



Owned by the Members We Serve

A HISTORY OF THE DELAWARE COUNTY (NY) ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

by

Ray LaFever



Cover: DCEC linemen on a pole in August 1955, photographed for an advertisement for U.S. Steel. PHOTOGRAPH BY BOB WYER, DCHA.



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FOREWORD



2018 Board of Directors—Left to right, first row: Mark Schneider, General Manager; Steve Burnett, Director; Shawn Hartwell, Director. Second row: Hartley Russell, Vice President; Paul Menke, Treasurer; Edward “Rusty” Pick, Secretary; Frank Winkler, Director; Stephen Oles, President.

Integrity, accountability, innovation, and commitment to community have been the foundation of Delaware County Electric Cooperative for seventy-five years. These values have allowed the Cooperative to consistently deliver high standards of excellence to our member-owners. The Cooperative’s membership has changed considerably in those seventy-five years. We changed from a small group of farmers that formed the Delaware County Electric Association in 1941 to the group of 5,400 farmers, residents, vacation homeowners, schools, public buildings,

and businesses that own the Cooperative today. Despite those drastic changes, those core values on which the Cooperative was built seventy-five years ago are very much alive and well within the Cooperative today.

Looking back on seventy-five years of Cooperative history reminds me that today’s Cooperative members, directors, and employees inherited an extraordinary institution from those who came before us. We cherish our roles as caretakers of the Cooperative, its resources, and its incredibly important place within the communities it serves. We value our employees, who are the heart of the Cooperative, and their valuable service to our members. We also have a responsibility to the generations of Cooperative members, directors, and employees who will come after us. We must hand down to them a Cooperative that is just as vital and sustainable as the Cooperative we inherited from its founders.

My hope is that this publication will faithfully capture the remarkable history of the Cooperative, honor the many individuals who built and maintained the Cooperative for seventy-five years, and educate and inspire the next generation of our Cooperative family. Our future success depends on a new generation of members to participate in the democratic control and self-determination of the Cooperative.

Stephen G. Oles, President
Delaware County Electric Cooperative, Inc.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



I want to thank the directors and staff of the Delaware County Electric Cooperative for providing me broad access to records and information needed for this history. General Manager Mark Schneider, who got me into this project in the first place, was a reliable source of information and helped set me in the right direction. He also was important in reviewing the drafts of the book. Millie Faulkner’s love of the Cooperative and its history was invaluable in ferreting out information and photographs. And Alicia VanZandt was another good ferreter of information and helped set up crucial contacts and appointments.

This history would have been impossible without the generous input of recently retired Assistant General Manager Wayne Marshfield. Having worked for the Cooperative for two-thirds of its history made him a priceless resource. Many thanks Wayne!

I also want to acknowledge the help of Jessica Vecchione of Vecc Videography. She conducted several interviews for a seventy-fifth anniversary video and asked me to participate. The transcripts she supplied of the interviews were very useful.

My research included the collection of photographs taken by Bob Wyer held at the Delaware County Historical Association, where I am employed part-time as the archivist. The association director Tim Duerden gave permission for use of Wyer’s photos of the early days of the Cooperative, as well as some images from DCHA’s collection of nineteenth and early twentieth century farm-related materials.

I have come away from this experience impressed by the strong work ethic from everyone I met at the Cooperative as well as the strong sense of community that is frequently demonstrated by the Cooperative’s directors, employees, and members. The Northern Catskills is lucky to have such a sterling example of selfless community spirit.



In 2009, as the Cooperative had done for several years, food was donated by members, employees, and business partners and given to Delaware Opportunities in Hamden for distribution to needy residents. Here Millie Faulkner presents food to Linda Vance of Delaware Opportunities.



In the fall of 2012, DCEC put together twenty gift bags for local individuals serving overseas during the holiday season. Shown here are Rosemary Alwine, Tara Rifembark, Betty Goodrich, Lois Bender, and Millie Faulkner. Sharon Mogridge and other DCEC Line and Right-of-Way staff also made donations.



💡 CHAPTER ONE

FARMING IN THE DARK



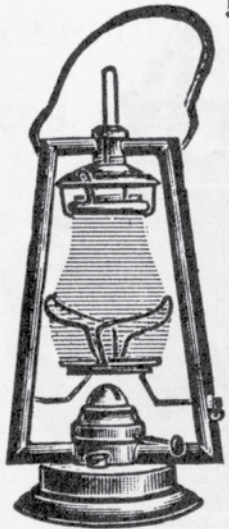
Animal power, such as this horse-powered saw, was a way to help with some of the more back-breaking chores on the farm. DCHA.

There are few people left today who can remember being without electric lights, washers, and stoves. Life before electricity was particularly hard for the farmer. Before the early twentieth century, the only power sources available to the farmer were water, animal, and human.

For dairy farmers, the day started and often ended with the milking, all done by hand. Twenty cows would take several hours. A lucky farmer had children to help with these chores. Generally, the boys would do the outside work while the girls worked in the house with mother, but this was not a hard-and-fast rule. Many a girl and woman knew how to milk a cow, pitch hay, and plow a field.

Many of these chores were done in the dark and, especially in the wintertime, in the cold. Just getting to the barn would be a challenge. Milking often started before sunrise or after sunset, so artificial light was needed. The main light source in the latter part of the nineteenth century was a kerosene lamp. While providing some light, it was challenging to keep lit. A simple wind gust on the way to the barn could put it out. Cornelius Stoop from Delhi remembered what a challenge the

Tubular or Barn Lantern.
 To Burn Kerosene.
 55775 OurNewClipper Lift is a thoroughly serviceable lantern in every respect; strongly made and nicely finished; the oil pot is retinned to prevent leakage; the burner being locked makes it an absolutely safe lantern; the lift movement is simple and efficient; the globe is very easily removed, making it without doubt the easiest handled lantern on the market.
 Price.....\$0.35
 Per dozen... 3.95



Lamps like these were crucial for providing lights for farmers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. 1898 MONTGOMERY WARD CATALOG.

lamps were even into the early 1940s. He hated cleaning them and considered them to be not very safe.¹ Food preservation was another challenge.

Some foods could be stored in root cellars, but other foods had to be canned, soon after being picked. This meant firing up the stove in the heat of summer. Heat that would be welcomed in January made the house brutally hot in August.

As the twentieth century started, farmers heard about people in towns and villages having lights and other conveniences powered by electricity. Several area communities, including Delhi, Stamford, Norwich, Unadilla, and Oneonta got electricity to light up the streets at night.²

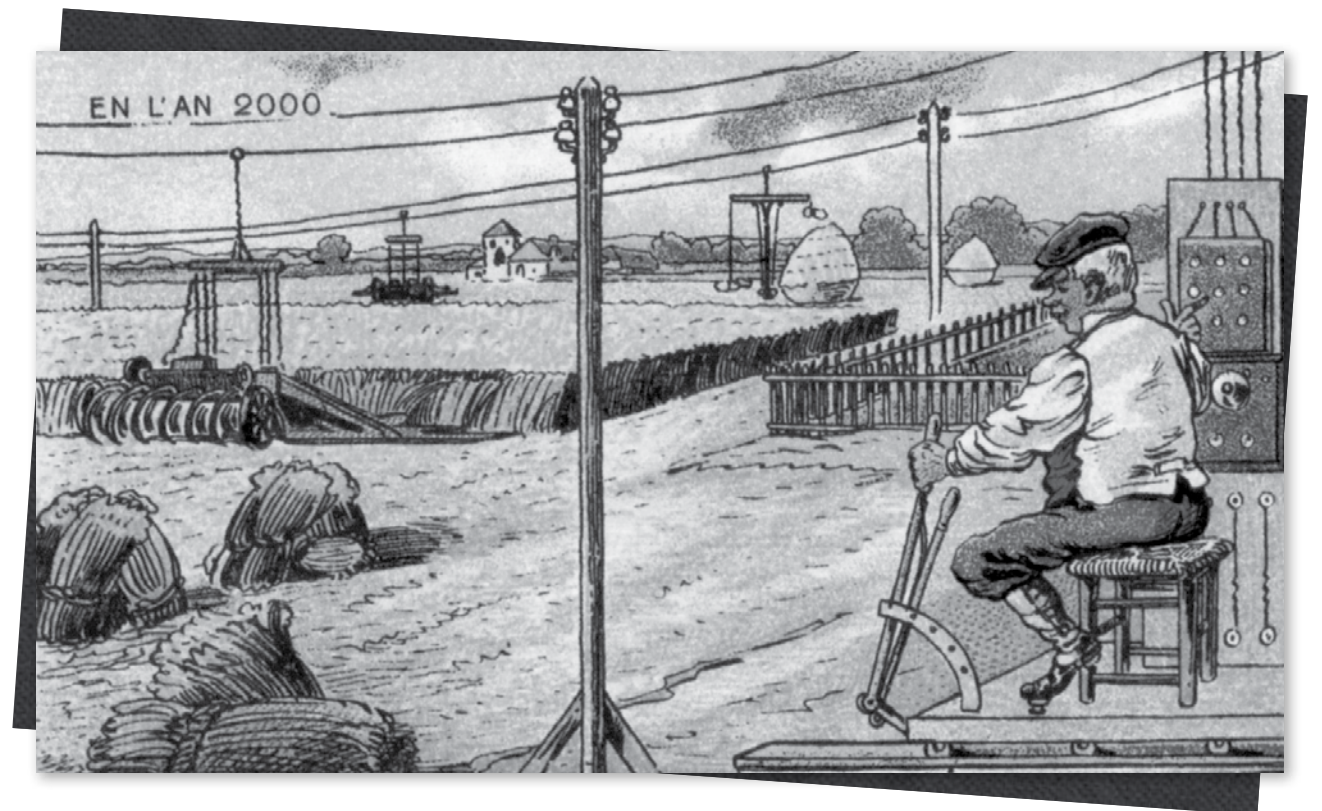
Given the perceived costs, getting electricity to the rural areas was not considered possible, though some farmers made attempts, with some success, to use waterpower. Newspapers reported that farmers in “Sweden and Norway surpass all other countries in the number of farms that have electricity . . . the countless waterfalls there are set to work to produce light.”³



Villages, such as Delhi, New York, saw electricity decades before it made it to the farms. DCHA.

Before refrigeration, ice was harvested and stored in icehouses packed in sawdust. DCHA.





Starting in 1899, a commercial artist named Jean-Marc Côté and other artists were hired by a cigarette manufacturer to create a series of picture cards depicting how life in France would look in one hundred years. Here, they pictured how electricity would be used by farmers to do multiple chores, including plowing the fields. PUBLIC DOMAIN FROM WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.



Ice harvesting in rural areas continued into the 1940s, as demonstrated in these 1942 photographs of ice being harvested on Spring Lake in the town of Meredith. PHOTOGRAPHS BY BOB WYER, DCHA.



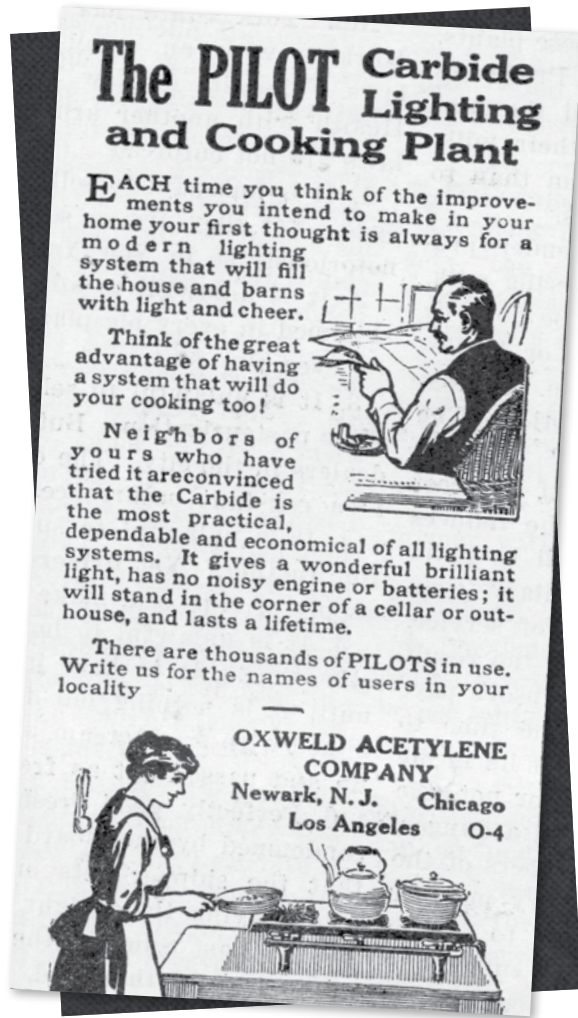
Waterfalls, like this one on a postcard from Hobart, were a possible source of energy. Farmers explored how they might utilize such power to bring electricity to their farms.

A report in the local press described how, in 1913, a farmer in Illinois was “raising vegetables, grains and fruits by electricity and [had] electric products on exhibition at the country fairs.” Using an electric plant on his farm, part of his garden was wired, running an electric current into the ground. The paper reported that the electricity was “wonders in the growing line.”⁴

There were some local efforts to bring the miracle of electricity to the farms. In 1906, four Stamford farmers attempted to build “a small electric light plant to light up homes and farm buildings.” The source of power was to have been a dam across Foote Hollow. “The plant will be in the building of James Stowe and controlled by him; the other three farmers are O.P. Canfield, W.P. Merwin and Nicholas Thiem.” We do not know if this succeeded.⁵

To deal with the lighting issue on the farm, some farmers in the early twentieth century used carbide lighting systems. These used calcium carbide pellets. Adding water released acetylene, which was piped into the house or barn to create a bright light. Such systems were inexpensive but prone to leaks and explosions. In 1911, it was reported in the *Catskill Mountain News* (Margaretville) that a young man tried an experiment by putting a “small quantity of carbide in a five-gallon glass bottle.” He poured water on the carbide and lit a match to see if any gas formed. This caused the bottle to explode into small pieces, striking the young man in





An advertisement from the *Rural New Yorker* in 1918 for the Pilot Carbide Lighting and Cooking Plant.

numerous places. The paper noted, "It is quite probable that the young man will not attempt any more experiments with carbide for some time to come."⁶

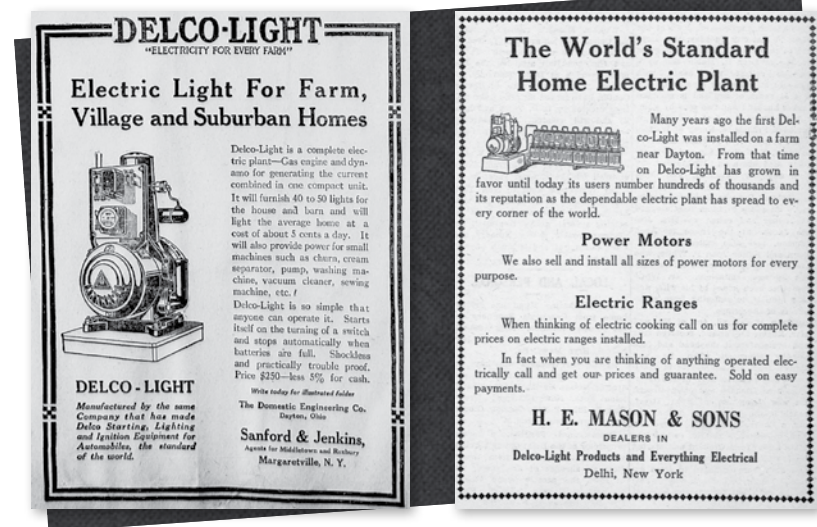
By the teens and twenties, farmers had recourse to another and somewhat safer source, the Delco plant. Not only did it provide light, but also a plant could power other equipment. Charles F. Kettering from Ohio introduced the Delco system in 1916 as a way for farms and small towns away from the main electric lines to get power. The system had a set of lead-acid batteries and a generator run by gasoline or kerosene. While allowing farmers for the first time to consider electric light and refrigeration, Delco plants were not always reliable, given the farmer had to keep adding fuel. Nonetheless, for farmers and others not close

to an electric utility, such plants certainly would have improved life.

Promoters of these plants noted that small direct-connected electric light and power plants were very important during the war in field hospitals and other operations during the First World War. As reported in the *Catskill Mountain News*, "the plant that could be depended upon in any emergency was used by the thousands and played an important part in beating the Hun."⁷

Sanford and Jenkins, merchants in Margaretville, saw the product in Margaretville in May 1916 and shortly after began selling it.⁸

Delco plants were promoted at state and county fairs, as noted in this advertisement from the 1926 *Rural New Yorker*.



Left to Right
Advertisement for a Delco plant from Sanford & Jenkins in Margaretville in the *Catskill Mountain News* in 1916.

H. E. Mason & Sons in Delhi sold many electrical products, including Delco plants, in this 1926 advertisement from the *Delaware (Delhi) Republican*.

Through the 1920s, farmers nationwide slowly were receiving electricity through utility companies, but many still were without.

In 1927, it was reported that existing electric lines were "within the reach of one-fourth of all the farms in the United States, but at present only 8% of the 6,500,000 farms of the country are actually supplied with electric light and power." At this time, about half of all farms had some type of power system installed, such as the aforementioned Delco plants.⁹

In a lengthy article published in 1927 by A.R. Tremaine, the general manager of the New York State division of the Associated Gas and Electric System, he noted that with the industrial revolution, industries grew, attracting people from rural areas. He said, "Farm labor has been increasingly difficult to procure with the succeeding years, and it is here that electricity steps into the breach to help the farmer solve his most vital problem. It is through a better understanding of power application to rural requirements that he will be able to reestablish the organization of farming activities on a working and profitable basis. He will not only be able to apply electric power to the greater part of the necessary work on the farm, but he can also use it to supplant a large number of men."¹⁰

While the technology was there to get electricity to the farms, the cost was another story. Farmers had to be willing to pay to get the lines to their farms, at a cost between \$2,000 and \$3,000 per mile.¹¹

As the Depression started, local papers continued to be optimistic about rural electrification. The *Catskill Mountain News* in November 1930 reported that more farms nationwide were receiving electrical service, though in 1930, the number still was only 16 percent of all farms. The paper concluded, however, that this was progress and that "At the present rate of progress, it will not be many years until a majority of American farms are provided with electric service. When that time comes we will be close to a permanent solution of agriculture's problems."¹²

Corn harvest on the Mike Johnson farm in Delhi in September 1941. The equipment is being run by a tractor. PHOTOGRAPH BY BOB WYER, DCHA.



FARMERS ASK FOR 300 MILES OF POWER



Congress passed the Rural Electrification Act in 1936. Here, Franklin D. Roosevelt signs the Rural Electrification Act, observed by Representative John Ranking and Senator George W. Norris.

Rural Electrification Administration (REA)

During the 1930s, the number of farms with electricity throughout the country still was low. Utility companies did not find it profitable to string wires and poles to property that was, by the very nature of farming, too spread out. As the Great Depression deepened, “progressive Governors such as Franklin Roosevelt in New York and Gifford Pinchot in Pennsylvania had commissioned . . . studies, to determine the feasibility of extending power to everyone.”¹³

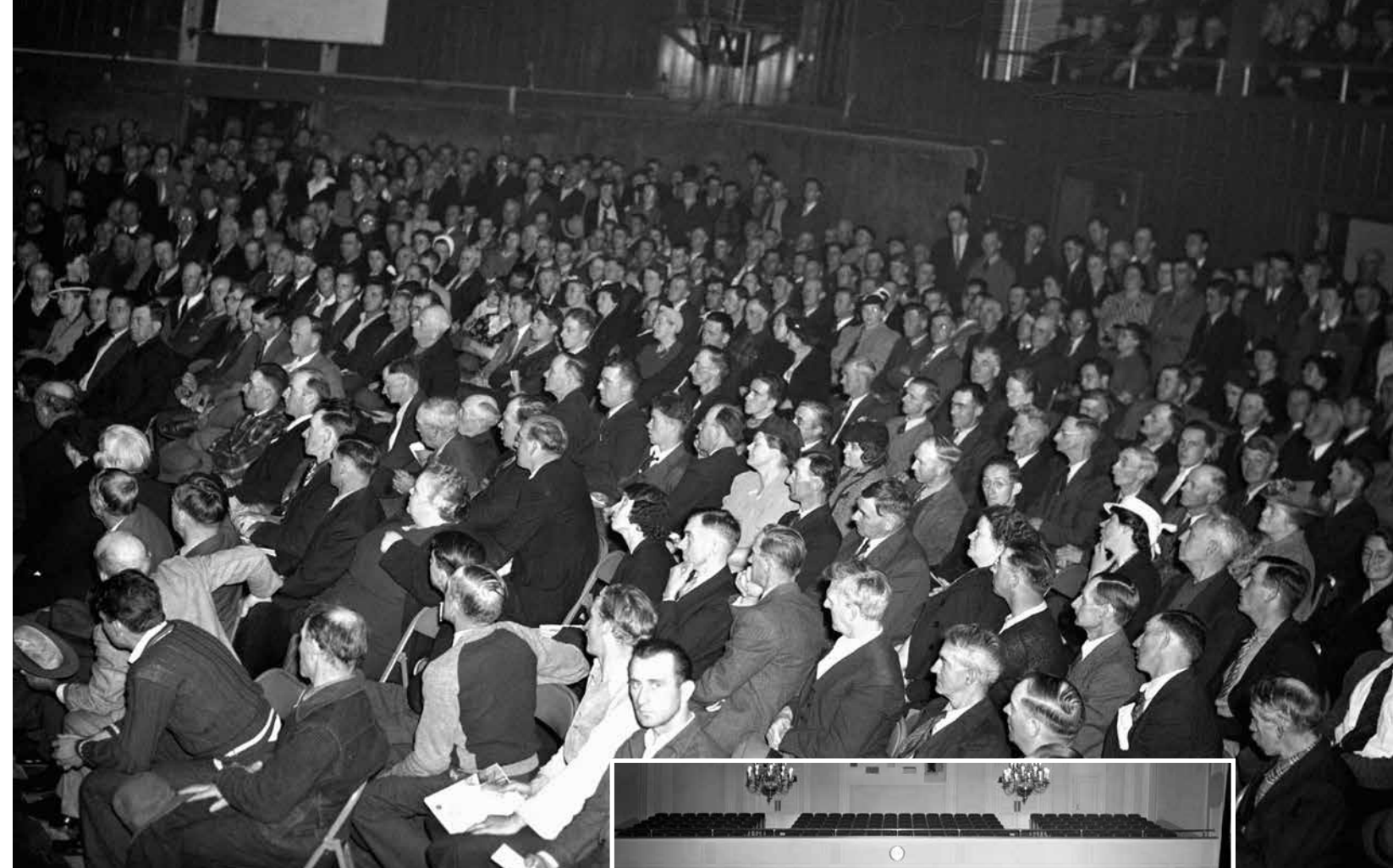
One of those governors was in a position a few years later to take further action. In 1935, now President Roosevelt created the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) as part of his “alphabet soup” of New Deal agencies. The purpose of the REA was to provide financial support to get electricity out to the farms. There were forty-six cooperatives in existence at the time.

The administrator of the REA, Morris L. Cooke, stated, “The advantages of electrification for the farm home and the farm itself are so obvious there is hardly any need for comment . . . Approximately 86 percent of the farms of the nation are still without electricity. We stand at the entrance to a new era in American agriculture, one in which life on the farm will be relieved of much of its drudgery . . . it will rekindle the interest of our people in farming.”¹⁴

It was more than five years after the REA creation before any activity took place in southern New York. According to DCEC manager William Wenner, this was because there was an agreement around 1937 between then REA administrator John M. Carmody and “the Associated Gas and Electric Company, which owned the electric companies in northern Pennsylvania and southern New York.” Carmody promised not to organize any cooperatives in New York for five years to give the company the opportunity to serve the area.¹⁵

Creation of the Delaware County Electric Cooperative—Moving Energetically Toward Its Pretentious Plan

In 1941, efforts to bring electricity to rural areas in New York State began in Delaware County and the region. On July 15, 1941, the Delaware



County Electric Association, Inc., was created. The *Delaware Republican* (Delhi) reported that the association “is moving energetically toward realization of its pretentious plan to bring electric service to hundreds of rural residents.”¹⁶ In October, the REA allotted \$307,000 from the Rural Electrification Authority to the association to construct 309 miles of electric lines. The REA deputy administrator and New York State Electric and Gas worked out the areas that each would serve.

The next step was to get permission from the New York State Public Service Commission (PSC) to operate the utility. Hearings were held in Albany in February 1942. The *Catskill Mountain News* reported that there were “1,322 subscribers in the new . . . association.” The association’s president, Gordon Gleason of Meredith, “reported that 1,365 easements for rights-of-way have been secured.” He added, “The need for electric power is even greater since the outbreak of the war.” Support for the association was not unanimous. E. B. Naylon, an attorney for New York State

Top: In May 1941, a series of meetings took place in and around the county to sound out the interest of farmers in forming a cooperative. One of the first interest meetings was held on June 5, 1941, at the old Delaware Academy gymnasium. PHOTOGRAPH BY BOB WYER, DCHA.

Above: The organizational meeting for the Delaware County Electric Association was held at the new Delaware Academy auditorium on October 3, 1941. PHOTOGRAPH BY BOB WYER, DCHA.



Electric and Gas (NYSEG), “declared his company in opposition to the proposal . . . that the franchises sought would duplicate many already held by NYSE&G.”¹⁷

Several local organizations strongly supported the association. Resolutions were sent by the Delaware County 4-H Club, representing 92 clubs and 1,336 members; the Delaware County Grange with 1,800 members; the Delaware County Farm Bureau (1,000 members); and the Delaware County Dairy Farmers union (1,400 members).¹⁸

The need to get permission from the PSC became unnecessary in April 1942, when New York Governor Herbert H. Lehman signed the Rural Electric Cooperative Law, permitting farmers to create electric cooperatives without going to the Public Service Commission. When the bill had passed the state legislature, Assemblyman W.T.A. Webb said in a telegram that “The Rural Electric bill passed both houses and I have just left the Governor’s office with the promise that he will sign the bill. I have received over seven hundred letters from anxious Delaware county farmers and I know that they will be glad to read the good news.”¹⁹ On May 12, 1942, the Delaware County Electric Association became the Delaware County Electric Cooperative.²⁰

Early Challenges—Copper Wire and Spite Lines

The first year for the Cooperative was not easy. The U.S. entry into World War II less than six months after the association’s creation, while a compelling argument for the importance of electrifying farms for the war effort, also caused major issues getting the necessary supplies, including copper wire. In May 1942, the Cooperative requested “a priority order from Washington on the grounds that electric power on the farms is essential if farms are to become effective as food producers according to the war program.”²¹ Fewer than half of the farms in the county had service, despite the county being the largest milk-producing county in the state. The initial effort to get materials needed to start stringing wire failed when the War Production Board (WPB) denied the Cooperative’s request. Arthur Wyer, in a column in the *Catskill Mountain News*, was strongly critical of the REA, calling it “a sham and only a vehicle for political breast beating.” He was upset “that under present priorities no wire can be allocated . . . for any other purpose not directly connected with the war effort.” He pointed out that if instead the “250,000 pin-ball machines in this country were seized as gambling paraphernalia,” the 130 pounds of material in each machine would be useful for war production.²²

Another issue in the Cooperative’s early days concerned competition from the NYSEG. In October 1941, at a meeting in Oneonta, agreement had been made concerning which sections would be served by NYSEG and which by DCEC to avoid any conflicts or duplication. During the Public Service Commission meetings, “the co-ops were directed to furnish the utility their maps for the proposed project.”

In May 1942, President Gleason claimed that NYSEG was using these maps to wreck the Cooperative. He complained to the WPB, “NYSEG was using critical war material to build spite lines to destroy the co-op.” He reported, “NYSEG took 10 consumers on 3 miles of line in Tompkins thus affecting the feasibility of serving 70 people on 25 miles. In Davenport they [were] building one mile to serve 3 non-farms affecting the feasibility to serve 18 farms on 6 miles. He said the Davenport case was a misuse of war materials as none were farms and two were summer places.”²³

It was noted in an article by the Cooperative protesting the WPB’s decision that gave funding to NYSEG that though the REA had provided support to NYSEG for extensions to some of the farms, the utility was demanding \$5.00 to \$20.00 per month minimum to help finance the construction. “They assumed a God-given grant over Delaware County and only those who could afford to pay the tribute demanded by these clay lords could have service.” The Cooperative claimed that NYSEG’s “interest is not motivated by any desire to help increase food, but to stop the Cooperative from extending their lines.”²⁴

It was primarily the inability to get the needed materials, however, that led to closing the Cooperative’s offices in August 1942. In a letter to its members about the closing, Cooperative President Gordon Gleason noted that the Cooperative had applied to the WPB for a priority “rating to enable us to build rural electric lines. On June 30, 1942, our application was denied on the ground that critical materials such as copper are more urgently needed for the war effort.”²⁵

The following March, the WPB said materials would be made available if cooperatives could demonstrate that the war effort would be helped and that there would be fifty-three animal units per mile of line. An animal unit was defined as one cow, twenty calves, seventy-five chickens, or two brood sows.²⁶ Aubrey Pearce recalled that there was a woman who needed twenty cows to qualify but she had only twelve. “She wanted electric power awful bad [so] she went right out and purchased 8 more cows so that she could get hooked up.”²⁷ The Cooperative became optimistic in the summer of 1943 that rural electrification would finally move forward. The Cooperative’s vice president, Edward MacLaury, said “that bids would soon be accepted . . . and that the Cooperative will purchase materials for wiring buildings, reselling to farmers at cost.” About 50 percent of the houses in the area already had wiring for 32-volt battery plants. MacLaury noted that these houses “can be adapted to 110-volt power at small cost.” An argument for rural electrification noted that the “32-volt battery plants (such as the Delco plants) now operating in the area consume an average of three gallons of gasoline a day,” gasoline that would better go to use as motor fuel.²⁸ The REA believed that with electric power, farm production would increase, but “some observers question[ed] this view . . . pointing out that it will still be difficult to obtain electric equipment, such as milkers, coolers, and other appliances.”²⁹

The WPB’s willingness to give priority to materials for rural electrification meant that plans for construction of power lines could move forward, allowing the Cooperative in 1943 to open “a temporary office in the building formerly occupied by Hafele’s barber shop [in Delhi].”³⁰ The Cooperative surveyed their applicants. The chairman of the Delaware County USDA War Board, Logan Gould, “urged all landowners in the area to comply with the Cooperative’s request at the earliest possible date in order that food production might be maintained at the highest possible level.” In August 1943, the Cooperative made the case for a priority rating to the WPB. County Cooperative Extension Agent C. S. Denton, in supporting the Cooperative’s case, said that “in applying to WPB for electric service . . . the farmers reported that they plan to use milk coolers, electric milking machines, electric water pumps, and other electrical labor-saving equipment in poultry and dairy production. If electricity can be made available to these farms in the near future, an important step will have been made toward equipping the farmers to overcome the labor shortage and maintain production.”³¹

Construction Starts—Men Who Want to Work Even Part-Time Are Requested to Apply

This time, the DCEC’s application was successful. Contracts were signed, and construction started in early 1944. The contract for wiring “633 farms . . . for electric service . . . [was] awarded to the Westgate Electric Co.” Survey crews had to lay out the paths for the poles and wires. The *Catskill Mountain News* reported, “One crew has completed the Peakes and Platner Brooks section near Delhi and is continuing to Walton and Masonville areas. A second crew is surveying a path from Spring Lake on the Delhi-Treadwell road, across the Meridale Farms property to Meredith. The third crew is working along Federal Hill at Delhi to Bovina and will continue into the Stamford and Kortright townships.”³² The labor shortage that was affecting the farms also impacted the Cooperative’s efforts to bring in this power. The *Delaware Republican-Express* reported, “Men who want to work even part-time are requested to apply to the contractors. Many farmers, who may not be very busy at this time of year, could be employed as laborers, electricians or electricians’ assistants.”³³





Fred Platt, 1952. PHOTOGRAPH BY BOB WYER, DCHA.



Fred Harrington, 1942. PHOTOGRAPH BY BOB WYER, DCHA.



Mr. and Mrs. Nick Rohner, 1944. PHOTOGRAPHS BY BOB WYER, DCHA.

The first pole was placed on January 21, 1944, “near the Cooperative’s substation site on the Joseph Rosa farm near Delhi.” Arthur Kludas, the Cooperative’s superintendent, noted that “the use of a hole digger of new design will considerably expedite the job . . . working on the principle of a drill, the machine can dig a hole six feet deep in 60 to 90 seconds.”³⁴ At 2:00 p.m. on June 29, 1944, the first 8.2 miles of line serving twelve farms were energized on Platner Brook and nearby areas. J. C. Cameron, Stanley Clarke, Alfred Dearstyne, Fred Platt, Fred Harrington, Laura Hafele, Ralph Holcomb, Eleanor Kudsey, Belle Mason, Ralph Oliver, Nick Rohner, and Karl Zimmerman owned the twelve farms.³⁵

While pleased to have some farmers “on-line,” directors were displeased at the rate of construction, expressing the opinion that “our present rate of construction is so miserable that it is almost a miracle that the Co-operative does not fall apart in the seams. After 11 months we have 8.2 miles energized serving 12 persons. This is not only a record for lack of progress but a disgrace as well.” Part of the reason for the slow pace was the continuing challenge in getting the needed material. In May 1944, the DCEC complained to the WPB “that unfair decisions were being made on applications for material for serving identical areas.” They noted that one WPB employee making the decisions was a former NYSEG employee and that “he showed partiality in selecting NYSEG over the Co-op.”³⁶

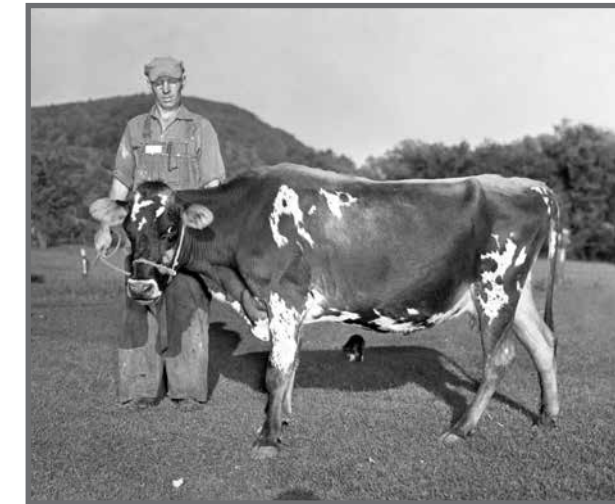
Another cause of the slow pace related to one of the construction companies, D&W Construction. On August 16, 1944, President Gleason sent a letter to the company headquarters in Ohio, noting that the original agreed completion date of March 25, 1944, had passed. Five months after the agreed date, “only 16 miles of the total project consisting of 307 miles have been constructed.” The company was given five days to respond. The letter concluded by stating that “repeated warnings and complaints have produced no tangible improvement in the situation, and our obligations to our consumers, to the War Production Board, and the Rural Electrification Administration and to ourselves forbid postponing any longer the decisive action necessary to complete this project at once.”³⁷

A few days later, the executive committee of the Cooperative met with the company. Directors Norberg and Campbell attended, as did Mr. L. Wolfrey and Mr. A. Wolfrey of the D&W Construction Company and Mr. Dauksch from the Atkinson-Dauksch Agencies, the insurance company for the project. President Gleason was unable to leave his farm in Meredith, so the group met at his home. D&W Construction admitted the slow progress but stated that the project would



Left and bottom: On January 21, 1944, the first poles for the DCEC were set in place in Delhi on the Joe Rosa farm. PHOTOGRAPHS BY BOB WYER, DCHA.

Below: Stanley Clark, 1941. PHOTOGRAPH BY BOB WYER, DCHA.





First Electricity—You Didn't Have to Put in Ice Anymore

IN 1984, THE DCEC RECORDED in its newsletter, *Catskill Hi-Line*, stories from three of the original twelve farmers to receive the first electricity.ⁱ Alfred Dearstyne, at the age of eighty-two, recalled that he “helped wire the houses all up and down Peakes Brook.” He remembered that before electricity, “we always had to put in ice every winter.” They got their ice from Spring Lake. The last year that Lawrence Ballentyne drew ice from the lake, he told Mr. Dearstyne, “I’m not going to be drawing ice for you any more cause you’re going on electricity another year.”

Mr. Dearstyne remembered that before electricity, they had gaslights in the house but not in the barn because they considered gas to be unsafe there. They continued using lanterns in the barn. “Seemed just natural to be carrying a lantern after it got dark,” but he adapted quickly to not carrying one when they got a “pole light halfway between the house and the barn.”

When they got electricity, Mr. Dearstyne noted that “we had to get all new modern things.” The new electric stove they got also could burn wood. Their gas-powered washing machine had only been bought recently. He was able to remove the gas engine and replace it with an electric motor. Dearstyne particularly appreciated having electricity in the sap house.

Mrs. Fred Harrington remembered the first night they had lights in the house. “I was taking my small girl up to bed, [when] she said, ‘Mother, you got to go back downstairs and blow out the light.’”



Dearstyne noted that, before electricity, they got their ice from Spring Lake in Meredith, New York. Here’s the ice harvest in January 1942. PHOTOGRAPH BY BOB WYER, COURTESY OF THE DCHA.

Inset: Alfred Dearstyne, photographed in May 1952 by Bob Weyer. DCHA

Ralph Holcomb was ninety-five when he shared his memories of the early days. Mr. Holcomb remembered that their farm was one of the first to get a refrigerator. They were hard to buy then, being quite scarce. One day, he saw a refrigerator advertised in Oneonta, so he got in his truck and went right over. He just beat another man coming on the same errand. “I had it already bought and was loading it when he got there.” Holcomb concluded, “Electricity was something—you didn’t have to put in ice anymore.” His daughter Clara Stewart remembered, “Dad had a lot of switches put in the house so when he turned out one light he could turn another light on in front of him; it was a big house.”

Lynn Francisco recalled how his parents took advantage of the construction work. The contractors “were setting a pole during the winter and the ground was frozen . . . [so they] used about 10 sticks of dynamite to blow the hole for a pole. Each time they dynamited, my parents would bring out 3 chunks of wood, lay it over the hole and split the wood as the charge went off.”ⁱⁱ

Another story shared in 1984 came from Ellis and Leona Taylor of Northfield in the town of Walton. They were instrumental in securing right-of-way easements for about twenty miles of line, going from Northfield toward Trout Creek. Mr. Taylor recalled the challenges in getting the easements. “There was one farmer in particular who was adamant—he simply would not consider the newfangled electric at all.” Mrs. Taylor stepped in and visited the recalcitrant farmer at milking time. While milking, a cow kicked over his lantern, extinguishing the light. She asked the farmer, “It would be better to have a bulb hanging where a cow couldn’t kick it, wouldn’t it?” He signed up that night.

Ellis Taylor remembered much of the labor in preparing that twenty miles of line. They used crosscut saws, and horses drew away the brush. It was all done by hand—there was no machinery for clearing the trees. Mr. Taylor was paid for his time, noting that he “worked through the WPA program . . . and [was] paid good too!” The horses were used again in stringing the wires. Taylor noted that “the horses were so good they would hold the wire perfectly steady for the crew to fasten to the poles.” Mr. Taylor concluded his story by saying “You don’t know how glad we were to get electric! We had to draw water six months of the year—all summer. It was great to be able to pump it!”ⁱⁱⁱ

Another memory collected in 1984 for the newsletter came from a farmer who preferred to remain anonymous. He lived in Pumpkin Hollow in the Davenport area. He remembered that they had no money to have the house wired, just the barn. They bought two wires and ran them “from the barn to the house and had one light bulb hung on a hook between the door to give light to two rooms at once—the pantry and the kitchen. Illegal as hell, but we had lights . . . Such a light nearly blinded me and all of us got excited over it, wife, little kids, all my neighbors, everyone!”^{iv}

Today there are far fewer people who remember life without electricity and the early days with electric power. Longtime director and former DCEC President Ernie Bartz does have a memory of the first night they had electricity: “We turned every light on in the house and went down the road and looked at it.” Ernie also remembered how electricity changed his mother’s life. “She had a gas-operated washing machine. [We] put [an] electric motor on it and [it made it] so much easier. [You] didn’t have to put the exhaust pipe out the window.”^v

i. “Those Darn Meter Readings...,” *Catskill Hi-Line*, July 1984, page 5.

ii. Interview with Lynn Francisco, Delhi, undated, from collection of Delaware County Electric Cooperative.

iii. “I Remember When...,” *Catskill Hi-Line*, March/April 1984, pages 11–13.

iv. *Ibid.*, page 10.

v. Interview with Ernie Bartz, May 19, 2017.





At the old DCEC offices on Second Street during World War II. One of the gentlemen is believed to be Arthur Kludas, the first manager of the DCEC. DCEC.

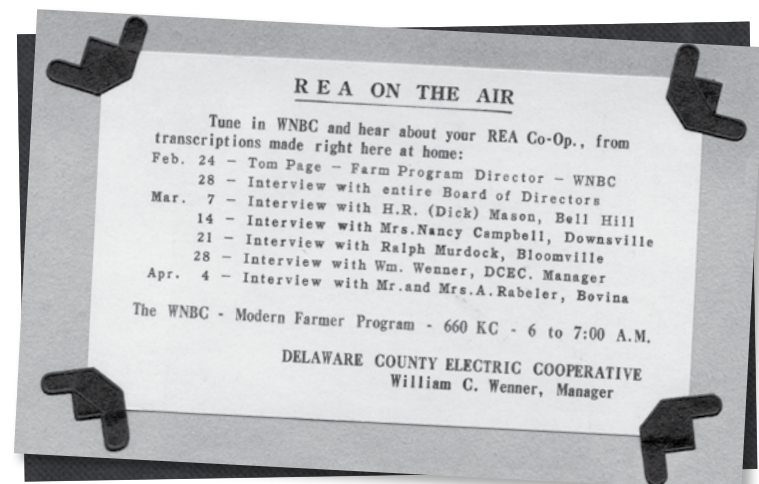
made to be able to use his services. The only lineman the Cooperative could find was a man running an autobody shop. His main asset was that he had “clumb some, and was not afraid.” What the Cooperative did not know was that he was on parole for a minor offense. Another minor offense put him back in jail. The manager made arrangements with the sheriff so when they got a trouble call, he could sign the lineman out of jail, take him to where the work needed to be done, then take him back and sign him back into jail again. Wenner recalled, “he was in no hurry to get back to his jail cell, so we often spent some time sitting in the truck watching lightning flash from cloud to cloud, atop Scotch Mountain, the highest point in the county.”⁴¹

Progress Is Made—421 Miles and 373,000 Tons of Milk

Despite these challenges, the pace of construction increased rapidly at the end of 1944 so that by March 1945, 633 farms in the Cooperative were on-line.⁴² In February 1947, the Cooperative had connected its 1,000th member and had expanded into two towns in Schoharie County.⁴³

As more farmers came on-line, some concerns were expressed about the installation of electrical equipment in homes and barns. The Cooperative, in its July

In 1947, the *Modern Farmer Program* on WNBC, New York, had a series of episodes about the Delaware County Electric Cooperative. This card shows the schedule of broadcasts, including interviews with directors from the DCEC board and several members. This information also appeared in several local papers starting in February 1947. DCEC.



be completed by November 20, 1944. Labor shortages were the main cause of the delays, but delivery of materials was a contributory factor. A representative of the insurance company for the project had gone over the construction and felt “it was safe to say the project could and would be complete by November 20, 1944.” After some discussion, the directors decided it would make more sense to let D&W Construction complete the work than place them in default.³⁸ By the end of the year, twenty more farms had been added to the twelve originally being served.³⁹

Manager William Wenner recalled that the “winter of 1944/1945 was very severe,” impacting the work further. Most of the men were laid off, leaving a foreman and two men to do the work when weather permitted. “The contractor bought a team of horses and a sled to haul materials.” When the REA construction inspector came to check the poles, he often had to travel on snowshoes.⁴⁰

Labor was so short at one point that when the Cooperative’s only lineman got into trouble, special arrangements were

Electricity Comes to Shew Hollow



BETTY MATALAVAGE, WHO PASSED AWAY IN 2015 at the age of ninety, was the daughter of John and Jessie Hamilton. She was raised on the corner of Shew Hollow and Decker Roads in the town of Gilboa in Schoharie County. In 2013, Betty recalled the early days of electricity in an article published in the Gilboa Historical Society’s newsletter.ⁱ

My early childhood was spent on a dairy farm in Shew Hollow. We didn’t have electricity, but we had a small sawmill powered by the water in the Little Minekill River. Aside from this, any machinery we had was powered by gasoline engines. There was an engine in the barn that ran the milking machines . . . We also had a smaller engine in the wood shed under the big farmhouse. This engine charged twenty glass Delco batteries that were mounted on the side of the farmhouse and that operated lights in the house, but the lights grew dimmer during the long winter nights and so bedtime came early in December and January.

In the 1930s, a commercial electric power company ran lines on route 30; my grandfather, John Souer, contacted them about running lines up Shew Hollow Road to our farm. They agreed to do it at a cost of \$100 a pole, which he felt was too expensive.

When he heard about the rural electrification effort in Delhi, he and my mother, Jessie Hamilton, went down to talk with them about expanding lines into our area. They agreed to do it if they could get free right-of-ways for their lines.

My grandfather agreed to furnish my mother with a car, and my mother agreed to get authorization for the lines. For the next few weeks, she and Ray Meehan (our neighbor who also wanted the electricity) called on all the property owners along the proposed right-of-way to get their consent to let the line go through their property freely. Most of the time they went together, leaving early in the morning and staying out until late afternoon. My mother did the driving and encountered badly maintained roads, unfriendly dogs and billy goats, and aggressive geese and roosters.

Most owners were at first very interested and therefore very cooperative, but there were a number who had to be persuaded and this sometimes involved several visits with reinforcements from neighbors on each side of their property. I remember my mother being at times quite discouraged by some of these hesitant owners—but neither she nor Ray gave up. As soon as she had a number of contracts signed, she would take them to the office in Delhi and give them to Arthur Kludas, the man in charge of obtaining the right-of-ways. He would always encourage her to continue with the last holdouts.

After gathering the permissions, she also agreed to room and board the linemen in our home for several weeks as they put in the lines and rewired the farm buildings. Some of them had worked on the Tennessee Valley Authority and all were out-of-staters—they were our guests seven days a week, with Mother giving them a hearty breakfast, packing their lunches, and making dinner for them at night.

. . . We enjoyed the workmen’s stories and they became very comfortable in our home for the duration of their stay in our area. The numbers varied from week to week, depending on where they were working and what they were doing, but two or three were always there and sometimes as many as six or seven.

i. Betty Matalavage, “Electricity Comes to Shew Hollow,” *Gilboa (NY) Historical Society* newsletter, Fall 2013, pages 18–19.



1947 newsletter, said, “We are really disturbed about the workmanship of the average installation of equipment which you members are paying for. Most of it is not a fire hazard, at the moment, but it is very cheap business and will likely result in excessive use of power, burning out of motors, electric shock and fires in the future.” The Cooperative recommended that for any installation that members “insist on an inspection by the Fire Underwriters’ Inspector” before paying the bill.⁴⁴

Another milestone was reached in 1948 when the Cooperative “for the first time in its history, had everyone connected who desired service and who was within service distance of a Co-Op. line.” By March 1948, the mileage was up to 421 miles with 1,070 members being served. “During 1947, 1070 connected members purchased 2,141,311 kilowatt hours and a total cost to members of \$83,347.20.” While the average rate of usage per member had gone up from two years earlier, the cost per kilowatt-hour had gone down.⁴⁵

The improvement in farm production was noted almost immediately. In early 1947, it was reported that “although the average dairy farm member of the Delaware County Electric Cooperative . . . has had Co-op electricity for only 21 months, average farm consumption is 200 kilowatt hours a month. The Co-op points with pride also to the fact that Delaware County’s 1946 milk production total of 746,788,990 pounds (valued at \$15,015,525) led all 71 counties in New York City’s milkshed.”⁴⁶

As the Cooperative grew, the directors kept a close eye on the costs. In early 1950, they sent a resolution to Congress declaring that they were being excessively charged for power. “The directors asserted that the charges made by the Cooperative’s power source are 61 percent higher than the national average rate of such firms to Cooperatives and 300 percent higher than rates paid by Cooperatives in hydro-electric power areas.” The resolution went on to encourage the construction of a hydroelectric power source on the St. Lawrence River on the New York/Canadian border.

Transformers are unloaded from a railcar for the Cooperative in Delhi, New York, November 1948. PHOTOGRAPH BY BOB WYER, DCHA.



The directors also complained in the resolution about the local “commercial power company” building many lines in areas that before the creation of the Cooperative were considered unprofitable “for the purpose of preventing the Cooperative from serving the number of consumers necessary to provide reasonable rates and make the government loan secure.”

The directors saw these excessive rates and encroachment by NYSEG as slowing “the development of this rural area . . . [placing] it at a serious competitive disadvantage. Many farms just out of reach of the Co-op lines are unable to obtain electric service as they cannot pay the private company charges to build to them, and the Cooperative cannot afford to do so at present electricity rates.”⁴⁷

The Pepacton Reservoir—We Were Stunned

In the late 1940s, the Cooperative found itself in a legal battle with the City of New York involving the establishment of the Pepacton Reservoir on the East Branch of the Delaware River. The reservoir is one of four in the City’s Delaware Water Supply System. Planning for this reservoir had started in the 1920s. World War II delayed its construction, but work began in earnest in 1947 when the contract for construction of the Downsview Dam was awarded. When completed in 1955, the reservoir had displaced 974 people.⁴⁸ Among these people were 190 members of the DCEC.

The legal issues started in 1943, when “the Co-op asked the [New York City Board of Water Supply] for permission to cross an abandoned railroad bed at several points in order to bring electric power to the farms in and about the area of the East Branch of the Delaware River . . . the City expressed no reluctance to having the Co-op lines cross the railroad bed and drew up a lease” in December 1945.⁴⁹ Rights were given for “eight specific points which included crossings in the towns of Andes, Colchester and Middletown.”⁵⁰

In December 1947, the Cooperative was notified that the Board of Water Supply had condemned 41.6 miles of line serving 106 members. Ultimately, the DCEC would lose 60 miles of line. The City claimed that the DCEC “had released its rights to damages in the right-of-way agreement in 1945.”⁵¹ The Cooperative responded that “it only waived the rights over the [eight] specified rights of way.”⁵² It was noted in 1951 that “at the time the lease was signed nothing was ever said about releasing the City from damage claims . . . had the City intentions been known, the Co-op would have built to these same farms without signing the lease, and at an additional cost to the coop of a mere 2 or 3 thousand dollars.”⁵³

Then DCEC Manager William Wenner recalled the reaction of the DCEC to the City’s notification: “When we received official word from the . . . City” and that they were “taking nearly ten percent of the lines, we were naturally shocked. When they later told us that we could receive no compensation, we were stunned.”⁵⁴ The Cooperative claimed more than one million dollars in damages while the City countered with a figure of only \$47,000. Wenner’s successor as manager, Robert Donovan, argued that the City shouldn’t have the right to take away \$1,080,000 worth of the Cooperative’s assets.⁵⁵

In 1949, the Cooperative submitted a claim for damages. After being told by the appraisers hearing reservoir damage claims that they had no jurisdiction, the Cooperative realized that it would have to go to court.⁵⁶ The directors, after much discussion, approached Utica attorney Francisco Penberthy. Penberthy already was doing work for the Oneida-Madison Co-op without pay because he firmly believed in the REA.⁵⁷ The case went to the New York Supreme Court, and in August 1950, they ruled that the “Co-op is entitled to be compensated for all its property taken and seized by the City of New York and Board of Water Supply except electric lines located on and over City land.”⁵⁸ The City appealed the ruling in May 1951 before the five judges of the Appellate Division in Albany. In June, the court





East Branch lines during the construction of the Pepacton Reservoir. DCEC provided temporary service during the construction for several businesses and for the engineering office. The buildings were ultimately demolished, and the lines relocated, when the reservoir was completed. These photographs were taken in May 1948. PHOTOGRAPHS BY BOB WYER, DCHA.



Top: Aerial view of the construction of the Downsville Dam, September 1949. PHOTOGRAPH BY BOB WYER, DCHA.

Above: Construction of Downsville Dam, August 1952. PHOTOGRAPH BY BOB WYER, DCHA.

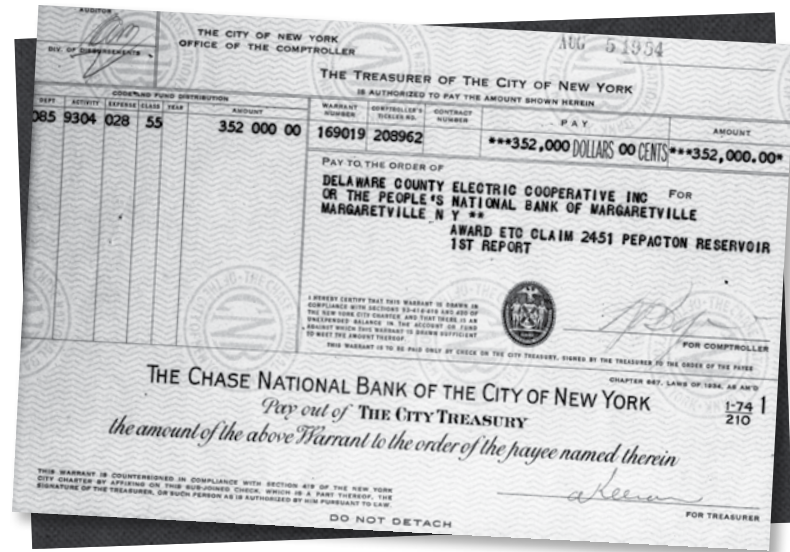
ruled in favor of the City, so the Cooperative went to the state's highest court, the Court of Appeals.⁵⁹

While the fight continued over the compensation issue, in January 1952, the Cooperative members were sent a letter that “the contractor building the new road around the south side of the Pepacton Reservoir area set off a dynamite charge of approximately 8,000 pounds.” The explosion destroyed two poles and broke several others. DCEC linemen made repairs at night in sleet and rain so that power could be restored. The Cooperative regretted the frequent power outages in the reservoir area, noting that “these are due almost entirely to the City of New York and the construction of [the reservoir] . . . the City . . . refuses to move our lines to safe locations so you can have good service.”⁶⁰

In May 1952, the New York Court of Appeals ruled unanimously in favor of the Cooperative and that it was “entitled to damages for everything except the 500 feet of line [from the original eight crossings].” The Cooperative noted in September 1952, “The City of New York



DCEC received this check in August 1954 as compensation for the loss of power lines and members in the construction of the Pepacton Reservoir. PHOTOGRAPH BY BOB WYER, DCHA.



has not appealed this decision, and will not do so.” Given that the issue revolved around a contract and not constitutional rights, “it was impossible to carry the argument further.”⁶¹

The case was settled in July 1954 at “a hearing before the Commissioners of Appraisal for the Pepacton Reservoir” held in Margaretville, whereby the City agreed to reimburse the DCEC, with the Cooperative receiving \$10,000 a mile for the thirty-five miles of line that had to be relocated to accommodate the reservoir, totaling \$352,000.⁶²

Though the Cooperative received some compensation, people were losing their land and the Cooperative its members. One such person was Nancy C. Campbell, who was a DCEC director representing the East Branch area. The Campbell farm was just below the Downsview Dam, so the farm was lost. Archie and Nancy Campbell were awarded \$18,000.⁶³ And while she got some compensation, Mrs. Campbell lost her farm, as well as her place on the DCEC board.⁶⁴

St. Lawrence Seaway and the New York Power Authority—Farmers Are Anxious to Maintain and Receive an Adequate Supply of Electrical Power

A major decision that had a long-term positive effect on the Cooperative’s rates stemmed from an invitation to get hydroelectric power from the St. Lawrence Seaway. Getting this took some effort, however. Rural electrical cooperatives in New York, at a meeting in Bath, New York, in February 1947, strongly recommended the adoption of the St. Lawrence Seaway project. The project, under discussion for decades, would make it feasible to transport goods from the Great Lakes to the Atlantic Ocean using the St. Lawrence River. Part of the project would include damming a lake, which would allow for hydropower. The resolution adopted at the meeting noted that Cooperative members are largely “farmers who have recently obtained service pursuant to the Rural Electrification Act and that such farmers are anxious to maintain and receive an adequate supply of electrical power at lowest possible cost.”⁶⁵

In May 1947, Claude R. Wickard, head of the Rural Electrification Administration, spoke to a gathering in Delhi of representatives from three states (including seven New York counties) about electric power. He spoke about the potential of power from the St. Lawrence: “Up on the northern borders of New York State lies one of the greatest untapped sources of cheap hydropower in the world.” He went on to state that the “monopolists don’t want the competition of cheap power or of a direct water route to the heart of America. They want to keep the Nation’s economy in a stranglehold and keep America from growing.”⁶⁶

The DCEC passed a resolution in February 1948 supporting the seaway project, noting that the project would furnish “a substantial amount of electric energy at a reduced cost and thereby aid the growth of industry, agriculture, promote the conservation of natural resources, and assure a plentiful supply of electric energy for all of the people.”⁶⁷



A meeting of multiple cooperatives from three states was held on May 1, 1947, in Delhi to listen to the head of the REA, Claude Wickard, talk about the St. Lawrence Seaway Project. PHOTOGRAPHS BY BOB WYER, DCHA.



DCEC Manager Robert Donovan sent a letter to Governor Thomas E. Dewey on September 23, 1952, asking for his support. He said, “We want to support the Power Authority if through it we can receive the same benefits as now enjoyed by rural electric cooperatives in other parts of the country.” The big issue concerned the rates. “Rates to our Co-op members, even though set up on a non-profit basis, are roughly double the rates paid by farmers served by private companies. One reason is that the power we buy at wholesale is so expensive . . . [another] reason is that, as our lines were extended to serve farmers the private companies would not take care of, we have a low consumer density along our lines.”⁶⁸

In May 1955, a public hearing was held in New York City by the State Power Authority to consider four contracts for using the seaway power. The contracts were for Alcoa Aluminum, the State of Vermont, City of Plattsburg, and the U.S. Air Force base near Plattsburg. Alcoa would be the biggest user of the power that was expected to be available. There were several people who supported the contracts, but others urged rejection or delay. Manager Donovan, representing the cooperatives of the state, along with a representative of the United Automobile Workers, was particularly critical of the Alcoa contract. “They held that it apparently promised the company a subsidy in the form of rate favors in case of strikes and failed to protect labor’s interests.”⁶⁹

On November 2, 1956, several electric cooperatives and small villages applied to the New York State Power Authority (NYPA) to purchase St. Lawrence hydropower. Utica attorney Francisco Penberthy

St. Lawrence Power Dam, St. Lawrence Seaway Project in 1958. PHOTO FROM POWER AUTHORITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK.



submitted the applications. Authority chair Robert Moses was highly critical of the applications. On November 20, Moses sent letters to the cooperatives and villages, accusing them of “demanding too large a share of electricity.” He found their request “wild and unsupportable.” While he was willing to sell them “all the power they can sell in the foreseeable future,” Moses contended their request for 375,000 kilowatts of always-available power and 65,000 kilowatts of interruptible power was a “completely irresponsible request,” given that these cooperatives “presently use less than 10,000 kilowatts.” Moses aimed much of his ire at Mr. Penberthy, whom he noted in his letter was purporting “to represent the cooperatives.” He suggested that given “irresponsible assertions” made by him that “the officials of the cooperatives who are responsible to the members and who must sign whatever contracts are negotiated . . . take a direct, personal part in any further negotiations.”⁷⁰

Penberthy responded to Moses, stating that the request by the three cooperatives for the power was “proper and responsible.” He said that “the petition was intended to put rural cooperatives, municipalities and others in a position to enforce what . . . was their legal right to St. Lawrence power.”⁷¹

Two years later, on November 10, 1958, a public hearing was held at the offices of the NYPA in New York City to approve the contracts for three cooperatives, including the DCEC, and five villages for power from the St. Lawrence Seaway.⁷² The DCEC’s contract was approved later that month. The Cooperative was to “receive 4,000 kilowatts from the authority.”⁷³ On July 16, 1959, the Cooperative began purchasing power from the St. Lawrence Seaway. It was able to pass approximately 25 percent savings in a rate reduction on to the member-consumer.

Governor Nelson Rockefeller and Queen Elizabeth II of Great Britain (with Vice President Richard Nixon) at the official opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway in 1959. Also in attendance were Robert Moses and his wife, President Dwight D. Eisenhower and his wife, and Governor Rockefeller’s daughter Mary. PHOTOGRAPH FROM THE NEW YORK STATE ARCHIVES.



Capital Credits—Ensures Fairness to All Members



IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER that the customers of the DCEC are not just customers but members. They are owners of the Cooperative and elect its Board of Directors, who are also members. The DCEC throughout its history, because it works as nonprofit, has a program to pay back to its members when the Cooperative has a positive financial margin at the end of the year. It is allocated to members and paid back when financial conditions allow. The Cooperative's objective is to have a return each year. As then treasurer Steve Oles noted in 2011, "Our new members are helping to maintain the strength of the Cooperative. Retiring capital credits to long-standing members ensures fairness to all members while maintaining the financial health of the Cooperative."

The decision to retire capital credits is made by the DCEC Board of Directors. Members still active with DCEC receive the retirement as a credit on their December electric bills while check payments were issued to members that are no longer receiving electric service from DCEC. The Cooperative has a goal of retiring capital credits on a twenty-year cycle.ⁱ

i. "DCEC Makes Capital Credit Distribution," *Catskill Hi-Line*, January/February 2011, page 1.

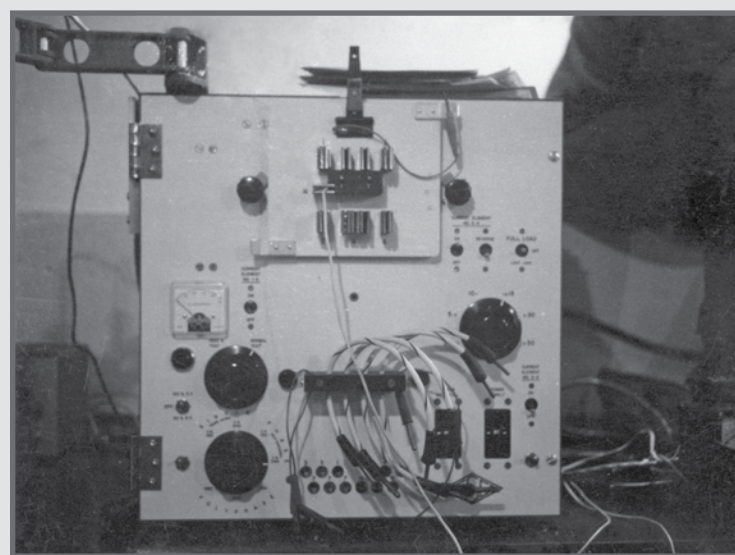
of the State of New York provided power "at a very reasonable rate, but believe me, the dark clouds are gathering fast on the horizon!" He also expressed concern about pending state and federal legislation that "if passed into laws, would have dire effects on the Cooperative cost of power."⁷⁸

The Three Mile Island Nuclear Power Plant accident in Pennsylvania in 1979 ramped up the debate over nuclear power. Prescott noted, "The passionate debate over the use of nuclear energy as an abundant and cheap source of power has been intensified, and many questions must be answered and many problems resolved as we continue our use of nuclear power, paralleling our search for additional safer methods of developing power for the needs of our nation. We cannot become a nation of ostriches with our heads in the sand while the rest of the world goes ahead."⁷⁹

Partly owing to accidents like Three Mile Island and general concerns about the environmental safety of nuclear power, it became an expensive option. So, when Prescott in 1979 reported that the Cooperative had "been notified by the NYPA . . . that they intend to start using electric power generated at the James A. Fitzpatrick Nuclear Power Plant in supplying additional electric power to the . . . cooperatives," it caused concern. This would increase the cost of the cooperative's power considerably. At the same time, the NYPA was asking for "a revised wheeling (transporting) schedule by the private utilities." In 1978, the cost of power wheeled by NYSEG was \$.75 per kilowatt per month. The revised schedule increased that to \$2.37 per kilowatt per month. The revised schedule increased that to \$2.37 per kWh.⁸⁰ The DCEC and other cooperatives fought these increases over the next several years.

In 1982, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission ordered the NYPA to stop using more expensive nuclear power in supplying the cooperatives. An editorial in the *Delaware County Times* in October 1982 wholeheartedly supported the decision and praised DCEC for fighting the requirements to use

Those Darn Meter Readings . . .



DCEC purchased a meter tester in 1968 to ensure meters were providing accurate information. DCEC.

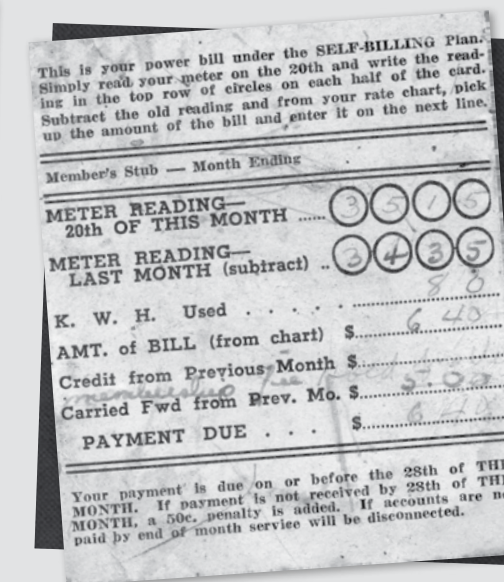
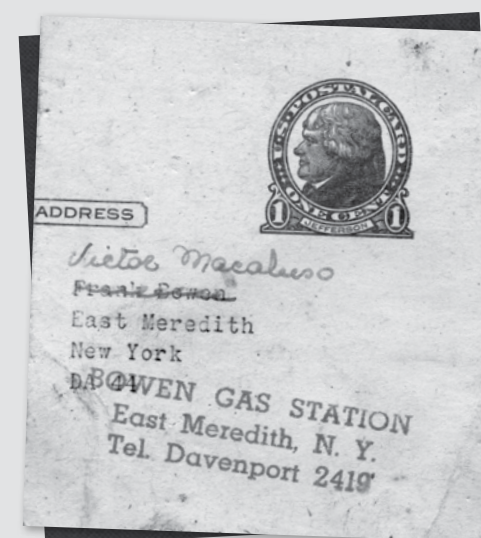
was fully operational, negating the need for members to phone in or mail their monthly meter readings. The system had the added advantage of closer monitoring of the Cooperative's electric grid, alerting it quickly to outages. Such a system is known today as being one of the "smart-grid" technologies.

i. "Customer Service Enhancements," *Catskill Hi-Line*, May 2001, page 4.

ii. *Catskill Hi-Line*, July 2001.

FOR MUCH OF THE COOPERATIVE'S existence, meter readings were done by the members and submitted by mail. Early in the new millennium, in 2001, the Cooperative began experimenting with an automated phone system, which included an option to phone in a meter reading.ⁱ There was some confusion over this, and in the July newsletter, under the title "Those Darn Meter Readings. . .," members were advised that they did not have to call in a reading if they submitted the reading by mail.ⁱⁱ The next step was to have an automated meter reading system. Installation progressed, and by 2005, the system

For many years, DCEC members submitted their meter readings each month, using a card like this one sent to Victor Macaluso on the former Frank Bowen farm. DCEC.



nuclear power: “Fighting against an arbitrary increase in a rate that is 13 times greater than that which had been previously agreed upon made dollars and sense for the little co-ops.”⁸¹

This would not be the end of the issue. The contract with the NYPA for hydropower was due to end in 1985. Prescott had warned Cooperative members in 1980 that “the battle lines are already forming—the co-ops and municipals must continue fighting for the preference clause law that gives them the right to 50% of the hydro-power generated at the St. Lawrence project. To lose it could easily mean tripling your present power costs.”⁸²

Negotiations for a new contract began in early 1985, but it wasn’t until September 1986 that a fifteen-year contract between the NYPA and the various cooperatives and municipal systems was in place. The contract with DCEC and the other cooperatives continued the sale of “low-cost hydroelectric power produced at the Power Authority’s Niagara Project . . . and its St. Lawrence Franklin D. Roosevelt Project in Massena.” The agreement also included additional power when needed from the NYPA’s nuclear plant and the Blenheim-Gilboa Pumped Storage Project in Schoharie County.⁸³

Meanwhile, with the change of presidential administration on the federal level in 1981, fears grew for the future of rural electric cooperatives in general. Efforts continued for several years to reduce or eliminate the REA. Cooperative Manager William Smith noted that the “Federal Office of Management and Budget has proposed to President Reagan that the rural electrification program be terminated.” Smith went on to state that the “REA and its program unequivocally is the most successful program the federal government has ever

Shot-Up Insulators



A SOMEWHAT UNUSUAL CHALLENGE to keeping the power running was mentioned frequently in newsletters from the 1960s and ’70s. It involved “Shot-Up Insulators.” This was a problem in November during hunting season. Hunters, likely frustrated that “a deer did not come his way as the vandal who cares little what trouble he causes, [instead takes] a shot at a live insulator.” Sometimes, the power would go out immediately, but more often than not, it would do just enough damage but not knock out the power until rain or wet snow caused it to burn out, meaning the co-op crew would have to go out to make the repairs in poor weather conditions.ⁱ Manager Charlie Prescott in 1975 suggested to the board of directors that “the Cooperative offer a \$100.00 reward for information leading to the conviction of persons shooting insulators or otherwise destroying Cooperative property.” The board agreed to authorize such a reward.ⁱⁱ

i. “The Shot-Up Insulator,” *Catskill Hi-Line*, November 1977, page 2.

ii. Minutes of the DCEC Board of Directors, November 19, 1975.

November 1969 Snowstorm—Beautiful to Look at But Deadly to Utility Companies



THE DECEMBER 1969 BOARD MINUTES noted that “Approximately 6 pm on November 5, 1969, severe snow struck the Cooperative, leaving approximately 98% of the system without electricity.”ⁱ Manager Prescott reported that it was “beautiful to look at but deadly to utility companies wires and poles.” The first calls came at 6 pm and continued for several days. Beyond the damage to the Cooperative’s lines, damage to NYSEG’s lines caused outages at the Cooperative’s substations. The Cooperative lost twenty poles with damage at about \$30,000. Prescott reported that “there were several cases where people who were depending on electricity for breath” as well as people getting sick from the lack of heat. He also noted that “there was no end to the problems faced by [the dairy] farms.”ⁱⁱ

Wayne Marshfield had vivid recollections of this storm—he had been working at the Cooperative about two years at the time: “We got a very wet heavy snow and it created outages for our members . . . they were . . . without power [for a month] . . . farmers were dumping their milk.”ⁱⁱⁱ The Cooperative had crews from the Steuben and Vermont Electric Cooperatives to help deal with the disaster, as well as a contractor. Many broken poles needed replacing. Marshfield recalled one member didn’t want the crew on his land because of the damage the equipment would do to his fields. DCEC had to promise to help restore any damage to fields created by the crews doing their work. Final restoration occurred in late November or early December.

The efforts of the DCEC linemen and crews who came in from outside were greatly appreciated. Mrs. F. Lynwood Gray of Walton said, “They worked every minute in some terrible rain, cold, and fog. We want you to know that we feel you and the Company did everything possible to complete service as soon as you could and did.” Michael Jamba of Stamford, in a letter of thanks, stated, “We want to express appreciation for the prompt repair service the men gave us. A great deal of credit for working such long hours in the bad weather.”^{iv}

i. Minutes of the Delaware County Electric Cooperative.

ii. Charles Prescott, “A Time To Remember,” *Catskill Hi-Line*, December 1969, page 2.

iii. Wayne Marshfield interview, May 15, 2017.

iv. *Catskill Hi-Line*, December 1969, page 4.

undertaken . . . One of our greatest challenges in 1985 will be to preserve our cooperatives and to continue to serve the needs of our members and extend service to the rural areas of upstate New York.”⁸⁴

As the millennium progressed, the NYPA announced further contract changes and rate increases. The *Catskill Hi-Line* newsletter in March 2007 noted, “These are changing times for where DCEC sources its power supply. Unfortunately, the long-term relationship that has existed with NYPA for many years has changed, which will likely result in higher rates to residents and businesses throughout New York



State. The DCEC staff and Board of Directors will continue to work hard to minimize the effect of these higher costs to our members while ensuring that safety and reliability of service is not sacrificed.⁸⁵ This led to the Cooperative exploring other sources of power, including the Delaware County Waste to Energy Project (discussed in chapter 4).

In 2011, even with all the aforementioned efforts, rising costs forced the board to approve a 7.9 percent increase, phased in over a two-year period. The recession that started in 2008 impacted the cost of purchased power. The recession also caused a 23 percent increase in the Cooperative's property taxes. By this time, the Cooperative's annual operating costs were \$7 million.⁸⁶

Shortly after this rise in rates, DCEC was notified that the NYPA was going to increase its rates to its wholesale power members by 26 percent. The rate was to go into effect November 1, 2011, but the cooperatives requested an extension and argued against the case for the increase. NYPA reduced the increase to 20 percent over a four-year period. NYPA also agreed to meet with power customers annually to review costs that could affect future rates.⁸⁷

Reducing Costs—Shaving the Peak

As the energy and budgetary challenges continued, the DCEC explored a number of options to control rate increases. The Cooperative was selected in 1987 to participate in the NYPA's Watt Buster Program. This provided all residential members a "free comprehensive energy audit." The program also suggested that "homes which are total electric may be eligible for free installation of energy conservation measures such as additional insulation, weather stripping, caulking, hot water blankets, etc."⁸⁸ Initial member participation was good, with more than 300 signing up during the first month. As this program moved forward, the Cooperative announced in the spring of 1988 that it was "looking into the feasibility of automated load management as a means to combat the peaks for demand power."⁸⁹

Reducing the peaks for power became a critical component in reducing costs to the Cooperative members. Power rates charged by power suppliers to the Cooperative were based on the highest peak demand, setting the rate for the whole year. A load management system had been discussed as early as 1972. The concept at that time was dismissed. The Cooperative even made it a policy that it "shall not purchase or install any 'off peak' or other load control equipment."⁹⁰ That changed in the 1980s with the increase in energy prices. The Cooperative began encouraging members to help "shave our peak." They were asked to limit "usage of electricity between the hours of 5:00 P.M. and 9:00 P.M." It was suggested, for example, that "when you are cooking the evening meal, don't run the automatic washer and dryer."⁹¹

In 1991, the Cooperative began installation of an automated load management system, which would specifically impact hot water heaters. The system interrupted a switch on a homeowner's hot water heater during peak hours. When Wayne Marshfield explained the system to members, he noted that "these interruptions will last only a short time, then the system computer reactivates the hot water heater . . . this will not be an inconvenience to the member since there is still a tank of hot water available." Participation in the program was strictly voluntary and was at no cost or obligation to the member.⁹² By 1992, load control had saved the Cooperative and its members \$75,000. In 2012, the controllers were updated. The program now has about 800 members participating.⁹³

Manager Paul Rottingen, when reporting on the effectiveness of the load control program, noted, "The Cooperative and its members have access to hydro-produced electricity at the lowest cost . . . Our power becomes expensive when it has to be supplemented with energy from alternate sources. Load Management is the tool to minimize the need for the alternate energy during peaking conditions and gives us the ability to maximize the use of hydro-produced electricity."⁹⁴

Transformers to El Salvador—"They Can Serve a Rural Community Just As They Did for Our Members."



Transformers are removed, drained, and loaded for the start of their journey to El Salvador. DCEC.

WHEN THE DCEC replaced seven substation transformers in 1990, it listed them with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Project Share Program. The seven transformers, "due to their size, age and voltage capabilities, did not appeal to any buyers in the United States."ⁱ This program aimed to get such equipment out to a needy country. In August of that year, the Cooperative received word that a utility in El Salvador could use these retired transformers. A rocket attack in 1984 had destroyed transformers like the ones shipped from the DCEC.

In December 1990, the transformers were prepared for shipping and sent to Tampa, Florida. From there, they were shipped to Guatemala and then trucked to San Salvador.ⁱⁱ Rottingen noted that "not only did the Share program save our Cooperative money (which would have been spent to dispose the units), it found a home for the forty-year-old units, where they can serve a rural community just as they did for our members."ⁱⁱⁱ

Alice Nichols, a Cooperative member, sent the article from the coop's newsletter about the transformers to her niece in El Salvador. The niece, Carol Brown Morales, was a teacher for the U.S. Embassy. She responded to her aunt, noting, "A lack of electricity is part of our daily life." She reported that transformers and light posts were still being bombed and that every day they lost electricity for six to eight hours. "Recently things have been better, but hardly a day goes by without the electricity going off for at least a little while . . . it's nice to know that things which are no longer of use in the U.S. can be sent here where they really will help."^{iv}



i. Rottingen, Paul, "Manager's Report," *Catskill Hi-Line*, January/February 1991, page 1.

ii. "Co-op's Old Transformers to Re-ignite Power Abroad," *The Reporter* (Walton, NY), December 12, 1990, page 2.

iii. Rottingen, *ibid.*

iv. "A Letter from El Salvador!" *Catskill Hi-Line*, March/April 1991, page 1.





Wayne Marshfield in his office at the DCEC in 2005 with the map he developed in the background. DCEC.

These efforts allowed the Cooperative to go eleven years without a rate increase, but in 2000, certain fees were raised, including those for meter reading, reconnection, returned checks, and service calls when the cause of the problem is determined to be on the consumer's side of the meter.⁹⁵

As well as exploring ways to reduce costs for electric power, the Cooperative has looked at ways to reduce other operating costs. Wayne Marshfield recalled when computers came to the DCEC. "We got our first networking computer system . . . in [19]87." Before the computer came, they used a billing machine. Manager Paul Rottingen reported in July 1987 that "we are anxiously awaiting the arrival of our IBM System 36 Computer System. We are the last of the electric cooperatives in New York State to make the transition to a computer."⁹⁶

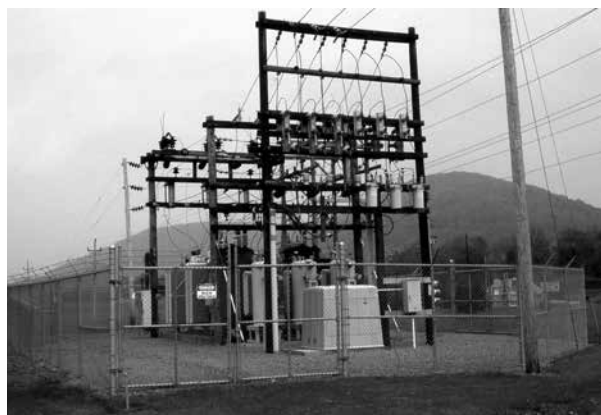
Another innovation that involved Marshfield was developing a map of the entire system. Completed in 1979, after four years of Wayne's efforts, the large wall map he created was supplemented by maps that could be carried on the trucks. The map included pole numbers and line numbers, allowing the Cooperative to provide a more precise location to the line crew. Before creating the map, Marshfield noted that they would have to tell the linemen to look "for Joe Doe out behind the oak tree on the such and such a road." The map made it much easier to manage outages.⁹⁷ The system is now an automated Geographic Information System.

Though there has been a lot of innovation in terms of monitoring the system, improving communications, etc., DCEC Manager Mark Schneider has noted, "The core technology that starts with the substation transformer and goes out to the service wire at the member location is pretty much the same now as it was seventy years ago."⁹⁸

The System—Substations, Transformers, and Reclosures

A distribution substation is a location where the utility connects to the high voltage transmission system. Substation transformers are much larger, physically, and weigh significantly more than distribution or regulating transformers, so they are mounted on concrete pad foundations. These transformers safely change or "transform" the high voltage of the electric transmission system to a lower voltage used to

Delhi substation in 1981. DCEC.



Dryden substation in 1978. DCEC.

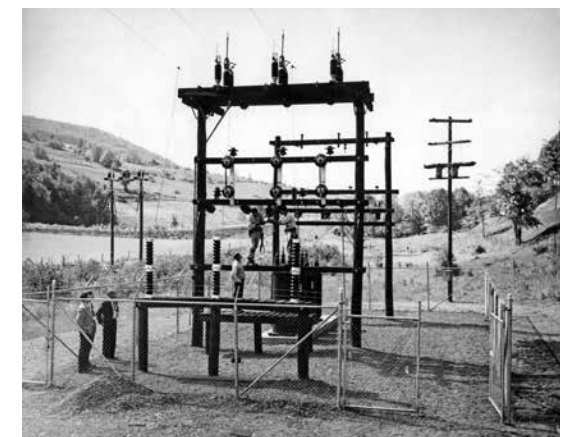


Walton substation, photographed in October 1958 by Bob Wyer. DCHA.

distribute power along the DCEC overhead lines. Inside their steel tanks, these substation transformers contain wire coil windings and magnetic friendly steel cores to function effectively and efficiently. Additionally, these transformers contain mineral oil that helps to cool and insulate the windings and cores.⁹⁹ The Delhi substation serves more than 1,900 members with a single substation transformer.

The Cooperative's first substation was built in Delhi and energized in 1944. This station was relocated in 1998. Other substations over the years have been in Jefferson, Kortright, Andes, Cat Hollow, Dryden (Walton), and Sidney. There are seven substations today.

There are several devices in use on the DCEC electric delivery system that control and protect the system against abnormal operation, often caused by vegetation or tree limbs contacting the distribution line. Their primary function is to isolate the abnormal or "faulted" parts of the system, automatically. A recloser senses short circuits and opens the line automatically to stop the flow of damaging electric currents caused by the short circuits. In doing so, reclosers (often referred to as "switches" by DCEC operating personnel) isolate the faulted and sometimes-damaged portions of the system, allowing for service to be continued in the undamaged portion. The reclosers will open and close several times so that in the event of a tree limb swiping the line or a lightning strike, the abnormal portion of the system may be returned to normal service quickly and automatically. In the event of a damaged line, however, the recloser will stay open until DCEC personnel are able to make necessary repairs that will again allow for service to be returned to normal.¹⁰⁰



Stamford substation in 1948. DCEC.





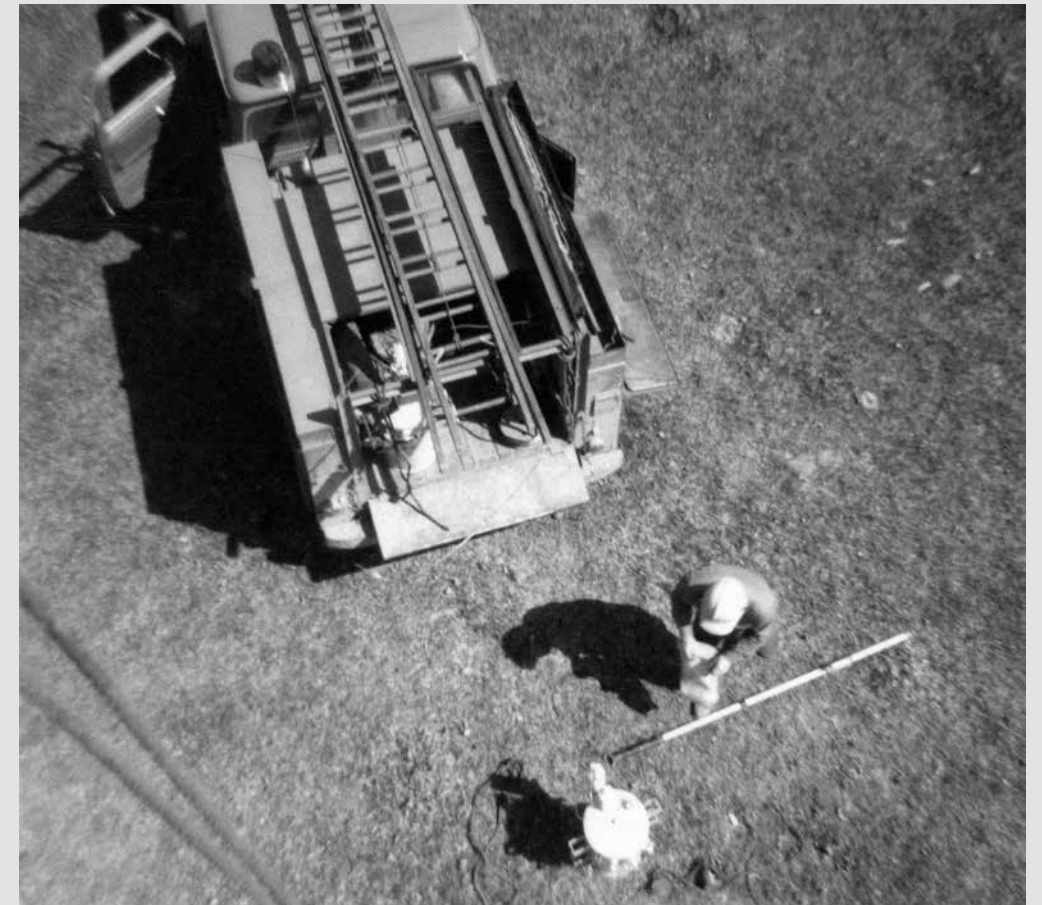
Repairing a Bad One



DCEC linemen on a pole in August 1955, photographed for an advertisement for U.S. Steel. PHOTOGRAPH BY BOB WYER, DCHA.

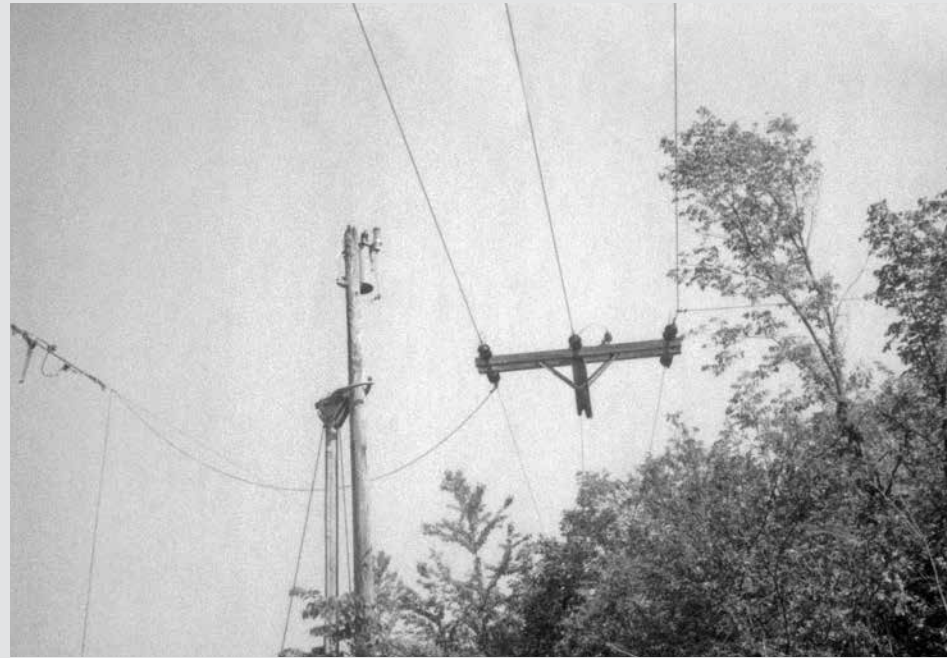


Linemen Bill Perkins and Ralph Brundage working in April 1966. DCEC.

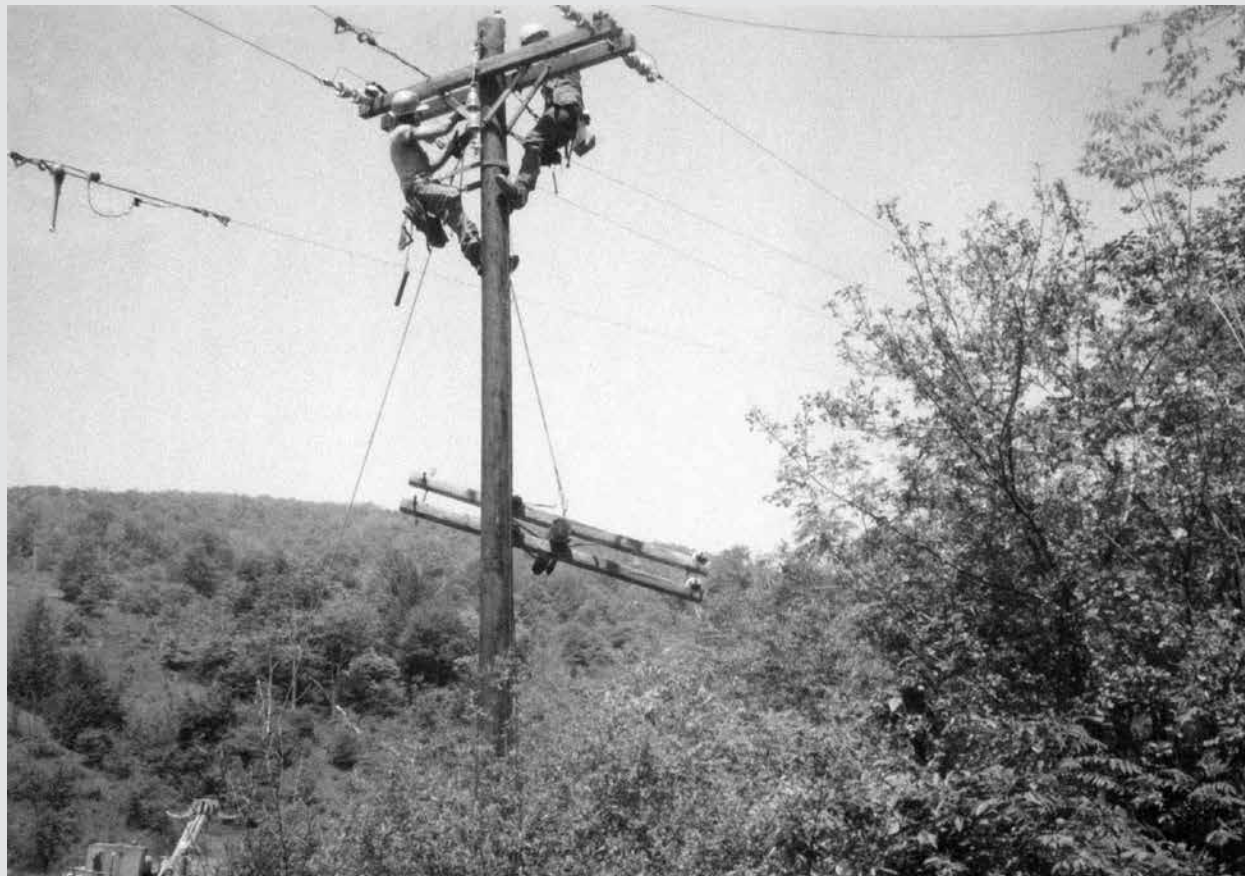
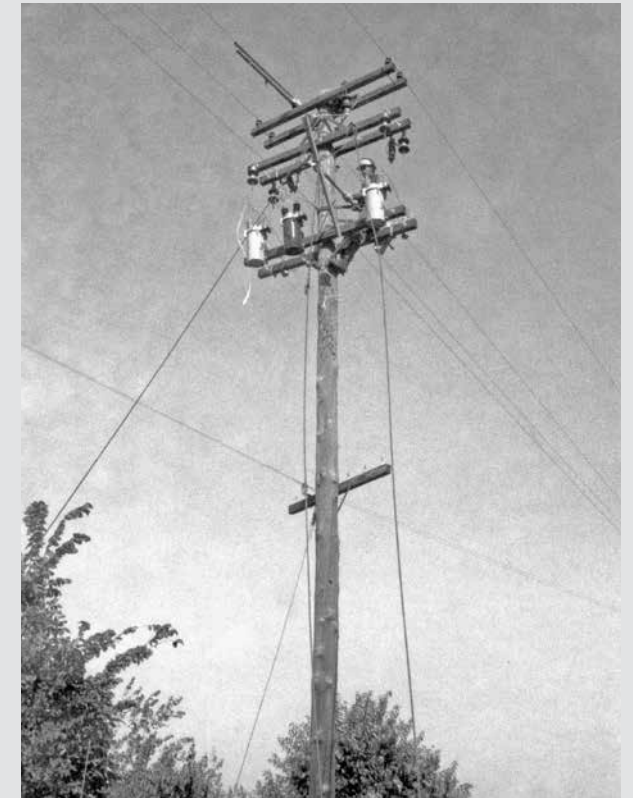




"Repairing a Bad One": these polaroids were taken probably in the 1960s. DCEC.



This pole became top heavy and broke, requiring a major repair to make it stable again. DCEC.





The DCEC line crew frequently replaces electric poles that have gotten old or have become damaged by contact with vehicles or equipment. Sometimes, something else causes the damage, such as the damage caused by bears in the area of Tower Mountain in the town of Tompkins. One pole was damaged so badly that replacement was needed. The claw marks were found more than eight feet high. DCEC.

On January 3, 2003, Western Delaware County was hit by a major ice storm, followed by twenty inches of snow. This was particularly hard on the pine, spruce, and hemlock trees. Wayne Marshfield later noted that "acres and acres of red pine forests fell, one against the other, and created an avalanche of trees." DCEC.



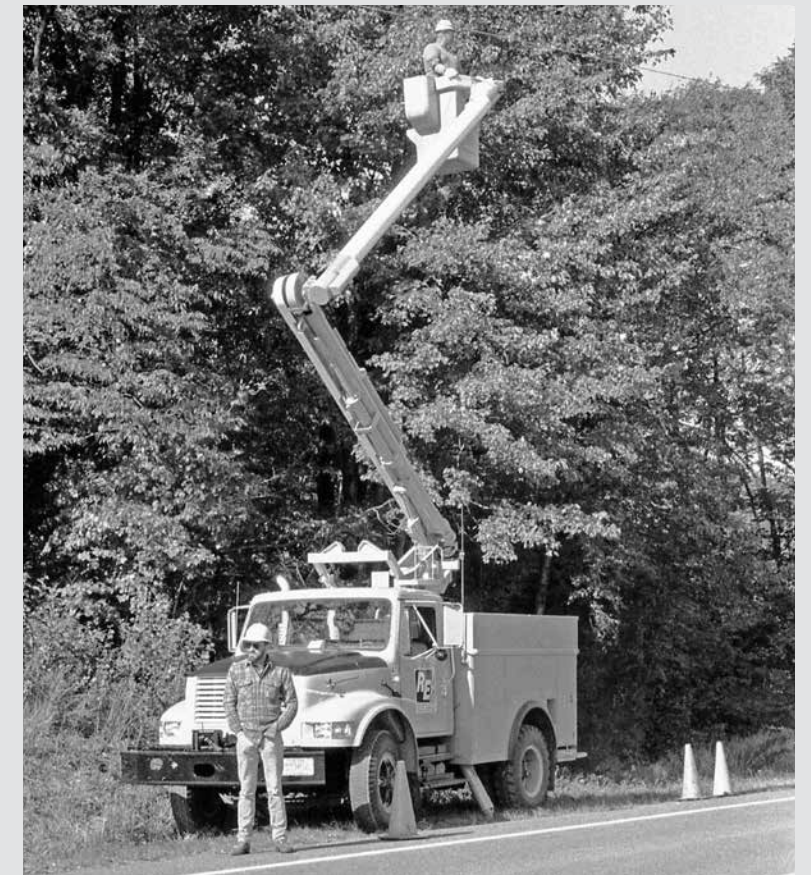


Above: DCEC's digger truck in front of the office building on Elm Street. The first DCEC digger truck was bought in 1967 and was replaced in 1971. DCEC.

Right: DCEC truck 57, September 2005. DCEC.



DCEC's cherry picker truck in 1991. DCEC COLLECTIONS.





Heavy wet snow early on the morning of March 2, 2018, brought down numerous trees onto Cooperative lines, leading to a series of power outages. The DCEC line and right-of-way crews restored power to their consumers in less than forty-eight hours. PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOE DAMONE.





The 1996 Flood—In the Words of a Lineman

JANUARY 19, 1996, SAW SOME of the most devastating winds and flooding in the area in years. The DCEC's system was hard hit by this storm, with more than thirty outages over a twenty-four-hour period. Line crews found the winds had knocked trees over power lines, sometimes tangling in the lines, too. And as the crews worked, their efforts were hampered by rising floodwaters. While the crews struggled to restore power, the DCEC offices lost power, knocking out radio contact with the crews for more than an hour. When Delhi Telephone circuits became flooded, the Cooperative offices lost their phones, too. Fortunately, Wayne Marshfield had a cell phone to help track outages.

Lineman Al Reed was asked by Millie Faulkner to tell his story about his work to restore power.

The Flood of 1996, In the Words of a Linemanⁱ

Friday morning, 6:30 a.m., my partner and I are the last crew called out. The great storm of 1996 is in full swing. Our co-workers have been out for various amounts of time, the longest since about 2:30 a.m. As the last crew out, we are stuck with truck 37, a bucket truck, not my truck and not my choice of trucks. Before the day was out, I would have reason to change my mind. This is the story of our day.

Our first call is a spur line fuse in the Town of Meredith on Monkey Run Road. The fuse was down, so we tagged the pole and started to patrol the line. We found a tree on the line and pulled over. We suited up in rain gear from head to foot, an outfit we would have on for many hours. We cleared the tree and reenergized the line, and by that time the line had gone out behind us, up through Hotaling Hollow. Again, we patrolled and found a tree on the line. We cleared this tree and went over to the switch at the end of Rathbun Road. Out here in the open, the wind was hitting really hard and the rain was driving almost horizontally. I climbed the switch pole and when the wind let up a little, I reached out with one hand and closed in the switch, hooked the stick back in my belt and started down before the wind got back to full fury. It was the first time since I have been a lineman that I thought the wind was going to blow me right off the pole.

We headed for Kortright and on North Road we found a tree down and both conductors on the ground. Although it was still raining, the wind seemed less and we got the wires back up and restored power in Kortright Center, North Road and Braehead Road areas. From there we had an individual call from someone who had not come back on with a main line. Here we had to change out a transformer up on a steep bank and now it really began to rain and just for effect Mother Nature decided to throw in some thunder and lightning. We finished up, restored power and got back in the truck thinking we might have time for a late lunch. It was somewhere around 3:00 p.m. It was also at this time I found out my lunch pail was not waterproof and as I ate my sandwich the water kind of ran down my hands. In the end, the bread just got too soggy. It was raining as hard as ever. It was also about this time the Delhi substation went out and we lost radio contact with the base. We headed back for Delhi and just outside of Bloomville I began to appreciate the size of the tires on that bucket truck. We made it through the overflow at Lutz's farm and then watched the water as it pushed at the side of a pickup truck as it waded through at the Bloomville water house. Heck, the water didn't even get $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way up our tires. Before we got to Delhi, the radio came back on and we were sent back out towards Harpersfield.

We got to Teedle Brook, tagged the switch pole and started to patrol in a hurry. We wanted to get everything done that we could before dark. We found a huge tree on the line and wondered how we could get it the rest of the way down without breaking the poles and wires. The tree was a big ash about 60 feet high and was leaning at a 45-degree angle held up by another tree and just waiting to smash the line. We decided to cut a large stake, drive it into the ground as far as we could and then use it to pull the conductors back as far as they would go hopefully allowing the tree to fall inside the wires. We untied the rope and headed for the truck. It was still raining but it was getting colder fast. We drove on up the line and then things really got ugly. A large hemlock had fallen across the line and broken the conductors in two spans. About 600 feet of wire. The line ran right along the brook in this spot and the stream that was usually a couple of inches deep and a few feet wide was a torrent, deep and up to 30 feet wide. It was also dark and the rain had changed to snow. I had a dry coat in the truck and I put it on under my raincoat knowing that it wouldn't keep me warm for long. We decided we could cut the line below the flooded area and it was already cut above the flooded area. We could feed the lower end of the brook from the Kortright substation as was normal and then make some new connections in a dead span and feed the upper end of the brook and the Quaker Hill area from the Jefferson substation. About this time, we got a call from truck 44 and they were there in the area and ready to help us. We also got a call from truck 43 and they were over on Campo Road with broken conductors, twisted crossarms and all kinds of trouble on the main 3 phase line out of the Jefferson substation. We said we would get there as soon as we finished on Teedle Brook. It was really getting cold now and still snowing hard. The wind blew right through rainsuits or anything else we had on. With two trucks to work at both ends, we got all the Teedle Brook area back on in about another 45 minutes and we headed over for Campo Road.

On Campo Road we met up with trucks 43 and 45 and three more men. For the next hour and a half, we worked to get crossarms straight, the conductors back up and tied in. It just kept getting colder and colder. When we reenergized all three phases at Point D Jefferson substation it was about 10:00 to 10:30 p.m. Trucks 43 and 44 had been out since 2:00 a.m. so they started back for Delhi hoping to find a route through the flooded highways.

I was so cold by now I could not stop shaking, so while we waited for the office to confirm power and give us a new direction, I stripped all my clothes off and started drying them from the inside out on the truck heater. It was a great feeling to put on those dry, warm clothes. I felt good to go again. In the next couple of hours, we restored power to three more points that had all been taken out by trees. Working around the washed out or flooded spots in the road and fighting the cold made it seem longer but we finished up all the outages in the area. The office had no outside phone contact, other than cellular, so with no real way to know where the outages were anymore we decided to have all the trucks head back to Delhi. There was still a lot of water in the low spots and it took us about an hour and a half to get back (normally a one-half hour ride). As we were hanging things up to dry and trying to make some amount of sense out of all the material we had used, and all the amazing things we had seen that day, nobody really knew what had happened to their own homes and if we would be able to get there. But we all knew we had done all we could to get the power back on to our members and we knew also that in a few hours we would be back to finish the job.

i. "The Flood of 1996, In the Words of a Lineman," Catskill Hi-Line, March/April 1996.



 CHAPTER FOUR

GROWTH AND CHALLENGES



Until the 1950s, the Cooperative's offices were on Second Street. This office had inadequate storage and office space, as well as issues with parking, so in August 1955, the Cooperative bought the former home of Frank Farrington at 39 Elm Street in Delhi. This gave the Cooperative three times the space of the old building and about ten times more acreage. This photograph by Bob Wyer ironically was altered to remove the power lines in the photograph. DCHA

In the 1960s and '70s, the decrease in the number of farms in the area was a concern to the Cooperative, even as it started to find non-farming consumers. This decrease and the migration of people to the cities was seen as one of the reasons for the riots of the 1960s and an argument for promoting farming and the rural lifestyle as a solution to these urban challenges. Charles Prescott wrote an article for the Cooperative's newsletter in November 1968, the end of a very challenging year for the country that saw two political assassinations and riots in the streets. He noted, "The war in the cities is causing more and more attention to be paid to the cities and less and less to Rural America. This focus of attention by government and private interests could cause an even further slackening of necessary investments in Rural America by all sectors of the economy." He speculated, "The rioting in the cities comes about because people migrate from rural areas to the cities and when they get there they cannot find work." Prescott suggested, "Rural America can and must play a major role in solving the problems of the cities. With better schools, housing, public facilities, roads and economic opportunities, rural America could slow down . . . the relentless march to the cities."¹⁰¹ This was a frequent theme in general of the rural electric cooperatives during this time.

New Customers

The 1960s, '70s, and '80s were a busy time for the DCEC as it reached out to the non-farm rural residents in the area. Line Superintendent Dick Gifford reported for 1971 that his crew had "hooked up 173 new customers and heaved-up the transformers and services of 77 members." He noted that only five years before, they had hooked up only seventy new members. The crews also installed security lights for thirty members.¹⁰² In October 1987, the DCEC "received a \$1.1 million loan to help it expand . . . the money [was to] be used for new facilities to serve 210 new consumers and to build 17 miles of distribution line. A variety of improvements to existing power lines also [was to] be made."¹⁰³

DCEC also began offering service to businesses and even to a school. In the late 1960s, when it became known that a BOCES (Board of Cooperative Education Services) was to be built in Masonville, the DCEC looked to provide power to the site. BOCES were created to

provide educational programs that would be too large or expensive for any one school district to manage. This BOCES covered nine school districts in Delaware, Chenango, and Otsego Counties. The new school would provide services for eight hundred students.¹⁰⁴ The school was located in an area already being serviced by the Cooperative, but NYSEG also expressed interest in supplying power and got several easements to do so. DCEC member Pat Van Valkenberg, however, refused to give NYSEG an easement, and ultimately the Cooperative became the supplier.¹⁰⁵ DCEC supplies power to this BOCES to this day.

The addition of local businesses has been helped by the NYPA's Economic Development Power (EDP) program. The EDP provides inexpensive hydropower for businesses. This has allowed DCEC to expand its consumer base to several area businesses, including FrieslandCampina Domo, Sportsfield Specialties, and Amphenol Aerospace Corporation.¹⁰⁶

FrieslandCampina is an international Cooperative and has its roots in the dairy industry. The company develops and produces functional and nutritional ingredients for the food, nutrition, and pharma industry. The "company is owned . . . by over 16,000 member dairy farmers." It was "organized to collect, process and market milk products." FrieslandCampina is located just south of the village of Delhi.¹⁰⁷

Sportsfield, founded by Scott Clark in 1998, has been a DCEC member since 2004. Sportsfield Specialties is a Delhi-based manufacturer of sporting equipment, including prefabricated long, triple-jump, and steeplechase pits, football and soccer goals, in-ground communication boxes, press boxes, foul poles, modular dugouts, and various track and field equipment including pole vault boxes, discus and shot-put circles, shot-put toe-boards, take-off boards, lane gates, and ball safety systems.¹⁰⁸

In August 2011, devastating floods hit Sidney, New York, impacting Amphenol Aerospace, a business that provided 1,100 jobs in the area. New York State Empire State Development and the Delaware County Industrial Development Agency worked with elected officials to create an incentive package to keep



Top: Wayne Marshfield at FrieslandCampina in April 2007. DCEC.

Above: Sportsfield headquarters outside Delhi. PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF SPORTSFIELD SPECIALTIES.



“A New Twist—House Moves to Co-op!”



IN 1991, RUSSELL COLE OF DAVENPORT moved his house less than half a mile to allow it to be on the DCEC system. The Cooperative’s newsletter reported the move:

I suppose if you want Co-op power bad enough, you move your house to the Cooperative electrical system. Well, that’s almost what happened, but not quite. On Sept. 20, 1991, Dexheimer moved a house owned by Russell Cole of Davenport. The house was serviced by New York State Electric & Gas, and the house was moved to an area serviced by the Cooperative. Total distance moved was approximately two-tenths of a mile along NYS Rt. 23 and another tenth of a mile along a private roadway.

NYS Rt. 23 was closed off completely to all traffic for about 15 minutes while the house was moved. The house weighed 75 tons and required special permits to move it and could only be moved between the hours of 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. that day. While jacked up on Dexheimer equipment, the house measured 32 feet to the peak and Cooperative crews assisted in the safe crossing underneath our 7200-volt distribution line.

It took one day to prepare the house for moving, one day to jack it up and turn it for its trip and one day to move it. Normal cost for this delicate operation is \$20,000.00. From the point the house left the state highway to its final destination, the wheels were placed the entire distance on planks and top speed was 15 inches per minute. The house was winched that distance so as to avoid any jerking. The wheels were constantly chocked, and the house was automatically leveled and manually steered that distance. The house consisted of an exterior brick veneer and was strapped its entire circumference to avoid any cracking.

The house currently sets at its final destination, and Mr. Cole inspected the inside upon its arrival. He found that a bowl of water had been left on the floor for the cats and not one drop had been spilled during the house’s journey. That in itself gives a tremendous amount of credit to Dexheimer and their professional staff says Mr. Cole.ⁱ



The Cole residence being moved in September 1991. DCEC.

Amphenol factory floor in Sidney, New York. PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF AMPHENOL AEROSPACE.



Amphenol in Sidney. Part of the package was to have the DCEC provide low-cost power on a nonprofit basis to the company. Before the flood, electric cooperatives could only provide service to villages with a population of 1,000 or fewer. A bill signed by the governor in 2011 increased the population threshold to 20,000. This allowed DCEC to reach out to Amphenol.¹⁰⁹

Though DCEC is the main electric utility for Amphenol, it was done with support from other utility partners. The NYPA sells economical energy to the DCEC, which, in turn, provides cost-effective electricity to Amphenol. Also involved is NYSEG, which provides electric transmission service to feed DCEC’s distribution system in Sidney.¹¹⁰

So, from the 152 members in 1944, numbers increased rapidly to 1,000 only three years later. These numbers held steady through the 1950s and early 1960s. While the construction of the Pepacton Reservoir (detailed in chapter 2) caused the loss of 197 consumers, others came on-line. The numbers jumped in the 1970s and '80s so that by 1993, there were more than 4,000 members in the DCEC. As of 2017, “the Cooperative has grown to serve over 5,300 service locations and over 4,200 members/consumers covering approximately 800 miles of line. The Cooperative service territory encompasses the rural areas of 21 towns in Delaware, Schoharie, Otsego and Chenango Counties.”¹¹¹

Sources of Power—Exploring Alternative Energy

Although the Cooperative’s main power source today continues to be a combination of hydroelectric power through the NYPA, as well as nuclear and natural gas, the DCEC has continually explored other sources, including wind and solar. Currently, more than 90 percent of the Cooperative’s power comes from renewable sources.

Given that the DCEC’s power source is subject to renewal contracts, the board and staff have had to keep alert to rising costs. Director Ernie Bartz noted in 2008 that future challenges facing the DCEC included “rising costs of power and transmission charges from the New York Independent System Operator and the 2025 expiration of DCEC’s hydropower from the Falls Generation Plant. We have to be prepared for these issues and deal with them proactively by finding local sources of alternate energy.”¹¹²

When the NYPA announced in January 2005 the termination of one of the Cooperative’s power supplies, the DCEC sought alternatives sources. One option was to consider a local source, using the methane emitted by the Delaware County Landfill in Walton, New York.¹¹³ In 2008, the Delaware County Board of Supervisors approved participation in the project, known as the Delaware County Waste-to-Energy Project. On December 2008, the project went live. This was a significant event in the DCEC’s history, being the first time that the Cooperative had owned any of its own power generation. The \$2.5 million project was funded in part through a grant from the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority.¹¹⁴

i. “A New Twist – House Moves To Co-op!” *Catskill Hi-Line*, November-December, 1991, page 5.





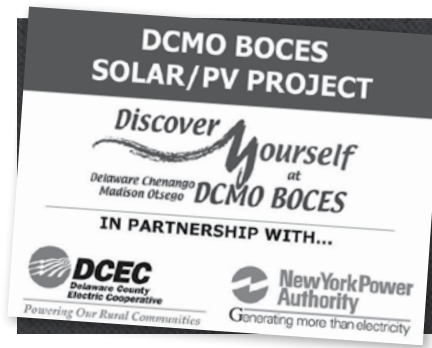
Delaware County Waste-to-Energy Project, 2012. DCEC.

The project involved a system of wells and pipes in the landfill that sent methane gas to a generator to create electricity. Early in the project, it was noticed that the amount of gas available for extraction was less than expected. Unfortunately, the amount did not increase. In 2012, the board made the difficult decision to shut down the project. As explained in the Cooperative's newsletter, "the expenses of operating the plant exceed[ed] the benefits to our members." Revenues had

"been limited by the smaller than expected gas supply from the landfill in combination with lower than expected energy prices."¹¹⁵ Low wholesale electricity prices, while generally good for the members, drastically reduced revenues for the project. Low wholesale prices were encouraged by the abundance of inexpensive natural gas from Pennsylvania.

Another energy alternative source under consideration by the board was solar. Board President Steve Oles reported in the Cooperatives' newsletter in 2015 that "the Board of Directors has focused our attention to the community solar option. This approach allows members to invest in this form of renewable energy on a larger scale, which can reduce the initial investment and provide for affordable operation and upkeep of the units in a safe and reliable setting. Our goal is to produce solar energy at the appropriate scale so that those members interested in solar can be offered a more affordable and easier approach, and at an equitable price point."¹¹⁶

The DCEC Board had approved a policy in 2009 permitting "residential renewable generation projects to operate while connected to the DCEC grid. In addition to addressing how members will be credited for energy injected into the DCEC grid, the policy outlines strict safety requirements that must be followed to ensure safety to the public and DCEC line workers." Mark Izeman and Tanya Khotin took advantage of this policy by installing a 3.6 kilowatt photovoltaic system at their home in Andes. "During times when their electrical consumption is more than the solar can provide, they [are] served by the DCEC power line. When generation is in excess of their load, surplus energy generated by the solar panels is 'injected' into the DCEC power grid."¹¹⁷



Solar panels, 2011. DCEC.



Top right: DCMO BOCES Solar/PV Project. DCEC.



Maria and William Lawrence's wind turbine in the town of Jefferson. DCEC.

In 2010, DCEC members Maria and William Lawrence installed another kind of renewable energy source—a wind turbine. Located on Titus Lake Road in the town of Jefferson, the turbine would provide all of the Lawrences' energy needs during strong wind conditions. As with solar power, when the turbine produces more power than being consumed, it is injected into the DCEC system. During periods of little or no wind, the Lawrences still continue to be served by the DCEC.¹¹⁸

Another initiative for the benefit of the DCEC's members began in 2014 when the Cooperative began working with the Delhi and Margaretville Telephone Companies to explore expanding broadband to the membership. As reported in its newsletter, "The Cooperative's goal is simple—bring high bandwidth Internet service to more of our rural members. It's a matter of improving the quality of life experienced by our members by not only giving them more choices but better ones as well."¹¹⁹ The program is known as the Delaware County Broadband Initiative (DCBI). In December 2014, the initiative received \$2.9 million from the Southern Tier Economic Development Council. The project proposed to extend over 210 miles of fiber optic facilities passing 1800 un-served and underserved households, businesses, and anchor institutions of the DCEC membership located within the townships of Andes, Colchester, Hamden, Hardenburgh, Harpersfield, Jefferson, Kortright, and Meredith.¹²⁰ DCBI received its third round of major grant funding on March 1, 2017. By the end of 2018, construction will be nearly complete to 99.9 percent of all Co-op member locations.¹²¹

In 2016, the DCEC became the host of Delhi's first public electric vehicle charging station. The station, located at the Cooperative's headquarters on Elm Street, was installed by Transitions Catskills, with additional funds coming from the New York State Energy Research & Development Authority (NYSERDA) and the O'Connor Foundation.¹²²



DCEC Finance Manager Millie Faulkner at DCEC's EV Charging Station, 2016. DCEC.



THE PEOPLE OF THE DCEC

The Cooperative's mission states that the "Delaware County Electric Cooperative, Inc. (DCEC) is a non-profit rural electric cooperative serving more than 4,200 members in Delaware, Schoharie, Otsego and Chenango Counties. Our primary mission is to provide a safe, reliable, and cost-effective electric power supply to our members. Through the efforts of our highly motivated and dedicated staff and participation in educational and community initiatives, DCEC strives to better the quality of life in our local area."¹²³ The Cooperative has seven principles by which it operates: Voluntary and Open Membership; Democratic Member Control; Members' Economic Participation; Autonomy and Independence; Education, Training, and Information; Cooperation Among Cooperatives; and Concern for Community.

The members/consumers of the Delaware County Electric Cooperative elect the board of directors. In turn, the directors hire the general manager and the necessary staff to run the Cooperative. From its earliest days, the Cooperative has reached out to its members, and members often responded in kind. Farmers helped with the installation of poles and clearing of rights-of-way, encouraged by the directors. In October

1941, at an early meeting of the then association, the directors "voted to make this a self-help project in which members may, if they wish, do actual work on construction." At this meeting, "R.E.A. officials . . . discuss[ed] the benefits the members may derive by this arrangement to reduce costs to them of both wiring and appliances."¹²⁴ George Bolles, from Hamden, recalled that local farmers helped when they could with installation. The poles would be delivered to the side of the road. "Most of the time there was a neighbor or something that had one or two horses and he would take them to the site where they were to be installed."¹²⁵

Membership certificate 1239 for Jane M. and Frank Bowen, signed by E. N. MacLaury, President, and S. V. Campbell, Secretary. Each member received such a certificate when joining the DCEC. DCEC.



First Board of Directors of the DCEC. PHOTOGRAPH BY BOB WYER, DCHA.

Directors and Officers—But We All Worked Together

The first officers and directors of the DCEC were elected in 1941, when the Cooperative was still an association. They were Harold Berberich, Vega; Nancy Campbell, Downsville; Stanley V. Campbell, Delhi; Gordon Gleason, Meridale; J. F. Hager, Bainbridge; Josephine Lockwood, Walton; Edward M. MacLaury, Bloomville; Anker T. Norberg, East Meredith; and Ellen Stahl, Margaretville. The officers elected from the board were Gleason as president, Lockwood as secretary, and Norberg as treasurer.¹²⁶

The county was divided into nine regions with directors elected out of the districts. In the early days, it was the director's job to sign up as many farmers from the district as possible.¹²⁷

Gordon Gleason, the first president of the



REA Administrator and former Secretary of Agriculture Claude Wickard spoke in Delhi in May 1947 at the Kingston House on Main Street. Members of the DCEC board with Wickard: Left to right, front: Mr. Hewitt, Ed MacLaury, Mr. Wickard, Stanley Campbell, Nancy Campbell; back, Bill Moody, Harry Hedman, J. Hager, Clyde Foote, Anker Norberg. PHOTOGRAPH BY BOB WYER, DCHA.





Board of Directors in October 1950. Left to right, front: William Moody, Stanley Campbell, J. Hager, Anker Norberg, unidentified; back: Stanley Reed, Harry Hedman, unidentified, William Bouw. PHOTOGRAPH BY BOB WYER, DCHA.

Cooperative, was a farmer in Meredith. The son of Judge Lafayette Gleason, he had a varied career, including a stint doing publicity for the 1925 New York State Census. In the late 1930s, he purchased a farm in Meredith, calling it Totem Farm. He raised Black Angus beef and guinea fowl. When he sold his farm in late 1944, he resigned as director and president, to be succeeded by Edward N. MacLaury.¹²⁸ MacLaury served as president until his untimely death in a car accident in 1949.¹²⁹

Anker Norberg was one of the prime movers in the creation of the DCEC. A native of Denmark, he came to the United States in 1913 and spent several

years looking for a suitable place to settle. He ended up in Davenport where he was a successful farmer and active in the town's politics, serving as town supervisor. At his death in 1952, his obituary noted, "Mr. Norberg was always interested in co-operatives. Ten years ago, rural electrification was proceeding at a slow pace . . . He

Officers and Directors of the DCEC in September 1957: left to right, front: Harry Hedman, Maurice Bellinger, Stanley Campbell, William Bouw, Howard Willard; back: Charles Hager, William Tweedie, Peter Svegl, Niels Norberg, Stanley Reed. *ONEONTA (NY) DAILY STAR*.



DCEC Board of Directors from 1967: left to right, front: William Tweedie, Maurice Bellinger, Stanley Reed, Peter Svegl; back: Harry Hedman, Owen Howarth, John Eckert, Kenneth Smith, Niels Norberg, and Charles Prescott, Manager. DCEC.

was one of the leaders in the formation of the [DCEC] which has brought electric energy to many farmers in the county." Norberg was treasurer and later vice president, a position he held at his death.¹³⁰

The longest-serving director was Stanley Reed from Andes, who was on the board for fifty-eight years, retiring in 2005. He was treasurer from 1992 to 2001. Stan served so long that when the Cooperative wanted to honor him for fifty-five years of service, staff "struggled to find a service award pin that exceeded 50 years so [they] opted for an American Eagle Silver Dollar with the year 2002 clearly visible." At the same meeting at which he was honored for fifty-five years, he was elected to another three-year term.¹³¹ Reed passed away not long after the end of his last term in 2005.

Other long-serving directors included Maurice Bellinger, who served for forty-three years, starting in 1943; for twenty-two years, he was vice president and for eight years served as president. When he retired in 1986, he said, "I was a little different than the rest of the directors. I came from Schoharie County and represented Gilboa and parts of Jefferson." Clyde Foote, an early director, suggested that he become a DCEC director. As well as a farmer, Bellinger was the Highway Superintendent in Gilboa for twenty-six years. Bellinger noted, "We have had some bad times and good times, but we all worked together. We've had new managers, new directors and personnel, and we have come a long way since I first became director. It has all certainly come from everyone having the Cooperative spirit and working together."¹³² Bellinger passed away in March 1987.



Ernie Bartz from Sidney Center joined the board in 1976 and served for thirty-seven years, retiring in 2013. He was a farmer until 1986 when he retired, leasing out the farm and building a house nearby. Bartz was convinced to run for the board by former director John Eckert.¹³³ He served as president for twenty-two years, taking over after the death of Cooperative President Thomas Harris. Ernie also served as vice president and secretary.

Owen Howarth and Niels J. Norberg both served for thirty-four years. Norberg started in 1953, taking over for his late father, Anker. He was vice president for nine years and active in the New York State Rural Electric Cooperative Association. He was born in the farmhouse where he spent “the rest of his life, farming and serving the East Meredith community.”¹³⁴ Niels died in 1991. Howarth joined the board in 1959 and served as secretary for twenty-six years. He also was president from 1986 to 1989 and was the recipient of the Governor Aiken Award from the Northeast Association of Electric Cooperatives for his dedication to rural electrification. Born in Westchester County, he was a veteran of World War II. In 1951, he purchased a dairy farm in the town of Meredith. Owen passed away in 2013.¹³⁵

Harry Hedman and Harry Peterson, both from Harpersfield, each served for thirty-three years. Hedman joined the board in 1945 and was the board president for twenty-three years, the longest



In 1993, John Eckert received the Aiken Award from the Northeast Association of Electric Cooperatives. DCEC.

term of a president on the Cooperative’s board. He retired from the board in 1978 and became chair of the nominating committee for several years. He noted at the time he retired that when he became a director in 1945, he was “unfamiliar with the concepts of the philosophy underlying a Cooperative, but soon to find in that philosophy an infectious spirit of friendliness. And so began an association that developed into an experience of working with people who were bound together in a common cause and, as such, felt a bond of common interest.”¹³⁶ Hedman was ninety-three at his death in 2001. Harry Peterson is a retired dairy farmer and also a sawmill owner/operator from Harpersfield and active in the community, serving as town supervisor. Harry was vice president for many years, holding that office at the time of his retirement in 2011.



DCEC Board of Directors from 1981: Left to right, front: Owen Howarth, Secretary; Niels Norberg, Vice President; Maurice Bellinger, President; John Eckert, Treasurer; Charles Prescott, Retiring Manager; back: Stanley Reed, Wesley Warren, Thomas Harris, Ernest Bartz, Harry Peterson, John Ferguson, incoming Manager. DCEC.

John Eckert from Delhi served as a director of the DCEC for twenty-seven years, retiring in 1992. He was treasurer from 1975 to 1992. Eckert also served as a director on the New York State Rural Electric Cooperative Association’s Board of Directors. The Eckert Farm was one of the first to be hooked up in the Cooperative. He remembered life on the farm without the convenience of electric power. This made him a strong advocate for the rural electric cooperatives. “He was always ready, willing and able to defend the rural electric program to anyone that dared to criticize or challenge it.” This included on the national level, making many trips to Washington to defend the REA.¹³⁷

Director Tom Harris was president of the DCEC for only two years but was very active in the Cooperative since becoming a director in 1975. He also was active on the state and national level. He was “secretary of the New York State Rural Electric Cooperative Association and [was] the State’s National Director on the National Rural Electric Cooperative’s Board of Directors.” Harris also served as president of the Northeast Association of Electric Cooperatives from 1984 to 1986. In 1991, the Northeast Association presented him with the George D. Aiken award “in recognition of Mr. Harris’ contribution and dedication to the rural electric program.”¹³⁸ Sadly, Harris passed away not long after receiving this award.

Board of Directors, 1994. Left to right, first row: Paul Menke, President Ernest Bartz, June Harris, Stan Reed; second row: Wesley Warren, Stephen Oles, David Hartwell, Wayne Marshfield (Assistant General Manager), Paul Roftingen (General Manager); third row: Bruce McKeegan (Attorney), Harry Peterson. Not pictured: Thomas Lubbers.





Recollections of Ken Budine

KEN'S RECOLLECTIONS WERE PUBLISHED in the DCEC newsletter in the fall of 1984. Budine left the DCEC to become manager of first the Sherburne Municipal Cooperative then later the Oneida-Madison Cooperative.

I started working for the Cooperative in 1964. At that time, we had two pick-up trucks—a line truck with a collapsible A-frame boom, which had to be installed manually, and a 1947 vintage Jeep with an air compressor for drilling rock. The outside crew consisted of a line foreman, two linemen and a groundman right-of-way crew operator. When I was hired as an apprentice, the groundman took charge of two temporary employees for right-of-way clearing during the summer. My starting pay was \$1.70 an hour. We also were placed on stand-by duty—two men every other week. We were compensated \$5.00 a week for this stand-by duty, but were required to come in on Saturday mornings and wash trucks. Needless to say, the pay and benefits are considerably better today.

The office and shop were located at 39 Elm Street. Today, the shop and yard complex is located at Depot Street. In 1964, the materials and equipment, except a few poles, were stored in the barn behind the office. The balance of the poles were stored near the Delhi town dump, which is now the south entrance to the [SUNY] Delhi campus.

Hard hats and rubber gloves were occasionally worn. The rubber gloves, which age we could not determine, were never tested. Also, there was no formal safety or meetings. All of it was on the job. Today, we have a safety meeting which is approximately 2 hours each month and the balance of the day is for training for apprentice linemen which covers various facets of training. This involves construction of primary line and secondary services, the hanging of transformers, the repair and testing of transformers and regulators, testing for voltage and maintaining proper load on the primary circuits from the substations.

In 1964, the sectionalizing, which is switching, was such that we'd average anywhere from 4 to 6 hours every time we were called out on an outage plus the travel time to and from your home. With improved switching and sectionalizing, the outages have been cut down by quite a bit.

The growth of the area as well as the change in growth patterns from area to area has required the rebuilding of the Delhi sub[station] three times since I've been employed. The Kortright and Stamford sub[station]s have been rebuilt twice. The Stamford sub[station] was relocated to Jefferson and today is called the Jefferson sub[station]. The reason for this was to keep the capacity in the substations up with the growth of the whole system. To keep up with this growth pattern of the system, at the present time, we have 13 outside employees full time for new construction and operation and maintenance of the system. We also employ 3 temporary employees to maintain the right-of-way; that is, clearing the brush and keeping the trees back from the conductors to save from outages and cut down on outage time.

Looking back over the past 20 years, we've encountered a few ice and/or snow storms. After I first came to work for the company, the following winter we had a pretty good old blinger where many of the member/consumers were out for several days. With the manpower that we had, we often worked 12 to 18 hours at a shot, then get a couple hours rest and go right back at it again. Over the years, it has improved. At the present time, quite

often, we'll break up into two shifts and work 12 on and 12 off. Fortunately for the last couple or three years, we haven't had anything of any major proportion troublewise.

Twenty years ago, the members who were without power had to call the lineman on their home phone. After the men left for work, the phone would keep ringing, disturbing the wife and families of these men. During the day wasn't so bad, but all through the night, it could be a little bit irritating. Today, we have centralized dispatching with one number to call 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. I might add that these dispatchers are special to us, for they not only take a lot of flack at times but save a great deal of time in locating the fault causing the outage through questioning the members and relating the information to the dispatched line crew.

In conclusion, I would like to say from the member/consumer to the office to the dispatcher to the line crew, we should all work together to keep the electric flowing as efficiently as possible, I firmly believe electricity is still the best buy for the money in America today. Thank you.ⁱ

ⁱ. Budine, Ken, "I Remember When," *Catskill Hi-Line*, September/October 1984, page 12.



At the September 1982 Annual Meeting, the Cooperative had available for members to see several pieces of its field equipment.



Managers and Staff

Since the Cooperative's early days, one of the key jobs of the directors was to hire a manager to handle the day-to-day operations. The first manager was Arthur Kludas, who had helped in organizing the Cooperative. When Kludas resigned as manager, William C. Wenner decided to apply. Wenner had worked for the REA as an operations field engineer, visiting the new electric cooperatives in New England and New York. To him, "it seemed like a special opportunity to grow with a new system and to make a special contribution to the war effort." He was hired in December 1944 at a salary of \$60 per week.¹⁴⁵

Wenner left in 1949 to become manager of the Northwestern Electric Cooperative at Cambridge Springs, Pennsylvania.¹⁴⁶ After more than twenty years in Pennsylvania, Wenner had stints in Brazil and the Philippines, promoting rural electrification. Managers that followed him have included Robert Donovan (1949–1957), Howard Willard (1957–1964), and Blaine Stockton (1964–1966). Walter Cozzens was manager for a short time in 1966, and when he resigned, the Cooperative briefly saw its first female manager. Mrs. Ruth Stockton took over in August 1966 as acting manager, staying in the position until May 1967 when Charles Prescott began his fourteen-year stint. Prescott had worked at the Vermont Electric Cooperative for twenty-one years before coming to the DCEC. During his tenure, the Cooperative's first "digger truck" was purchased and the truck garage was built. He served as president of the Northeast Association of Electric Cooperatives and the NYS Rural Electric Cooperative Association.¹⁴⁷

In 1981, with the retirement of Mr. Prescott, the directors conducted a nationwide search, but they also seriously discussed "the possibility of consolidating the . . . Otsego Electric Cooperative and the Delaware County Electric Cooperative." Both boards decided that it was not in the best interest to consolidate but "were willing to try a shared management plan whereby the present Manager of the Otsego Electric Cooperative would manage both Cooperatives for a period of one year." This led to hiring John Ferguson as the DCEC manager.¹⁴⁸

Line Crew, 1964, left to right: Line Foreman Harry Mclean, Apprentice Lineman Kenneth Budine, 1st Class Lineman William Perkins, 1st Class Lineman Walter Cozzens. DCEC.



DCEC Board of Directors in 2000, left to right: Paul Menke, Tom Lubbers, Stanley Reed, Mark Aeilts (Manager), Ernie Bartz, Wesley Warren, Steve Oles, Harry Peterson, David Hartwell, Richard Yarnes. DCEC.

The DCEC board over the years has included women, starting with the original board, which had three. Josephine Lockwood of Walton, Nancy Campbell of Downsville, and Ellen Stahl of Margaretville were founding directors. Lockwood was the board's first secretary. Stahl had to resign in 1943 when NYSEG supplied electricity to her farm. Lockwood had to do the same thing in 1944 when her father's farm became connected by a private utility.¹³⁹ Mrs. Campbell had to leave the board when her farm was taken for the Pepacton Reservoir in 1948.

June Harris came on the board in 1991 to fill in for her late husband, Thomas, and served until her death in 1998. She served on the board as the assistant treasurer.¹⁴⁰ Meg Hungerford from East Meredith served on the board from 2007 to 2016, serving as secretary from 2008 to 2013.

Directors' terms were for two years until in 1988 when a bylaw change lengthened the term to three years.¹⁴¹ A bylaw provision went into effect in 1975 that set an age limit of seventy for directors.¹⁴² It lasted a bit over a decade. Peter Svegl was the first director so retired under this rule. Longtime President Harry Hedman was the second in 1978. He had been on the committee that had established this policy. He "felt a younger group of directors would be better able to handle the business and problems of [the] Cooperative."¹⁴³ At the 1990 annual meeting, this provision of the bylaws was repealed because federal "law prohibits using age as a provision for the office of Director."¹⁴⁴



William Smith, who also was joint manager with Otsego, followed Ferguson in 1982. When Smith resigned in 1986, the decision was made by the DCEC to hire a manager solely for their Cooperative. Paul Rottingen, originally from Jefferson, New York, was hired in August 1986. Rottingen served until his sudden death in February 1999. Wayne Marshfield stepped in as interim manager for a few months until the hiring of Mark Aeilts. Greg Starheim followed Aeilts in 2003, and filled the position for nine years. The current general manager is Mark Schneider.

Linemen perform the critical function of keeping the power coming to DCEC members. Al Reed, interviewed by the *Rural Electrification Magazine* in 1998, started to write about his experiences for the Cooperative in the 1990s for *Catskill Hi-Line* “because he noticed that newcomers from the City don’t understand what a lineman does. ‘I tell ‘em it’s tough demanding work; you go out there in the middle of the night in a snowstorm or hurricane and try to get the night lights on over these mountains. Most people understand if you take the time to explain.’”¹⁴⁹

Al Perkins, a DCEC member remembered the challenging work of dealing with outages his dad Bill had to do as a DCEC lineman in the 1960s. Many of the outages were in the woods. The only way to get to them was to load up all your gear and carry it out to the site. In the winter, that often involved doing it on snowshoes. Bad weather always led to some anxiety, particularly in the era when poles were smaller and more easily broken in the wind. “You know you might have a birthday party going on or you had plans to go out to dinner somewhere and all of a sudden the phone would ring and that was the end of those plans.” Bill’s family



Left: Lineman Kim Armstrong in action.

Below: Linemen Ralph Brundage and Almiron Rockefeller take a lunch break in May 1966. DCEC.



understood, however, how important his dad’s work was. It was always important to get the farmers back on line as soon as possible so they “could get their cows milked and they didn’t lose their product in the tank or in their coolers.” Al recalled his father telling about “how they would take a line when the poles were broken off [and] . . . nail it into the trees just so they could get it back up and running.”¹⁵⁰

Al recalled the family picnics the Cooperative had. So did lineman Kim Armstrong. His father worked for the Cooperative when he was a child. Armstrong started at the Cooperative in 1975 as an assistant to the janitor in the summer. He worked on the Cooperative’s right-of-way crew and, in the fall of 1980, was hired as a permanent apprentice lineman. Kim became a first-class lineman in 1987, retiring in 2014.¹⁵¹ He had his share of stories, like the time that a bat caused problems in a transformer. It took seven hours to find it. The work was hard, but members overall were very thankful. Armstrong recalled people offering food to the linemen as they tried to put them back on-line. He particularly recalled when power came back on seeing a small child at the window beaming because they had light again. He only recalled two times in his thirty-eight years with the DCEC that he could not make it to work. A couple of times, he came by snowmobile.

Armstrong noted that “fatigue plays a big role on a lineman and people don’t realize the amount of stress you can put on your body when you’ve got all the material that you’ve got to lug up hillsides and mountain and hill and dale to get power back on. [In] the old days you didn’t have four wheelers [or] snowmobiles . . . it was all walk.”¹⁵²

Clifton Pausé, who passed away in 2017, was a lineman at DCEC for thirty-five years. Clif had served in the U.S. Navy in the 1960s as an electrician’s mate third class and was honorably discharged in 1968. He started at DCEC that same year as a lineman. He became a second class lineman in 1970 and a first class lineman in 1973. He was DCEC’s primary underground cable installer. At his retirement in 2003, Clif was considered “difficult to replace.”¹⁵³ Other long-serving linemen included Ronald Schmitz (thirty-four years, including right-of-way laborer and later foreman, retiring in 2017 as a first class gloving lineman), Joe Dibble (thirty-four years, retiring as a first class lineman in 2011), and Steve Watkins (thirty-one years, retiring in 2008 as a line foreman).



Top: Maintenance Crew, 1994, left to right: Doug Rosa, Kim Armstrong, Clif Pause, Maintenance Foreman Al Reed. DCEC.



Above: Lineman Ken Budine in May 1966, with DCEC repair truck. DCEC.



Alain Harelimana— “Extending Electrification Is a Passion of Mine”



ALAIN HARELIMANA WAS BORN IN RWANDA in 1983 and left the country in 1996 as a teenager after surviving the genocide there, coming to the United States. He graduated from Bainbridge-Guilford Central School and Hartwick College. In 2007, he was hired by then manager Greg Starheim as the DCEC’s financial analyst.

Harelimana returned to Rwanda “in October 2008 with officials of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) International. They met with government officials to explore the possibility of cooperation in designing and implementing a rural electrification program.” Working with DCEC had given Harelimana ideas about how to help people in his native land. “As I learned about the electric cooperatives’ role in transforming the rural areas of the United States decades ago, I began dreaming of introducing the same concept in Rwanda, in the hopes that my home community might also benefit someday,” he said. Having seen the 1994 devastation of his country when more than 800,000 Rwandans were killed in a period of 100 days, and knowing that only approximately 5 percent of the population was currently served by electricity, Harelimana felt an obligation to help. Alain volunteered his time under the NRECA International Foundation (the charitable arm of NRECA).ⁱ



Alain Harelimana talks to people in his home village of Ruli, Rwanda, in 2010 about various government programs that can assist to bring electrification to the village. Electricity was brought to the village four years later.

In 2011, Harelimana left the DCEC and returned to Rwanda as a consultant to the Ministry of Energy. His new position was an extension of work he did in 2008 for the Rwandan government, in conjunction with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), to extend and improve electrification in Rwanda. Harelimana’s work in Rwanda was to coordinate internships, allowing Rwandans to spend time in other countries, including the United States, to gain experience in the energy industry.

When he left the DCEC in 2011, he noted, “Since I came here, there has been a lot of change in Rwanda. I was born and raised in Rwanda, but my only memories are as a child. It is a good time to go back and experience it as an adult and to get a better understanding of how I can help my country continue to develop. Extending electrification is a passion of mine.”

Harelimana’s departure came with mixed feelings. “I am surely going to miss working with my colleagues,” he said. He also said he would miss the challenges of navigating the developing clean energy markets and changing regulatory structure in which DCEC operates. “DCEC tries to be at the forefront of emerging technologies,” he said. However, he was looking forward to the challenges and responsibilities the new job would bring in helping Rwanda’s energy sector.ⁱⁱ In 2014, Alain was able to see his own village, where he grew up, receive electrical service.

i. “DCEC Employee Works to Bring Electricity to Rural Africa,” *Catskill Hi-Line*, November–December 2008, page 2.

ii. “Meet the DCEC Employees, This Month: Alain Harelimana,” *Catskill Hi-Line*, March–April 2011, page 5.

Al Reed noted that linemen often were the face of the DCEC. He recalled a number of times when someone would complain about an outage or a buzzing transformer. “It’s the honest face. You go and talk to them and look them right in the eye and they believe you because you are telling the truth. You’ve always got to be willing to talk to people.”¹⁵⁴

The tree crews, also sometimes called the right-of-way (ROW) crews, are another critical component in maintaining the operations of the Cooperative. Keeping the DCEC power lines clear of trees and brush is an important component in preventing the loss of power. A simple tree limb can do considerable damage to a line and cause a power outage. Charlie Prescott noted in 1974 that trying to contract the work for clearing the rights-of-way was not improving conditions. He asked the directors that he “be allowed, from time to time, to hire a three man work crew to work on right-of-way clearing and re-clearing.” The board passed a resolution to allow the manager to do this.¹⁵⁵ In 1984, Manager William Smith noted in the *Catskill Hi-Line*, “We love trees and the beauty they bring to our landscape, but trees and electric lines

Right: Linemen doing repair work in January 2005. DCEC.

Line Crew, 1994, left to right: Al MacGibbon, Larry Soule, Glen Hull, Bob Coager, Line Foreman Steve Watkins, Ernie Toften, Joe Dibble. Not pictured: Ron Schmitz, Jim Bright. DCEC.



don't go together. They really make bad companions, so when our crews ask for permission to remove a tree we would appreciate your cooperation."¹⁵⁶ DCEC tree crews sometimes were supplemented by contractors or temporary workers, especially in the summer. A number of these workers later became members of the line crew. In 1985, the Cooperative decided that such important work needed to be done by full-time permanent tree crewmen. Randy Zuill was the Cooperative's first permanent tree crewman. This practice of having permanent tree crewmen continues to this day. In 2001, Manager Mark Aeilts noted that summer heat was causing "the electric line [to sag] farther than normal which can place the lines down in the brush along the Right-of-Way." Additional workers were brought in to deal with this issue. Aeilts reminded members, "It is extremely important that you do not plant trees under or near electric power lines."¹⁵⁷ Tree crews are vital to this day in ensuring that the Cooperative's power lines are free from potentially damaging brush. The Cooperative's longest-serving tree crewman is Randy Tweedie, who started at the DCEC in 1999.

Line Crew, 2018, left to right: Steve Little, 1st Class Lineman; James Bright, 1st Class Lineman; Michael Schafer, 1st Class Lineman; on top of truck Kyle Schuman, Apprentice Lineman 2nd year; Michael Pietrantonio, 1st Class Lineman; James Green, 1st Class Lineman; Scott Tuttle, 1st Class Lineman; Michael Dianich, 1st Class Lineman; Doug Rosa, Line Foreman; Michael Sackett, 1st Class Lineman; Todd Oles, Fleet Mechanic. Not present for photo David Schmidt, 1st Class Lineman. PHOTOGRAPH BY JOE DAMONE.



Above: Right-of-Way Crew, 1994, left to right: Rick D'Angelo, Sean Trimbell, Brush Crew Foreman Scott Tuttle, Mike Sackett, Bret Sage. DCEC.



Seasonal Right-of-Way Crew, 1964, left to right: Theodore Kenyon, Blaine Stockton Jr., William Layman, Stephen Christianson, Richard Placek, Almiron Rockefeller. DCEC.



Left: Right-of-Way Crew, 2018, left to right: Micah Scobie, Line Clearance Arborist; Scott Smith, Journeyman Line Clearance Arborist; Randy Tweedie, ROW Crew Foreman; Quintin McGraw, Journeyman Line Clearance Arborist. PHOTOGRAPH BY JOE DAMONE.



Youth Leader Delegate to National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA)



NYSRECA-sponsored student Matt Popp, a junior from Stamford Central School, with Millie Faulkner from the DCEC and Congressman Sherwood Boehlert, May 1993, Washington, D.C. DCEC.

IN 1993, STAMFORD CENTRAL SCHOOL junior Matt Popp attended the National Rural Electric Cooperative Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C., as a student delegate. The program that paid for Matt's trip was from the Rural Electrification Administration. The program allowed students from the four New York cooperatives to participate on a rotating basis. Students were chosen from a family that is a member of the Cooperative and had to have good grades to qualify. Traveling with Millie Faulkner from the DCEC and Curt Hoffman, a history teacher at Stamford, Matt met with a number of congressional representatives to discuss issues of direct interest to the Cooperative, such as "financing-support efforts that put rural electric systems on equal and competitive footing with other types of

electrical utilities . . . plus related issues, such as rural health care needs." The trip also included some sightseeing.ⁱ

The program has since become an annual event for the DCEC. In 2001, the Cooperative decided to sponsor a student every other year.ⁱⁱ By 2005, a student was sent annually from the DCEC. Students in the eleventh grade were eligible. Over the years, students have come from schools in Stamford, Sidney, Jefferson, Delhi, and Walton. Students selected have included Delaware Academy students Melissa Oles, Benjamin Althaus, and Cullen LaFever; Jefferson Central students Emily Wilson, Katrina Havrish, and Elissa Starheim; Sidney Central students Emily Bartz and Erica Howard; South Kortright student Jessica Cianciullo; Stamford Central students Ed Pick and Kristen Starheim; and Walton Central students Serna Simpson and Molly Gavett.

Some of the students have gone on to represent New York State at the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Youth Leadership Conference held in Washington, D.C., during the summer and at the NRECA annual meeting the following February. One of those students selected was Karina Miranda, who was DCEC's Youth Delegate in 2013.



Karina Miranda, DCEC's 2013 youth delegate to the NRECA legislative conference, was selected to represent New York State at the NRECA's Youth Leadership Conference that summer, as well as the NRECA annual meeting in Nashville in February 2014. Miranda credits her experience as a delegate with inspiring her to pursue a career in law. PHOTO PROVIDED BY KARINA MIRANDA.

i. Wanda Callagy, "Student Learns about REA," *Daily Star* (Oneonta, NY), June 18, 1993.

ii. "Needed: One High School Student to Visit Washington, D.C. as our Delegate," *Catskill Hi-Line*, March/April 2001, page 4.

The support from the office staff was critical in helping the linemen do their job—and in helping the consumer/members. In the very early days, when the Cooperative still was an association, the office was run by one of the directors, Secretary Josephine Lockwood.¹⁵⁸ As the Cooperative grew, so did the need for office staff. Wilma Wardell, the first secretary, was paid \$12.50 per week. The first manager, Mr. Kludas, was paid \$125 per month. In 1946, it was reported that the Co-op employed twelve people, including three in the office plus the manager.¹⁵⁹ In February 1948, the Cooperative purchased "a billing machine with full equipment, a stenographer's desk, typist's chair, one steel file and shelves and compartment drawers for [the] office safe" for a total of \$1,500.¹⁶⁰ The offices of the Cooperative were moved from Second Street to Elm Street in Delhi in 1955. In 1972, the office included a bookkeeper, billing clerk, and secretary-treasurer, as well as a janitor.¹⁶¹

The longest-serving office staff member is Millie Faulkner, who has been with the Cooperative since 1989. Faulkner also has the distinction of being the first woman to serve on the DCEC's operations crew.



Above: Office Staff, 1964, left to right: Bookkeeper Anita Hitt, Cashier Louise Bryden, Assistant Cashier and Billing Clerk Betty Holbert. DCEC.



Right: Office Staff, 1994, left to right: Nancy Gioffe, Millie Faulkner, Operations Clerk Leonard West, Sharon Mogridge, Office Manager Grace Tuthill. DCEC.



Right: Office Staff, 2018, left to right; Paul DeAndrea, Engineering & Technology Manager; Mark Schneider, General Manager; Millie Faulkner, Finance Manager; Ryan Sullivan, Operations Manager. PHOTOGRAPH BY JOE DAMONE.



Below: DCEC Engineer Mark Schneider in September 2005. Mark would become DCEC General Manager in 2012. DCEC



Office Staff, 2018, left to right: Betty Ives, Operations Clerk; Tara Rifenburg, Billing Assistant; Alicia VanZandt, Administrative Assistant; Rosemary Alwine, Billing Specialist; Larry "Bucky" Soule, Systems Coordinator. PHOTOGRAPH BY JOE DAMONE.

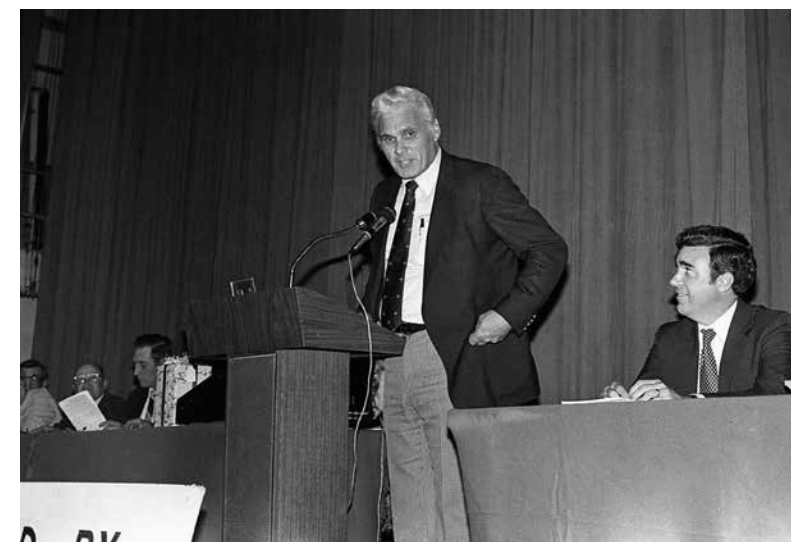
Annual Meeting—Unminced Words Were Presented to 200 Patrons

Every September since 1945, the Cooperative has held an annual meeting, usually at Delaware Academy. In the 1950s and into the 1960s, the meetings were most often held at the Delhi Agricultural College (now SUNY Delhi) before moving back to Delaware Academy in 1963 (though in 1969 and again in 1974, they once again were at the college). At these meetings, members would receive reports from directors and the general manager and elect directors. The meetings usually included a dinner and for many years would adjourn for a square dance.

The third annual meeting, held at the end of August 1947, was reported in the local press as "the big event of the year for all members of the co-op. and a large turn-out is expected." The paper noted, "The board of directors has also invited everyone in the co-op. area who still is waiting for hi-line electric service to come to the meeting to learn the final plans to serve everyone within reach of the co-op. lines within the next calendar year."¹⁶²

As well as elections and reports to members of the Cooperative, meetings often featured a speaker on a topic of interest. Sometimes, the speakers would be area politicians. Katharine St. George, who was the area's congresswoman from 1947 to 1965, "spoke to the members about the country's domestic and world affairs" at the 1960 meeting.¹⁶³

At the 1980 meeting, Assemblyman Arlington Van Dyke, State Senator Charlie Cook, and Congressman Matt McHugh spoke. DCEC.





Wayne Marshfield's Unforgettable Journey



Wayne at his desk in 1990. DCEC.

WAYNE MARSHFIELD HAS THE DISTINCTION as being the longest-serving employee in the history of the Delaware County Electric Cooperative. Starting in 1967, he retired in the spring of 2017. You simply cannot tell the history of the DCEC without talking about Wayne. The best way to tell the story of his long and loyal service to the Cooperative is to hear it in his own words. At his retirement, he wrote some of his recollections in an article for the March/April *Catskill Hi-Line*.

UNFORGETTABLE JOURNEY by Wayne Marshfield

In 1967 fresh out of college as an accounting major, I applied for a stock clerk, meter tester position at the Cooperative. At that time, I didn't know what an electric cooperative was, but found the cooperative idea interesting and a good fit for a rural farm boy, eager to share his college knowledge with a relatively fledgling organization. I was hired, and at that time I also attended outages with the line crew if needed. At that time and most notably we had no computers, no bucket trucks and our entire operation was based out of 39 Elm Street in Delhi, with our Depot Street property being used strictly for storage in the old railroad depot building. At that time, we had 485 miles of electric line, 1,580 members, and sold 56 million kilowatt hours. Our Cooperative vehicle fleet consisted of a 1947 Jeep, 3 pickup line trucks, and a 1964 International A-frame boom truck for setting poles, and our very first digger truck, a 1967 Dodge chassis with a Holan dangle digger. The line crew consisted of 6 linemen, all under the direction of Superintendent Bill Perkins and General Manager Charles Prescott. I was hired at \$1.50 per hour, which was good pay for that era.

Gradually I worked up to performing collections, purchasing, mapping, bookkeeping and field staking for new services and line rebuilds. The field work was the most rewarding as I got to meet and know the members and develop a close sense of their means of survival. With that



In 2013, Wayne was honored by the Northeast Association of Electric Cooperatives as a recipient of the George D. Aiken Award. Here he is with DCEC Systems Coordinator Larry Soule, CEO/General Manager Mark Schneider, and Board President Frank Winkler. DCEC.

and being raised on a dairy farm with eight other kids, I learned to gain a true sense of conservatism, which I carry with me today.

Fortunate or not, I witnessed and worked the worst storm in the history of the Cooperative. Its date was November 6, 1969; it was a heavy wet snow taking down trees, poles and power lines. Many of our members, mostly farmers, were out of power for up to one month in duration. Other Cooperative crews worked for us as well as contractors, and even still, farmers were forced to dump their milk day after day, as generators were little used in those days. Speaking of farmers, they were the backbone of the Cooperative. There were cattle dealers, implement dealers, inseminators, welders, veterinarians, farm supply dealers, milk haulers and more running all over the Cooperative service areas. We must remember that the Cooperative was formed in the early 40's strictly for the farmers, as they were a vital economic boon not only to our area but to our country as well. Unfortunately, dairy farmers started to diminish drastically in the 80's to the few we have left today.

When I began work with the Cooperative, our electric rates to the members were as low as 1.5 cents per kilowatt-hour, which was slightly higher than our local competition. Years later we were able to offer lower rates to our members, compared to our competition. I have seen a lot of dedicated members come and go, mainly ones that helped in the building and formation of the Cooperative and understood what it meant not to have electricity.

Over the years at the Cooperative, we have graduated to computers in every sense of the word, digger trucks, bucket trucks and automated meters and devices, etc. We now have 5,300 accounts, 800 miles of line, and sell about 80 million kilowatt hours annually. Our rates are now in the 11-cent range and we have seen a lot of bad storms come and go, but still nothing that compares to 1969.

The one event at the Cooperative that sticks out in my mind over any others is the day I received a phone call early one morning, that our then Cooperative General Manager had passed away unexpectedly and as Assistant Manager, I was now the leader of the Cooperative. The two added together created a sense of anxiety and stress at its finest. I have seen a tremendous amount of changes at our Cooperative and continually remind myself that they have to be for the better? I have received awards in the past, but they are nothing compared to the feeling I have for being an advocate for the Cooperative member, the owners and the backbone of the Cooperative. After my retirement in 2017, I will in my other avenues of life still be able to share my conservative values for our members indirectly, mostly as taxpayers. Fifty years with one firm is remarkable in itself; it was also rewarding, a learning experience and an occupation where I was able to give back as well as to receive.

Thanks to all for the beautiful and rewarding ride!



A typical day for Wayne in 2007. DCEC.

i. Wayne Marshfield, "Unforgettable Journey," *Catskill Hi-Line*, March/April 2017, page 6.





Top: Assemblyman Richard Coombe addresses the 1990 annual meeting. DCEC.

Middle: The Cooperative has never forgotten its roots in dairy farming. The Delaware County Dairy Princess started attending the annual meetings to promote milk and dairying in the late 1970s and does so today. DCEC.

Bottom: DCEC's fiftieth birthday cake in 1994. DCEC.

Other congressional representatives who attended the meeting over the years included John Dow, Sherwood Boehlert, Chris Gibson, and John Faso. State senators attending have included Jim Seward and John Bonacic. The assembly also was represented with Assemblymen Clifford Crouch, Peter Lopez, and Brian Miller attending.

Some meetings were heavily devoted to issues crucial to the Cooperative. At the 1950 meeting, the issues were the high rates being charged by the "private utility" to the Cooperative and the co-op's fight with New York City over the loss of lines and users for the Pepacton Reservoir. As reported in the *Oneonta (NY) Star*, "Unminced words were presented to 200 patrons of the [DCEC] by their president, J.F. Hager, Masonville, who discussed power costs, and by their secretary, Stanley Campbell, who accused New York City of unfairness in refusing to pay damages for the loss to the Co-op of 60 miles of land and 150 users of electricity in the East Branch Valley." Hager noted, "The private utility in the area . . . is embarrassed by its failure to serve farms in Delaware County, and has been unwilling to sell the Co-op large blocks of power at reasonable rates." Campbell, as well as noting the loss of lines and users, reminded members that "about 50 farms in the area . . . will be stranded without electric power."¹⁶⁴

The meetings were not all work. George Bolles vividly remembered those early annual meetings when he was a child. He recalled, "They had refreshments of all kinds . . . I can

Dinners for years at the meetings have included barbecue chicken such as at the 1982 meeting. DCEC.



At the September 1968 annual meeting, the DCEC awarded a \$300 scholarship to a student entering the State University Agricultural and Technical College at Delhi to Lauradale Liddle. DCEC.





For many years, annual meetings of the DCEC included round and square dances. These two photographs date from the September 1968 annual meeting and show dancing in the Delaware Academy gymnasium. DCEC.



Member Lillian Barnhart has been an avid crocheter of blankets. Her recent focus has been on baby blankets. In 2014, the DCEC newsletter reported, "Mrs. Barnhart has contributed one of her full-size afghans to the Cooperative's Annual Meeting the last couple of years and it has been a treasured door prize to receive."¹⁷⁰



Prizes have been another feature of the annual meetings, provided by various sponsors and by the members themselves. Manager Charles Prescott gives a lamp to a prize winner in 1980. DCEC.

Top: Prizes on display at the 1982 meeting. DCEC.

remember us kids ate ice cream until it ran out of our ears . . . most of the older folks had square dance after that . . . it went until one or two o'clock in the morning."¹⁶⁵

The round and square dances continued into the 1970s, with local music being supplied. "Hitchcock's orchestra of Delhi" supplied the dance music in the 1950s.¹⁶⁶ At the 1962 meeting "Jerry Laing of Franklin and his band furnished [the] music."¹⁶⁷ Other musical entertainment also





was provided. At the meeting in 1954, the “50-piece band of the Downsville Central School entertained.”¹⁶⁸ At the 1967 meeting, entertainment “was provided by a vocal ensemble under the direction of Robert Knight, and accordion selections by Marge Dorfler.”¹⁶⁹ Bob and Marge were a feature of the meetings for several years.

The Delaware County Electric Cooperative, as noted in its slogan, is owned by the members it serves. The Cooperative’s annual meetings allow its directors and employees to interact with the members and for members to socialize with each other, all while providing a public forum in which to discuss issues of concern. As the Cooperative reflects on its past and celebrates its seventy-fifth anniversary at its annual meeting, it also looks to the future to ensure that its members continue to receive the reliable electrical services that it struggled so hard to establish during those challenging days of World War II.

Farmers Gather Here to Learn About Rural Electrification
 Dwellers in County Areas Who Want Electric Service Now Able to Get It, Mr. Lake Says
 “The time has come when Delaware County farmers who want electricity may have it.”

From the *Delaware Republican*, May 29, 1941.

Left: PHOTOGRAPH BY JOE DAMONE.

APPENDIX



Directors of the Delaware County Electric Cooperative

Ernest Bartz, 1976–2013; President 1991–2003, Vice President 1988–1991, Secretary 2004–2005
 Maurice Bellinger, 1943–1986; President 1978–1986, Vice President 1955–1978
 Harold Berberich, 1941–1941
 J. William Bouw, 1948–1959; Treasurer 1954–1959
 Pete Brandes, 1950–1952
 Steve Burnett, 2016–
 Nancy Campbell, 1941–1948
 Stanley Campbell, 1941–1959; Secretary 1944–1959
 William Darling, 1945–1945
 John Eckert, 1965–1992; Treasurer 1975–1992
 Clyde Foote, 1943–1950
 Gordon Gleason, 1941–1944; President 1941–1944
 Charles Hager, 1956–1966
 Jay Hager, 1947–1956; President 1949–1955, Vice President 1945–1949
 June Harris, 1991–1998
 Tom Harris, 1975–1991; President 1989–1991
 David Hartwell, 1986–2012
 Shawn Hartwell, 2012–
 Harry B. Hedman, 1945–1978; President 1955–1978, Vice President 1953–1955
 Owen Howarth, 1959–1993; President 1986–1989, Secretary 1959–1985
 Meg Hungerford, 2007–2016; Secretary 2008–2013
 Josephine Lockwood, 1941–1944; Secretary 1941–1944
 Thomas Lubbers, 1987–2010
 Edward MacLaury, 1941–1949; President 1944–1949, Vice President 1943–1944
 Stephen McKeegan, 2001–2007; President 2004–2007, Secretary 2003
 Paul Menke, 1993– ; Secretary 2000–2002/2014–2015, Treasurer 2004–2005
 William Moody, 1945–1953; Treasurer 1945–1953
 Anker Norberg, 1941–1952; Vice President 1949–1952, Treasurer 1941–1944
 Niels J. Norberg, 1953–1987; Vice President 1978–1987
 Stephen Oles, 1992– ; President 2015– , Secretary 1994–1999, Treasurer 2006–2014
 Harry Peterson, 1978–2011; Vice President 1991–2011
 Edward “Rusty” Pick, 2011– ; Secretary 2013–2014/2015–2017
 Stanley Reed, 1947–2005; Treasurer 1992–2003
 Hartley Russell, 2007– ; Vice President 2011–2017, Secretary 2007
 Kenneth Smith, 1966–1976
 Ellen Stahl, 1941–1943
 Peter Svegl, 1952–1977
 William Tweedie, 1953–1975; Treasurer 1959–1975
 Eugene Vandenbord, 1959–1964
 Edward VanKeuren, 1946–1947
 Wesley Warren, 1977–2001; Secretary 1986–1993
 Frank Winkler, 2005– ; President 2007–2014, Secretary 2006, Treasurer 2015–2017
 Richard Yarnes, 1998–2002
 Clarence C. Zurn, 1941–1945



NOTES



1. Interview with Cornelius Stoop. Video made in 2008.
2. Reports in several newspapers, starting with the *Sidney Record* in 1885, reported on local villages getting electricity.
3. Untitled news item, *Delaware Gazette* (Delhi, NY), January 31, 1900, p. 2, col. 3.
4. Untitled item, *Delaware Gazette* (Delhi, NY), September 24, 1913.
5. Untitled news item, *Delaware Gazette* (Delhi, NY), November 21, 1906, p. 2, col. 2.
6. "Carbide Is Dangerous," *Catskill Mountain News* (Margaretville, NY), September 22, 1911, p. 1, col. 2.
7. "Farm Electric Plants," *Catskill Mountain News* (Margaretville, NY), February 28, 1919, p. 4, col. 1.
8. Item under "Margaretville Daily Happenings for the Week," *Catskill Mountain News* (Margaretville, NY), May 26, 1916, p. 1, col. 3. An ad for the product appeared the following month.
9. "Electrification of Farms Fast Increasing," *Otsego Farmer* (Cooperstown, NY), December 23, 1927, p. 1, col. 5.
10. Ibid.
11. "When Rural America Was a Dark Land," 25 Years of Electrifying and Serving Rural America, DCEC annual meeting brochure, President's report, p. 2.
12. "Steps of Progress," *Catskill Mountain News* (Margaretville, NY), November 7, 1930, p. 2, col. 2.
13. Wenner, William C., "Some Recollections of the First Manager," p. 1.
14. "Rural Electrification Program Is Begun," *Kingston (NY) Daily Freeman*, May 15, 1935, p. 7.
15. Ibid., p. 2.
16. "Co. Electric Co-op. to Meet Tomorrow," *Delaware Republican*, October 2, 1941, p. 1, col. 1.
17. "Farmers Ask for 300 Miles of Power," *Catskill Mountain News* (Margaretville, NY), February 13, 1942, p. 5, col. 1.
18. "Chronological Report of Events in History of Delaware County Electric Cooperative, Inc.," 1946.
19. "Rural Electrification Bill Will Be Law," *Catskill Mountain News* (Margaretville, NY), April 17, 1942, p. 9, col. 3.
20. Faulkner, Millie, "Rural Electrification in the Catskills," Gilboa Historical Society newsletter, Fall 2013, p. 13. [Reprinted from the DCEC Annual Report, 1996]
21. "Light and Power Extension Pending Priority Sought," *The Hancock Herald*, p. 1, col. 1.
22. Weyer, Arthur C., "Ain't It the Truth," *Catskill Mountain News* (Margaretville, NY), June 12, 1942, p. 8, col. 3.
23. "Chronological Report of Events in the History of Delaware County Electric Cooperative, Inc.," *Catskill Hi-Line*, January/February 1984, pp. 10–11.
24. "Reasons for Protesting W.P.B. Approval of Our Extensions to New York State Electric and Gas Corporation," *Catskill Hi-Line*, September–October 1984, p. 14.
25. Letter from Gordon Gleason, President, Delaware County Electric Co-operative, Inc., to members, August 24, 1942, collections of the Delaware County Electric Cooperative.
26. "Farm Light, Power Plans Revived," *The Hancock Herald*, April 22, 1943, p. 1, col. 7.
27. Interview with Aubrey Pearce of Delhi, taken from presentation "Delaware County Electric Co-operative, Inc., From 1941 to Present, As Interpreted by Wayne E. Marshfield."
28. "Rural Electric Lines Assured for This County," *Catskill Mountain News* (Margaretville, NY), July 30, 1943, p. 8, col. 3.
29. "Farm Light, Power Plans Revived," *The Hancock Herald*
30. "Open a Temporary Office," *Catskill Mountain News* (Margaretville, NY), August 13, 1943, p. 1, col. 5.
31. "Electrification of County Gets U.S. Loan of \$307,000," *The Hancock Herald*, August 26, 1943, p. 1, col. 5.
32. "Contract Let to Wire 633 Farms in This County," *Catskill Mountain News* (Margaretville, NY), September 24, 1913, p. 1, col. 3.
33. "Bad Weather Hampers Elec. Line Construction," *Delaware Republican-Express* (Delhi, NY), January 20, 1944, p. 3, col. 5.
34. "Coop. Electric Co. Digs Postholes," *The Hancock Herald*, January 27, 1944, p. 1, col. 1.
35. Minutes of the Delaware County Electric Cooperative, p. 6.
36. "Delaware County Electric Cooperative History," *Catskill Hi-Line*, March–April 1984, p. 7.
37. Letter from Gordon Gleason to D&W Construction Company, August 16, 1944, as recorded in the DCEC minutes.
38. DCEC Minutes, Special Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors, August 21, 1944.
39. Ibid., p. 8.
40. Wenner, p. 3.
41. "Jailhouse Lineman," *Catskill Hi-Line*, July–August 1996, p. 1, letter from Bill Wenner.
42. "633 Delaware Farms on New Electric Line," *Binghamton (NY) Press*, March 24, 1945.
43. "Electric Co-op. Now Has 1,000 Customers," *Walton (NY) Reporter*, February 21, 1947.
44. "Wire Inspection Urged by Co-op," *Oneonta (NY) Daily Star*, July 15, 1947.
45. "Annual Report of Delaware Co. Electric Co-Operative," March 4, 1948. Clipping from Marshfield presentation.
46. "Tops in Milk," *Rural Electrification News*, April–May 1947.
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48. Tim Duerden, *A History of Delaware County*, New York, p. 111, Purple Mountain Press, 2007.
49. Secretary's Report for 1951 Annual Meeting, September 12, 1951, Minutes, DCEC.
50. "Supreme Court Favors Electric in Recent Decision," *Catskill Mountain News* (Margaretville, NY), August 4, 1950, p. 1.
51. "N.Y.C. Awards \$352,000 to Electric Coop.," *Delaware Republican-Express* (Delhi, NY), July 24, 1954, p. 1.
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53. Secretary's Report for 1951 Annual Meeting.
54. Wenner, p. 4.
55. "Pepacton Reservoir," *Catskill Hi-Line*, July/August 1984, pp. 8–9.
56. The Downsville Dam and Pepacton Reservoir, How It Affects This Coop," September 1952, from the DCEC minutes.
57. Wenner, p. 4.
58. Ibid., p. 11.
59. "The Downsville Dam and Pepacton Reservoir, How It Affects This Coop."
60. "Pepacton Reservoir," *Catskill Hi-Line*, July/August 1984, p. 7.



61. "The Downsville Dam and Pepacton Reservoir, How It Affects This Coop."
62. "N.Y.C. Awards \$352,000 to Electric Coop.," *Delaware Republican-Express* (Delhi, NY), July 24, 1954, p. 1.
63. "N.Y. City to Pay \$43,500 for Three Contested Parcels," *Catskill Mountain News* (Margaretville, NY), February 24, 1950, p. 1.
64. Wenner, p. 5.
65. "Rural Electric Leaders Favor Seaway Project," *The Evening Tribune* (Hornell, NY), February 10, 1947, p. 8.
66. "Hon Claude Wickard Was Luncheon Speaker At Delhi Last Saturday," *Stamford (NY) Mirror-Recorder*, May 15, 1947, p. 1.
67. "Electric Co-op Favors Seaway Power Project," *Oneonta (NY) Daily Star*, February 7, 1948.
68. Letter from Robert N. Donovan to Governor Thomas E. Dewey, September 25, 1952.
69. Porter, Russell, "Power Sale Pacts Delayed By State," *New York Times*, May 11, 1955, p. 22 (from ProQuest Historical Newspapers).
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Newspapers

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Manuscript and Image Sources

The records from the Delaware County Electric Cooperative (DCEC) were crucial in creating this book. The Cooperative has a complete set of the minutes of the Board of Directors and an almost complete set of the Cooperative's newsletters, *Catskill Hi-Line*. The Cooperative also has a large collection of photographs.

The Delaware County Historical Association (DCHA) holds the photographs of Bob Wyer (1908–1982). Included were a number of photographs from the early days of the Cooperative, including the placing of the first pole.

Interviews

Jessica Vecchione was contracted to interview a number of people for a video being created for the seventy-fifth anniversary. The following were interviewed:

- ♦ Kim Armstrong, retired lineman
- ♦ Ernie Bartz, retired director and former president and early consumer of the DCEC
- ♦ George Bolles
- ♦ Paul DeAndrea, DCEC engineer
- ♦ Millie Faulkner, DCEC finance manager
- ♦ Wayne Marshfield, assistant general manager
- ♦ Steve Oles, current president of the Board of Directors and longtime director of the DCEC
- ♦ Al Perkins, DCEC member and son of retired DCEC lineman William Perkins
- ♦ Mark Schneider, DCEC general manager
- ♦ Frank Winkler, DCEC director and former president

In 2008, Bob Cairns was hired by DCEC to conduct video interviews with:

- ♦ Clarence Hartwell, Jefferson (died in 2009, age 97)
- ♦ Cornelius Stoop, Delhi/Delancey (died in 2010, age 86)
- ♦ Eugene Vandembord, Delhi/Delancey, former director (died in 2017, age 94)

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