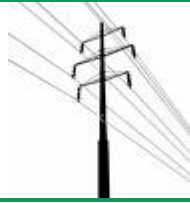




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# CATSKILL HI-LINE

Newsletter — March 2025

## From the desk of CEO John Gasstrom

Happy Spring! Let's all hope that the worst of the cold winter weather is behind us. As many of you are aware, we've had some of the coldest weather we've experienced in a long time, and many members saw much higher electric bills last month. Your Cooperative staff, including myself, has answered many of your calls and we have heard similar questions over and over. "If I've done nothing different, why has my power bill increased so much?"

There are really two components that affect your bill, and both have much to do with the weather. Due to the cold temperatures, many members have consumed much more electricity this past month. Even if you haven't changed your thermostat, it has been colder outside. That means your heating equipment is working harder to raise your indoor temperature to your setpoint. Even if electric isn't your primary heating fuel, there are likely electrical components working harder due to the cold temperatures. Perhaps blower fans on a gas furnace or wood stove, or an auger on a pellet stove are running longer. This increased energy use is the first component that has affected power bills. Look for the number of kWh (or kilowatt-hours) on your electric bill – this represents how much energy you consumed. Compare it to previous months, or the same month of last year to see how your bill has changed.

In addition to greater energy consumption, there was also an increase in the cost per kilowatt-hour that you paid last month. This is the second component that has impacted electric bills. Most of our energy comes from economical hydropower. Because of that, we often enjoy lower prices on electricity than our neighbors with a different electricity

supplier. However, we have a limit on how much of this low cost power we are allowed to have. As a Cooperative, we get about 11.6 Megawatts (MW) of power allocated to us. On January 22 at 8:00 AM, we were using more than 18 MW of power. While our 11.6 MW were at the hydro-rate, the additional power had to be purchased on the market, at market rates.

The Cooperative has a long term contract with the New York Power Authority (NYPA), to buy and provide this power on our behalf, and by having that contract, we minimize the chances of not having enough power. However, we have to pay whatever the hourly rate of power is at the time that we need it, whenever we exceed our hydro allocation. Because the Cooperative is a not-for-profit, we have to collect the money from the membership to pay the power bill from our supplier, NYPA. Our January power bill was several times higher than it normally is, and those additional costs appear on your bill as the Power Cost Adjustment, or PCA. That cost is just a pass-thru of the additional wholesale power cost the Cooperative incurred.

We do understand that many members are struggling, and we have been setting up payment arrangements for those that may need a little extra time to pay the higher bill. If you would like to setup a payment agreement, please call the coop office during regular business hours and press FOUR to speak to someone about a payment agreement.

Cooperatively Yours,

*John Gasstrom*



## Powering Our Rural Communities

5 North Depot Street  
PO Box 471  
Delhi, NY 13753

AUTOMATED LINE (payments & outage reporting): **(855) 939-3672**

Office Phone: (607) 746-2341

Fax: (607) 746-7548

## What is the Power Cost Adjustment charge on my bill?

The Power Cost Adjustment mentioned on your electric bill refers to the unpredictable variation in power costs. On a month-to-month basis, DCEC compares the amount of power costs collected through its base rates and the actual costs incurred.

The difference between the power costs actually incurred and the amount recovered through the base rates is either refunded to or collected from members the following month through the Power Cost Adjustment charge. A negative Power Cost Adjustment means on your monthly bills reflects a credit and a positive Power Cost Adjustment reflects a charge for the difference between average power cost and the actual cost incurred.

## What was different about this month's PCA:

Your recent DCEC electricity bill included a higher than average power cost adjustment, or PCA. Due to the recent cold weather, DCEC members are using far more electricity than our current hydroelectric allocation provides for. This means that the New York Power Authority (NYPA) has been purchasing power on the electricity market to meet these additional demands.

The PCA is listed on every monthly bill and is used to accommodate for monthly fluctuations in power costs and will show the adjustment either up or down, as this can be a charge some months and a credit other months.

If you have seen a very high power bill recently, it is likely due to this increased cost of power, reflected through the PCA, as well as an increased consumption of electricity due to additional heating needs in this cold weather.

**WHY** is my winter electric bill higher?

**A FRIGID FACT:** You use more electricity in cold weather.

**Here's why:** In cold weather, your heating system works much harder to keep your home comfortable. even if you don't change your thermostat setting, it runs longer to heat your home.

Heat Required 50°	Thermostat Setting 68°	Heat Required 20°
Outside Temperature 18°		Outside Temperature 48°

When the difference between outside and inside is greater, your heating system must run more to condition your home.

Even gas heating systems use electricity to power the fan and distribute the warm air.

**DCEC**  
Delaware County  
Electric Cooperative

If DCEC members need to set up a payment arrangement or may require payment assistance, please call our office and speak with our dedicated staff.



# TREE PLANTING GUIDE

Zone	Distance from the Center of ROW	Max Mature Tree Height	Example of Acceptable Species for Zone
ZONE A	0 to 5 feet	Zero – there is a no-planting zone within 5 feet of the center line of the right-of-way.	Grass, Sedum, Dragon’s Blood, Pachysandra, Wildflower seed
ZONE B	5 to 10 feet	8 feet tall	Black Chokeberry, Blue Crop Blueberry, Jersey Blueberry, Silky Dogwood, Blue Ray Blueberry
ZONE C	10 to 15 feet	15 feet tall	Common Lilac, Elderberry, Rose of Sharon, Forsythia, Arrowwood
ZONE D	15 to 20 feet	30 feet tall	Arkansas Black Apple, Red Crabapple, Red Bud, Macoun Apple, White Flowering Dogwood, Cortland Apple, McIntosh Apple, American Hazelnut
ZONE E	20 feet and beyond	N/A	American Larch, Concolor/White Fir, Native Birch, Norway Spruce, Red Oak, Sugar Maple, White Pine, White Spruce, Fraser Fir, American Arborvitae, Wild Black Cherry, Catalpa, Colorado Blue Spruce, Douglas Fir, Paw Paw, Red Mulberry, Scotch Pine, White Walnut, Balsam Fir, Black Spruce

**Call before you dig to locate underground utilities  
Call UDig NY, by dialing 811.  
Also, you must call DCEC at (607) 746-2341,**

## Annual Arbor Green Tree & Shrub Sales

The Delaware County Soil and Water Conservation District (DCSWCD)

**April 12, 2025** —Tree and Shrub Handout at SWCD Office

**\*\* Order deadline—March 3. There will also be some overstocked trees and shrubs available for purchase on the April 12 handout day**

For additional information please visit: [www.dcswwcd.org](http://www.dcswwcd.org)

The Schoharie County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD)

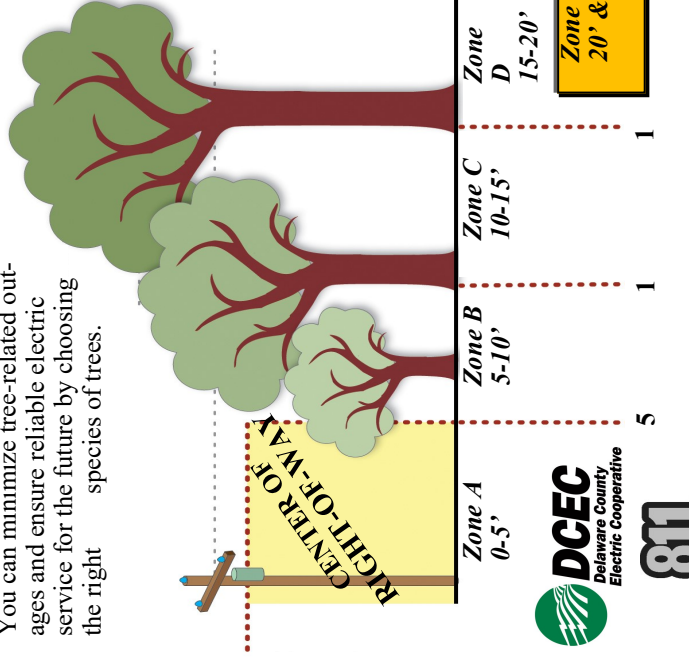
**March 14, 2025**—Order Deadline

**April 18—19, 2025**—Tree and Shrub Handout at Cobleskill Fairgrounds

For an order form and additional information please visit: [www.schohariesoilandwater.org/trees](http://www.schohariesoilandwater.org/trees)

## Planting Distances from the Center of Right-of-Way

**PLAN before you plant**  
You can minimize tree-related outages and ensure reliable electric service for the future by choosing the right species of trees.



Know what's below.  
Call before you dig.

The following tree species have weak wood and should always be planted at distances away from the pole line that exceed the mature height of the tree:

- Alder, Red
- Austrian Pine
- Basswood
- Boxelder
- Catalpa
- Poplar
- Silver Maple
- Tulip Tree (Yellow Poplar)
- Willows, including all subspecies



### Member Events:

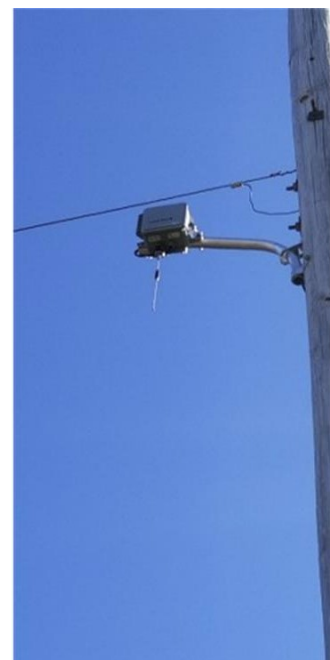
DCEC will be holding a Member Q&A on March 31, 2025, at the Delaware County Public Safety Complex, 280 Pheobe Lane, Delhi, NY. Members are welcome to join at 5:00PM for light refreshments. The event will begin at 5:30PM, with an update on your Cooperative, followed by the Q&A Session. RSVPs and member questions can be pre-submitted to [memberservices@dce.coop](mailto:memberservices@dce.coop)

We are currently scheduling future events for your Cooperative to come to you! Please check our website at: <https://dce.coop/members> for future dates

### Metering System Upgrade

As we've discussed in recent newsletters, the Cooperative is currently upgrading our aging electric meters to newer models. These new meters will be better able to send outage information to our office when there are problems on our system, as well as enable the Cooperative to better manage our hour-by-hour energy consumption as a system. This enhanced capability to manage our energy consumption is one of the best ways that we can stay within our hydro allocations from the New York Power Authority. We are excited about this project, and the opportunities it brings to better serve you, our members.

You may start noticing new devices being installed on Cooperative poles (see pictures below) that allow us to collect and transmit information faster to respond to the increased energy needs of the membership. Stay tuned for more information about this exciting project in the months to come.



### Reporting Outages

You're away from home, and your internet based device just went offline. What caused that? Could it be a power outage? Is it just an internet disruption?

We often get calls from people reporting what they suspect may be a power outage, but turns out not to be. We want to remind people that we will respond to an outage call by dispatching our on-call crew to address the problem. And if there is a power outage that is the Cooperative's responsibility, there is no charge for that. However, if it turns out not to be a Cooperative power outage, you will be assessed the costs for that call out on your next bill. Please help us out by checking a few things before calling, such as your breaker panel. Could your perceived power outage actually be because a breaker tripped in your home? Or a GFCI outlet? One easy way to check is to look at your electric meter. If utility power has been disrupted, the LED display on your meter would be blank. If there are numbers on the display, then the problem is likely on the member side of the meter and it's a good indication that the problem is within your home.



### Water Heaters

Elsewhere in this newsletter, you may have read about the metering system upgrade we are working on. Our current water heater load control system runs on the old metering system, and will cease to function soon. Therefore, we will be discontinuing the current water heater program, and the associated bill credit, effective with the May bill. Stay tuned for more information about new programs for load control to be launched later this year.



Pictured are a blank meter (top) and an operational meter receiving power (bottom)

### Reminder: Monthly Service Charge Changes Occurring in May 2025

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
<b>2nd Service Charge Revisions are Applied to Member Bills</b>	<b>May of 2025</b>
Rate Redesign	2027

### DCEC is Committed to Helping Members During Financial Hardships

DCEC encourages members currently struggling to meet their monthly payment obligation to contact the local agencies listed below for payment assistance.

1. Contact DCEC’s Billing Department to set up payment arrangements: 1-607-746-2341
2. Contact your local County Social Service program:
  - A. Delaware County 1-607-832-5300
  - B. Schoharie County: 1-518-295-8334
  - C. Otsego County: 1-607-547-4200
  - D. Delaware Opportunities provides assistance through certain agencies and can be reached at 1-607-746-1600
  - E. Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) Hotline: 1-800-342-3009

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

### HEAP Benefits

The New York State Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) provides payment assistance for income eligible residents to use towards the 2024-2025 heating season. This year’s regular HEAP benefits opened November 1, 2024. For eligibility, income guidelines, and how to apply contact your local Department of Social Services or the NYS OTDA Hotline at 1-800-342-3009.

Additional information is provided on: <https://otda.ny.gov/programs/heap>

## DCEC’s UPDATED NUMBERS:

**AUTOMATED LINE**  
for payments & outage reporting:  
**(855) 939-3672**

**LIVE Representative 24/7/365:**  
**(607) 746-2341**



CATSKILL HI-LINE is a Publication of the Delaware County Electric Cooperative, Inc. and is published bi-monthly for the membership. This newsletter has articles submitted by CEO/General Manager John Gasstrom, Cooperative Relations Manager, Stacey Young, and Project Grant Administrator Janelle Linehan.

The information contained herein is designed to promote action and discussion among members. Statements published do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Cooperative. The information has been obtained from sources believed to be reliable, and the editor has exercised reasonable care to assure its accuracy.

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