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CATSKILL HI-LINE

Newsletter — January 2026



From the desk of CEO John Gasstrom

Happy New Year! We feel lucky that 2025 had far fewer outages than 2024, and we were able to get through the holiday season with only a few interruptions for Members. We continue to closely watch the NY-ISO power market and look at our total membership load profile as we search for additional ways to keep power costs as low as possible for all Members.

I would like to highlight a couple of activities coming up that need YOUR help. First, we need to select members for the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee is responsible for identifying potential candidates to run for Board of Director positions. This year, there will be three seats up for election, so we will need to get started early and will really need your help.

If you would like to be a member of the Nominating Committee, please call the office at 607-746-2341 or e-mail nomcom@dce.coop.

Another area we need your assistance with is in finding Juniors in High School this year, who are interested in representing DCEC as our Youth Delegate to Washington D.C. and the Youth Leadership Council. There is a \$1,000 scholarship associated with being selected as the Youth delegate, and various additional scholarship opportunities available. The winning student also

gets an all-expense paid trip for themselves and a chaperone to Washington, D.C. to participate in our visits to Capital Hill. This opportunity looks great on a resume, college applications, and additional scholarship applications.

Visit <https://dce.coop/youth-delegate-program> for more information.

If you're an adult and also want to participate in reaching our elected officials, I encourage you to join our action committee to help us get our message across to our national and state level leadership. More information on contributing to the America's Electric Cooperative Political Action Committee can be found on page 6 of this newsletter. We also have a limited number of 2026 pocket calendars left. Any member who signs up for the nominating committee, Voices for Cooperative Power, or supports the Action Committee will receive a free pocket calendar as a thank you gift.

On December 19th, the DCEC linemen addressed a large-scale outage due to weather that saw hundreds of members without power. I want to take a moment to thank them for their hours of hard work throughout the night and the following day. I would also like to thank members for their patience while we worked through the repairs. Your kind words and support are noted and appreciated.

Cooperatively Yours,

John Gasstrom



Powering Our Rural Communities

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Operations Update - Dakoda J Aiken, E.I.T

Looking back to this time last year, many members experienced a window of high usage in January and February due to the cold weather as well as increased costs to deliver that power due to demand. Monitoring and controlling your own personal residential usage can make an enormous difference in the amount you pay during these peak usage months. For this reason we have compiled a list of things that can be done or checked to help prepare for the harsher season.

1. Make sure all of the doors and windows in your home are closed to maintain the heat. While this may seem like an obvious countermeasure, it's very common to see temperatures swing by 30 degrees in just a few hours so these things can go unnoticed and have a large impact on energy usage. In this same line of thinking, weather stripping on windows and doors can make a significant difference in the insulation of your home (and savings on your energy bills).
2. Water pumps can be a nearly silent and significant source of energy consumption. If you aren't looking for it, you may not notice that the toilet in your home is running every few minutes. This can be caused by a few things but the most likely cause is a poor seal in the flush valve of the toilet. This can cause water to slowly leak out, causing the tank to fill up again. Once this repeats a few times the water pump in your home will run to restore pressure throughout the house, consuming electricity. A small adjustment can prevent this pump from cycling hundreds of times over the course of your billing period.
3. Electric Heaters are often advertised as "100%" efficient, which while technically true, does not tell the entire story. Electric Heaters can be an excellent way to offset the cost of fuel oil, propane, or firewood however there is a tradeoff in a circumstance like this one. What you aren't paying for in Oil, Propane, or firewood - you end up paying in electricity. It is up to each individual to determine which is the best source of heat and best for you and your household.
4. If you notice a change in the usage of your home, think about what may have changed recently. Did you get a new Electric Vehicle? Have you started using electric heaters? Did you forget to take the AC Unit out of the window when the weather got colder? Did you set the refrigerator/freezer to a lower temperature? All of these things are worth the time it takes to stay ahead of the curve this season.

You may recall that the Cooperative first deployed new Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) in 2012 throughout the service territory, and we are well on our way to replacing those aging meters with new ones at Members' homes and businesses. In the near-future, we expect to complete the replacements in the Davenport, Meredith, Bovina, Kortright, Jefferson and Gilboa regions of our territory. As a reminder to our membership, we would like to reiterate the DCEC policy that meters are to be outdoors and accessible to our personnel. Having the meter located inside of an enclosed porch, behind a locked fence, or obstructed in some other way can prevent us from accessing the Cooperative's equipment. These newer meters will give us a better understanding of the Cooperative's energy usage, unlock opportunities to save power costs on our bill from the Power Authority (which is in turn passed on to you), and give us timelier information about outages to enable us to complete power restoration activities quicker. When we come to your residence to change out the meter we will generally try to knock on the door to give a friendly warning that the power will be out momentarily and you will be back to normal operation within minutes. Until we complete this replacement, it is still extremely helpful that each member calls in their own outages as the older meters do not always correctly or quickly report service outages.

Members continue to submit Distributed Generation applications going into the new year for solar panels and battery storage systems which are always welcome. As a reminder, we have our policy and procedures for this listed on our website. Similarly, we are accepting information on member-owned generators (full-home as well as partial) to document what percentage of our membership has backup options available. For now, this is information-only as we are looking at developing member-saving opportunities in the future. If you wish to provide information on your own generator, please call the DCEC office with nameplate information of your system.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- Be in their junior (11th grade) year
- Participate in extra-curricular activities and community service

APPLICATION PROCESS

- Complete and submit the application
- Submit a one-page student essay describing yourself
- Submit a letter of recommendation from a teacher or administrator
- Once applications are submitted, a remote or in-person interview will be scheduled.



Every generation leaves behind a legacy, footprints that shape the future. The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour is your chance to do the same. For over 60 years, electric cooperatives have sent high school students to Washington, D.C., to discover their voice, step into history and begin writing the story only they can tell.

This once-in-a-lifetime experience isn't just about seeing the nation's capital. It's about preparing students to lead, to grow and to make their mark on the world.

What's in it for students?

Delegates from New York will join more than 1,800 students from across the country in Washington, D.C., April 27 - 30th, 2026. During the trip, students will:

- Develop leadership skills through hands-on experiences and workshops
- Strengthen their resumes with a nationally recognized program that stands out to colleges and employers
- Connect with peers from 44 states, building friendships that last long after the trip
- Meet with elected officials and learn how government impacts their communities
- Experience history up close by visiting world-class museums and monuments
- Learn about cooperatives and how they support rural communities across America

The best part? All expenses—travel, lodging, meals, and program costs—are covered by Delaware County Electric Cooperative. The program is coordinated by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

Don't Let This Opportunity Pass By

Applications for Youth Tour will be open until **February 13th, 2026**. If you know a high school student who is ready to grow as a leader and take the next step in their journey, encourage them to apply today.

For details, visit our website <https://dce.coop/youth-delegate-program>



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 the DCEC's Annual Meeting in August. DCEC currently has seven directors representing three regions of the DCEC's service territory. 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.

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 2026 Annual Meeting of Members is planned for August, 2026 - with the exact date TBD.

Elections will occur at the 2026 Annual Meeting for **one board seat, representing the Central Region.**

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 position. 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 either through:

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

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

Interested in Serving on the DCEC Board?

The governing body of DCEC is a member-elected Board of Directors comprised of active DCEC members who are compensated for their time. The Board is responsible for the Co-op's overall policy and direction, as well as for standards and requirements for safety, affordability, and reliability. The DCEC Board is a working board with active committees. The Board currently meets in-person once monthly, typically on the 4th Tuesday of each month. The Board also has separate committees for such matters as financials, staff and organization, and core projects. The current Board of Directors invites any interested candidates to join a regular scheduled monthly meeting. The interested candidate can get a sense of the regular business addressed at the monthly meetings and will have the opportunity to ask any questions that they may have about serving on the Board. If you are interested in attending a Board meeting please contact the Cooperative at (607) 746-9294 prior to the meeting so we can ensure you are notified of any changes/ modifications of the regular schedule.

Serving on the Board of Directors is a worthwhile and enriching experience, both personally and professionally. If you are interested in adding your name to this year's ballot, please send an email to nomcom@dce.coop informing the Cooperative of your intent to do so. A letter of intent should be submitted by **Friday, March 20, 2026**.

If you are interested in being a candidate, or if you would like additional information, please contact the DCEC office at (607) 746-9294.

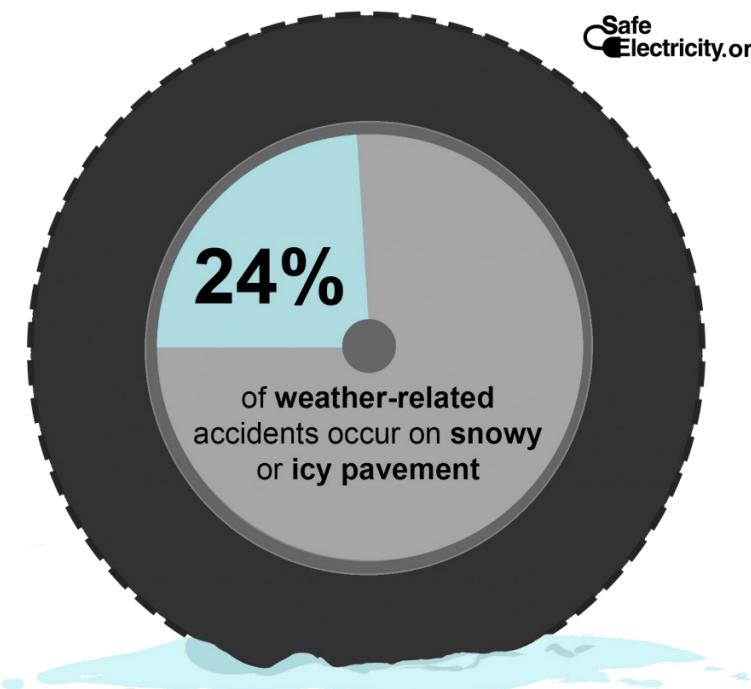
For additional information about the Nominating Committee and how to serve please call the office at (607) 746-2341 or email nomcom@dce.coop

2025-2026 HEAP Monthly Income Limits

The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) helps low-income people pay the cost of heating their homes. Your total household gross monthly income for your household size must be at or below the following guidelines:

2025-2026 HEAP Benefits Gross Monthly Income Guidelines:

Household Size	Maximum Gross Monthly Income
1	\$3,473
2	\$4,542
3	\$5,611
4	\$6,680
5	\$7,749
6	\$8,818
7	\$9,018
8	\$9,218
9	\$9,419
10	\$9,619
11	\$9,820
12	\$10,020
13	\$10,221
Each additional	Add \$687



research collected from the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration

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 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:

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 & can be reached at 1-607-746-1600

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.



America's Electric
Cooperatives | PAC

Bill Addition * \$1/Month (\$12/year)
 One-Time \$2/Month (\$24/year)
Contribution \$5/Month (\$60/year)
 \$10/Month (\$120/year)

\$ _____

I affirm that my contribution has been made with personal funds:

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

COOPERATIVE: _____

EMAIL: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

*Federal law requires the following information for contributions exceeding \$200:

EMPLOYER: _____

OCCUPATION: _____

Also sign me up for Voices for Cooperative Power

*Monthly contributions will continue until you notify us to discontinue

Contributions to the NRECA America's Electric Cooperatives PAC are not tax deductible for federal income tax purposes.

Contributions to America's Electric Cooperatives PAC are voluntary and will be used for political purposes. You have the right to refuse to contribute without reprisal. Federal law prohibits contributions from foreign nationals who lack permanent resident status. Any contribution guidelines presented are merely suggestions. You are free to contribute more or less than the suggested amounts, or not at all. NRECA will not favor or disadvantage anyone by reason of the amount contributed or a decision not to contribute.

GENTLY REMOVE ICE AND SNOW

Help keep your meter accessible
by clearing ice and snow, but
please do not use a shovel or
sharp object to do so.



NEW YEAR'S SAFETY RESOLUTIONS

Consider these safety-themed resolutions this year. They will help keep you and others safe!

1. Do not drive distracted, especially near or in work zones.
2. Do not place a cell phone on bedding or under a pillow.
3. If you see a downed power line, stay away and call 9-1-1.
4. If you are in a car accident involving a downed line, do not get out.
5. Do not take on electrical work if you are not qualified.
6. Never use a portable generator indoors, in a garage or in an enclosed area.
7. Test GFCI outlets monthly to ensure they are working.
8. Ensure your home's electrical system is up to code.
9. Look up and look out for overhead power lines when working outside.
10. Call 8-1-1 prior to your next digging project.

Helpful Tips:

- **Meters** Can't get to your meter? Maybe we can't either! Know where your meter is located, keep it clear and accessible. If you're the first person calling in to report an outage, we may ask you to verify your meter is blank. This information allows us to more quickly diagnose the size of the outage and restore power.
- **Phone Numbers** Make sure your contact information is up to date. There are times we need to contact you – confirming your power is restored, billing purposes, and alerts are a few reasons.
- **Security Cameras** If you call to report an outage because your cameras are not working we will need someone to check that the meter is blank. Cameras can be out due to other factors than power outages.
- **Service Calls:** Please note that trip charges will apply to service calls made in response to situations that are not related to a power outage. Examples include issues with customer-owned equipment, inaccessible meters, or problems caused by security systems or other devices. To avoid unnecessary charges, ensure your meter is accessible, verify your equipment is functioning properly, and confirm the outage before requesting service.