



DEC Current

Mutual Aid

Mutual Aid is the process that can help electric cooperatives temporarily increase their workforces to respond to major outages, such as those caused by storms. The goal of mutual aid is to restore power as quickly and safely as possible.

How does Mutual Aid work? In preparation for emergencies, Cooperatives have mutual assistance agreements with each other that allow them to call upon each other, when available, to aid in restoral efforts. The 'home' cooperative needing help provides an estimate of how many people it can realistically and safely use and what type of skills they should have. Other cooperatives and utilities in the network will then respond with what they can offer. Sometimes, all of the contemplated mutual aid crews are already deployed or are busy with similar damage on their own systems.

The OEC network of Mutual Aid usually starts with other electric cooperatives in the New York State Rural Electric Cooperative Association because they are well versed in our construction methods. If they are not available, we sometimes call on municipal power systems (such as Sherburne or Hamilton) or private contract firms. Mutual Aid can help scale up the number of crews efficiently and effectively but this number cannot be unlimited. Generally, every outside crew needs a local OEC employee who can travel with the crew to "bird dog" outage locations and communicate with other crews to coordinate restoration efforts. The job of a bird dog is not just to locate outages but also to maintain the safety of all the crews on the system. Safety is always paramount so there can be situations where there may be too many crews to be safely deployed in a geographic area.

OEC also participates in the New York Association of Public Power (NYAPP) and its Mutual Aid Coordinator attends many meetings during the year to prepare for outages. The voluntary coordination effort by members of NYAPP effectively leverages more staff, vehicles, and equipment to respond to storm damage that exceeds local cooperative capacity.



Otsego Electric Cooperative
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Office Hours
7:30 – 4:00
Monday – Friday

Phone:
607-293-6622

Pay-by-Phone
1-844-963-2837

After Hours and Outages:
1-866-591-3192

Call **UDig New York** before
you dig at **811** or
1-800-962-7962

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www.otsegoec.coop

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80th Annual Member Meeting

Thank you for making our Cooperative Annual Meeting a great success! Your presence and participation are what make our cooperative community truly special. Your support is crucial to our continued growth and success.

This year, we were lucky enough to have two speakers join us from our national association, Paul Gutierrez and Kate Tillotson. They spoke to our members regarding the Cooperative world making national headlines and how vital having that platform is for cooperatives like ourselves to be heard regarding regulations that would have direct effects on us and in turn you, our members.

Members who attended received bill credits for joining us and were entered into raffles for prizes such as TVs, lawnmowers and more. Great BBQ was provided by Brooks BBQ. Youths in attendance went home with new backpacks filled with supplies. Live music was enjoyed and many local vendors, who provide a variety of services in our area, were in attendance to continue to spread information about their offerings to local community members.

Never attended a meeting but curious about it? Give us a call and we would be happy to explain why it's an important piece of being a Cooperative member with us.



Honoring our Veterans!



Board and CEO



Our Call Center

We sometimes hear from our customers that they had to speak with someone outside of our local office. While we strive to assist every member locally, there are occasions when this isn't feasible. To ensure you receive timely support, we have a dedicated call center that works with electric cooperatives nationwide.

During peak times or outside of our regular business hours, you might reach a representative from this call center. They are here to assist you and support us. You shouldn't need to provide extensive details during your call; just share your contact information, and the call center will forward your request to our local Member Services team. We will follow up with you as soon as possible. By the way, please call when you have an outage so we will be aware of all outage areas.

Their support is crucial, especially after hours or during outages, ensuring that no call goes unanswered. We deeply appreciate their assistance and are grateful for their role in helping us serve you better.

What Makes My Lights Blink During a Storm

OEC uses oil circuit reclosers (OCRs) to help maintain electrical power during storms. An oil circuit recloser plays the role of an "automatic fuse replacement" in a sense. For example, when a tree limb falls on the line the OCR "blows a fuse" and causes your lights to blink. However, if a tree limb falls to the ground and the line is undamaged, the OCR re-closes the circuit and the lights go on again. It will do this up to three times, but if the tree limb remains on the electric line it will protect the equipment by safely "blowing the fuse" or keeping the circuit offline.

So when your lights blink off and on during a storm, you'll know your OCR is on the job working properly.

Payment Challenges

As humans, we all face challenges in our lives from time to time, financial struggles included. At OEC we understand and want to remind you that we are here to help and work with you. Step one of this process is open communication between you, the member, and our Member Services team. If you find that you are falling behind, or you know you need to pay your bill slightly late, please reach out to us. We are happy to work with you and happy to refer you to local organizations who also may be able to help if you are in need of some additional assistance.

We make several attempts to try to contact you prior to any kind of disruption of service as we really prefer not to have to disconnect service for non-payment. An important piece of this is ensuring you keep your contact information up-to-date with us should it change. As long as we work together, we most always can find a solution that works for you and for the Cooperative, and we are happy to help!

FREE & EASY
ways to save energy

(Spoiler Alert: Your clothes and dishes won't know the difference)

Major home appliances account for approximately 16% of an average home's energy consumption.

1. Run full loads of laundry instead of several smaller ones.
2. Use cold water to wash your clothes.
3. Keep your refrigerator at 35° to 38°F and your freezer at 0°F.
4. Regularly defrost manual-defrost freezers and refrigerators.
5. Skip the heat-dry setting on your dishwasher.
6. Fully load your dishwasher before washing.
7. When buying new appliances, consider Energy Star versions.
8. Unplug appliances you're not using.

Time to replace that old appliance? Replacing older versions with energy-efficient models can save the average household more than \$500 per year.

Sources: National Resources Defense Council, U.S. Energy Information Administration

Safe Electricity.org

Keeping Member Information Safe

Often times, we will have an individual call on behalf of a family member's account. Unfortunately, we are unable to speak to a person who is not one of the account holders or listed as a Third Party on that account. This is to protect you, our members. It is difficult to always know exactly who we are talking to on the phone and we would never want to share personal information or billing information with someone who should not have that information.

When you call, please be patient with our Member Service Representatives as they may ask you to verify identifying information or they may tell you that, without a Third Party signed, they cannot speak with you altogether.

In accordance with the provisions of the New York Codes, Rules, and Regulations, Otsego Electric Cooperative is required to permit a residential member to designate, in writing a third party to receive a copy of every Notice of Disconnection, provided that such third party indicated in writing a willingness to receive these notices. Please contact the office at (607) 293-6622 for a copy of the applicable paperwork.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Now is the time to schedule annual maintenance for your home's heating system. During fall months, HVAC technicians are typically less busy, making this an excellent time for maintenance and any necessary repairs before the winter months.

A qualified technician can clean filters, check for leaks and ensure all system components are working efficiently to keep your home cozy and warm when the temperatures begin to drop.



October is National Cybersecurity Awareness Month.

Let's work together to build a safer digital world. Whether at home, work or school, we can increase our online safety with the following tips.

- 🔒 Recognize and report phishing attempts.
- 🔒 Use strong, unique passwords.
- 🔒 Enable multi-factor authentication.
- 🔒 Update software regularly.

