



Otsego Electric Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



# THE OEC CURRENT

People You Can Count On

www.otsegoec.coop

October 2011

## A Matter of PRINCIPLES

You might be surprised by the number of co-ops around you. Co-ops have been formed to sell produce and electricity, offer financial and banking services, provide housing and health care, and much more.

So where did the idea for co-ops come from? It's a matter of principles (seven, to be exact). The modern movement traces its roots to a store started by weavers in the town of Rochdale (pronounced Rotch-dale) in northern England in 1844. The group was guided by a set of principles drawn up by one of its members, Charles Howarth. When introduced into the U.S. by the National Grange in 1874, these "Rochdale Principles" fueled a cooperative explosion.

Although stated in many ways, the Rochdale Principles require that a cooperative must be open for anyone to join. Every member retains one voice, one vote. Electric co-ops hold member business meetings annually, allowing members to elect fellow consumers to guide the co-op and have a say in how their utility is run.

Education remains another big focus. Electric co-ops provide safety information in schools, share ideas on how to make your home more energy efficient to keep electric bills affordable, and make sure elected officials and opinion leaders know about the co-op business model. Because there is strength in numbers, co-ops tend to stick together when tackling regional and national issues.

Perhaps most important of all, co-ops are independent and community-focused, not tied to the purse strings of far-flung investors. Co-ops help drive local economic development, fund scholarships, support local charities, and work to make life better in the areas they serve—the heart of the cooperative difference. Learn more about cooperatives and the principles that define them at [www.go.coop](http://www.go.coop).

### Learn About Co-ops

## It's a Matter of PRINCIPLE

### The Rochdale Principles

Co-ops deliver electricity, sell produce, provide loans, and arrange for housing, health care, and more. But despite these differences, they all have one thing in common—seven cooperative principles:

- Voluntary and Open Membership
- Democratic Member Control
- Members' Economic Participation
- Autonomy and Independence
- Education, Training, Information
- Cooperation Among Cooperatives
- Concern for Community

Learn more at [www.go.coop](http://www.go.coop).

### Cooperative Enterprises Build a Better World

A message from America's Electric Cooperatives

#### Otsego Electric Cooperative, Inc.

*Stephen Rinell, CEO*

#### Board of Directors

Gary Potter  
*President*

Charles Arnold  
*Vice President*

Wendell Saunders  
*Treasurer*

Steve Child  
*Secretary*

Roger Erway  
*Director*

Fred Braun, Jr.  
*Director*

Edward Clarke  
*Director*

Kathleen Del Plato  
*Director*

#### Electric Water Heater Load Control Program

Load Control Switches Installed  
**915**

Co-op Savings Per Month  
**\$2,708**

Total 2011 Savings  
**\$24,372**



#### Energy Efficiency

### Tip of the Month

When buying a new appliance, check the black and yellow EnergyGuide label. This label provides an estimate of the product's energy consumption and efficiency. It also shows the highest and lowest energy efficiency estimates of similar models. Most major appliances—such as refrigerators, dishwashers, and clothes dryers—are required to have these labels.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

*BRINGING VALUE AND COMFORT TO ENHANCE OUR MEMBER'S QUALITY OF LIFE!*

## Director of Operations and Engineering

Otsego Electric Cooperative would like to welcome Alan Birmingham as our new Director of Operations and Engineering. Alan, his wife Linda and two children recently moved here from central New Mexico. They are currently living in the Town of Hartwick.

Alan has 16 years of experience working at electric cooperatives in Colorado and New Mexico.

Alan will be overseeing daily OEC operations.

Alan is looking forward to a long relationship with Otsego Electric Co-op and the local community.

If you have any questions or concerns about your electrical service you should contact Alan at 607-293-6622.



## Don't Let Electrical Hazards Haunt Halloween!

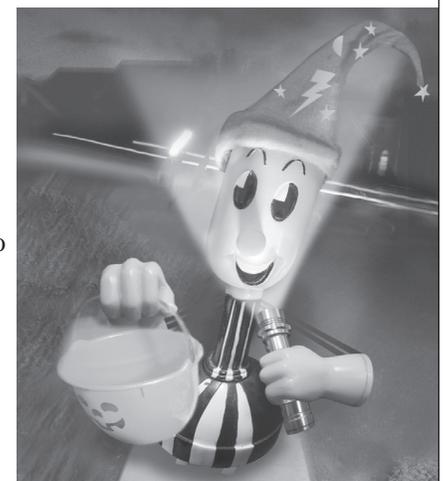
Halloween is the most festively frightening night of the year. But don't make yours fraught with danger.

Here are some safety reminders:

- As you're decorating, make sure you and your parents check for cracked sockets, frayed, loose or bare wires, and loose connections.
- Fasten all outdoor lights securely to trees and other firm supports. Do not use nails or tacks that could puncture insulating cords and damage wires.
- Make sure decorative lighting is well-ventilated, protected from weather, and remains a safe distance from anything flammable like dry leaves and shrubs. Do not coil extension cords while in use or tuck under rugs or drapes.
- Make sure all outdoor electrical lights and decorations are plugged into an outlet protected with a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI). If your outlets aren't equipped with GFCIs, have an electrician install them or buy a GFCI adapter plug. Don't overload outlets with too many extension cords and strands of lights.
- Keep power cords off walkways and porches that trick-or-treaters may use. You don't want them to trip.

Have mom or dad leave the porch light on for trick-or-treaters, and be sure to turn out all spooky lights and decorations before leaving home or going to bed. This will also save energy.

For more tips visit [www.SafeElectricity.org](http://www.SafeElectricity.org).



# How Do We Build a Better World?

## ■ 2012 marks the International Year of Cooperatives

In today's uncertain economic times that question quickly comes to mind. We want our children and neighbors to succeed. We need a strong and sustainable community. But how do you build a better world?



History tells us when we band together we can do anything. Together, we can build a better world. That's where cooperatives come into play.

This month we kick off a year-long celebration marking the International Year of Cooperatives 2012. Our theme, "Cooperative Enterprises Build a Better World," resonates loud and clear in our turbulent national—and global—economy. The year offers a chance for us to showcase our legacy of innovation and achievement, and reminds us of what's important in business—putting people first.

You're a member of Otsego Electric Cooperative so you know we're focused on providing safe, reliable, and affordable power. But this community-driven business model doesn't stop at your light switch. There are 29,200 co-ops across America taking many forms, from farmers banding together to get a fair price on supplies to credit unions delivering low fees and reasonable interest rates on loans. Our business model works for dairy farmers and small business owners, financial institutions, grocery stores, insurance, housing, and child care.

### Learn About Co-ops

## Electric Cooperatives Build a Better World

Member-owned electric co-ops transformed the landscape of rural America, delivering safe, reliable, and affordable electricity for 75 years. [www.nreca.org](http://www.nreca.org)



America's Electric  
Cooperatives

### DID YOU KNOW?

- Electric co-op lines cover 75 percent of the U.S. landmass.
- Serve 42 million people in 47 states.
- Electric co-ops have retired \$9.5 billion to members (capital credits) since 1990.

### CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY:

Every June, more than 1,500 high school juniors take part in an educational trip to Washington, D.C. during the Rural Electric Youth Tour.

### Cooperative Enterprises Build a Better World

A message from America's Electric Cooperatives

One out of every four Americans is a co-op member; there are more than 1 billion members around the world. Co-ops fill a community need, giving a voice to folks that profit-driven businesses often overlook. Co-ops share a common set of principles and values, including self-help and democracy.

Electric cooperatives may only serve 12 percent of Americans, but our lines cover 75 percent of this great nation. By banding together, we deliver power to 42 million rural Americans in 47 states—and we're not finished.

We also want to celebrate our legacy of innovation. Co-ops adapt quickly to change, and we work together—cooperatively—to find solutions to improve service for our members. Can you imagine profit-driven utilities working together to keep bills affordable?

At Otsego Electric Cooperative innovation takes many forms, from our energy efficiency efforts to our Automated Meter Infrastructure (AMI) we are transforming the electric grid. Each innovative step forward builds a better community for all of us.

Whenever a community faces a need—a challenge to make life better—the cooperative business model comes into play. By putting people first and innovating to meet member needs, cooperative enterprises build a better world. To learn more, visit [www.go.coop](http://www.go.coop).

**Otsego Electric Cooperative's Brush Crew will be working in the Towns of Middlefield and Westford this Month.**

## IS YOUR SERVICE MAP LOCATION LOCATED IN THIS NEWSLETTER?

Somewhere in the body of this newsletter there's a service map location number. Your map location number is located on your bill. If you find your map location number in this newsletter call the office within 15 days and your account will be credited \$25.



## Marathon<sup>®</sup> WATER HEATERS

Contact our office at 607-293-6622 to find out about member discounts on Marathon electric water heaters.

If you are heating water with gas or oil consider using clean electricity.

Call the Co-op office if you are interested in having a load switch put on your electric water heater.

There is a \$2 monthly credit for having a Co-op installed load control switch on your water heater.

OEC will be rolling out a pay-by-phone and web-based system to pay your bills in the coming months. We will post more information as we move forward.

## HEAP Update

The 2011-2012 HEAP season opens Wednesday, November 16. Households who receive public assistance and/or food stamps will obtain heating benefits through their DSS Caseworker. Heads of household over age 60 may apply through the Otsego County Office for the Aging. All other households may submit a HEAP application through Opportunities for Otsego.

**Opportunities for Otsego will begin scheduling appointments on Wednesday, November 9<sup>th</sup>.** Appointments are available 8:00AM-5:00PM, Monday-Friday and in the evenings on Monday and Wednesday. All appointments are in Oneonta.

HEAP is a federally funded program, administered at the county level, which assists income-eligible households in meeting their winter heating costs. The program supports payment for electricity, propane, natural gas, wood, oil, kerosene, coal, or other heating fuels. HEAP may also coordinate furnace repair and/or a replacement benefit for homeowners with inoperable heating equipment.

**Of Special Note:** Benefit amounts for the 2011-2012 HEAP season have been reduced. The base benefit for oil, kerosene, and propane is \$450; wood, pellets, coal, and corn is \$250; and natural gas, utilities/electric heat is \$250. Distribution of emergency benefits, including utility emergencies, begins after January 3, 2012. *Households are encouraged to plan accordingly.*

***Otsego Electric Cooperative, Inc.***

***P.O. Box 128, Hartwick, NY 13348***

***Office Hours***

***7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.***

***Monday – Friday***

**Phone: 607-293-6622**

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

**Call Dig | Safely. New York before you dig 1-800-962-7962 or 811**