



Lineworker Appreciation Day is April 8

APRIL 2019 | VOL. 24 NO. 04

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Sign up for Operation Round Up at CHELCO.com.



A Touchstone Energy Cooperative



# Cooperative Solar one-year anniversary

CHELCO is proud to celebrate the one-year anniversary of its Cooperative Solar project, which was installed last March on the roof of the Operation Center located on Highway 331 north of DeFuniak Springs. The array consists of 504 solar panels and is the first cooperative solar power system in the northwest Florida and south Alabama area.

After reviewing the responses from an annual customer service survey, CHELCO discovered member interest in having a solar energy option. Based on the information customers provided in regard to pricing and appeal, CHELCO created the Cooperative Solar project to give customers the option to enroll in a program that offers members renewable energy without having to install their own personal systems resulting in a cost-effective means to bring solar power to the community.



A CHELCO SOLAR PROJECT

Those wishing to partake in the program enrolled in a one-year or five-year term subscription. As of today, the program is fully subscribed with 21 members on a wait-list.

The Cooperative Solar arrays first year's

*Continued on page 2*

# CHELCO Youth Tour winners selected

Five area high school juniors have won a trip to Washington, D.C., this June.

In February, CHELCO escorted 19 high school juniors to Tallahassee to participate in the annual Florida Electric Cooperative Association's Youth Tour. The students visited the Mission San Luis museum, learned about science at the Challenger Learning Center, participated in mock bill sessions at the capitol and later interviewed for a trip to the national Youth Tour in Washington, D.C.

Four won spots on the annual Youth Tour trip through a local competition, while the fifth won a statewide essay contest. The four



Left to right, CHELCO CEO Steve Rhodes, Olivia Mixon, Madeline Dowden, Amber Etheridge, Emily Wayer, Nathan Fleming and Youth Tour Coordinator Bonnie Whitfield.

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# Annual Meeting is April 27 at Freeport High School

Remember to join CHELCO for food, fun, activities for the kids and thousands of dollars in prizes at our 78th annual meeting, Saturday, April 27 at Freeport High School, 12615 Business Highway 331, in Freeport.

Members who attend annual meeting will receive a gift, a \$5 bill credit and be entered in a drawing for additional prizes. In addition, there will be numerous smaller prizes and

age-appropriate prizes for children. You must be present to win.

All members who vote will be entered in a drawing to win prizes. Election packets and annual meeting publicity was mailed out in March. Your ballot must be received by the independent auditor no later than close of business April 22, 2019.

Registration begins at 9 a.m., and there will be plenty to do prior to the

business meeting. The business meeting begins at 11 a.m. and includes reports from CHELCO CEO Steve Rhodes.

The Northwest Florida State College Soundsations Show Choir will perform at 10 a.m. We also have exhibits and an area with activities for kids. During the business meeting, there will be children's activities in the gym for kindergarten through six grade.



## Trustee candidates announced!

Incumbent Brady Bearden and challenger Dewyne Douglass are running for District 4 on the CHELCO Board of Trustees. Incumbents Gerald Edmondson, District 6, and Terry Pilcher, District 2, are running unopposed this year for their seats on the CHELCO Board of Trustees.

Members vote at-large each year for three trustee seats. Nominated trustees represent geographic districts, but, because voting is at-large, every member should cast a vote for a trustee in each district (even if unopposed), regardless of where the member lives. Bearden and Douglass are both from DeFuniak Springs, while Edmondson is from Crestview, and Pilcher is from Freeport.

CHELCO encourages all members to vote so that it can reach a quorum for the annual meeting.

◀ **Brady Bearden, District 4 (top-left); Dewyne Douglass, District 4 (top-right); Gerald Edmondson, District 6 (bottom-left); Terry Pilcher, District 2 (bottom-right)**

## Cooperative Solar one-year anniversary *from page 1*

production is likely to be on the lower end of its estimated annual 194,000 to 231,000 kilowatt hours. Of note, production this winter declined significantly. While a reduction is typical during winter months due to shorter days and available sunlight hours, this winter's production was also lessened significantly by a large number of rainy and cloud covered days. The array's first year of energy production reflects both the power of

the sun and photovoltaics reliance on good weather to produce energy.

It is estimated that the array will be in service for at least 25 years. Based on current member interest, CHELCO has no immediate plans to install additional solar panels.

According to CHELCO Manager of Marketing Bryan Gilbert, "The goal of this program from the beginning

was to provide a renewable energy option to those members who wanted one, understanding that in the current market climate, solar, while a viable energy source, is still slightly more expensive than other energy generation sources. That said, the economics and associated technologies get better every day and are a consideration for the future."



Stay up-to-date on all CHELCO happenings by following your co-op on social media! We are on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.



## The commitment of a cooperative lineworker

### Lineworker Appreciation Day is April 8.

As April arrives, it brings with it the showers that produce spring flowers. It also heralds the beginning of a potentially stormy season that can inherently include power outages. While CHELCO strives to provide reliable electricity to our members, there are times when Mother Nature has other plans. Most of us can ride out a storm from the comfort and convenience of our homes. However, there is a group of professionals that spring into action when the weather takes a turn for the worst – cooperative lineworkers.

National studies consistently rank power line installers and repairers among the most dangerous jobs in the country, and for good reason. Laboring high in the air wearing heavy equipment and working directly with high voltage creates the perfect storm for a dangerous and unforgiving profession. But electric lineworkers are up to the task. These brave men and women are committed to safety, as

well as the challenges of the job.

CHELCO's lineworkers are responsible for keeping power flowing day and night, regardless of national holidays, vacations, birthdays, weddings or other important family milestones. Beyond the years of specialized training and apprenticeships, it takes internal fortitude and a mission-oriented outlook to be a good lineworker. In fact, this service-oriented mentality is a hallmark characteristic of lineworkers. The job requires lineworkers to set aside their personal priorities to better serve their local community.

### Family support system

To perform their jobs successfully, lineworkers depend on their years of training, experience and each other to get the job done safely.

Equally important is their reliance on a strong support system at home. A lineworker's family understands and supports their loved one's commitment to the greater community during severe storms and power outages.



This means in times of prolonged outages, the family and their lineworker may have minimal communication and not see each other for several days.

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### CHELCO Youth Tour winners *from page 1*

CHELCO Youth Tour students selected for the June trip were Madeline Dowden, Niceville High; Amber Etheridge, Crestview High; Emily Wayer, Collegiate; and Nathan Fleming, Baker High.

Olivia Mixon, who attends Freeport High School, is the 2019 Florida Electric Cooperative Association (FECA) essay competition winner and will represent the state of Florida.

The Washington, D.C., Youth Tour is organized by the National Rural Electric Cooperatives Association. Once in Washington D.C., the students will join 1,800 Youth Tour representatives from across the country and spend an entire week learning about the government, history and the role of cooperatives.

### Text notifications coming soon

CHELCO is launching a new text messaging service sometime this spring. Members who have their cell phone number up-to-date with CHELCO will begin to receive outage text message alerts. Also, members will be able to report outages by text. If you need to update your information with CHELCO, sign in to your online account at CHELCO.com, email [memberbilling@chelco.com](mailto:memberbilling@chelco.com) or call (850) 892-2111. Keep an eye out for our official outage texts welcome message!

CHELCO is governed by a nine-member board of trustees: Pat Carlyle, District 1; Terry Pilcher, District 2; Jim Bishop, Vice President, District 3; Brady Bearden, Assistant Secretary/Treasurer, District 4; Ronald Jones, District 5; Gerald Edmondson, President, District 6; Bert Prutzman, Secretary/Treasurer, District 7; Gayle Hughes, District 8; Burt Cosson, District 9.

# CONNECTIONS CORNER

The Co-op Connections discount program is another benefit of being a CHELCO member. Dozens of local businesses, plus thousands nationally, offer discounts to co-op members. There are also discounts available on prescriptions at participating pharmacies. Don't forget to download the Co-op Connections app.

This month, we highlight and thank the following businesses.

## AAA Accounting & Management Services

- 1512 John Sims Pkwy, Niceville
- Phone: 850-345-2250
- *Free QuickBooks Review & Assessment (\$255.00 value)*

## Aidmore Animal Clinic

- 450 Baldwin Ave., DeFuniak Springs
- Phone: 850-892-5435
- *10% discount off dental cleaning or annual health screen with an annual visit.*

## Beach Brothers' Beach Service

- 102 Lauren Lane, Santa Rosa Beach
- Phone: 850-737-1499
- *15% off total rental charge*

For more information, or, if you own a business and want to sign-up to offer CHELCO's 50,000+ member accounts a discount, email [marketingservices@chelco.com](mailto:marketingservices@chelco.com) or call CHELCO's marketing department at (850) 307-1122. You can find all the local and national deals by searching co-op connections at [CHELCO.com](http://CHELCO.com) or download the Co-op Connections app.

## IS \$25 YOURS?

If the account number below matches yours, sign this page and mail it with your bill to CHELCO or drop it off at any office. You'll win a \$25 credit on your next bill.

**Joyce - 9000086316**

## The commitment of a... *from page 3*

Without strong family support and understanding, this challenging job would be all the more difficult.

### Thank you

Monday, April 8, is Lineworker Appreciation Day. Given the dedication of CHELCO's lineworkers,

both on and off the job, I encourage you to take a moment and acknowledge the many contributions they make to our local community. And if you see their family members in the grocery store or out and about in the town, please offer them a thank you as well.



## BENEFITS OF TREE TRIMMING

Clearing trees and overgrown vegetation is vital to provide safe, reliable power to our consumer-members.

We clear certain areas in our service territory, known as rights of way, to:

- Keep power lines clear of tree limbs
- Restore power outages more quickly
- Keep crews and members of our community safe
- Reduce unexpected costs for repairs

Vegetation management improves service reliability for you - our members!

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Streaming content with electronic equipment that has earned the ENERGY STAR® rating will use 25 to 30 percent less energy than standard equipment.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)

