

# CHELCO news



Young CHELCO members enjoyed bucket truck rides at annual meeting

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## INSIDE

**PAGE 2**  
**Powering up after an outage**

**PAGE 3**  
**Strategic planning for our future**

**PAGE 4**  
**CHELCO employees raise more than \$8,000 for the American Cancer Society**

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A Touchstone Energy Cooperative



## CEO Steve Rhodes announces no base rate increase in 2019 at annual meeting

CHELCO members and their families attended CHELCO's 78th annual meeting at Freeport High School on Saturday, April 27.

Purvis, Gray and Company, an independent audit organization responsible for tabulation of ballots, announced the Board of Trustee election results. Members re-elected three incumbents to the CHELCO Board of Trustees. Re-elected to three-year terms were Terry Pilcher, District 2; Brady Bearden, District 4; and Gerald Edmondson, District 6. Members voted by mail prior to the annual meeting.

During his report, CEO Steve Rhodes announced there would be no base rate increase in 2019. He also said CHELCO is returning over \$1.5 million to members in

May as part of a special capital credit retirement because 2018 margins were greater than anticipated due to continued cost reduction efforts. Rhodes' report highlighted CHELCO's new facilities, numerous performance improvements and continued cost control measures.

Following the business meeting, the Board of Trustees met in a re-organizational meeting and elected the following officers: President Gerald Edmondson; Vice President Jim Bishop; Secretary/Treasurer Gayle Hughes; and, Assistant Secretary/Treasurer Brady Bearden.

It was the second CHELCO annual meeting at Freeport High School. Freeport

*Continued on page 2*



CHELCO CEO Steve Rhodes highlighted no base rate increase in 2019, new facilities and continued cost control measures at annual meeting.

## No base rate increase in 2019 announced at annual meeting *from page 1*

is located in the center of CHELCO's service area, making it an ideal location for the meeting.

In addition to the business report, the event included food, musical entertainment, children's activities and information booths. CHELCO awarded numerous prizes to members, ranging from bill credits to a large screen television.



**Terry Pilcher**  
District 2  
Freeport



**Brady Bearden**  
District 4  
DeFuniak Springs



**Gerald Edmondson**  
District 6  
Crestview

TRUSTEE ELECTION WINNERS ▶

## CHELCO CONNECT APP

Don't forget to download the CHELCO Connect app. To use the app features, you must have an online account at CHELCO.com. Your username and password are the same as your online account.

### Powering Up After an Outage

When the power goes out, we expect it to be restored within a few hours. But when a major storm or natural disaster causes widespread damage, extended outages may result. Our line crews work long, hard hours to restore service safely to the greatest number of members in the shortest time possible. Here's how we get to work when you find yourself in the dark:

- 1. High-Voltage Transmission Lines:** Transmission towers and cables supply power to transmission substations (and thousands of members), and they rarely fail. But when damaged, these facilities must be repaired before other parts of the system can operate.
- 2. Distribution Substation:** A substation can serve hundreds or thousands of members. When a major outage occurs, our line crews inspect substations to determine if problems stem from transmission lines feeding into the substation, the substation itself or if problems exist further down the line.
- 3. Main Distribution Lines:** If the problem cannot be isolated at a distribution substation, distribution lines are checked. These lines carry power to large groups of members in our local communities.
- 4. Tap Lines:** If local outages persist, supply lines (also known as tap lines) are inspected. These lines deliver power to transformers, either mounted on poles or placed on pads for underground service, outside businesses, schools and homes.
- 5. Service Lines:** If your home remains without power, the service line between a transformer and your residence may need to be repaired. If you experience an outage, please give us a call so we can isolate the issue.

This newsletter is published monthly to provide information on news, events, services, energy advice and safety tips to the member/owners of CHELCO. Comments and questions should be directed to [yourcooperative@chelco.com](mailto:yourcooperative@chelco.com) or (850) 892-2111.



## Strategic plan is map to future

This summer CHELCO will develop a new, three-year strategic plan, the third such working document we have executed since I came to Florida in 2013.

These exercises are extremely valuable for any organization that takes planning seriously. A famous quote is, "A goal without a plan is just a wish." So, a strategic plan's purpose is to look forward and find a path to strategic goals that we will set.

We start by polling our employees about where they see opportunities or concerns. We then solicit the input of our managers and supervisors. The views might be focused on changing a process or developing a new program. Or the team might use their knowledge of our industry, technology or changing member expectations to express a need for change.

Next, this input is reviewed by the executive team of six persons, including myself. Using the earlier

input, we are likely to develop five or six initiatives, which are broad statements on our priorities for the next three years. An example from our 2016 strategic plan included control costs while maintaining value and service.

These initiatives are then proposed to the CHELCO Board of Trustees at a day-long retreat where the trustees also carefully consider the direction of the co-op. After in-depth discussions, changes and amendments, the board approves the initiatives.

**"A goal without a plan is just a wish."**

The next step is to form employee task forces that formulated specific action steps to achieve these goals. From there, the actual work is executed by the departments involved, and we report our progress to the Board of Trustees.

The value of the strategic planning process is born out by the results. For example, after a thorough study, CHELCO now installs all lines underground from the transformer to the meter. The change reduces long-term costs while improving reliability.

There have also been notable changes in our communication programs and other aspects of our organization. We continue to be a preeminent employer in our area, in part, because of strategic planning.

By the end of 2019, a new strategic plan will be in place, and I will discuss that in a future report. Meanwhile, I can assure you that, when we formulate our initiatives, our employees, management and trustees are always focused on goals and actions that benefit our members.



### 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.

**Kelley – 204172282**

### Together we can make an impact: Advocate and take action for cooperative electricity

The Action Committee for Rural Electrification (ACRE ®) is the grassroots political action committee of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. ACRE represents the interests of CHELCO and nearly 930 other not-for-profit electric cooperative systems nationally and our 42 million members. This PAC supports only federal candidates – those in Congress now or running for Congress – who will speak for and protect the interests of electric co-ops and our members. ACRE is bipartisan and its contributions are based on a candidate's record of support for rural electrification, not on their political affiliation. To learn more, visit <https://action.coop/>.

# 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.

### **Bob Taylor's Carpet**

(850) 682-1090

Crestview

*10% discount on floor covering materials only. Sales items are excluded. Card must be presented at time of purchase.*

### **CRC Data Technologies**

(850) 654-7262

Destin

*20% off services (excluding parts). Free no obligation phone consultation.*

### **A Healing Massage**

(850) 830-4608

Santa Rosa Beach

*One-hour message for \$49 (regularly \$70)*

For more information, or, if you own a business and want to sign-up to offer discounts to CHELCO's 52,000+ member accounts, 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.



**CHELCO employees and their families at the Crestview Relay for Life event in front of the CHELCO "#AllCancersMatter" booth. Each team member is wearing a shirt color to represent a type of cancer that has impacted their life.**

## **CHELCO employees raise more than \$8,000 for the American Cancer Society**

CHELCO employees raised more than \$8,000 for the American Cancer Society. More than 25 employees also participated in the Crestview Relay for Life and Walton Relay for Life events to raise money and awareness to fight back against cancer.

## TIP OF THE MONTH

Want to light up your outdoor space without increasing your energy use? Try outdoor solar lights! They're easy to install and virtually maintenance free. Remember, solar lights work best when the solar cells receive the manufacturer's recommended hours of sunlight.



**Help CHELCO control wholesale power costs and collect rewards by allowing CHELCO to install a switch on your electric water heater. CHELCO offers members a \$75 payment, plus bill credits worth \$18 per year, for participating in our Switch to Save program.**

**Call (850) 307-1122 for more information or fill out the online sign-up form at [CHELCO.com](http://CHELCO.com).**

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

