

# PoweringConnections

Central Hudson's Consumer Outreach Publication

Spring/Summer 2020

## CENTRAL HUDSON CONTINUES TO SUPPORT LOCAL COMMUNITIES, FAMILIES

Central Hudson is providing needed funding, programs and initiatives to help residents and businesses of the Mid-Hudson Valley cope with the economic and social challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"This pandemic has created a critical health issue and upended the economy," said Charles A. Freni, President and CEO of Central Hudson. "We recognize that safe and reliable electric and natural gas service is critical during this time. Equally important is supporting the communities we serve. We're working with our customers, financial institutions, local business organizations and elected leaders in addressing the changes taking place in this new environment," he continued. "While partial economic recovery may soon begin, the entire recovery process will likely take time and there are many essential needs that must be fulfilled now. We have implemented programs and funding that will help provide some measure of relief, particularly for the most vulnerable households and our region's small businesses."

From the onset of the "New York State on Pause" executive order, Central Hudson has suspended service disconnections for non-payment of utility bills and waived finance charges for families affected by COVID-19.



*Telecommunications Systems Designer Jim Rhoda is part of a team that is delivering meals to people in need and those on the frontline caring for patients and keeping our communities safe during COVID-19.*

### *The utility also provided funding to the following organizations and initiatives:*

- **\$25,000 to Ulster County Project Resiliency**

A county-wide partnership to organize fundraising, meal delivery, and other support to those in need following the outbreak of COVID-19. Funds raised will be used to purchase meals from local businesses and not-for-profit organizations, helping to keep dollars circulating in the local food economy.

- **\$25,000 to Dutchess Responds**

Established through Community Foundations of the Hudson Valley, the fund provides critical needs including food, medications and household essentials to individuals experiencing hardships or quarantine restrictions as a result of COVID-19.

- **\$25,000 to Orange & Sullivan COVID-19 Response Fund**

The Community Foundation of Orange and Sullivan coordinates this fund, used to address immediate and longer-term needs of residents in Orange and Sullivan counties. This fund will distribute grants to established nonprofit organizations that provide food and essentials for vulnerable families, such as prescription drug deliveries to homebound senior citizens and people with compromised immune systems.

- **\$20,000 to Hudson Valley Food Bank**

This organization distributes food to the charitable agency network serving disadvantaged residents. Central Hudson will also donate reusable grocery bags.



*Central Hudson employees donated more than 50 bags of food and non-perishable items to local nonprofit organizations helping to feed families in need during the COVID-19 pandemic.*

- **\$5,000 to the Hudson Valley Additive Manufacturing Center at SUNY New Paltz**

The SUNY New Paltz Additive Manufacturing Center is using its 3-D printing capabilities to produce face shields for regional healthcare organizations, including Ulster County for the drive-through mobile testing station at Tech City and local hospitals and medical centers.

- **Good Neighbor Fund** – Central Hudson's corporate match was doubled for the Good Neighbor Fund for the next six months, up to an additional \$50,000.

- **\$1 million in economic development for small business in 2020**, working with county and state economic development partners.

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Central Hudson  
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# CENTRAL HUDSON PROVIDES SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT WITH *BACK TO BUSINESS* FUNDING PROGRAM

In response to the serious financial impacts resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, Central Hudson has launched its *Back to Business* funding program, committing up to \$1 million in economic development support to provide local small businesses with grants to help pay down new working capital loans taken with participating local banks. This program is intended to assist small businesses in continuing their operations or reopening as the economy is restarted.

“As necessary precautions are taken during this pandemic, many local small businesses are struggling or have temporarily closed,” said Charles A. Freni, President and CEO of Central Hudson. “These businesses will require funding in order to continue or resume operations and hire back workers as the economy reopens, and Central Hudson wants to help.

“Small businesses help define the character of a region, employ thousands of residents and provide needed services,” Freni continued. “Many have limited access to funding, and may not qualify for other forms of assistance. We are providing these grants through our Economic Development program, which is designed to support and retain local businesses and jobs, to assist our area’s small businesses.”

Working with local banks, Central Hudson has committed economic development funds to reduce the cost of borrowing. Qualified small businesses seeking new working capital loans from participating banks will have the grants applied directly to the loan by the bank to reduce the amount that is repaid.

To qualify, the business must have up to 20 employees, be a Central Hudson customer in good standing, and currently operating or planning to reopen as the state of emergency is lifted. The grant is available for new loans only, and loan decisions will be made at the discretion of the bank. Central Hudson funding will be provided on a first-come, first-serve basis.



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## Participating banks for Central Hudson’s *Back to Business* funding program are:

- |  |                         |
|--|-------------------------|
| • Rhinebeck Bank                           | • Bank of Greene County |
| • Ulster Savings Bank                      | • Bank of Millbrook     |
| • Walden Savings Bank                      | • Sawyer Savings Bank   |
| • Wallkill Valley Federal Savings and Loan | • Rondout Savings Bank  |
|  | • Orange Bank and Trust |

“We thank these participating banks for their support of our *Back to Business* funding program,” Freni said. “They are all locally headquartered, have roots in our region, and, once we’ve turned the corner on this pandemic to protect the health of our residents, share our goal of economic recovery for the Mid-Hudson Valley,” said Freni.

“We hope that our grant program will help lift small businesses as the economy restarts, putting many residents back to work and providing the goods and services needed and used by our communities,” Freni said. “We’re very proud of our region, and feel privileged to support our local economy.”

**For more information on the *Back to Business* funding program, visit [www.CentralHudson.com/BackToBusiness](http://www.CentralHudson.com/BackToBusiness).**

**2019-2020 HEAP Season:** Regular and emergency HEAP benefits have been extended through Aug. 31, 2020, or until funds are exhausted. The Cooling Assistance benefit is also available to those who qualify.

## LIFE SUPPORT EQUIPMENT

### HOW IT WORKS

If you or someone who resides in your household needs electricity to operate a life-sustaining device, you may be eligible for certain special protections and notifications through our Life Support Apparatus Program. This identification on your account will remain in effect as long as the device is required. We will mail an annual certification form to you to be completed and returned by your attending physician. You will be provided a confidential hotline number upon enrollment. As an added service, we will place a special tag on your meter and code your account to identify that life support is in use. The service is also available for any tenants who require life support equipment and receive electricity service through the landlord’s account.



### REQUIREMENTS

- A household member requires electricity to operate life-sustaining equipment.
- You and your doctor will need to complete an application, which can be found on [www.CentralHudson.com](http://www.CentralHudson.com) or email [ConsumerOutreach@cenhud.com](mailto:ConsumerOutreach@cenhud.com) and we will mail you one.
- If your landlord pays for electric, they will have to complete the application with you and your doctor.
- Central Hudson review and approval.
- Annual re-certification.



# SUMMER STORM SAFETY



Summer weather can be unpredictable. Severe weather, such as thunderstorms, heavy rain and strong winds can hit unexpectedly, toppling trees and causing damage to electric facilities and temporary loss of electric service. By preparing in advance and taking the necessary safety precautions, customers can reduce the impact an outage has on their household.

## PREPARE BY:

- Paying attention to weather advisories, storm outage updates and/or shelter information;
- Charging electronic devices in order to connect with <https://StormCentral.CenHud.com>;
- Keeping handy a flashlight and fresh batteries;
- Having a battery-powered radio to remain informed of restoration efforts;
- Confirming adequate packaged or canned foods that require no refrigeration or cooking;
- Avoiding opening a refrigerator unnecessarily during outages, so that food lasts longer;
- Having a non-electric can opener;
- Keeping an emergency supply of bottled water on-hand for drinking and washing; and filling bathtubs with water as added reserves.



## KEEP SAFETY IN MIND:

- Stay at least 30 feet away from downed power lines, and remember that lines may be entangled and hidden in fallen trees. Assume all downed lines are live;
- Never use outdoor gas or charcoal grills indoors, as they pose a fire hazard and can produce carbon monoxide gas;
- Beware of fallen trees and limbs;
- Avoid the use of candles for illumination due to fire hazards;
- Follow the manufacturer's safety instructions when using generators. Be sure to shut off the main breaker when in use and always operate outdoors;
- Operate motor vehicles outdoors only, and never inside the garage; and
- Avoid driving if possible, as hazardous conditions may cause accidents, including those involving utility poles that may cause power interruptions.



## STAY INFORMED:

- **By text messaging:** Customers should enroll in Central Hudson's Texting Program to use text messaging to report their power condition and to obtain repair status. To enroll, visit [CentralHudson.com/Alerts](http://CentralHudson.com/Alerts) or text REG to 236483;
- **On the Web:** Visit [www.CentralHudson.com/Storms](http://www.CentralHudson.com/Storms) to report outages and obtain restoration updates;
- **Via smart phones:** A mobile version of Central Hudson's website can be accessed by web-enabled cell phones and mobile devices at <https://mobile.CenHud.com>. The free Central Hudson mobile app, for both Android and Apple devices, is available by logging onto [CentralHudson.com/mobileapp](http://CentralHudson.com/mobileapp);
- **Through social media:** "Like" Central Hudson on Facebook ([www.Facebook.com/CentralHudson](http://www.Facebook.com/CentralHudson)) and "Follow" on Twitter ([www.Twitter.com/CentralHudson](http://www.Twitter.com/CentralHudson));
- **By phone:** Call the Central Hudson PowerLine at (845) 452-2700 or 1-800-527-2714, and please use the automated system to report or monitor your power condition.

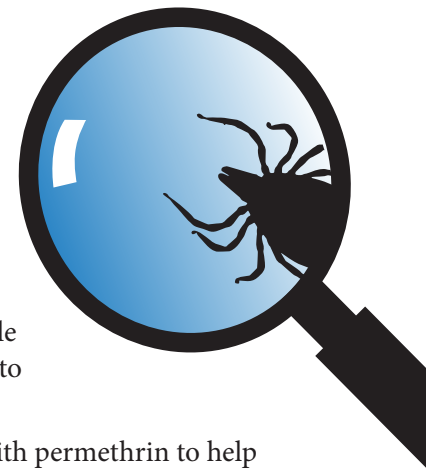


For more safety tips, visit [www.CentralHudson.com/Safety](http://www.CentralHudson.com/Safety).

# OUTDOOR SAFETY

To reduce the risk of contracting a tick-borne disease, please remember to take the following precautions:

- Wear light-colored clothing with a tight weave to spot ticks easily.
- Wear enclosed shoes, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt. Tuck pant legs into socks or boots and shirt into pants.
- Use an EPA registered insect repellent. The EPA has an online search tool ([www.epa.gov/insect-repellents](http://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents)) to find the right insect repellent. Keep insect repellent easily accessible near the front door, in the shed, garage or car to make sure it gets used consistently.
- Treat shoes, clothes and other outdoor gear with permethrin to help reduce tick bites.
- Check clothes and any exposed skin frequently for ticks while outdoors.
- Stay on cleared, well-traveled trails. Walk in the center of trails. Avoid dense woods and bushy areas. Ticks are mainly found in low-lying vegetation, therefore stay clear of leaf litter, brush and high grass whenever possible.
- Bathe or shower as soon as possible after returning indoors (preferably within two hours) to wash off and find ticks more easily.
- Place clothes in the dryer on high heat for 30 minutes to kill any ticks lingering on the fabric.
- Do a final, full-body tick check at the end of the day (also check children and pets) and remove ticks promptly.



# DIG SAFELY

Do I really need to call 811 before I dig?

**YES!** Homeowners often make risky assumptions about whether or not they should get their utility lines marked, but every digging job requires a call — even "small" projects like planting trees and shrubs.



When you make the free call to 811 a few days before you dig, you'll help prevent unintended consequences such as injury to you or your family, damage to your property, utility service outages to the entire neighborhood and potential fines and repair costs.

## TAX DEADLINE EXTENDED

Postponed to July 15, 2020

In March, the IRS announced that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, taxpayers have until July 15, 2020 to file and pay federal income taxes originally due on April 15. No late-filing penalty, late-payment penalty or interest will be due. The postponements are automatic and apply to all taxpayers. You do not need to file other forms or call the IRS to qualify.

For more information, visit [irs.gov/coronavirus](http://irs.gov/coronavirus).



**CENTRAL HUDSON'S GOOD NEIGHBOR FUND IS OPEN**

Call Customer Service at (845) 452-2700 to see if you are eligible.

## ASK PAULA

from our Consumer Outreach Team

**"Hi Paula, when the COVID-19 pandemic was in the beginning weeks, I had a representative from your office call to do a wellness check on me in my home. I was taken back and very appreciative that my gas and electric company would go to such lengths. Can you tell me what other things Central Hudson and the Outreach team have been doing to help the community?"**

– Sarah from Catskill, NY

Hello Sarah,

Thank you for reaching out to me, I am happy to find you doing well during such a tragic time. Central Hudson prides itself on many things, one of them being our community involvement. We were able to give back in many ways during our response to COVID-19. Please take a look at a few of the following ways we have helped families throughout our service territory during this time:

- Waived reconnection and late fees.
- Suspended terminations for residential and non-residential accounts.
- Restored any service that had limited usage to full service.
- Collection practices have ceased, and payment agreement terms have been revised to ensure every customer who needs one will get one.
- Made referrals to the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP).
- Revised requirements to receive a Good Neighbor Fund grant to make it easier to apply for assistance.
- Doubled our Company match into our Good Neighbor Fund, which is administered through local Salvation Army offices, from \$50,000 to \$100,000.
- Wellness checks were made to our vulnerable customers to check on them to see how they are doing and offer them any resources that are available in their community that they may need (food, day care, health care, mental health services and more).
- Central Hudson is practicing social distancing while we carry out our essential work.
- Central Hudson held an employee food drive immediately after the pandemic started. We collected over 50 bags of non-perishable food items which were donated to RECAP in Newburgh and People's Place in Kingston. Hot meals were provided to seniors in Beacon with the help of the Salvation Army and donations of water and snacks were provided to several non-profit organizations.

We will continue to work closely with our community and community partners. By working together, we can keep one another safe and healthy.

Please visit [www.CentralHudson.com](http://www.CentralHudson.com) for updates and to learn more about our Payment and Special Assistance Programs.

Thank you and be well,

**Paula T. Coppin**

Operating Supervisor Consumer Outreach



**Send your customer service questions and we'll answer them in Powering Connections. Please keep your letters brief, do not send anonymous letters and include your address.**

**Email: [ConsumerOutreach@cenhud.com](mailto:ConsumerOutreach@cenhud.com).**

## 2020 Dutchess, Ulster County Fairs Canceled

Due to current social distancing and safety measures being taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the 2020 Dutchess County Fair and Ulster County Fair have been canceled.

In making the decision to cancel the events, organizers cited the safety and well being of guests,

participants and community members as being their highest priority.

Both fairs are expected to resume in 2021. The Ulster County Fair is scheduled to take place August 3-8, 2021. The Dutchess County Fair is scheduled for August 24-29, 2021.

## We've increased rebates and expanded sales on energy efficient products

### FEATURED ITEM: ENERGY SAVINGS KIT

**\$9\***

(A \$38 value)



\*Limit 1 per household per year. Rebates exclusively for Central Hudson customers.

- » **FREE SHIPPING** ON ALL ITEMS FOR A LIMITED TIME.
- » **REBATES UP TO \$75** ON ALREADY REDUCED PRICES.
- » SMART THERMOSTATS **AS LOW AS \$24**.

Save now at [CenHubStore.com](http://CenHubStore.com)!

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## Energy-saving tips

**Working at Home?** Quit unnecessary programs. Use sleep settings and turn your computer off or unplug it when you're done working.

**Check Thermostats.** Revisit your thermostat settings to make sure they're changing with the weather.

**Plug into Power Strips.** Plug your phones and computers into power strips. That makes it easy to switch everything off at the same time.

**TV Always Running?** Be sure to turn off your cable box every time you turn off your TV. Lower your TV's brightness settings, then disable "Instant On," "Always On," or "Quick Start" settings. They draw excess standby power.

**Beware of Vampire Loads.** Don't leave chargers plugged into the wall if they're not charging anything. They're still drawing energy you're not using them.

Senior Times, a Central Hudson publication, is now **Powering Connections**, which will be distributed two times per year, in the spring and fall.

## RECIPE

### GREEK BROWN RICE SALAD

#### Ingredients

- **1 pack** Uncle Ben's Ready Whole Grain Brown Rice (microwaved for 90 seconds)
- **1 can of chickpeas** drained
- **1 English cucumber** chopped
- **1 cup cherry or grape tomatoes** halved
- **¼ cup kalamata olives** halved
- **¼ cup diced onions**
- **2 diced scallions**
- **¼ cup feta cheese**
- **½ lemon** juiced
- **¼ cup extra virgin olive oil**
- **Dried oregano and basil** and **salt and pepper** to taste

Mix everything together, chill and enjoy!

– Kyro Bouquet