

# CHELCO News



A Touchstone Energy®  
Cooperative



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## Online now

**Fast info:** [chelco.com](http://chelco.com)

### Anniversary photos

You can view photos of our historic anniversary exhibit at [chelco.com](http://chelco.com).

### Check us out on Facebook

For outage updates, search Choctawhatchee Electric Cooperative.

## Trees major cause of 2015 power outages

In the first half of 2015 CHELCO members experienced more outages related to falling trees and limbs than in all of 2014.

"It's been several years since we've had a significant tropical storm or hurricane, and we're certainly thankful for that," said Vice President of Engineering Matthew Avery. "But it also means there are a lot of dead trees and limbs out there posing threats to power lines."

Falling trees and/or limbs are responsible for more than 54 percent of CHELCO's 2015 outages to date. Summer storms bring high winds and strong showers, which soak the ground, creating optimal conditions for falling trees and downed limbs.

"Falling trees and limbs will typically tear down and break wire(s) and often poles too," said

Vice President of Operations Donny Fugate. "It takes time, manpower and specialized equipment to change out poles and repair broken conductors."

To lessen the damage from downed trees and limbs, CHELCO has increased its easement for most new, overhead services from 20 to 30 feet.

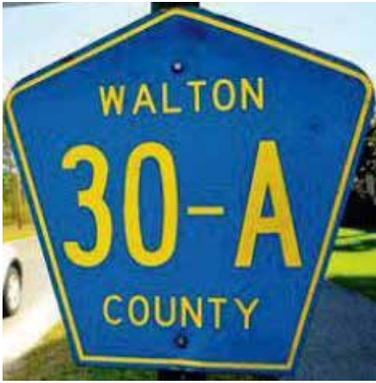
"The new easement allows us to clear a wider area around power lines and keep it free of hazards," explained Avery.

Summer storms also bring lightning strikes, which are another frequent cause of outages. However, this year, lightning accounts for less than 6 percent of outages to date. But in 2014, lightning accounted for almost 21 percent.



To lessen the threat to lines, CHELCO has increased easements on new overhead lines to 30 feet.

# South Walton leads residential developments



The residential real-estate market is rebounding well in Walton and Okaloosa Counties, with South Walton leading the charge.

More than 40 percent of CHELCO's construction related service orders this year have been for projects south of Choctawhatchee

Bay. Developments, such as Prominence on State Road 30A, offer a relaxed, coastal lifestyle while providing shopping, dining and entertainment on the property.

Just north of the Bay in Freeport, Hammock Bay is also experiencing renewed growth.

More than 80 lots are currently under construction. The planned community offers large lots with private homes, a 6,000 sq. ft. clubhouse, fitness center, two pools, tennis courts, basketball court and playground.

Even farther north, the Auburn community is also growing. While development in the northern part of Okaloosa County is not as rapid as in other locations, it remains steady. As of July 1, CHELCO has logged 81 construction related service requests in Auburn.

*(continued on pg 3)*



## InBrief

### Autumn begins Sept. 23

The official summer season is drawing to a close. School is back in session, leaves will soon start to change and temperatures will start to drop. Now is the time to have your heating system checked and/or maintained so there are no surprises during that first cold snap.

### Storm season

The peak of tropical storm season occurs during September and October, so be sure you are prepared. Visit [chelco.com](http://chelco.com) to download a free weather app and find out what to do before, during and after a storm.



### Walk for a cause

Northwest Florida State College will host The American Heart Association's Heart Walk on Sept. 26. The event begins at 8 a.m., and CHELCO will sponsor the Kid's Zone again this year. The Heart Walk is more than just a 5K; it's a morning of family-friendly fun.



### 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.

**Bowling - 204017529**



**STEVE RHODES**  
Chief Executive Officer

## Making waves, leaving a legacy

If you toss a stone onto the still, reflective surface of a pond, there will be a splash, a disturbance as the fragment plunges into the water.

After a moment it might seem that the action is over, the stone now resting on the bottom of the pond.

But the careful observer will see that the impact of the stone continues as concentric waves roll gently across the surface, spreading the impact of the rock over space and time.

That image is a great metaphor for the actions we take in our lives. Everything we do is like a stone, some big, some small, tossed into the water. The actions we take have immediate impact, then there are ripples all about us as we make decisions that influence other people, institutions and, sometimes, even history.

At CHELCO, we are very mindful of the effect that we have on our members'

lives. On a basic level, we deliver comfort, convenience, productivity and efficiency through the power of electricity. That is like the splash in the pond. But we also add value to your electrical service with multiple payment options, helpful advice on electrical use, proactive modern communications and support for organizations that build our community and economy. CHELCO spends millions of dollars annually maintaining and rebuilding lines and equipment to ensure reliable service. And, CHELCO power is affordable, which is an important thread in creating a vibrant, healthy fabric that is our community.

These are examples of the ripple effects from decisions that CHELCO has made and continues to make about how it does business as a not-for-profit cooperative. We believe that being a member-owned cooperative is the foundation for the difference that CHELCO has made over the years.

For 75 years, CHELCO has established a heritage of caring for its members, looking out for their interests and trying to build a better quality of life. The decisions made over the decades built a cooperative that we are proud of. And, as we respond to modern challenges with new ideas and strategies, we are confident that we will create new ripples that will leave a legacy that future generations will point to with pride. Our members will say, "That's MyCHELCO!"

*(continued from pg 2)*

"It is only natural that development will move north as the beaches and Crestview become more and more populated," said CHELCO Project Coordinator Chris Eddy. "So, there is interest in the Auburn area, and it is beginning to see some growth."

This healthy residential real-estate market brings new residents to the area, both year-round and seasonal, and CHELCO members benefit when fixed costs are spread over increased sales, helping to stabilize electricity costs.



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



**Energy Advisor  
Tina Rushing**

## How to slay energy vampires

***Don't let vampires suck the life out of your wallet!***

Unplugging unused electronics, otherwise known as "energy vampires," can save as much as 10 percent on your electric bill.

Cable boxes, smart phones, laptops... anything that consumes standby power when not in use is an energy vampire. Even ceiling fans become vampires when there is no one in the room to appreciate the breeze.

To identify these energy vampires, look for devices with remote controls, such as TVs, DVRs, and audio equipment. Then target gaming consoles, computers, monitors, and printers along with chargers for cell phones, iPods and laptops. Chargers draw energy even when they're not charging anything. And, don't forget to unplug appliances, such as coffee makers and toaster ovens, with digital clocks when you aren't using them.

An easy way to seal the coffin on energy vampires is to plug components of your computer, home entertainment system or charging stations into a power strip. With a single flip of a switch, you can stop the drain.

# Have no fear, CHELCO is here

*"Some of our neighbors were scared of it," said Dennis Ray, who remembers when CHELCO brought electricity to his family home. "But not my parents, they were excited."*

Ray and others in the Piney Grove community remember when the first electric lines were being strung. They would get word-of-mouth updates from neighbors as to where the lines were going and where crews were expected during the next week.

"I remember tagging along with my mother and the two guys who came to wire our house," recalled Ray. "She told them 'I want a light here, and one here ...

and a plug for the refrigerator right here.' She wanted lights and a refrigerator. At the time, she thought that would be all we would need."

As CHELCO celebrates 75 years of rural electrification and service to members, we are happy to collect and share stories that demonstrate how electricity brought comfort and convenience to early members.



**Dennis Ray, owner and proprietor of The Little Big Store in downtown DeFuniak Springs.**

## *Tip of the month*

Periodically inspect your dryer vent to ensure it is not blocked. This will save energy and may prevent a fire.