMUNITIES"

Member Mailing Address Here



KWH USAGE HISTORY	
Current Month's Average KWH Per Day	31
Last Year	37
Average Cost Per Day	\$3.37
Last Year	\$4.07



Please read pages 2 & 3 of the February Special Edition Catskill Hi-Line newsletter for important monthly fixed charge changes:
www.dce.coop/catskill-hi-line

Account No.	Service Location	Service Description	Service From	To	Days
			01/15/2024	02/15/2024	31
Meter Number	Pres Read	Prev Read	Mult	KWH Used	Rate Schedule / Reference
			1.00	957	101/RESIDENTIAL SC-1

Activity Since Last Bill	\$ Amount	Current Bill Information		\$ Amount
Previous Balance	121.75	Monthly Fixed Charge		22.00
Payment	-121.75	Energy Charge	957 KWH @ .10795	103.31
Adjustments	0.00	Power Cost Adj	957 KWH @ .00113	1.08
Late Fee	0.00	Formulary Rate Adj	957 KWH @ .003	2.87
Balance Prior to this Billing	0.00	Energy Efficiency Fund	957 KWH @ .001	0.96
		Load Mgmt Credit		-4.00

To make automated payments, please call 844-209-7162. To pay online, visit www.dce.coop to sign up for Smarthub or download the Smarthub app.

80th ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING




SAVE THE DATE!

SATURDAY, AUGUST 24, 2024

9:00AM - REGISTRATION

BUSINESS MEETING TO FOLLOW

DELAWARE ACADEMY

2 SHELDON AVENUE | DELHI, NY

DCEC is Committed to Helping Members During Financial Hardships

DCEC encourages members currently struggling to meet their monthly payment obligation to contact the local agencies listed below for payment assistance.

1. Contact DCEC's Billing Department to set up payment arrangements: 1-607-746-2341
2. Contact your local County Social Service program:
 - a. Delaware County 1-607-832-5300
 - b. Schoharie County: 1-518-295-8334
 - c. Otsego County: 1-607-547-4200
 - d. Delaware Opportunities provides assistance through certain agencies and can be reached at 1-607-746-1600
 - e. Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) Hotline: 1-800-342-3009

DCEC can provide supporting documentation regarding your account to these agencies that can assist in expediting your application.

HEAP Benefits

The New York State Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) provides payment assistance for income eligible residents to use towards the 2023-2024 heating season. This year's regular HEAP benefits opened November 1, 2023. For eligibility, income guidelines, and how to apply contact your local Department of Social Services or the NYS OTDA Hotline at:

1-800-342-3009

Additional information is provided on:

<https://otda.ny.gov/programs/heap>

Third Party Notification

Every member has the right to designate a third party to be notified if the member's bill is not paid and if the member's service becomes subject to disconnection for nonpayment. For example, a parent can designate an adult child as the third party to receive notifications. Third party notifications can be very helpful in situations where health troubles or other factors might make it difficult for the member to stay on top of bill payments.

For more information about third party notifications, please contact the office.

2023-2024 HEAP Monthly Income Limits

The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) helps low-income people pay the cost of heating their homes. Your total household gross monthly income for your household size must be at or below the following guidelines:

2023-2024 HEAP Benefits Gross Monthly Income Guidelines:

Household Size	Maximum Gross Monthly Income
1	\$3,035
2	\$3,970
3	\$4,904
4	\$5,838
5	\$6,772
6	\$7,706
7	\$7,881
8	\$8,056
9	\$8,231
10	\$8,407
11	\$8,582
12	\$8,890
13	\$9,532
Each additional	Add \$642

FR 1948

CATSKILL HI-LINE is a Publication of the Delaware County Electric Cooperative, Inc. and is published bi-monthly for the membership. This newsletter has articles, content, and photos submitted by CEO John Gasstrom; Manager of Operations, Job Training & Safety James G. Small; Billing Representative I Linda Astuto; Field Engineering Technician I Brittany Hall; Apprentice Arborist I Jakeb Ryan; and Manager of Cooperative Relations Janelle Linehan.

The information contained herein is designed to promote action and discussion among members. Statements published do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Cooperative. The information has been obtained from sources believed to be reliable, and the editor has exercised reasonable care to assure its accuracy.

Board of Directors

- President.....Edward Pick Jr.
- Vice President.....Jeffrey Russell
- Secretary.....Laurie Wehmeyer
- Treasurer.....Edward Furgol
- Director.....Steve Oles
- Director.....David Krzyston
- Director.....Patrick O'Brien
- CEO.....John Gasstrom

Is Your Service Location Number in This Issue?

Your service location number begins with two letters and is located on your bill next to your account number. Keep your eyes peeled for the "hidden location number" in this newsletter! If you find the number, and it is your service location, call us at (607)746-2341 and you will receive a \$10 bill credit! You must call within 60 days of publication—there are FIVE numbers in this newsletter, go and find 'em! **Good luck!**

DCEC Office Closures:

DCEC's office will be closed on:
Monday, May 27, 2024 – Memorial Day
Thursday, July 4, 2024 – Independence Day
Friday, July 5, 2024 – People's Choice Day
Monday, September 2, 2024 – Labor Day



Like our page on Facebook to follow our news:



Follow us on Instagram:



Create your SmartHub account today! You can click straight to SmartHub through our website: www.dce.coop



LINEWORKER TOUGH

**I AM A
POLE-CLIMBING
NO-WHINING
POWER-RESTORING
ELEMENT-ENDURING
GRAVITY-DEFYING
ENERGY-SUPPLYING
LINEWORKER**