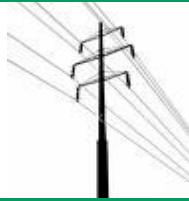




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CATSKILL HI-LINE

Bi-Monthly Newsletter

Volume 79 — Issue 1
January / February 2023



DCEC is looking forward to a bright future of meeting our member's needs in 2023. We are proud of our local communities and rural areas as we work hard to provide safe, reliable & affordable electricity for you!

Reflections on Life Before Electricity at the Ralph Oliver Farm

Thoughts from his son, Ralph William (Bill) Oliver, now 98 years old!

Ralph S. Oliver (Bill's Dad) owned a family farm on Peakes Brook Road in Delhi, NY. Like so many farmers at the time, he hungered for the advantages that electricity could offer, especially with farm and house chores for a family of eight. Ralph's farm was one of the first farms in the area to have electricity. Ralph was proud of the fact that he had some electric power even prior to the new REA (DCEC) line being put up.

...continued on page 2



Oliver Family Farm prior to REA (DCEC) electricity

Power of Electricity Powering your life. Every day.

As we look back at the history of electric co-ops, DCEC continues to thrive on the courage, commitment, and dedication of all the individuals that got us here today. You might not think about it, but as a co-op member, dependable electricity for your lifestyle is something you can count on every day. That's comforting to know, because nowadays electricity is essential to energizing our lives and keeping us connected more than ever before. Through innovation and new technology, DCEC is doing everything we can to keep electricity reliable and affordable for you. And that's a powerful thing!

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

Reflections on Life Before Electricity

...continued from page 1

Farmers were creative about getting electric power to help them. In the Post home up the road from the Oliver's, they had a gas line installed that ran directly into their lighting fixtures so they could be lit (rather than with kerosene). At his farm, Ralph purchased and installed a Delco-Light Plant which was essentially a series of batteries in the basement of the house that generated 12 volts of electricity. They were commonly marketed to farmers during that time before they could get attached to the main electric source. While the electricity was convenient, it certainly was not easy to produce. The Delco consisted of large batteries wired together in a series to provide the 12 volts of direct current necessary for the system and included a generator for charging the batteries. The generator engine was supposed to start automatically when the charge in the batteries was low. In theory, all the family needed to do was to keep the fuel tank full and the oil level in the engine up to the mark.

However, Bill remembers dealing with the "darned" Delco. Everybody – at one time or another – had the onerous chore of going down to try to start the generator that re-charged the battery. It was not a favorite chore as the generator was very persnickety and required a lot of attention to get going. It had a long-handled crank, like an old car. The handle had to be repeatedly cranked to attempt to start the generator. It's hard to imagine that they were running a generator in the basement of the old house. The fumes from the exhaust were vented out of a basement window. Nowadays, we know that the fumes from running the generator in the basement – even though vented out the window – could potentially be dangerous or deadly to the family.

They connected the barn to the 12-volt battery in the house by running a line from the house to the barn. 12 volts was considerably less than the 120-volt line that would eventually be provided by the REA (DCEC). Any electric appliances at that time had to be specific to the 12-volt line. Bill's family had a 12-volt refrigerator and a 12-volt milking machine. Chores were safer and easier at night with small electric bulbs instead of the kerosene lanterns used before the Delco plant. When Bill was asked what electricity meant to his parents, he said that his mom, Margaret, "loved the milking machine the most," as it meant she would no longer have to go to the barn to do milking. The milking machine was much quicker than doing it by hand. While she had a special touch with some of the most challenging cows, she was quite happy to not have to go to the barn constantly for milking.

The Delco-Light Plant certainly helped change the face of the farm and farm work required. However, the hoped for 120-volt line would provide much more power and many more options. To get the new line, farmers were required to provide labor and vehicles for the laying of the new electric lines. Farmers made breaks

in stone walls and fences for the new lines, some of which may still be seen today. The Oliver family provided Draft horses and a driver as well as manpower, although Bill was in high school and then away in the Service and did not personally provide his own manpower. He does, however, distinctly remember driving up Peakes Brook Road and being able to see how far the REA (DCEC) line had progressed, based on the new lights shining from the houses and barns.

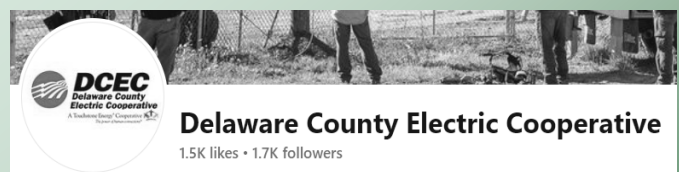
Something that people don't often think about is the expense of new fixtures and appliances that were required back then. While farmers were thrilled with the electricity and the options it gave them, there were still many things they had to do for the electricity to be very useful. They had to replace or modify kerosene lamps. Any existing fixtures that were designed to be used with 12-volt electricity had to be reconfigured or replaced with fixtures that could handle the new 120-volt line. They could not afford to replace everything at once. For example, the Oliver's did not immediately get rid of either the kerosene stove or wood stove, but continued to use them for quite some time.

Bill fondly remembers a gentleman in town, Harry Conrow, who lived on the upper end of Elm Street. He was one of the early 'electricians' and helped with the electrical projects around the farm that needed to be done. The one room schoolhouse that both Bill and his father, Ralph, had attended was not electrified when Bill and his father attended there. However, after Delaware Academy was opened in Delhi, Ralph bought the old schoolhouse and turned it into a home. Harry Conrow came up and hooked the schoolhouse into the main REA (DCEC) electric line.

Later, Bill and his family moved into the old schoolhouse, and they were certainly happy with the electricity!

Written by Bill's daughter, Michele Dunn

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Follow us on Instagram:

dce.coop

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



Space Heater Safety Tips

Heating equipment is the second leading cause of home fires in the United States. More than 65,000 home fires are attributed to heating equipment each year. These fires result in hundreds of deaths, thousands of injuries and millions of dollars in property damage.

Portable electric space heaters can be a convenient source of supplemental heat for your home in cold weather. Unfortunately, they can pose significant fire and electric shock hazards if not used properly. Fire and electrical hazards can be caused by space heaters without adequate safety features, space heaters placed near combustibles, or space heaters that are improperly plugged in.

Safety should always be a top consideration when using space heaters. Here are some tips for keeping your home safe and warm when it's cold outside:

- Make sure your space heater has the label showing that it is listed by a recognized testing laboratory.
- Before using any space heater, read the manufacturer's instructions and warning labels carefully.
- Inspect heaters for cracked or broken plugs or loose connections before each use. If frayed, worn or damaged, do not use the heater.
- Never leave a space heater unattended. Turn it off when you're leaving a room or going to sleep, and don't let pets or children play too close to a space heater.
- Space heaters are only meant to provide supplemental heat and should never be used to warm bedding, cook food, dry clothing or thaw pipes.
- Install smoke alarms on every floor of your home and outside all sleeping areas and test them once a month.
- Proper placement of space heaters is critical. Heaters must be kept at least three feet away from anything that can burn, including papers, clothing and rugs.
- Locate space heaters out of high traffic areas and doorways where they may pose a tripping hazard.
- Plug space heaters directly into a wall outlet. Do not use an extension cord or power strip, which could overheat and result in a fire. Do not plug any other electrical devices into the same outlet as the heater.
- Place space heaters on level, flat surfaces. Never place heaters on cabinets, tables, furniture, or carpet, which can overheat and start a fire.

Always unplug and safely store the heater when it is not in use!

SPACE HEATER SAFETY

Place space heaters
on hard, level
surfaces.

Keep heaters at least
3 ft. away from
children, pets and
flammable materials.



Message from the desk of CEO John Gastrom

I wanted to take a few moments to help clarify some items for our members. With more and more homeowners exploring the potential to add their own generation at home, as well as new and existing government programs helping to make self-generation more attainable, there is still a lot of confusion about how self-generation (or what we call "Member Owned Distributed Generation") is accounted for on the DCEC system.

Self-generation may include renewable sources of electricity, including wind, solar, and even hydro-electric power generation. When a member installs their own generation, the power they produce is first consumed at their site. This self-generation directly reduces their power consumption by the number of kWh (kilowatt-hours) of energy they produce, which means that they will receive a direct full benefit of not paying for energy at full retail price. When more power is produced than the site consumes, the generation owner has two basic options. They can store that energy for later use, such as by charging a battery; or they may sell that excess power back to DCEC.

As a member-owned, not-for-profit cooperative, DCEC has a duty to accurately account for costs and to pay a fair and equitable rate for any product we buy, including electric power. As such, we use a process which calculates our "avoided cost" of buying energy from the New York Power Authority, which we instead received by buying it from one of our members.

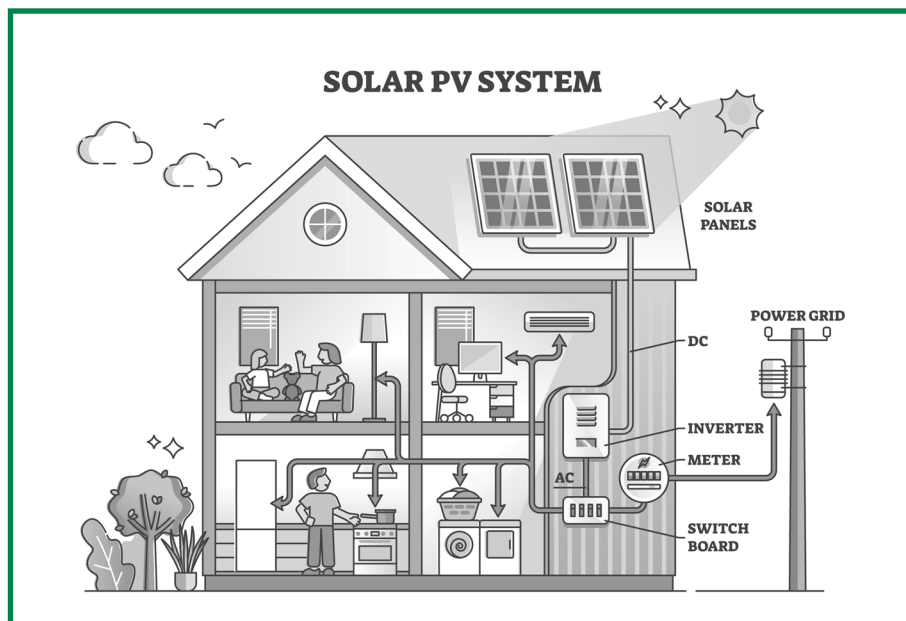
This "avoided cost" is a wholesale power cost, which does not include the cost of wires, poles, transformers, utility workers, regulatory compliance, and a myriad of other components required to operate a safe, reliable, and cost-effective power delivery system. So, when DCEC pays a member for their excess generation, they are getting paid at the same rate that we are paying our other energy supplier(s) for electricity.

We know that this scenario can be confusing, as there are a lot of components involved in running a power grid, and we don't expect that every member would be an expert on all these items. To compound matters, there are many providers of self-generation equipment that may not be aware of the different methodologies and rates in use in different parts of the state (and every state for that matter) and they may inadvertently pass along misinformation to the purchaser.

We invite any of our members considering self-generation to reach out to us and we would be happy to explain the way the process works and help to evaluate your potential savings from installing self-generation. We have further information available on our website at <http://www.dce.coop> as well as applications and agreements to begin the process if you do decide to install your own Member Owned Distributed Generation at your home.

Cooperatively Yours,

John Gastrom



DCEC Food Drive 2023

During the holiday season each year, DCEC runs a food drive calling for donations from our members, staff, and our directors to help local families affected by poverty. This past year, our members, directors, and employees were able to

provide an abundance of nonperishable food donations to the Stamford Sacred Heart Food Pantry. When our team arrived with donations, their “peanut butter shelf” was empty...check it out below—we filled the shelf!

Thank you to all that participated!



DCEC's 2023 Student Delegate Program

BE A PART OF HISTORY – Seeking Youth Delegate Applicants for 2023!

Senator Lyndon Baines Johnson inspired the Youth Tour when he addressed the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Annual Meeting in Chicago in 1957. The Senator and future president declared, “If one thing comes out of this meeting, it will be sending youngsters to the national capital where they can actually see what the flag stands for and represents.”

Consequently, some Texas electric cooperatives sent groups of young people to Washington to work during the summer in Senator Johnson's office. In 1958, a rural electric cooperative in Iowa sponsored the first group of 34 young people on a week-long study tour of our nation's capital. Later that same year, another busload came from Illinois.

The idea grew and other states sent busloads of young people throughout the summer. By 1959, the “Youth Tour” had grown to 130 students. In 1964, NRECA began to coordinate joint activities among the state delegations and suggested that co-op representatives from each state arrange to be in Washington, D.C., during Youth Tour week.

The first year of the coordinated Tour included approximately 400 young people from 12 states. Word of the program has continued to spread and today, more than 1,800 students and over 250 chaperones participate in the Youth Tour every year. Youth Tour directors from each state association arrange their delegation's visits to their U.S. representatives and senators' offices, federal agencies, and other educational and sightseeing activities. In addition to the planned statewide activities, the Youth Tour experience encompasses multi-state activities coordinated by NRECA.

In order to be considered, students must meet the following qualifications:

- Be in their junior (11th grade) year
- Be a son/daughter of a member of DCEC
- Have at least a “B” average or better
- Participate in extra-curricular activities and community service

For more information on the application process, due by **March 15, 2023**, please visit our website at:

<https://www.dce.coop/2023-youth-delegate-program>

**DCEC's 2023
Annual Meeting
will be on
September 15, 2023
at 4:30 pm in 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 2022-2023 heating season. This year’s regular HEAP benefits opened November 1, 2022. 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>

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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.

2022-2023 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:

2022-2023 HEAP Benefits Gross Monthly Income Guidelines:

Household Size	Maximum Gross Monthly Income
1	\$2,729
2	\$3,569
3	\$4,409
4	\$5,249
5	\$6,088
6	\$6,928
7	\$7,086
8	\$7,243
9	\$7,401
10	\$7,558
11	\$7,715
12	\$7,873
13	\$8,420
Each additional	Add \$568

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/ General Manager John Gasstrom, Operations Manager Ryan Sullivan, Billing Specialist Rosemary Alwine, and Cooperative Services Administrator 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.

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- Secretary.....Laurie Wehmeyer
- Treasurer.....Paul Menke
- Director.....Steve Burnett
- Director.....Edward Furgol
- Director.....Steve Oles
- CEO/General Manager.....John Gasstrom

Operations Update

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

Right of way crews will be trimming trees and mowing in Hamden near County Route 2. Asplundh has begun work for the Cooperative starting in Kortright near County Route 33 headed towards Doonan’s Corners.

Is Your 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 DCEC fleece sweatshirt! *Good luck!*

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**

DCEC Office Closure:

DCEC’s office will be closed on Monday, Feb. 20, 2023 for Presidents’ Day

