

RURAL Act: We Need Your Help!

The Tax Cut and Jobs Act of 2017 made an error that may cause OEC to pay some income tax on our broadband grants and lose our tax-exempt status. This mistake also treats FEMA grants as taxable income. We are currently working with our representatives in Congress to fix this error by adopting the RURAL Act. Our local Congressmen, Hon. Antonio Delgado and Hon. Anthony Brindisi, have co-sponsored the Act and we have 203 co-sponsors in the House. We are hoping to get enough votes to adopt this Act before the end of 2019 but we only have 24 co-sponsors in the Senate. We need you to help by contacting Senators Schumer and Gillibrand to ask them to support the RURAL Act (S. 1032) to get it passed before the end of 2019. Please go to www.action.coop now!

National Co-op Month

It is interesting to see in the business news that recent trends are pointing toward reforming corporate practices to include other factors than just maximizing profits for shareholders. We are proud to say that cooperatives have done this for many years! Otsego Electric Cooperative has stood on the rock foundation of seven “cooperative principles” (ethical and business principles) for over 75 years. October is “Co-op Month” and it has been celebrated annually across the country for over 50 years. So, it is a great time to point out that we are not just an electric utility but we are a cooperative operating on the following core principles, as follows: Voluntary and Open Membership; Democratic and Member Control; Members’ Economic Participation (shared margins, if any); Autonomy and Independence; Education and Training; Cooperation among Cooperatives; and Concern for Community. These principles were all followed by your Board of Directors when they decided to create a broadband business to serve the needs of our members. We needed a fiber backbone to build a smarter electric grid anyway but our members also had a greater need and OEConnect was formed to help bridge that gap.

Did You Know? The first cooperative was formed in Rochdale, England in 1844 by the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers; a group of 28 skilled workers who organized to create a retail shop and establish certain business principles. They sold butter, flour, oatmeal, sugar, candles and other goods.

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www.otsegoec.coop
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Fiber Activations Update

- Activations have begun mostly in five of our service areas. Copes Corners* and Index** Substation areas will be next but most of these will happen in 2020
- We have a long waiting list (which is great!)
- We have completed over 600 miles of fiber because NY State required us to build this way. We have to finish mainline construction by Dec. 31, 2019
- The Fiber to the Home network is hardwired and the process goes like this: Design, Make Ready, Strand, Fiber and Lashing, Splicing, Optics and Electronics, Service Drops to Premises, then Installations
- Drops require fiber to be “dropped” from the pole to a box on your house
- Installs require fiber to be run through the box on the house into a modem inside the house
- We are doing as many drops as possible this fall before the weather prevents us from trenching
- The installations backlog will continue to go up while we focus on drops this fall
- We are trying to get as many members and customers online as fast as we can

*Copes Corners Substation area includes Butternuts and Unadilla and some of Morris and Otego.

**Index Substation area includes Hartwick, Milford, Westford, Middlefield, and a small part of Springfield

We have officially hit 400 customers as of the beginning of October and we are excited to continue adding more customers!

Cybersecurity: October is National Cybersecurity Awareness Month and we want to remind all members and customers of OEC and OEConnect to be cautious. It only takes one click on a malicious email, website or attachment for someone to gain access to your computer and network. Today’s heavy use of electronics and reliability on them in our everyday lives makes our chances of being hacked even higher. Last year in 2018, billions of people were affected by cyberattacks or data breaches. Using websites that start with “https://” lets you know that they are secure so try to remember this when shopping online in the upcoming holiday season or any time. Here are some more tips to help protect yourself from being attacked:

- Create a passphrase instead of a password; get creative by using symbols to replace letters (use @ instead of A); and change your password or phrase every two months or so.
- If you connect it, you must protect it. The best defense is to stay up to date on the latest security software. The easiest way is to enable automatic updates so you can stay on top of your security without having to set a reminder.
- Stay protected while connected. Before you connect to any wireless connection at a public place such as a – hotel, airport or café – be sure to take extra precautions and avoid sensitive apps (banking). It might be best to avoid public Wifi.