

CHELCO news



CHELCO's fourth annual charity golf tournament raised more than \$8,700. The proceeds will be split between the American Heart Association, the American Cancer Society and the Friends for Autism Awareness.

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CHELCO returns over \$1.5 million to members in capital credits

CHELCO members who had accounts in 2018 will receive a bill credit or check in May. CHELCO's Board of Trustees approved a special retirement of capital credits of more than \$1.5 million to members because our margins were greater than anticipated.

Margins were more than budgeted due to CHELCO's cost-saving measures which resulted in more efficient operations.

What is a capital credit? Electric cooperatives are not like other utilities. We are not-for-profit businesses, and you are a member and an owner. At the end of each year, after expenses are paid, CHELCO has margins

remaining. These margins are allocated to each person who was a member during that year.

Normally, these capital credits are used to build and replace electrical facilities and are not returned to members immediately. However, this year, because margins were larger than budgeted, the board approved retiring capital credits from 2018 sooner than our usual practice.

We hope you enjoy this benefit of being a member of a not-for-profit cooperative! Members who receive less than \$30 will get a credit on their bill. Those who receive \$30 or more will receive a check.

ONLINE NOW

If you'd like to dig into how your home uses electricity to better understand your bill, CHELCO offers online energy calculators at CHELCO.com.



A Touchstone Energy Cooperative



Stay in the know! Text notifications coming soon

CHELCO is launching a new text messaging service. Members who have their cell phone number up-to-date with CHELCO will begin to receive outage text message alerts soon.

CHELCO is always looking to improve our member satisfaction. CHELCO want to kept our members informed about outages in real-time. When power outages occur, we are committed to keeping you informed throughout the restoration process. We'll contact you with:

- Outage alerts for your area
- Restoration times and status updates
- Outage causes (if known)
- Notification when power is restored

"Although the texts will not reduce the number of outages CHELCO experiences,

it can help us activate resources quicker during times of large or wide spread outages," said Manager of Energy Control Center Matthew Rushing. "These text alerts will bring CHELCO into a new age of communicating with members and establish a faster way of delivering information."

If you need to update your information with CHELCO, sign in to your online account at CHELCO.com, call (850) 892-2111 or email memberbilling@chelco.com.



CHELCO's New Vice President of Member Services, Emily Cowan

Emily Cowan joined CHELCO's executive team as the new Vice President of Member Services in March this year.

Emily received a Bachelor of Science in Business from Indiana University at Fort Wayne and a Master of Business Administration (MBA) from Indiana Wesleyan. She also completed the MIP (Management Internship Program) from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Emily previously worked at Kosciusko Rural Electric Membership Cooperative (KREMC) for 11 years in Warsaw, IN, on the executive team as the manager of marketing and member services. Under her leadership, KREMC won four national Touchstone Energy Spotlight on Excellence awards. Emily brings with her experience in managing member services, marketing, and communications functions, which will include a comprehensive energy marketing program. At CHELCO, Emily will provide strategic direction and leadership to the cooperative, specifically in the areas of member services, member credit and collections, marketing, communications, community relations, legislative activity and economic development.

"We are fortunate to have Emily as part of the CHELCO team," said CHELCO CEO Steve Rhodes. "Her knowledge of the electric cooperative industry, and her experience in multiple areas of the member services division, will be an asset to our employees, members and community."



**Vice President of Member Services
Emily Cowan**

Downed and Dangerous

If you see a downed power line, always assume it is energized and dangerous. Avoid going near it or anything in contact with the power line.



Downed power lines can energize the ground up to **35 ft.** away – so keep your distance.



Never drive over a downed line or through water that is touching the line.



If you see a downed line, notify the local authorities immediately.



Never try to move a downed power line, even if you think the line is deenergized or if you're using a non-conductive item – this will not prevent injury or death!

Source: ESFI.org

Surge equipment protects investments

A power surge is an abrupt increase in electric voltage, usually caused by lightning, which can seriously damage electrical devices. To help protect electronics, CHELCO offers both meter-based and point-of-use surge devices. Members can lease meter-based devices, while point-of-use protectors are purchased and can be paid for with a six-month agreement. To find out more about surge protection, call CHELCO's Marketing Department at (850) 307-1122.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Avoid placing items like lamps and televisions near your air-conditioning thermostat. The thermostat senses heat from these appliances, which can cause the A/C to run longer than necessary.

Source: energy.gov



Stay safe above all else

May is National Electrical Safety Month. Every year, thousands of electrical accidents occur, due to shock hazards that could have been avoided if people were more aware of electrical dangers in the home. According to the National Fire Protection Association, a residential fire was reported every 90 seconds in 2016. For this reason, CHELCO is committed to educating our community about electrical safety.

It is critical that the public understands their home's electrical system and the safety concerns associated with the latest residential technologies before bringing them into their homes. With newer technologies, such as solar panels, electric vehicles, and more electrical gadgets in the home, people need to ensure they have an electrical

system that is compatible with the increased load.

CHELCO's mission is to safely provide quality services and products at a competitive value while adhering to the cooperative principles. At the end of the day, we strive to deliver affordable and reliable electricity to our members. We also prioritize returning our workers home safely to their loved ones. This requires ongoing focus, dedication, and vigilance.

There is much you can do to keep yourself and your community safe around electricity:

- Don't attempt electrical DIY projects or overload your outlets.
- Report downed power lines or lines that are hanging low.

- Notify CHELCO if you see cut wire or unlocked electrical substations.
- Inform CHELCO when you notice padmount transformers that look faulty.

Contact CHELCO for additional electrical safety tips. If you would like us to provide a safety demonstration at your school or community event to help raise awareness, please contact CHELCO's marketing department.

Safety is a serious issue, especially when it comes to electrical safety. For CHELCO, it's our number one priority.

Bonnie Whitfield receives the 2019 United Way Ronda Davenport Spirit of Hope Award

CHELCO's Communications and Community Affairs Coordinator, Bonnie Whitfield received the 2019 United Way Rhonda Davenport Spirit of Hope Award in February.

The Ronda Davenport 'Spirit of Hope' award is named in honor of Ronda's dedication to helping people, and the spirit of hope she left behind.

Each year, the United Way of Okaloosa and Walton Counties recognizes one person who embodies that spirit with the volunteer of the year award.

United Way Marketing Director Carolyn Folley said, "Bonnie has been engaged with United Way for many years and her passion for the success of all things United Way is evident year-round. We appreciate her knowledge and professionalism, her spirit of volunteerism and her dedication to making an impact. She is so deserving of being named volunteer of the year."

"I'm proud to work for a company that supports their employees giving back to the community," said Whitfield. "It is an honor to be



From left to right: United Way Resource Development Director, Cindy Holmes; CHELCO's Communications and Community Affairs Coordinator, Bonnie Whitfield; Ronda Davenport's daughter, Jessica Atkinson; and, United Way Marketing Director, Carolyn Folley.

recognized in Ronda's memory. She was such a pillar for our community. She taught me to have a heart for our two-county community, and I strive to make a positive impact whenever I can."

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.

Best Western Crossroads Inn

- 343 US Highway 331 S, DeFuniak Springs FL 32435
- Phone: 850-892-5111
- 10% off rack rate (not valid with any other discounts)

Circle S Produce

- 12216 Highway 90 W, Defuniak Springs FL 32433
- Phone: (850) 585-9671 or (850) 368-3203
- \$5.00 off any total purchase of \$25.00 or more on Wednesday!

RENT-A-CENTER

- 1030-h Freeport Highway, DeFuniak Springs FL 32435
- Phone: 850-892-0440
- 50% off 1st months lease payment or 20% off cash price (50% off may not be used in conjunction with any other offer. May only be used to open a new rental agreement and may not be used as payment on any current agreement or towards any payment or rental purchase. Some restrictions may apply, see store Manager for complete details.)

For more information, or, if you own a business and want to sign-up to offer CHELCO's 52,000+ member accounts a discount, email 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 or download the Co-op Connections app.

Special shelter registration program

The Florida Division of Emergency Management in coordination with each local emergency management agency in the state, developed a registry to allow local residents with special needs to register with their local emergency management agency to receive assistance during a disaster. The statewide registry provides first responders with valuable information to prepare for disasters or other emergencies.

Why should you register?

- To receive important information from local emergency management officials about evacuations.

- It may save your life.
- CHELCO is not able to provide priority service restoration during power outages.

If you need assistance during evacuations and sheltering because of physical, mental, cognitive, impairment or sensory disabilities, please register with the local emergency management agency.

Walton County Emergency Management
(850) 892-8065

Okaloosa County Emergency Management
(850) 651-7150

We value your feedback

A phone survey will be conducted in May on the behalf of CHELCO. We appreciate you taking the time to help us improve.



IN BRIEF

Operation Round Up reminder

Join the thousands of CHELCO members who are participating in Operation Round Up, the new program that benefits non-profit organizations in our communities.

If you join Operation Round Up, your CHELCO bill is rounded up to the next dollar. Non-profits make application for the funds, and money is granted based on availability of funds. The average member will donate \$6 per year.

To join Operation Round Up, fill out a form on CHELCO.com, call us at (800) 342-0990 or emailing memberbilling@chelco.com with your name and account number.

Beware of scams

CHELCO members have reported receiving calls from scam artists

asking for immediate payment to avoid cutoff. Anyone receiving such a call should be aware that CHELCO never requests personal or payment information over the phone; therefore, the caller is not a representative of CHELCO. Such incidents should be reported to local law enforcement immediately.



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.

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