



### *Message from the desk of our CEO*

Happy Heart Month everyone! Sixty years ago, President Lyndon Baines Johnson declared February as “heart month,” but I dare say that Cupid made that proclamation centuries earlier. While it is always nice to hope that this means that the worst of winter is behind us, it pays to remain prepared, as temperatures can still be quite cold, and late winter and early spring storms seem to be more and more common lately.

I want to take a moment to recognize and thank the Cooperative’s dedicated staff, who always respond to these weather events, to get your power back on and communicate the status to you. We appreciate every Member as well, and especially thank you for calling in when your power is out to give us vital information on how to find the source of power outages.

Yes, as of February, 2024, we still need you to call in and let us know when your power is out. We do get some information through our automated systems, but the best data on how to find and resolve problems more often comes from your phone calls. Remember to call our Outage Line at 607-746-9283 if your power is out, or if we call or announce online that power is back on and it goes out again. And ALWAYS, I repeat ALWAYS, assume that any downed power line is live, and NEVER touch a downed wire.

I am very excited to announce that the Cooperative has nearly completed its next four-year construction work plan that will enable us to both upgrade our metering system to provide better two-way communication and information about power outages, as well as perform the line upgrades required to meet growing electricity needs in response to NY’s Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA).

As a part of this process, the Cooperative has taken a hard look at our costs, and it’s apparent that we will need to raise our monthly service charge. The last rate adjustment the Cooperative made was in April of 2016, with minor increase to the kWh (energy) charge and just a series of four 50 cent increases in service charge phased in over several years. The good news is that we are not proposing to raise energy charges at this time. Please see our “Rate Roadmap” article elsewhere in this newsletter for more information on the proposed service charge increase and registering to attend the public hearing on the matter.

Once again, I hope everyone has a safe and healthy heart month as we anxiously await for spring to arrive!

Cooperatively Yours, *John Gasstrom*



**80th ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING**

**SAVE THE DATE!**  
**SATURDAY, AUGUST 24, 2024**  
**9:00AM - REGISTRATION**  
**BUSINESS MEETING TO FOLLOW**

**DELAWARE ACADEMY**  
2 SHELDON AVENUE | DELHI, NY



## Rate Roadmap

The Cooperative has reviewed its current costs and rate structure, and we have determined that we can no longer hold off an increase to our monthly service charge. While our current rates were approved in 2016, with a very minor kWh increase at that time, and a two dollar increase in monthly service charges phased in as four 50 cent increases over time, that was eight years ago, and the costs of doing business have certainly changed a lot since then.

In August of 2022, the Cooperative, with the help of the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation (CFC), completed a cost-of-service study. This study looks at the way the Cooperative does business, what all of our costs are to purchase and deliver electricity to the membership, and also what the types of costs are. There are two main types: fixed costs and variable costs. Fixed costs are the ones that are there regardless of how much electricity someone uses. For example, DCEC places a pole in the ground, installs a transformer on that pole, and runs wires to your home for you to have electricity available to you. Whether you use one kWh of electricity per month, or thousands, we still incur that cost to make electricity available. This is a fixed cost.

When you flip on your light switch, you start consuming electricity to run your lights (or your other electric appliances). We measure the consumption of electric energy in kilowatt-hours, or kWh. To serve that energy to you, we purchase it from the New York Power Authority and deliver it through that fixed equipment mentioned earlier. The cost of purchasing that power on your behalf is a variable cost, because how much we buy for you varies based on how much you use.

The last cost-of-service study showed that those fixed costs incurred by the Cooperative were substantially higher than the \$22 to \$40 per month that most members pay today. On the order of three to four times higher.

In the future, perhaps three years from now, the Cooperative plans to introduce some new types of rates. These new rates may include new components to them, such as energy prices that vary based on the time of day that the energy is being used. Or “demand charges” that seek to cover the costs of providing large surges of energy being used at peak times on the system. The Coop also plans to deliver new tools to you, the Member, so that you can monitor and control your energy use, and make choices to balance your use of energy to your lifestyle and budget.

We are in the process of implementing these new tools through our system – which we predict to be roughly a two-year deployment – and to begin to provide enhanced energy information to you by mid-2026. We expect new rate designs to be announced in late 2026 for 2027 implementation. In the meantime, we are proposing two service charge increases affecting all members, with the first in May of 2024 and the second in May of 2025. See timeline below:

Proposed Rate Revision Time Table	
Last Rate Increase	April of 2016
Cost of Service Study Completed	August of 2022
Proposed Rate Revisions Announced to Membership	February of 2024
Member Public Hearing Meeting Scheduled	Tuesday, March 19, 2024 @ 7pm
Board of Directors to Finalize Service Charge Revisions at Regular Board Meeting	Tuesday, March 26, 2024
1st Service Charge Revisions are Applied to Member Bills	May of 2024
2nd Service Charge Revisions are Applied to Member Bills	May of 2025
Rate Redesign	2027

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The first change would be a \$12.75 increase to the monthly service charge effective with the May 2024 billing cycle. At this time, you would also see a reduction in your kWh charge of \$0.003/kWh as we remove the current Formulary Rate Adjustment (FRA) on Member’s bills. In May of 2025, another increase of \$6.25 per month would go into effect. As of now, we don’t expect any other monthly service charge changes or kWh changes before new rates are implemented in 2027. See table below for a summary of the changes by service class:

Service Class	Current monthly service charge	May 2024 proposed service charge	May 2025 proposed service charge
SC-1	\$22.00	\$34.75	\$41.00
SC-2	\$27.00	\$39.75	\$46.00
SC-3	\$22.00	\$34.75	\$41.00
SC-5	\$21.00	\$33.75	\$40.00
SC-D	\$22.00	\$34.75	\$41.00
SC-4A	\$40.00	\$52.75	\$59.00

Some may ask why we are making this change to our monthly service charges and not to the kWh charges. This recommendation was made to more closely align the costs we recover through bills to the expenses we incur. Additionally, this type of increase makes it easier to predict the changes to your monthly bill. Regardless of how much energy you use each month, you know that the increases in your bill will be \$12.75 per month and \$6.25 per month respectively.

We realize that this increase may be substantial to some of our Members. We have all seen our costs increase for items such as food, gasoline, building materials, vehicles, and other necessities. While we dislike having to raise our service charge, we do need to continue to pay the rising costs to operate the Cooperative. If you’ve followed the news, I’m sure you’ve also seen that other utilities are raising their rates as well, some by 20-30%, given the current costs of doing business.

The Cooperative is committed to doing our best to keep our costs as low as we can, and as a not-for-profit, we are strictly charging those prices that seek to recover our costs to operate. As always, if the Cooperative collects any money beyond its cost of doing business, we return that money to the membership through capital credits.

We will be holding a Member Public Hearing Meeting on Tuesday, March 19, 2024 at 7pm. Please visit [www.dce.coop/info](http://www.dce.coop/info) to register for that meeting. Or you can call the office at 607-746-2341 to register by phone.

### Member Public Hearing Meeting

Topic: Proposed Rate Revisions

When: Tuesday, March 19, 2024 @ 7pm

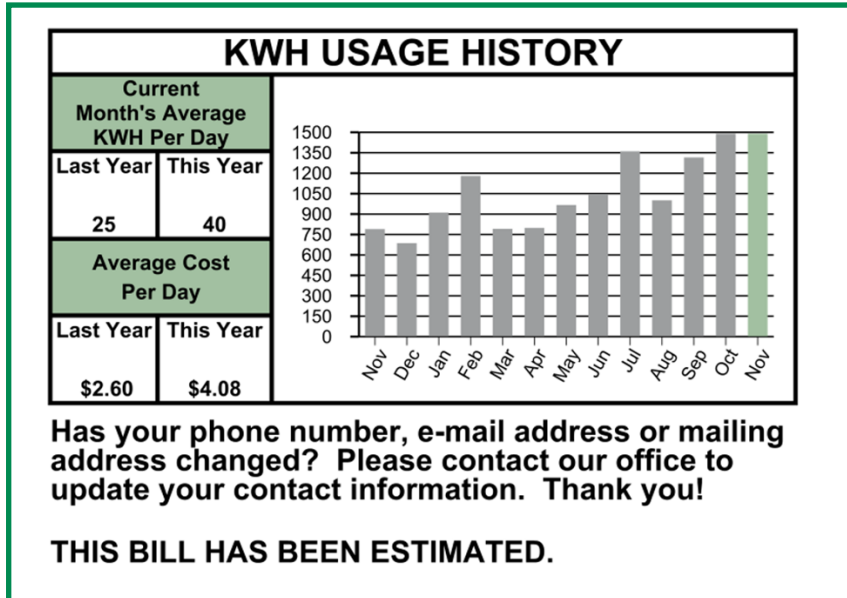
Where: location TBD based on registration



To register: [CLICK HERE](#) or call the office at (607)746-2341

# What is an Estimated read?

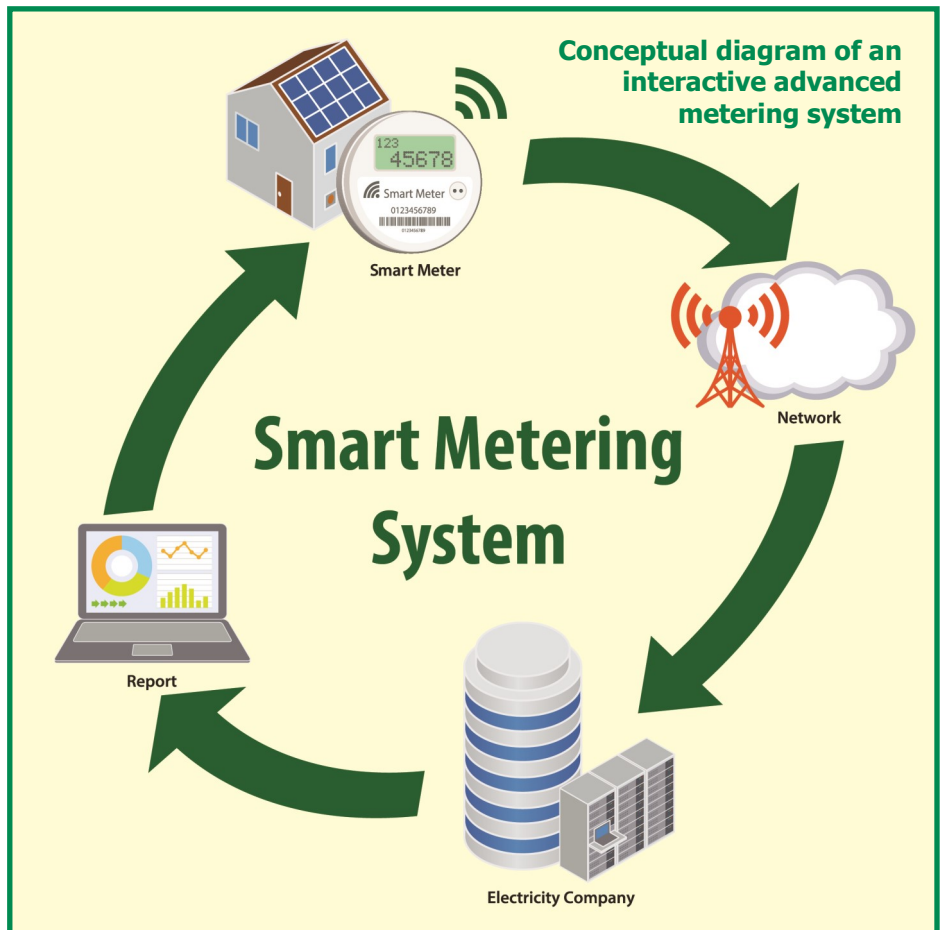
The cooperative uses its current metering system to collect reads remotely from the field. Approximately once per day your electric meter is asked to report back all kilowatt hours (KWH) you consumed. In the event a billing read is not available, the cooperative may use some combination of field readings and historical billing information to estimate the usage in a period. When the Cooperative is using estimates, your bill will reflect a notice of the estimate. See below:



As always, the Cooperative endeavors to make every effort to get billable reads for every member monthly. If we are unable to consistently collect reads, we may resort to a field read via a Cooperative staff member.

When a bill is estimated, we are making our “best educated guess” as to your energy usage for a given period. However, rest assured that your electricity meter is accurately capturing your true usage during this time. Once we are able to get an actual read on your meter, either in person or electronically, our billing system will adjust your next bill to make up the difference on our estimate, whether we over-estimated or underestimated your usage. This is why you may receive a “true-up” bill that is either unusually high or low after a month or more of estimated reads.

The Cooperative is currently in the process of upgrading our metering system, to one with more advanced communications abilities that we expect to greatly reduce the number of estimated reads we need to do. Expect to see this new metering system in action by mid-2026, with more advanced outage notification capabilities and more information available to you to monitor your energy use on a daily basis.



# Insights into High Electric Bills

We all know the feeling. We are paying our monthly bills and managing our household budgets, when all of a sudden, one of these bills is unexpectedly high. Often, many of us just pay our electric bill and never give it a second thought...until something catches our eye. When we are expecting a bill around the usual amount and we open up the envelope to see a bill that has gone up considerably, we need to ask ourselves, "Why?" Why did my bill go up so much this month? Did the electric cost go up? Did they overcharge?

Over my 27 years in the electric delivery field, I have been dispatched to talk to many people with these same concerns. Some of the reasons I have found have been very easy to spot. For instance, a member that had a house which was used as a second home called with a complaint about a high bill. When I went to the house to check that the meter read was correct, I noticed a window had been left open in the house. The last time they were there, the weather was very nice and they opened a window. As we all know, the weather in Delaware County can change in a matter of hours. This was exactly the case, the temperatures plummeted and the electric heat in the house was trying to keep up with the cold air pouring through the open window.

Another example was when a couple called and said they were having a similar issue with a high bill. I went to this residence and looked at the meter and everything looked fine. While helping to discern what the problem could be, I heard a pump kick on. A short time later, I heard it again. I put my ear on the water pipe and could hear water running. The upstairs toilet was running and running, causing the well pump to start, run for a bit, and then shut off, over and over again. This was the culprit to their high bill. They had it fixed and the problem went away.

The last example that I will talk about is portable space heaters. You may have seen advertisements for these heaters on TV, or other sources. These heaters were often touted as being able to save you a ton of money on fuel oil and operate for pennies. The problem was they didn't tell you exactly how many pennies. Many people were plugging these in thinking they were going to save a lot of fuel oil. They were right. They saved fuel oil, but paid for it with a higher electricity bill.

These are just a few things to keep in mind if you happen to have an unusually high bill. Often times, if you think about what has changed recently in your home, you may get an idea about what may be impacting your energy use. And if you are away from home, could an open window or appliance left running be using energy you aren't aware of? As always, if something looks amiss on your bill, please give us a call and we will do our best to talk through some things to look at with you.


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

BEST BETS FOR

## Winter Savings

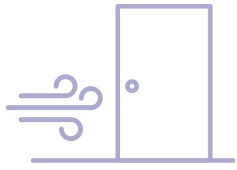
Energy consumption spikes during winter months as we spend more time indoors and heating systems work overtime. You can help reduce demand and strain on the electric grid by conserving during peak energy times. Reducing energy use will also help lower your energy bills.

**UNPLUG WHEN POSSIBLE**




Turn off unnecessary lights and electronics when you aren't using them.

**ELIMINATE DRAFTS AND AIR LEAKS**




Seal air leaks and drafts around windows and exterior doors.

**USE APPLIANCES WHEN ENERGY DEMAND IS LOWER**



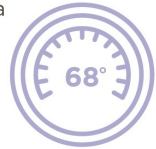
Run large appliances like clothes washers, dryers and dishwashers early in the morning or before you go to bed.

**MAINTAIN HEATING EQUIPMENT**



Maintain your heating system by replacing dirty, clogged filters and scheduling an annual inspection for necessary maintenance.

**LOWER THE THERMOSTAT**



Home heating accounts for a large portion of energy consumption. Adjust your thermostat to the lowest comfortable setting (68 degrees or lower).



# 2024 Board of Director Nominations & Nominating Committee

As a democratic organization, Cooperative members vote each year to elect directors to represent them on the DCEC Board. Elections for director positions occur at DCEC's Annual Meeting, this year on August 24, 2024. DCEC currently has seven directors representing three regions of DCEC's service territory (see DCEC's Board Region's chart below). Directors serve 3-year terms. In accordance with the DCEC bylaws, a Nominating Committee considers members interested in serving on the board and nominates candidates for the election.

**For more information, call DCEC at (607)746-2341**

### Interested in serving on the DCEC Nominating Committee?

In accordance with DCEC bylaws, the Nominating Committee must prepare a list of candidates for membership consideration at least 60 days prior to the Cooperative's Annual Meeting. The 2024 Annual Meeting of the Members is scheduled to be held on Saturday morning, **August 24, 2024 at Delaware Academy in Delhi**. Registration is expected to begin at 9am with the business meeting to follow.

Elections will occur at the 2024 Annual Meeting for **three board seats representing the Northern, Central, and Southern Regions**.

The Nominating Committee will meet from April through June at the DCEC office at 5 North Depot Street, Delhi, for the purpose of identifying candidates for the above positions. The committee is composed of members representing the geographic diversity of the DCEC service area (see chart below). Members serving on the committee are offered a modest stipend for their service.

Nominations for directors are governed by Article IV of the Bylaws. A director may be nominated in one of two ways:

1) The **NOMINATING COMMITTEE**. The Nominating Committee meets to identify at least two candidates to run for each seat up for election.

2) By **PETITION**. Any 15 or more members may petition the Cooperative to place a qualified member on the ballot. This must be done at least 45 days before the Annual Meeting.

Rules regulating director elections are outlined in DCEC's bylaws, which are available on: [www.dce.coop/dcec-bylaws-policies](http://www.dce.coop/dcec-bylaws-policies). Voting for directors is covered by Article III. Each member may cast one ballot for a nominee for each seat up for election. **A married couple holding a joint membership are considered one member and will receive one ballot.**

If you are interested in serving on the Nominating Committee, please contact the DCEC office. In accordance with DCEC bylaws, the committee is comprised of between 5 and 11 members representing the geographic diversity of the DCEC service area. Members serving on the committee are offered a modest stipend for their service. The committee meets three to four times from April through June in the evenings.

DCEC would like to thank Lynn Hait (Northern), Seth Blocker (Central), Molly Oliver (Central), Chad Trimbell (Southern), and Frank Winkler (Southern), the members who served on the 2023 Nominating Committee. Thank you!

**For additional information about the Nominating Committee and how to serve, please call Janelle Linehan at (607) 746-9294 by March 20th**

BOARD DISTRICT REGIONS CHART		
Northern	Central	Southern
Gilboa	Bovina	Andes
Jefferson	Delhi	Colchester
Summit	Franklin	Masonville
Davenport	Hamden	Middletown
Harpersfield	Kortright	Sidney
Stamford	Meredith	Tompkins
Maryland		Walton
		Bainbridge

