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# CATSKILL HI-LINE

Bi-Monthly Newsletter

Volume 77—Issue 6  
November/December 2021



## A Message from CEO/General Manager Christopher N. Evans

Thank you for attending your 77<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting on September 10th, 2021. We did manage a quorum with 63 members present.

It was a wonderful opportunity for me to meet the Cooperatives members and experienced the fellowship even in a slightly limited and properly socially distanced setting. More especially, it was a privilege to watch the 2<sup>nd</sup> cooperative principle in action.... democratic member control.

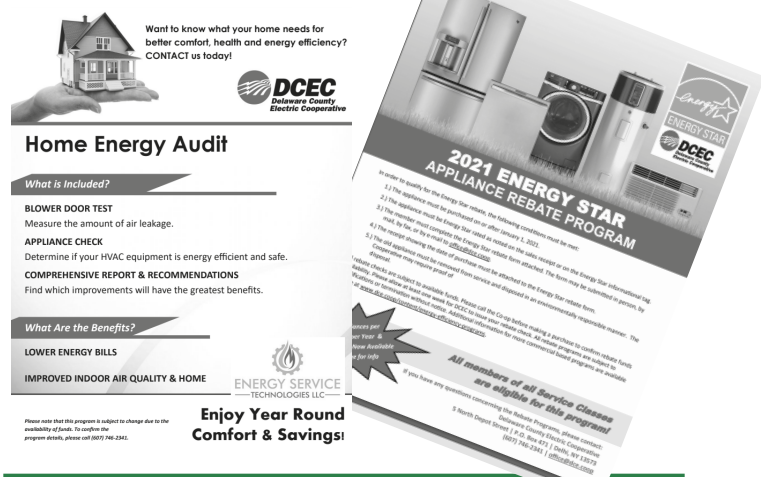
Much information was presented as well as several questions and comments from you, the members, before, during and after the meeting.

Please visit our website at [www.dce.coop](http://www.dce.coop) and click on the link **77<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting Q&A** so see complete responses to the specific questions and comments.

I will provide shorter answers to a few from my list here in the newsletter. Hopefully, this will pique your interest and you will visit our website.

Cooperatively Yours,  
Christopher N. Evans

*Continued on Page 2...*

Want to know what your home needs for better comfort, health and energy efficiency? CONTACT us today!

**DCEC**  
Delaware County Electric Cooperative

### Home Energy Audit

**What is Included?**

- BLOWER DOOR TEST**  
Measure the amount of air leakage.
- APPLIANCE CHECK**  
Determine if your HVAC equipment is energy efficient and safe.
- COMPREHENSIVE REPORT & RECOMMENDATIONS**  
Find which improvements will have the greatest benefits.

**What Are the Benefits?**

- LOWER ENERGY BILLS
- IMPROVED INDOOR AIR QUALITY & HOME COMFORT

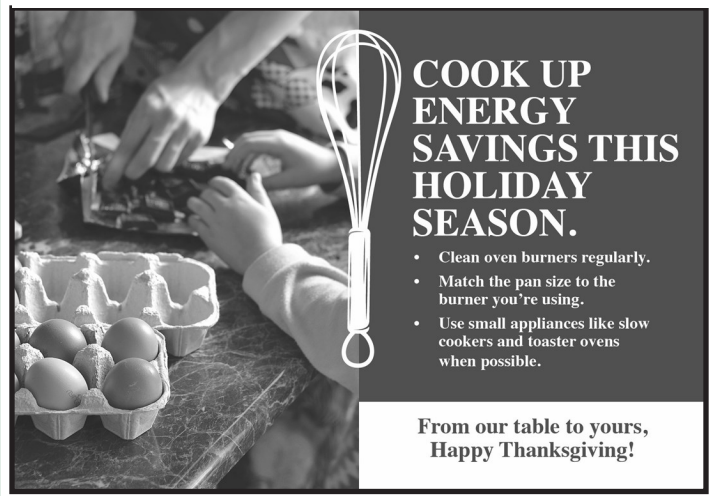
**ENERGY SERVICE TECHNOLOGIES LLC**

**Enjoy Year Round Comfort & Savings!**

**2021 ENERGY STAR APPLIANCE REBATE PROGRAM**

**All members of all Service Classes are eligible for this program!**

For more energy saving tips and programs visit our Energy Efficiency webpage at [www.dce.coop/content/energy-efficiency-programs](http://www.dce.coop/content/energy-efficiency-programs) or call the office at (607) 746-2341.



## COOK UP ENERGY SAVINGS THIS HOLIDAY SEASON.

- Clean oven burners regularly.
- Match the pan size to the burner you're using.
- Use small appliances like slow cookers and toaster ovens when possible.

From our table to yours,  
Happy Thanksgiving!

## 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

## Member Question & Answer from Annual Meeting...Continued from Page 2...

### Supplier outage numbers?

Of 312 outage events year-to-date, 16 (5.13%) were attributed as supplier events. However, being widespread and long durations, those events make up over 38,300 outage hours or 57.6% of the total time off thus far. Trees have caused 130 outages (over 41%) and is the largest contributor to outages after supplier-side issues with over 15,600 hours or 23.5% of total time off this year.

### Better communication with Members during outages and events.

As mentioned at the meeting, DCEC will be upgrading our website and improving how we provide outage and event updates on Facebook and the website. If an estimated time of restoration (ETR) is not able to be given by our supplier or our crews in an unplanned event, staff and phone operators will not speculate and create ‘false hope’ but will offer an honest response such as “crews have been dispatched and should arrive to begin patrolling. There is presently no estimated restoration time.”

### Is my bill going up this year?

No. The last rate increase was April 2019. The \$0.50 increases to the monthly base charge for that were already approved for starting April 2020 and April 2021 were postponed by the Board in response to the COVID emergency. Despite additional inflationary pressures, DCEC rates will remain constant for 2021 and 2022 except for any incremental changes in supplier pass-through charges in the power cost adjustment (PCA) and seasonal formulary rate adjustment (FRA). In 2022, a Cost-of-Service Study will be performed for guidance in setting rates for years 2023 through 2028.

### Is AMI going away?

No. DCEC continues to monitor trends and options while preparing for eventual upgrades. As with any technology, software, hardware and the ability to interface can be challenging. The vicious cycle of new hardware not always backward compatible and older software versions no longer supported.

Although we enjoy the convenience and value added services of AMI, it should be noted that meters need to remain readily accessible for annual inspections, periodic testing and other instances when a physical interaction is required.

### Does DCEC have lobbying activities?

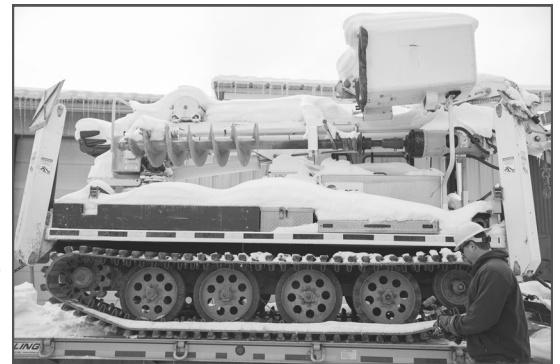
Yes. Please visit our website and click the link to [Affiliated Organizations/Government Relations](#)

## Property Access – Thank you Landowners

The Cooperative maintains 800 miles of distribution lines across four counties in order to provide electric service to 5,300+ homes and businesses. Those distribution lines run across thousands of properties owned by thousands of different landowners. On behalf of the Line Crew and Tree Crew members who perform daily maintenance and storm restoration, thank you to all the landowners who support their work by allowing access to our rights-of-way through driveways, farm roads, fields, and yards. Without you allowing them to cross your properties to access our rights-of-way, maintenance and restoration of the electric system would be impossible. Various obstacles prevent our workers from traveling directly down the rights-of-way:

- Natural features such as waterways, rock ledges, and gorges
- Stone walls
- Livestock fences

For this reason, it is often necessary for Cooperative crews and equipment to pass through private property outside of the easement area in order to accomplish their work. Thank you to all those landowners who continue the long tradition of allowing Cooperative crews to pass through your property. If the Cooperative creates ruts or other impacts to your property in the process of doing our work, we are responsible for repairing the damage and returning your property to it prior condition. If you have ruts or other damage on your property, call Operations Manager Ryan Sullivan at (607) 746-9284 to arrange for repairs.



## Access to Meter Pans and the Base Poles

Did you know insects can damage your electric meter? Insects nest in the meter and the meter is unable to report accurate usage to our office. This damage can be done during the summer and fall months but can impact your meter during the upcoming winter. This may result in an estimated billing amount rather than a true amount. Clearing your meter from flowers, brush and trees will help keep the bugs away. Remember your utility pole too. There shouldn't be any attachment on a utility pole unless it is from the utility company themselves. This helps keep our lineworkers safe.”

## Does DCEC Have a Key To Your Gate?

The Electric Cooperative recognizes the importance of protecting your properties and limiting access to them by means of gates or chains. What we encourage our Cooperative members to do is to provide us with keys to your properties so that we can access them in the event of a power outage or to perform routine maintenance. Many property owners have provided us with keys or lock combinations to allow us access when we need it.

Often times we come up on a new chain or gate and have no means to gain access except to remove the gate or cut the chain to access the property. In these circumstances we remove the gate if possible or cut a link from the chain and install a repair link in its place when we leave.

If you're a new property owner or an existing DCEC member that has installed a gate or chain please contact us at (607) 746-2341 in regards to providing us with a key. This would be beneficial to both of us in the event of an emergency.

## Dangers of Unauthorized Pole Attachments

Do you have a satellite dish, bird feeder, clothes line or any other kind of unauthorized attachment to the Cooperative's utility pole near your house? If you do, you are not alone. Unfortunately these unauthorized attachments pose a threat to the safety of lineworkers when they must climb a pole to perform maintenance or restore power after a storm. Under OSHA regulations enacted in 2014, a line worker needs to utilize a fall restriction device that wraps around the pole as he climbs. Each time a lineworker reaches an unauthorized attachment, he needs to remove the fall restriction device from the pole to climb past the obstruction, placing the worker at increased risk for a fall. Please do your part to keep our workers safe. If it can be done safely, remove any unauthorized attachments from the utility poles near your home. If you need help removing an attachment or you don't know whether an attachment is authorized, call the Cooperative's office at 607-746-2341. We would be happy to assist you.

## HEAP Benefits

The New York State Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) provides payment assistance for income eligible residents to use towards the 2021-2022 heating season. This year's regular HEAP benefits opened October 1, 2021. 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>

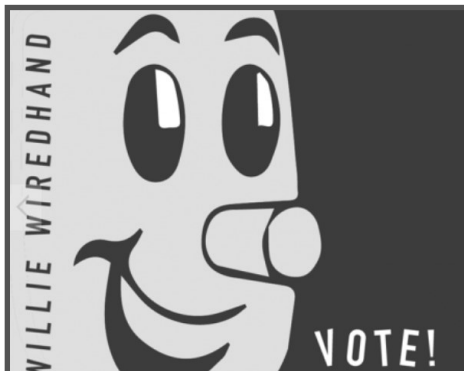


## I Can't Pay My Electric Bill: Where to Get Help

Members currently struggling to meet their monthly payment obligation have the following options available to them:

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: 1-800-342-3099

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



### **REMINDER:**

**If you voted by Absentee Ballot or In-Person at the 77th Annual Meeting, DCEC will be applying a \$10 bill credit to your November bill.**

### 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.

### Highlights of the 2021 Annual Meeting

The members of the Delaware County Electric Cooperative (DCEC) met this past September as we do annually to conduct the business of the Cooperative. The evening began with honoring America. We sang the National Anthem with the help of Grace's Touch, we prayed with the help of Deborah Fleming, we pledged our allegiance with the help of Board President Steve Oles, and we also recognized those veterans in our presence. President Oles spoke briefly about the state of the Cooperative, including the following topics: recognize the need to revise the By-laws to allow for different options for presentation and participation in the Annual Meeting including virtual and alternatives to in-person voting. Mr. Oles remarked that the Cooperative's office staff moved from the old headquarters at 39 Elm Street to the new consolidated headquarters facility at 5 North Depot Street during the weekend of September 25th through 28th 2020 and opened for business at 5 North Depot Street on Tuesday, September 29th, 2020. He also mentioned that the Cooperative will post information about an Open House on our social media pages, our website, and in local papers as soon as conditions allow for a safe, healthy environment that doesn't put members and Coop staff at risk or expose them to COVID. President Oles gave a quick update about the Delaware County Broadband Initiative project and that the broadband infrastructure throughout the DCEC service territory is completed. Lastly, President Oles stated that because the annual Legislative Youth Tour was canceled due to COVID the Cooperative decided to award a scholarship to a selected student instead. Mr. Oles remarked that the Board of Directors selected Ms. Alexis Rockefeller of South Kortright Central School and Ms. Rockefeller was awarded a \$1,000 scholarship. The business of the annual meeting included the approval of the minutes from last year's annual meeting. Secretary Edward "Rusty" Pick reported that a quorum consisting of 63 voting members were assembled. Secretary Pick turned the lectern over to Treasurer Paul Menke. Treasurer Menke reported on the previous Year's Financial Report. Treasurer Menke then invited the CEO/General Manager, Christopher Evans, to provide the CEO/General Manager's Report. CEO Evans outlined the following items: Despite being another year of a pandemic, DCEC is striving to maintain and improve the level of service. In true cooperative spirit, DCEC staff has risen to the task. Implementing new safety protocols and procedures into our culture of safety, leveraging technologies to become more efficient and now applying more financial controls has allowed us to keep rates steady during the last couple years. Mr. Evans stated that in 2022, DCEC will conduct a cost-of-service study. The timing will help DCEC appropriately determine rates and prepare courses of action in the near terms of planned projects amidst COVID-related arrears, potential material price gouging or actual shortages and other inflationary indicators.

Continued on Page 6...

**the 12 DAYS OF HOLIDAY SAFETY**

- 1 LIGHTS OUT!**  
Always turn off holiday lights when you leave the house unattended or when going to bed. The lights could short out and cause a fire.
- 2 Merry & BRIGHT**  
Carefully inspect holiday light strings each year and throw away any with frayed cords, cracked lamp holders or loose connections. When replacing bulbs, unplug the light string and be sure to match voltage and wattage to the original bulb.
- 3 Planes, Trains & AUTOMOBILES**  
Extended vacations are common during the holiday season, and criminals keep their eyes open for empty homes. Ask a friend or neighbor to pick up the mail, leave a few indoor lights on and do not leave a spare key in an easy to find place. Never discuss your vacation plans with strangers or post it on social media sites.
- 4 TREE TOPPERS**  
Place ornaments higher on the tree than children or pets can reach. If swallowed, ornaments or pieces of them can cause blockages or other serious injuries. The hooks that many ornaments use are detachable and pose a choking hazard.
- 5 CAUTIOUS COOKING**  
Don't leave any food out at room temperature for more than two hours. Use sealable containers, and don't over pack the fridge; the air needs to circulate to maintain the proper temperature. Baked goods should be thrown out within a few days.
- 6 Tinsel-less Town**  
Small children and pets love this sparkly, light-catching "toy" that's fun to play with, but if swallowed or accidentally wrapped around them it can be very dangerous.
- 7 Furries shouldn't feast**  
By now you know not to feed your pets chocolate or anything sweetened with xylitol, but pets have a way of sniffing out yummy treats. Keep your pets away from the table and unattended plates of food, and be sure to secure the lids on garbage cans. Mistletoe berries, Holly Berry and Jerusalem Cherry can be poisonous.
- 8 HUSTLE & BUSTLE**  
Shop during daylight hours whenever possible. If you must shop at night, park closer to the stores or near a light post so when you return you are visible in a well-lit area.
- 9 WRAPPING PAPER woes**  
Don't burn used wrapping paper as it may cause intense flash fires. Throwing it out adds waste, so consider recycling or repurposing it instead.
- 10 twinkletwinkle**  
Do not connect more than three miniature light strings together. Cords should not be run under carpets or tacked-up with nails or staples.
- 11 NOT SO merry matches**  
The number of fires caused by children playing with fire goes up significantly during the holidays. Keep matches and lighters out of sight and out of kids' reach. Make sure you buy a "child-resistant" lighter.
- 12 CHRISTMAS TREE**  
Natural trees always involve some risk of fire. To minimize risk, get a fresh tree and keep it watered at all times. Do not put the tree within three feet of a fireplace, space heater, radiator or heat vent.

# HOLIDAY FOOD DRIVE

*MAKE A DIFFERENCE THIS HOLIDAY*

10/11/2021—12/17/2021



**5 N. DEPOT ST. | DELHI, NY 13753 | (607) 746-2341**

Drop off unexpired goods & nonperishable goods  
Donations will go to Delhi Food Bank

## Highlights of the 2021 Annual Meeting...Continued from Page 4...

Mr. Evans stated that since the last Annual Meeting in 2020, DCEC has had four departures and four new arrivals and that by the next Annual Meeting, we are preparing similarly for potentially three more retirements and replacements. In all cases, the plan is to bridge the gaps whereby knowledge, experience, continuity, etc. is managed to promote smoothest and most efficient transitions practicable. CEO Evans remarked that the energy efficiency component of your electric bill is part of the purchase power contract and that the intention is that bulk power costs may remain low by reducing load or using electricity more efficiently. CEO Evans announced that members should visit the DCEC website for more information about our current energy efficiency programs at [www.dce.coop/content/energy-efficiency-programs](http://www.dce.coop/content/energy-efficiency-programs). CEO Evans mentioned that if any members are experiencing difficulties, please contact the office to learn our DCEC can help and what additional programs are available. Mr. Evans added that despite the extensions and good intentions, the moratorium cannot go on forever.

### Energy Efficiency Programs

DCEC is offering the following Energy Efficiency Programs:

- Energy Star Appliance Rebate Program
- Energy Star Appliance Rebate Program 2019 to 2020
- Load Control & Fossil Fuel Free Incentive Program
- LED lighting Program
- Home Energy Audit
- Smart/Programmable Thermostats
- Comfort Home Program

Proposed Future Programs:

- Heat Pumps
- Wood and Pellet Stove Upgrade Program
- Home EV Charger Incentive/Rebate
- Farm Program
- Battery Powered Outdoor Tools

For more information about additional programs that may save you money and energy please contact the office at (607) 746-2341 or email DCEC at [office@dce.coop](mailto:office@dce.coop). Please visit DCEC's website for more details about the above listed programs at [www.dce.coop/content/energy-efficiency-programs](http://www.dce.coop/content/energy-efficiency-programs)

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 Christopher Evans, Engineering & Technology Manager Paul DeAndrea, Operations Manager Ryan Sullivan, Billing Specialist Rosemary Alwine, and Administrative Assistant Alicia VanZandt.

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.....Kimberly Tosi  
 Director.....Steve Burnett  
 Director.....Steve Oles  
 CEO/General Manager.....Christopher Evans

### CLOSED FOR THE FOLLOWING HOLIDAYS

- 11/11/2021– Veterans Day
- 11/25/2021 & 11/26/2021 – Thanksgiving
- 12/23/2021 & 12/24/2021 – Christmas
- 12/31/2021 – New Year's

### 2021 ELECTION RESULTS

#### DIRECTOR CANDIDATES

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

- Phoebe Schreiner - 48
- Laurie Wehmeyer - 95

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

- Kathleen Schaaf - 27
- Stephen Oles - 118

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

- Jeffrey Russell - 99
- Dana Scuderi-Hunter - 45

#### LOCAL ORGANIZATION DONATIONS

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Delaware County - 86  
 Ronald McDonald House - 52  
 SEVA Foundation - 7

#### BYLAW CHANGES

Bylaw Change #1: Yes - 126 | No - 19  
 Bylaw Change #2: Yes - 117 | No - 27

### 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 you will receive a DCEC fleece sweatshirt! *Good luck!*