

## New Faces at DCEC



*Back Row left to right: Jay Small, Manager of Systems Planning, Job Training & Safety; Jakeb Ryan, Laborer 1; Kris Schabot, Journeyman Line Clearance Arborist; Brandon Tuttle, Line Apprentice 1st Year. Front Row left to right: Linda Astuto, Billing Assistant; Janelle Linehan, Cooperative Relations Manager; Brittany Hall, General Clerk; John Gasstrom, CEO.*

As we begin to experience the miracle of springtime and growth (how many times have you mowed your lawn by now?), it reminds me of our Cooperative roots. As most of you know, America's electric cooperatives were formed primarily by farmers and for farmers. And here in Delaware County, twelve dairy farmers took the lead to electrify the areas where profit-based companies would not. Electricity was revolutionary to farming, and as our membership grew, more farms were electrified. At our peak, there were a couple hundred dairy farms being served by the Cooperative.

Today we stand at roughly 4,700 members from our humble beginnings, and out of those, only twenty are dairy farms! But, we remember our roots this month and urge you to visit us at the Meredith Dairy Fest on June 10th & 11th as we honor that heritage.

While it is sometimes hard to believe that just a few decades ago, electricity was considered "miraculous" and a "luxury," today it is seen as a necessity, and it is often taken for granted. May is Electrical Safety Month and while safety is equally important **every** month of the year, we take this month to remind everyone and reinforce that electricity can be extremely dangerous, and we should always take precautions. When we get so used to having something as a part of our daily lives, we

can become complacent. We urge everyone to stay aware and be safe, whether it's around a downed power line or using electricity during outdoor summertime events.

Recently, I've spent time both in Albany and in Washington, D.C. speaking to our elected officials about some of the challenges we have in keeping up with shifts to electricity as a sole fuel source. Realistically, I believe everyone wants a future where we are minimizing our impacts on the environment, but addressing the issue is complex and we have had to bring our message to the people making the laws. We are already seeing real changes to the way people consume energy in our service territory, and with New York's current Climate Act legislation setting new requirements for building and vehicle electrification, we are looking at exponential electric load growth in the next few years.

This means that DCEC will be focusing on re-building electric distribution lines through large portions of our delivery area, and this will be a very costly endeavor. Our message, both in Albany and D.C., is to moderate the pace of the mandated changes and to make the funding available to support the level of investment we will need to make.

*.....continued on Page 2*

## Powering Our Rural Communities

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It will cost tens of millions of dollars to make the infrastructure improvements necessary to our distribution grid – a system that has grown to its current state over a period of 75+ years – and the implementation of some new state requirements that are driving this need are scheduled as early as 2024, with more requirements coming soon after.

The trip to Washington, D.C. had a wonderful bright spot, as I was able to interact with four high school students from New York’s Electric Cooperatives service territories. Delaware Academy’s very own Erin Coppersmith represented DCEC, and she was not only a delight to have on this trip, but she gave all of us hope for such a bright future for our nation. We will be lucky to have leaders like Erin and the other students as stewards of our future.

Cooperatively Yours,

*John Gasstrom*



## The Power of Cooperative Membership

Cooperatives are not-for-profit, member-owned businesses. Electric utility cooperatives build and maintain three times the miles of power line of other utilities and do so at comparable rates despite fewer customers. They do this by operating on a not-for-profit, cost-of-service basis.

Once a member pays the membership fee, they become a part owner of the cooperative. They have a voice in how the Cooperative is operated and influence this process through casting their vote at the annual meeting. It is also at the annual meeting that the members elect DCEC’s seven-member board of directors from the membership.

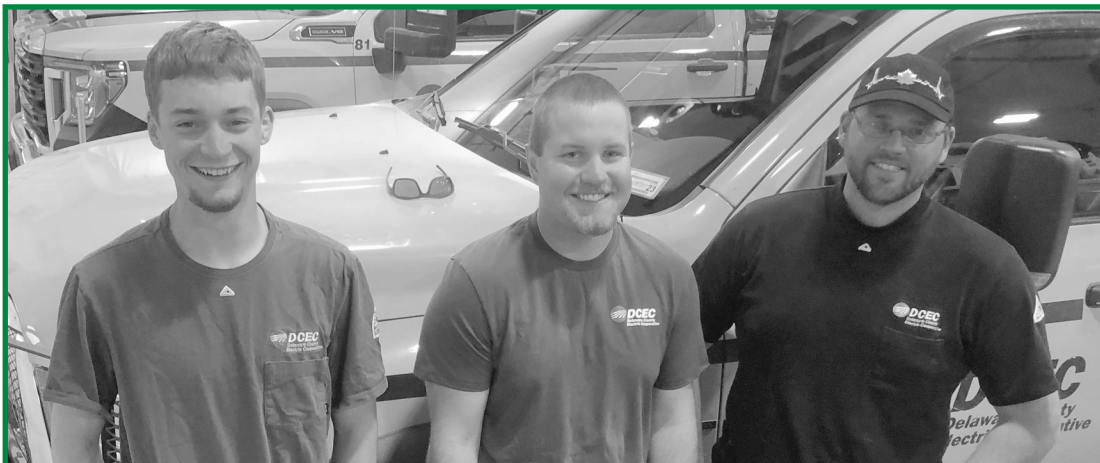
Because the members of the Cooperative are also the owners this means the cooperative is locally owned and operated. Employees of the Cooperative are also local residents who are familiar with the needs of the communities they serve.

## DCEC PROMOTION NEWS! Congratulations!

Congratulations to DCEC’s newly promoted Line and Tree crew members! Through required on-going testing and OJT (on-the-job training), from left to right:

- Joe Johnson has been promoted to Journeyman Line Clearance Arborist
- Nile Puerschner has been promoted to Lineman 2nd Class
- Micah Scobie has been promoted to Lineman 1st Class

We are grateful to work with such a dedicated and talented team proudly serving our members!



ST 2-82-4A

## Erin Coppersmith from Delhi is selected as DCEC's 2023 Student Delegate



As a Student Delegate, Erin was able to represent DCEC at the recent National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Legislative Conference in Washington D.C. which was April 16-19.

Each year, 11th graders of DCEC members are given the opportunity to apply and be considered to represent the Cooperative at this national event. Students are selected based on their academic achievement, involvement in extra-curricular activities, letters of recommendation, and service to the community. As a Student Youth Delegate, Erin accompanied DCEC officials to Washington. She joined representatives from 900 other rural electric co-ops in meetings with Congressional leaders on Capitol Hill. Erin did a terrific job helping prepare DCEC's CEO and Board Secretary for their legislative meetings, was very quick-witted answering some tough energy-related questions from elected officials, and was an overall joy to be with.

In addition to attending the Legislative Conference, Erin will be attending NRECA's Youth Tour from June 18-23 joining over thirty other states and their delegates. Life-long friendships, enhanced leadership skills, and a broader understanding of electric cooperatives and the energy industry are among some take aways from past attendees. DCEC is delighted to have Erin as 2023's Student Delegate. We are looking forward to being a part of Erin's involvement in NRECA's Youth Tour and beyond. Go Erin!



### Advocacy Group for Storm Preparation

An action item coming from 2022's Annual Meeting was to set up a Member Advocacy Group to discuss storm preparation. We have set up an Eventbrite where you can sign up on-line to attend the group.

- When: Tuesday, July 11th @ 4pm
- Where: Location TBD based on number of members rsvp'd to attend

Please sign up here:

[www.eventbrite.com/e/storm-preparedness-advocacy-group-tickets-634906190507](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/storm-preparedness-advocacy-group-tickets-634906190507)

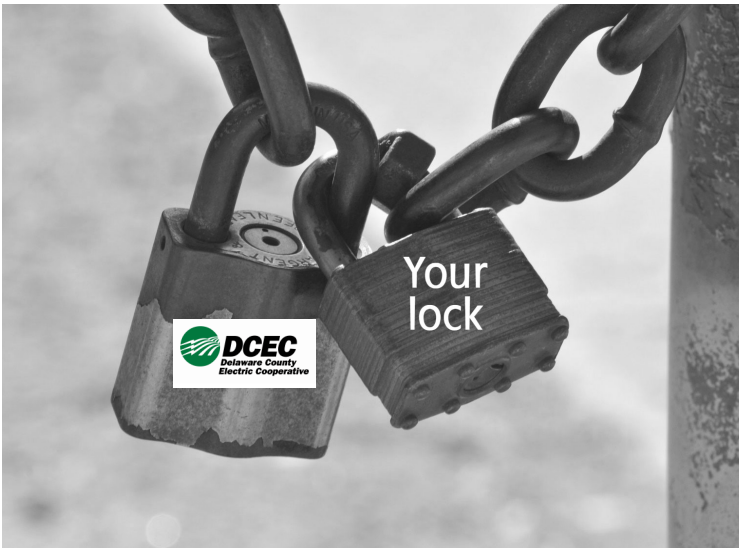
## Gate Codes and “Why are there two locks on my chain?”

DE 4-15-15A

Since the nature of restoring power may require access to your property – and it might be the middle of the night: raining, hailing, snowing – it is important that our crews can more easily get through gates to resolve the problem.

Some members have gates with codes. If you have installed a gate with a code padlock and you do not believe that we have that information, please call our office and we will add it to our secure list.

Other members have a chain with a traditional lock as seen in the photo. If our crews come to your property and only “your lock” is on the chain, we simply cut the next link of the chain to add a “DCEC lock.” This allows both you, the member, and DCEC access. We just received green tags with DCEC’s name and phone number for our locks that our crews will be adding as they come across DCEC locks in the field.



## DCEC Completes Annual Audit

Each year, the DCEC board retains an outside accounting firm to conduct a comprehensive audit of DCEC financial practices and internal controls. The auditing firm of Fiore Fedeli Snyder Carothers, LLP, located in State College, PA., completed a very comprehensive audit of how DCEC conducts business, applies accounting practices, and records financial transactions from all departments. We are pleased to report to our members that the 2022 financial statements present fairly, in all material aspects, the financial position of DCEC.

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](http://www.dce.coop)



## Are You Interested in Being on DCEC’s Fixed Budget?

Members interested in being on DCEC’s fixed budget plan must contact the office by the end of June in order to be enrolled. Members can also elect to be on a variable budget plan, which you can sign up for at any time throughout the year as long as you have 12 consecutive months of usage. For more information on the budget plans please contact the office.

**Board Appoints Nominating Committee:**

Each year, an independent committee of DCEC members works to recruit members interested in running for the DCEC board at the Cooperative’s Annual Meeting. This year members will elect new directors at the 2023 Annual Meeting scheduled for Friday, September 15th. The Committee kicked off their work on May 10th, and they will need to submit official nominations by July 16th. Members interested in learning more about being a director or becoming a candidate, should contact Janelle Linehan at [janelle.linehan@dce.coop](mailto:janelle.linehan@dce.coop) by June 30th.

All candidates will be expected to submit a letter to the Nominating Committee presenting their credentials and qualifications and explaining why they are interested in serving on the DCEC Board of Directors.

***The director positions up for election in 2023 are:***

Northern Region: Towns of Gilboa, Jefferson, Summit, Davenport, Harpersfield, Stamford & Maryland

Central Region: Towns of Bovina, Delhi, Franklin, Hamden, Kortright & Meredith

Southern Region: Towns of Andes, Colchester, Masonville, Middletown, Sidney, Tompkins, Walton & Bainbridge

**2023 Nominating Committee:**

<i>Member</i>	<i>Region</i>
Dr. Seth Blocker	Central
Molly Oliver	Central
Lynn Hait	Northern
Greg Starheim	Northern
Chad Trimbell	Southern

**ME 1-55-2**

**DCEC’s 2023  
Annual Meeting  
will be on  
Friday, September 15, 2023  
at 4:30 pm at Delaware Academy in Delhi, NY**

**Members Decide on Charity Donations:**

At the Annual Meeting on Friday, September 15, 2023, DCEC will be teaming up with CoBank, one of our financial services partners to give three donations to three, charitable organizations to be selected by the members. 1st prize award will be \$1,000, 2nd prize is \$600, and lastly 3rd prize will be \$400. Nominations for charities should be sent by Co-op members to Janelle Linehan by June 12th at [janelle.linehan@dce.coop](mailto:janelle.linehan@dce.coop) or by regular mail to the office of the Cooperative. To be nominated to receive a donation, a charity **MUST:**

- Have a significant presence within the DCEC service territory
- Have 501(c)3 status
- Be able to attend the DCEC Membership meeting and educate Members on behalf of their organization

Nominated charities will appear in the special edition of the Catskill Hi-Line, which you will receive with your August bill. Members will vote on the “winning” charities at the Annual Meeting. Many thanks to CoBank’s Sharing Success for their matching grants!

*Teach what you know about electrical safety*  
*Learn what you need to*  
*Care enough to share it with those you love*

May is Electrical Safety Month, so what better time to talk about electrical safety than now? We are all excited about the warmer weather coming. Whether it's swimming, boating or fishing, summertime is water recreation time for millions. While enjoying water activities, don't let a safety hazard dampen your summer fun. As part of its "Teach Learn Care" TLC campaign, Safe Electricity reminds everyone: Teach what you know about electrical safety. Learn what you need to, and Care enough to share it with those you love. Developing an awareness about ways to protect you and your family against harm from being exposed to energized electrical conductors or wires may someday prove to be lifesaving.



Assessing electrical hazards near areas of water is a wise investment of time and personal effort. Contact between water and electricity can be serious, or even deadly. According to the CPSC, deaths and serious shocks occur in and around swimming pools each year. Safe Electricity offers the following tips to stay safe in or around swimming pools:

- Do not put any electrical appliances within five feet of a swimming pool.
- Any electrical outlets within twenty feet of a pool should be equipped with a GCFI, or Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter.
- Pools and decks should be built at least 5 feet away from all underground electrical lines, and at least 25 feet away from overhead electrical lines.
- As always, never swim during a thunderstorm.
- Use battery operated, rather than electrical, appliances near swimming pools.
- If a swimmer is electrocuted or shocked, don't dive in yourself or you could be electrocuted as well. Turn off the power, and then use a fiberglass shepherd's hook to pull the victim out of the water.
- When you leave the pool, don't change the radio station or touch any electrical appliances until you are dry - never touch any electrical appliances when you are wet or standing in water.
- If children wish to play with sprinklers or hoses, emphasize that they should be set up well away from any electrical outlets or appliances.



**HF 2-23-10**

## DOWNED POWER LINES: Know what to do!

Operating a motor vehicle in our part of rural New York state is for the most part, a necessity. Would you know what to do if your vehicle crashed into an electric utility pole? Knowing what to do could be the difference between life and death.

If you're involved in a motor vehicle accident and power line conductors or other wires fall on your vehicle and there is no fire, your safest option is to stay inside your vehicle until help arrives. Exiting the vehicle increases your risk of electrocution.

Only attempt to exit your vehicle if it is on fire. If you have to exit, do so as follows:

**Jump out of the vehicle, making sure that no part of your body or clothing touches the ground and the vehicle at the same time. Land with both feet together and with small, shuffling steps, move at least 40 feet away from the vehicle and the power line or wires.** The ground could be energized. Shuffling away with both feet close together decreases the risk of electrical shock or possible electrocution.

Do not drive over downed power lines. Even if not energized, these lines could become entangled with your vehicle, causing further damage.

If a person or pet comes into contact with a downed power line conductor, remain clear. Do not touch them or the conductor. You could sustain an electric shock or possibly be electrocuted by doing so.

**ME 1-68-12B**

It is nearly impossible to tell if a power line conductor or a wire at an accident scene is energized and therefore, harmful. Always treat the power line conductor or wire as if it is energized.

Remember to call 911 for help as soon as you are safely able to do so. You may also call the DCEC outage telephone line at (607) 746-9283.

### WHAT TO DO: IF YOUR CAR CRASHES INTO A UTILITY POLE

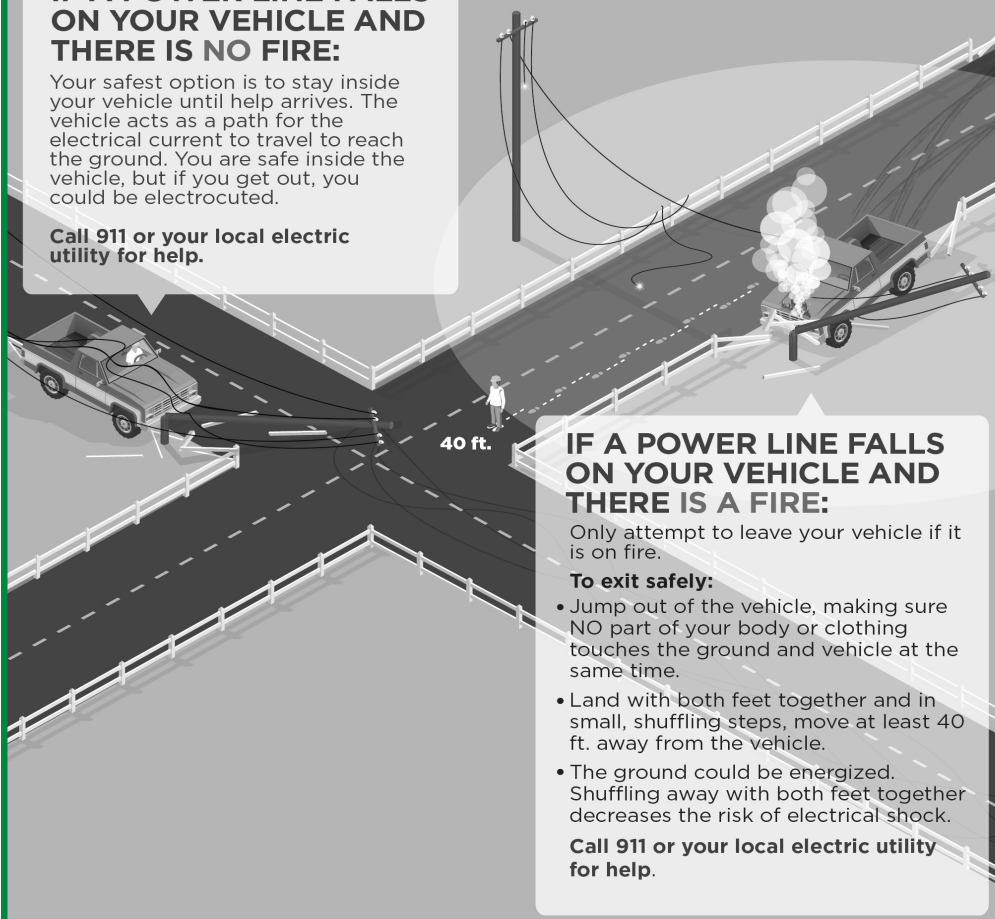
**Accidents happen.** Would you know what to do if your car crashed into an electric utility pole? Knowing what to do could be the difference between life and death.

**Always consider power lines and other electrical equipment to be live and dangerous!**

#### IF A POWER LINE FALLS ON YOUR VEHICLE AND THERE IS NO FIRE:

Your safest option is to stay inside your vehicle until help arrives. The vehicle acts as a path for the electrical current to travel to reach the ground. You are safe inside the vehicle, but if you get out, you could be electrocuted.

**Call 911 or your local electric utility for help.**



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- Land with both feet together and in small, shuffling steps, move at least 40 ft. away from the vehicle.
- The ground could be energized. Shuffling away with both feet together decreases the risk of electrical shock.

**Call 911 or your local electric utility for help.**



*Brittany and one of her favorite Holstein heifers she raised named "Tequila."*

## DCEC Staff Spotlight

Hi, my name is Brittany Hall. I recently started working for the Delaware County Electric Cooperative as their General Clerk. For most of my life I lived on Hallway Farm, a now-retired dairy farm in Delaware County, where I was the sixth generation and where most of my formative memories and experiences began. Two years ago, my family sold the farm but that hasn't stopped me from embracing everything it had to offer and continuing my love of the dairy industry.

In 2002, my parents made the tough decision to sell the dairy cows. Four-year-olds don't often remember a lot, however I don't think I could forget the day the trailers pulled out of our driveway with our herd. Though the milk cows were gone when I was so young, I have remained a part of the local dairy community in many ways over the years.

When I was seven my parents bought me my first show calf. It was then I developed a new love for dairy. I raised and showed many heifers over the years starting them from a few days old until they were bred and close to calving. I could often be found admiring my cows out on pasture, leading them around for hours, or trying to get the proportions of forage and grain just right to best suit them. If I wasn't doing something with my cows, I was with my dad helping him fix fences, making repairs around the farm, cleaning pens, helping with hay, or just enjoying being a kid outside in the fresh air and wide-open spaces.

Not all my dairy farming experiences stemmed from my family's farm but also from working on other local farms in the area. When I was old enough, I got to start milking cows for other farmers, helping them with chores, feeding calves and helping them in any other way that I possibly could. Looking back, though it sounds like work, those dairy cows were the source of so many memories, lessons learned, and satisfaction of a hard day's work. I have also worked with and shown cows alongside many of the dairy farmers who are members of the co-op. A few of them have some of my show cows on their farm as well as their offspring. I always enjoy visiting and talking with farmers and seeing how the heifer I once had has matured into a milk cow and to hear how far they've come.

When I interviewed for my current position with DCEC, in talking to the CEO and CFO I learned that they too have their own unique memories and experiences of farming. This is something that stood out after only just meeting them. I often can connect with someone I meet over their memories of their family's farm or a relative's they used to visit. It's hard to think that, because of there being fewer dairy farms, future generations may miss out on the memories, experiences, and opportunities that so many of us have had that hold a special place in our hearts. I've learned after being around and working on dairy farms that dairy farmers are a tough and committed breed: milk prices can be volatile and unpredictable at times; the day you deliver a heifer calf you might have to sell your favorite cow; you could be dealt record breaking crop yields or have to weather a drought or flood. It's not for the faint of heart, it's for those who can withstand the storm and still have hope.

It's comforting to someone like myself, who loves our dairy community, to know that dairy farms played an important role in the formation of the co-op, and they continue to be members we can support. At DCEC, we recognize the importance of dairy farms and their need for safe, reliable, and cost-effective electricity so they are better able to care for their animals and to produce a wholesome product for us consumers.



**What do farmers talk about when they are milking cows?**



**Udder nonsense!**

Here are a few dairy fun facts for New York State:

- New York ranks 5th in the U.S. for number of milk cows at approximately 627,000 dairy cows
- Approximately 3,400 dairy farms in New York state
- Around 15.5 billion pounds of milk is produced in New York State each year



**Celebrating our roots during June's "Dairy Month," DCEC to sponsor & attend the MEREDITH DAIRY FEST! June 10th & 11th – 10am-5pm**

When DCEC (then called REA) first started, there were only 12 members all of which were dairy farmers! Under the Roosevelt Administration's Rural Electrification Administration in 1935, farmers were urged to create electricity cooperative companies to bring electricity to rural areas.

The Meredith Dairy Fest's mission is to create a festival that celebrates our dairy history, our local businesses and crafts, and the individuals, families, and animals that make it all possible.

Per Dairy Fest committee member, Jackie Oliver, "This year, the Dairy Fest will feature a robotic milker from Delaval to help answer some questions about robotic systems. I thought this would be a great opportunity because Clark's dairy is moving towards using robots in the future. I know from working in the industry that a lot of people that see things from the outside have questions and I felt that I had resources I can use to answer those questions at the Dairy Fest. The unit will be on display and a representative from Delaval will be there to show you how the robot works. Delaval is a dairy company that supports a lot of local farmers and we are thrilled to see them attending the festival."

Since she was such a hit with visitors last year, the ginormous blow up cow named Bertha will be back standing tall for all to see! We look forward to seeing you there!

*For more information, visit: [www.meredithdairyfest.com](http://www.meredithdairyfest.com)*

# LOOK UP AND LIVE

## DURING HARVEST SEASON

Keep an eye out for overhead power lines. Use a spotter when operating equipment near lines and poles.



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 submitted by CEO John Gasstrom, Operations Manager Ryan Sullivan, Billing Specialist Rosemary Alwine, and Cooperative Relations Manager 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.....Paul Menke
- Director.....Steve Burnett
- Director.....Edward Furgol
- Director.....Steve Oles
- CEO.....John Gasstrom

**Reporting Outages**

Members, please always report when you experience a power outage. There are some cases when a member has a single outage and we may not know unless you report the outage. Likewise, if an outage is widespread, the more members that report the outage, the more information this provides for our Line Crew to find the cause of the outage to restore power. Providing information such as where trees are down on the line or “hearing a pop” are helpful to relay to us to quickly diagnose and restore the outage.

To keep members in the know when there is an outage, we have been posting on our Facebook page and sharing to many local group pages with updates throughout the four counties we serve. We strive to get you information as it is discovered in the field so that our members know how long the outage may last for.

To report an outage, call **(607) 746-9283** or report online through **SmartHub**

**Operations Update**

Line crews are working on new member services for incoming members all over the service territory as well as pole replacements.

Right of way crews will be trimming trees and mowing in Andes on Holiday and Berry Brook. Asplundh is continuing work for the Cooperative in Kortright near Catskill Turnpike headed towards Jersey Road in Meredith.

**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!*

**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.

**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.*