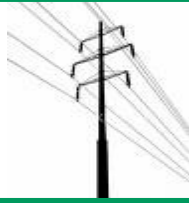




This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



CATSKILL HI-LINE

Newsletter- March 2026

Message from the desk of CEO John Gasstrom

Spring is on its way, and I for one am more than ready for some nicer weather. Electricity costs have been rising, and the cooperative has seen higher bills than ever before from our energy supplier. We continue to look for more ways to help control our energy consumption as a system. We appreciate those members who have helped by making adjustments to their energy use where they are able. While the impact on our system load has been small to start, I believe we can find ways to magnify this impact over the coming months and hopefully see some more meaningful savings on our energy costs. Some ways members have been helping include running dishwashers and clothes washers and dryers after 10 PM and before 6 AM. This has an impact by lowering how much energy the cooperative requires during peak times, when energy costs are the highest. Other ways to help including charging electric vehicles during that same time frame and keeping your thermostat set a little lower if you are using electric heat.

Because the cooperative operates on a not-for-profit basis, the higher power bills that we receive are a pass through to the electricity consumers. This shows up on your bill as a "Power Cost Adjustment" (PCA) that is normally an additional cost, but can occasionally result in a credit, especially in months where we use little power beyond our hydro allocation. We've received many calls from members who feel as though their bills have risen substantially, when they really haven't altered their perceived consumption habits. Many times, these increases are tied to a higher energy consumption, in addition to the PCA adding some additional cost to each kWh of energy consumed. The colder temperatures we have seen this winter have resulted in higher levels of electricity use throughout our system, which is sometimes difficult to understand until the bill arrives

The good news is that we have completed a substantial portion of our project to upgrade all meters to provide more detailed information to you about your energy use. The upgraded meters will be able to tell you what your energy use was during any 15 minute period of the previous day. This will allow you to see how your normal daily routine may impact your energy bill. Please download and install the "Smart Hub" application on your device to get the most out of this new information.

While we are speaking about meters, I want to remind all members to please not tamper with your meter. This includes removing the meter from its socket for any reason. We have had an increased incidence of people putting tape over the meter glass, which can permanently damage the meter. Please be reminded that there is a \$500 fee levied for tampering with your electric meter, plus all costs of sending a crew out and any repair of damage to the meter. As a condition of your membership in the cooperative, all members agree to allow our crews to access the electric meter at any time and agree to keep it clear of any obstructions. Meter tampering can include any deliberate attempts to block the reading of the meter. As we complete the upgrade of the meter hardware, we appreciate your continued cooperation in this.

Finally, I would like to congratulate Makenna Wehrli of Bainbridge-Guilford high school on being selected as our Youth Tour candidate this year, and the winner of a \$1,000 scholarship. Makenna will have additional opportunities for more scholarships, as well as an exciting trip to Washington, D.C. to help represent electric cooperatives on Capitol Hill. Congratulations Makenna! If you know of a current sophomore in high school, please remind them next February to apply for this exciting scholarship and leadership development opportunity.

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

YOUTH *Make* TOUR *Your* 2026 *Mark*

We are proud to announce that Makenna Wehrli, a junior at Bainbridge-Guilford High School, has been selected as our 2026 Youth Tour candidate. Each year, we look for a student who demonstrates leadership, service, curiosity, and a genuine commitment to community—qualities Makenna embodies wholeheartedly.

Makenna's passion for engaging with the world began early. At age 14, she was accepted into the Rotary Youth Exchange program, and at 15 she spent a full year living abroad in Taipei City, Taiwan. During that time, she embraced a new culture, built meaningful connections, and discovered a greater understanding of life beyond her own community. She describes the experience as one that permanently expanded her perspective and taught her invaluable lessons about compassion, communication, and the power of learning from others.

At Bainbridge-Guilford, Makenna is a dedicated student whose favorite subjects include English and History. She is also an active participant in many school organizations, including History Club, Drama Club, Yes!Leads, Student Council, and Student Government, where she currently serves as class secretary. Outside the classroom, she competes in dance and spends many evenings training at her local studio.

Service plays a central role in Makenna's life. She volunteers regularly with Rotary at community events—most recently helping with the Election Day Pancake Dinner—and she works monthly alongside her church to support the local soup kitchen. When the Red Cross visits her town, she makes it a priority to donate blood as well.

Looking ahead, Makenna hopes to pursue a career in public service, whether through education, diplomacy, or another field where she can help people. She sees Youth Tour as a unique opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of our nation's legislative process, meet leaders and advocates from across the country, and learn more about how she can contribute to her community and beyond.

We are thrilled to support Makenna on this journey and look forward to all she will accomplish—both during Youth Tour and in the years to come.



Makenna Wehrli
Bainbridge - Guilford

We are pleased to announce Emilie Saltzman as our 2026 Youth Tour alternate, who will receive a \$500 scholarship in recognition of her hard work, leadership, and service.

Emilie is a student at Delaware Academy whose passion for helping others has shaped much of her high school experience. Early on, she discovered a deep interest in psychology and the importance of understanding others' perspectives. Her involvement with programs such as Best Buddies allowed her to form meaningful connections with students who have developmental differences—experiences she credits with helping her grow more confident, empathetic, and dedicated to advocacy.

Emilie also takes initiative in her school community. She has spoken on topics such as bullying and the value of respecting differing viewpoints, and she strives to be a voice of encouragement for others. Outside of school, Emilie volunteers regularly, including work with the American Red Cross and local rescue shelters.

Through Youth Tour, Emilie hopes to learn more about national issues, civic engagement, and the impact one person can make through determination and compassion. We are proud to recognize Emilie for her commitment to service and her desire to help her community.



Emilie Saltzman
Delaware Academy

MAKE YOUR MARK!

What Is PCI Compliance — and Why Should You Care?

When you pay your electric bill online or hand over your payment details, you're trusting that your information is being handled safely. That's where PCI DSS compliance comes in.

PCI DSS stands for Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard — a set of rules that any organization accepting credit or debit card payments must follow. Think of it as a safety checklist designed to protect your card information from theft and fraud.

These rules cover things like encrypting your payment data, limiting who can access it, and regularly testing systems for vulnerabilities. Organizations that follow these standards are far less likely to experience a data breach — which means your financial information stays where it belongs: private and secure.

This is also why our staff will never ask for your credit or debit card information over the phone. Accepting payments that way falls outside PCI DSS compliance guidelines and, in short, it's just not a risk we're willing to take with our Member's data. If you need to make a payment, we'll always direct you to our secure, automated payment line. DCEC exists to serve your best interests — and that includes keeping your financial information safe. We remain committed to full PCI DSS compliance so that every transaction you make with us is one you can feel good about.

Can You Dig It?



-  An underground utility line is **damaged once every few minutes** because someone didn't call 811.
-  Call 811, the "Call Before You Dig Number," at least **3 business days** prior to digging.
-  811 locators **do not detect** underground sprinkler systems, invisible fences, data communication systems, private water systems, or gas piping to a garage.
-  Even if you have previously had underground utilities marked, **utilities can shift**, so it's best to call before starting a new project.
-  Once all of your utilities have been located, then you can start your digging project!

Learn more at SafeElectricity.org

Call 811 before you dig



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**

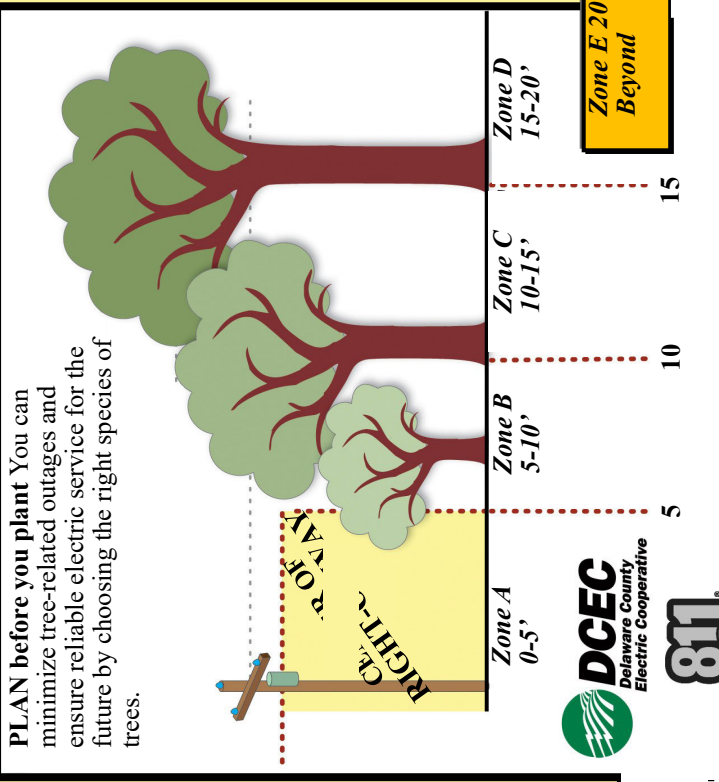
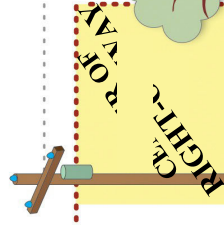


DCEC Crews Trim Trees to Keep Power Lines Safe!



TREE PLANTING GUIDE

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.

Zone	Distance from the Center of Right-of-Way	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, because secondary lines are not listed with UDig New

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 sub-species

Annual Arbor Green Tree & Shrub Sales

Schoharie County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD)

Annual Tree & Shrub Sale is underway!

Online ordering has been extended past the original March 5th deadline!

Take advantage of the extended ordering period while supplies last.

For order forms and additional information, please visit:
www.schohariesoilandwater.org/trees




METER TAMPERING
IS ILLEGAL & DANGEROUS

Meters should only be installed, maintained, or removed by electric utility crews.

Safe Electricity.org

DCEC Office Closures:

Monday, May 25, 2026 - Memorial Day
Friday, July 3, 2026 - Independence Day
Monday, September 7, 2026 - Labor Day
Wednesday, November 11, 2026, - Veterans Day
November 26-27th, 2026 - Thanksgiving
December 24-25th, 2026 - Christmas
Thursday, December 31, 2026 - New Years Eve




I'M MEANT TO BE SEEN

Please keep electric meters and other electrical equipment clear so that we may better serve you.

BUDGET BILLING PLANS

CHOOSE A BUDGET PLAN THAT FITS YOUR STYLE

FIXED



VARIABLE

June (budget billing begins in July)	WHEN YOU CAN ENROLL	Any month
1/12 of the annual estimated net billing is billed for each of the first 11 months (July–May).	HOW THE MONTHLY AMOUNT IS CALCULATED	Monthly amount = average of the previous 12 months of actual usage. Recalculated each month.
Stable for 11 months (same amount July–May).	MONTHLY BILL CONSISTENCY	Varies month to month, but seasonal swings are significantly smoothed by averaging.
Prefer predictable payments and don't mind a June adjustment.	BEST FOR MEMBERS WHO...	Prefer payments that track usage trends with reduced seasonal spikes.

ELIGIBILITY FOR DCEC BUDGET BILLING

- Residential Service Class – 1 (SC-1) or Residential Service Class – 2 (SC-2)
 - 12 months of usage required
 - Account balance has to be \$0 to enroll

Note: Three late payments in 12 months discontinues the plan, and any past due balance is subject to our Disconnects Policy.


DCEC is Committed to Helping Members During Financial Hardships

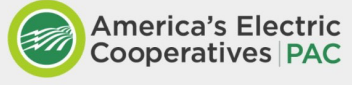
DCEC encourages members currently struggling to meet their monthly payment obligation to contact the local agencies listed below for payment assistance.

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.

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.





<input type="radio"/> Bill Addition *	<input type="radio"/> \$1/Month (\$12/year)
<input type="radio"/> One-Time Contribution	<input type="radio"/> \$2/Month (\$24/year)
<input type="radio"/> \$ _____	<input type="radio"/> \$5/Month (\$60/year)
	<input type="radio"/> \$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

5 Tips To GO GREEN for St. Patrick's Day



- 1. Replace your HVAC filter.**
These typically need replacing every three months, though factors like pets, climate and system age can affect the timing.
- 2. Install a smart thermostat.**
A smart thermostat offers convenience, savings and efficiency by adjusting the temperature based on your schedule — reducing usage when no one is home.
- 3. Cut energy use during peak hours.**
In spring, peak electricity hours are usually in the evening. Reduce usage by visiting a park, a theater or dining out.
- 4. Upgrade to energy-efficient appliances.**
Look for appliances that are ENERGY STAR-certified, using 10 to 15% less energy and water than standard models, according to Energy.gov.
- 5. Save energy through rebate programs for solar, battery storage or electric vehicles.**
Check with utilities and government programs for rebates and incentives to help make these technologies more accessible.

Learn more at: 