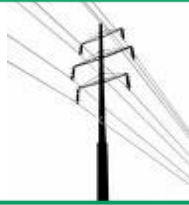




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CATSKILL HI-LINE

Newsletter — October 2026

From the desk of CEO John Gasstrom

There's something about October in the Catskills. The mornings get a little crisper, the hills put on their annual show, and those of us who have lived here for any length of time know that winter is waiting just around the corner.

October is also National Co-op Month, which makes this a good time to talk a little about where your Cooperative is headed.

DCEC is owned by the Members we serve. We do not have outside shareholders, and the decisions we make are intended to support the long-term interests of our Members and the communities we call home. That local ownership has always been one of the great strengths of the cooperative model. But being a cooperative does not mean that we should keep doing something the same way simply because that is how we have always done it.

The challenges facing electric utilities are changing. Power costs are increasing. Severe storms continue to put pressure on our system. Invasive species are changing the landscape around our power lines. Technology is advancing quickly, and finding and developing the skilled people who will operate tomorrow's electric system is becoming more challenging.

Our job is to preserve the things that work well, while being willing to look at new tools and new approaches when they can help us provide better service to you.

One place where Members can already see a difference is in our Rights-of-Way. Trees remain one of the biggest threats to reliability in our heavily wooded service territory, and we have made substantial progress improving our Rights-of-Way over the past year. We plan to increase that focus again in 2027.

But our strategy cannot simply be to cut more trees.

Many of you have heard me talk about the Emerald Ash Borer. Unfortunately, it has killed an enormous number of ash trees throughout our area. Many of those trees are outside of our normal maintained Right-of-Way but are still tall enough to reach our lines when they fall. We have been looking for better ways to find those danger trees before Mother Nature finds them for us.

That is one of the ideas behind our RESIST Grid Disruptions project through the federal Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships, or GRIP, program. We have been talking about this grant for more than two years, and I am happy to say that we are finally getting very close to putting this project into action.

The project will allow us to combine traditional vegetation-management work with tools such as aerial imagery, remote sensing, improved system data, and predictive analysis.

In plain English, we want to get better at finding the places most likely to cause us trouble and concentrate our time and money there before the lights go out.

That distinction is important. This is not simply about spending more money to do more of the same work. It is about doing the work more intelligently.

Our Advanced Metering Infrastructure, or AMI, project is another example. We are now approximately three-quarters of the way through deployment of the new system and continue to make progress throughout our service territory.

AMI is about much more than the meter hanging on the side of your house. It gives us better information about what is happening across our system, can help us identify outages more quickly, and gives Members better information about when they are using electricity.

And increasingly, when we use electricity matters almost as much as how much we use it.

I have written before about DCEC's valuable allocation of low-cost hydroelectric power from the New York Power Authority. Unfortunately, our allocation does not cover all of the electricity our Members use. When we exceed it, we must purchase additional energy at market prices. The difference has become pretty eye-opening.

Continued page 2...

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



In 2024, the effective cost of the incremental energy we purchased was roughly eight times the cost of our hydro energy. In 2025, it was approximately 17 times the hydro rate. Through the first eight months of this year, incremental energy has been costing us more than 22 times the hydro energy rate.

That is one reason we spend so much time watching our system load and talking about peaks. During the colder months, DCEC's highest demand generally occurs in the morning, often somewhere around 7:30 to 9:00. During the summer, the system tends to peak later in the day, generally in the early evening.

No one is suggesting that you should sit in the dark or avoid using electricity when you need it. But some things—running the dishwasher, doing laundry, or charging batteries or an electric vehicle—may not need to happen at the same time everybody else is using the most electricity.

As AMI gives us better information, it also gives us the foundation to develop new voluntary programs that can help Members make those choices and potentially share in the savings that come from lowering our system costs.

All of this is especially important as we work on our 2027 budget. Purchased-power costs are placing increasing pressure on the Cooperative, and we are evaluating the need for a rate increase beginning in April 2027. No final decision has been made, and the Board will be reviewing the budget and our rate needs over the coming months. I believe, however, that it is better to start having that conversation with you now rather than surprise anyone later. Technology and equipment are only part of preparing for the future. We also need people who know how to use them.

One example is our new mobile safety training trailer, acquired with support from the Appalachian Regional Commission and shared with SUNY Delhi as part of our ongoing partnership in lineworker education and workforce development.

What makes that especially rewarding is that we are already seeing the other end of that partnership. Our two newest apprentice lineworkers came to DCEC after completing SUNY Delhi's Electrical Construction and Utility Operations program and are now continuing their development through DCEC's apprenticeship program.

That is exactly the kind of workforce pipeline we hoped to create: introduce students to the utility industry, give them meaningful training close to home, and then provide opportunities for those students to build careers serving the communities where they live. The training trailer, our apprentices, AMI, improved Rights-of-Way, GRIP, and better management of our power costs may sound like a pretty mixed bag of projects.

They really aren't.

Although these projects may look very different from one another, they all support the same long-term strategic priorities: a more resilient electric system, responsible control of costs, a strong workforce, and better service for our Members.

That does not mean adopting technology just because it is new, or changing things simply for the sake of change. Every new approach has to answer an important question: does it help us serve our Members better?

Sometimes the best answer will be to keep doing something the way we have done it for years. Other times, the world around us changes, and we need to change with it.

I believe a strong cooperative needs to be able to do both: respect the foundation that earlier generations of Members and employees built for us, while making sure DCEC is ready for the next generation.

Thank you, as always, for your support of your Cooperative.

Cooperatively Yours,

John Gasstrom



David "TK" Pursell, Vice President of Cherokee Manufacturing, demonstrates DCEC's new mobile safety training trailer, acquired with support from the Appalachian Regional Commission



Pictured from left to right: Jeff Russell, DCEC Board President; Dr. Mary Bonderoff, President of SUNY Delhi; Daniel J. Davis, Dean of the College of Applied Professions at SUNY Delhi; Dr. David C. Brower, Provost & Vice President of Academic Affairs at SUNY Delhi; Ryan Klein, Instructor at SUNY Delhi; and John Gasstrom, DCEC CEO/General Manager



Safe
Electricity.org™

Dress up with care for HALLOWEEN

When dressing your little ones (or yourself),
keep these safety tips in mind:

- Always wear costumes that are labeled flame resistant.
- Wear bright, reflective costumes or add strips of reflective tape to improve visibility.
- Do not wear decorative (colored) contact lenses unless you have seen an eyecare professional.
- Wear makeup and hats rather than costume masks that can obscure or obstruct your vision.
- Test the makeup you plan to use in advance for a possible allergy.

In addition, inspect any plug-in decorations for signs of wear and tear (fraying or bare wires or broken plugs) and replace them if damaged.



© NRECA

RICE KRISPIE TREAT PUMPKINS

MAKES 12 PUMPKINS

INGREDIENTS

- ¼ cup butter
- 1 bag large marshmallows (about 40)
- 6 cups Rice Krispies cereal
- Yellow & red food coloring
- 12 Mini Rolos
- 12 Green M&M's
- Oil or melted butter (for hands)

DIRECTIONS

- Melt butter in a large pot over low heat.
- Add marshmallows and stir until smooth.
- Mix in yellow food coloring, then add red drops until pumpkin orange.
- Stir in Rice Krispies until coated.
- Grease hands and shape mixture into 12 pumpkin-sized balls.
- While warm, press a Mini Rolo on top for the stem and a green M&M beside it for the leaf.
- Let cool until firm.

A little treat for a spooktacular Halloween! ♥

TRICK OR TREAT

Don't Let an Electrical Mishap Be Your Halloween Trick

As you ready your yard and porch for Halloween, make sure the decorations you plug in do not become hazardous. To avoid a Halloween scare, take these safety precautions:

- Discard any decorations that have **cracked or frayed cords** or damaged plugs.
- Do not put any decorations on power poles, padmount transformers or any other electrical equipment.
- Use decorations that are endorsed by a reputable testing laboratory such as **Underwriters Laboratories (UL)**.
- If you are using extension cords outdoors, make sure they are **rated for outdoor use**.
- Secure all cords** so they do not become tripping hazards.

- Plug all cords into circuits protected by GFCIs to prevent electrical shock.
- Do not use nails or tacks to hang lights or other electrical decor.
- Keep decorations **away from flammable items** like bales of hay, cornstalks or witch's brew.

Have a safe and festive Halloween complete with safe tricks and tasty treats.

Learn more at: SafeElectricity.org

Energy Vampires



can add up to **10%** to electric bills.

Safe
Electricity.org

research collected from Energy.gov



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:

- Delaware County Department of Social Services: 607-832-5300
- Schoharie County Department of Social Services: 518-295-8334
- Otsego County Department of Social Services: 607-547-1700
- Delaware Opportunities: 607-746-1600
- Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) Hotline: 800-342-3009
- Catholic Charities : (607) 604-4071

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

Installing an EV Charger? Contact Us First!

If you're purchasing an electric vehicle and planning to install a charging station at your home or business, please contact us before installation. EV chargers can place a significant demand on your electrical service, and in some cases, upgrades to existing equipment may be needed to safely support the additional load. Notifying us in advance helps prevent overloaded equipment, unexpected power outages, and costly repairs that could otherwise be avoided. A quick call or email allows us to ensure your service is ready for your new charger.

For assistance, please contact our office or email operations@dce.coop.

Thank you for helping us keep your electric service safe and reliable

DCEC Office Closures:

Tuesday, November 3, 2026 - Staff Training

Wednesday, November 11, 2026 - Veterans Day

November 26–27, 2026 - Thanksgiving

December 24–25, 2026 - Christmas

Thursday, December 31, 2026 - New Year's Eve

☐ Bill Addition * ☐ \$1/Month (\$12/year)
☐ One-Time Contribution ☐ \$2/Month (\$24/year)
☐ \$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.