

# Mohawk Valley News

Clark Energy Center

NEW YORK POWER AUTHORITY COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER • WINTER 2005

## MAINTAINING NYPA'S RIGHT OF WAY: IT'S A JUNGLE OUT THERE...

If you think mowing and trimming your front lawn is a back-breaker, think what it would be like if you had to do the same for a 1,600-mile spread.

Ask Lew Payne, who is in charge of keeping the right-of-way for the Power Authority's high-voltage transmission lines from becoming so overgrown with vegetation that power delivery could be disrupted.

Access to the transmission-line towers must be preserved to allow maintenance and repairs to the lines. And any vegetation that grows tall enough to touch the lines could cause a short-circuit. Trees touching lines in Ohio were reported to be a contributing factor in the August 2003 blackout that hit parts of the Northeast and Midwest.

Based at NYPA's Clark Energy Center in Marcy, Payne, a right-of-way/environmental supervisor, and four Power Authority transmission linemen team up with 65 members of a Rochester-based tree-service company, Lewis Tree Services, in tackling the massive job. The control of trees and vegetation is completed in 400-mile segments, from April to November, one segment a year over a four-year period.

Payne, whose career in forestry spans 20 years, has a degree from the State University of New York's College of Environmental Science and



Crews prepare to trim trees growing too near NYPA's high-voltage transmission lines. Several vegetation-control techniques are used.

Forestry in Syracuse. He and his crew are trained in applying herbicides, governed by strict New York State environmental regulations.

Payne says 12 months of work are crammed into an eight-month season.

NYPA uses integrated vegetation management to ensure that tall-growing trees and shrubs are kept away from transmission facilities. Integrated management balances the use of biological, physical and chemical procedures for controlling vegetation on the right-of-way.

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## MVN NOTES

### DeCarlo Returns to Clark Energy Center

If the Power Authority's new top man at the Clark Energy Center looks familiar, it's because he's no stranger to the area. Steve DeCarlo, who was recently promoted to senior vice president, transmission, spent two years at Clark as operations supervisor between 1995 and 1997 and he's happy to be back.

"I consider community involvement to be a big part of my new job



## NYPA Staff Lends Helping Hand For Holidays

Several Mohawk Valley charities benefit from a "season of giving" at the Power Authority's Clark Energy Center (CEC) that extends through the end-of-year holidays.

First comes Thanksgiving, celebrating America's abundance. The reality, however, is that increasing numbers of people can't afford a decent meal. To help those who are less fortunate, CEC staff members each year collect thousands of pounds of provisions for the Utica Community Food Bank's Fall Harvest Drive.

"Starting in late September, we set up boxes throughout our building so that our employees can donate non-perishable items," explained Ken Anderson, a journeyman substation operator who coordinates the NYPA food drive. "Monetary contributions are also collected to make bulk purchases or to buy fresh produce. These are delivered to the



Santa distributes NYPA-donated gifts to children at Utica's Thea Bowman House.

Food Bank every week of the campaign."

Last year, CEC employees provided 5,500 pounds of food to the food bank for Thanksgiving. But the need continues to grow, Anderson added, with the food bank seeing a 110 percent increase in clients just between July 2004 and July 2005.

Some of the people who need a helping hand have traveled great distances for the assistance they receive. It is a little-known fact that Utica has the fourth largest

per capita concentration of refugees in the United States, according to figures from the Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees. An official resettlement agency, the center shares space with the city's Thea Bowman House, which serves needy families with the help of NYPA employee contributions. "Most of our clients are either homeless, working poor or refugees," said Jane Domingue, executive

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and I'm looking forward to playing a major role in various civic organizations and getting the Power Authority's message out there," DeCarlo said.

DeCarlo, who joined NYPA in 1985 as an electrical engineer, served most recently as regional manager, Central New York at the Blenheim-Gilboa Power Project in Schoharie County. He said his previous position helped him appreciate the value of community

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## Right of Way

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NYPA's program includes site data, mapping and analysis to discourage the growth of incompatible plant species and promote various low-growing species such as shrubs, herbs, grasses, forbs and ferns.

In 2002, NYPA became a member of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Pesticide Environmental Stewardship Program. The EPA cited the Power Authority program for 2004 in recognition of its success in developing and implementing vegetation management strategies.

Payne spends the winter "down time" analyzing vegetation control techniques, boning up on new methods of control, and



buttoning-up the on-going vegetation plan for the Power Authority as required by the state Public Service Commission.

He also prepares letters to be sent to landowners abutting the next season's target areas to let them know that crews might need access through their land to get to a section of the right-of-way, and to inform them of the planned vegetation maintenance activities and solicit questions.

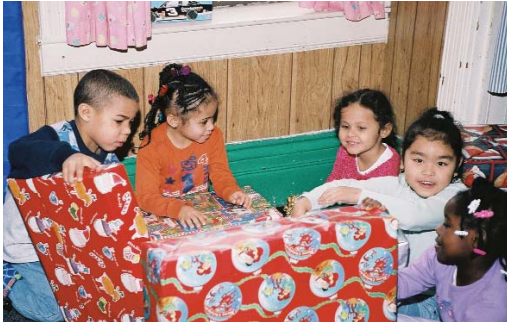
Payne says each new season is never boring. "We go out and meet and talk with the community. The linemen—a great bunch of guys—are the ambassadors, with their lap-top computers in tow so they can show the people exactly what's going on and what we're doing. It just makes the whole job more rewarding." ♦

## Holiday

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director of the Thea Bowman House. "We've counted 14 different language groups among our clients in one year. The Power Authority employees help us by 'adopting' some of our neediest families and providing them with a wonderful Christmas holiday."

Mike Parisi, a senior electrical engineer, takes the lead on the CEC's Christmas campaign. Besides conducting weekly raffles, Parisi and a group of volunteers set up office Christmas trees that are decorated with tags containing gift ideas for two or three medium-size families referred by the Thea Bowman House.



the most senior adult, has colorfully wrapped packages to open.

"We like to ask the families what they want for Christmas, but some are so needy they don't even know what to ask for," Parisi said. "We try to help out with necessities, like clothes or towels, and the children each get a few toys. Everybody gets a gift. And with the leftover money, we buy enough food for

them to have a nice holiday dinner."

Domingue recalled one refugee family from Burma that experienced its first ever Christmas celebration, courtesy of the Power Authority. "The woman just burst into tears; she couldn't believe anyone would care that much about her and her family," she said. "That was a few years ago. Now that family is established in the community and they now help others who are in need. Sometimes a little bit of assistance can go a long way in helping someone succeed."

The children of NYPA employees also get in on the act. At their annual holiday party organized by the CEC Recreation Association, each youngster is encouraged to donate a toy or other item. These gifts are then distributed to children who must spend Christmas at nearby Faxton-St. Luke's Healthcare Facility. ♦

## DeCarlo

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partnerships, such as vegetation management for transmission line rights of way.

As DeCarlo makes the transition from power generation back to the transmission side of the utility business, he sees two large areas of focus. The first is making sure the Power Authority complies with federal directives for new mandatory, enforceable electric reliability standards expected to be issued sometime this year, an effort which grew out of the blackout of August 2003. The second focus is on cur-

rent industry discussions on new ways to compensate for transmission investments. "The Power Authority is very well positioned to meet the new reliability standards, because New York has had them in place for many years, but I anticipate a big effort in documenting our compliance, adjusting training programs and providing feedback to the new electric reliability organization," said DeCarlo.

When he's not attending Chamber meetings or reading the latest industry position papers, DeCarlo likes to fish and hunt—primarily deer and bear. He also likes to travel with his wife, Cindy, and 11-year-old daughter, Dina. ♦

## Mohawk Valley News

Mohawk Valley News is produced by the New York Power Authority to update our neighbors on activities at our Clark Energy Center in Marcy.

If you have comments or suggestions, please contact Carol Rodino, community relations manager, at 315-792-8511, or by email at [carol.rodino@nypa.gov](mailto:carol.rodino@nypa.gov).

*To our readers: We occasionally receive requests for tours of the Clark Energy Center. While we would like to comply, security concerns prevent us from allowing members of the public to tour our facilities. Thank you for your understanding.* ♦