

# CHELCO NEWS

## POWERED *by* YOU

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### Rhodes wins TSE Distinguished Service Award

CHELCO CEO Steve Rhodes has been named the 2023 Touchstone Energy Cooperatives Distinguished Service Award recipient. The national award honors his dedication and service promoting the Cooperative Difference and helping Touchstone Energy evolve into the strong brand and national network it is today, with nearly 700 members in 45 states.

A 35-year electric co-op industry veteran, Rhodes has served in his current capacity as CHELCO CEO since 2013. At the national brand level, Rhodes was elected as a Touchstone Energy board member in 2010, where he served as a director for six years, including two as board president. In 1998, while working as CEO of Western Michigan Electric Cooperative, Rhodes was a member of the national steering committee that created the brand.

CHELCO Vice President of Member Services & External Affairs Emily Cowan nominated Rhodes for the national award.

"Steve is the culmination of the human connections he has made, and those connections are, without a doubt, what powers him," said Cowan. "During his 35 years in the electric cooperative industry, he's conversed with hundreds of members and forged a wealth of relationships that have added insight, direction and motivation to



Touchstone Energy Board Chair Deb Mirasola presents award to Rhodes.

his cooperative path. Steve is a prime example of what Touchstone Energy's tagline—The power of human connections—means when lived out in the real world."

The Touchstone Energy Cooperatives Distinguished Service Award is the organization's highest honor, presented annually to a cooperative leader who has made outstanding contributions to building the brand on the national stage.

"I am honored and thankful to be selected for this award," Rhodes said. "Touchstone Energy has been a huge part of my career in the electric cooperative program. I am just one of the many supporters and contributors that have helped the brand thrive over the past 25 years. I consider myself fortunate - and blessed - to have had the opportunity to serve."



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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### Did you know...

CHELCO offers decorative and street lighting to meet your needs. Whether you're a homeowner, business or developer, we have the lighting solutions for you. If you are interested in having an outdoor light installed at your home, business or development, visit [CHELCO.com/lighting](https://CHELCO.com/lighting) or call us at (850) 892-2111.



## CEO Insights: Appreciating the commitment of our lineworkers

If asked to associate an image or person with CHELCO, I expect most would first picture one of our lineworkers, and rightly so. The crews outfitted in their khaki CHELCO uniforms are visible throughout our service territory. Beyond the precise and pivotal work they do perched atop a 40-foot pole or in an elevated bucket truck, they are intertwined members of our community.

That's why CHELCO, and our fellow NRECA members, celebrate Lineworker Appreciation Day on the second Monday in April. While their service to the co-op and our members is valued throughout the calendar year, we invite you to join us on April 10, 2023, as we commend and recognize the lineworkers who put their lives on the line every day to keep the power on.

Whether power is impacted by winter storms, hurricanes, traffic accidents or any other cause, lineworkers are our first line of

defense and stay ready to respond when duty calls. As the co-op's first responders, lineworkers play a significant role in providing our members with the power necessary in their day-to-day lives.

Numbers from the Bureau of Labor Statistics put electrical line workers among the top ten most dangerous jobs in the United States, according to the agency's most recent census in 2021. Combine heights, heavy equipment and high voltage with a changing natural environment, and it's easy to see that linemen have far from a typical or routine workspace. However, at CHELCO we continue to prepare and protect our crews to help ensure that our employees go home safely.

Along with the hard work our lineworkers do for our members, their concern for community knows no boundaries. CHELCO is proud to frequently respond with mutual aid to assist other cooperatives with needed restorations. Although this assistance is more common during hurricane season, we most recently

sent a six-man crew to Kentucky to support restorations following a historic windstorm. The storm, with near-hurricane-force winds, ripped through the state on the first Friday in March, and our crews deployed first thing the next morning.

While lineworkers may be the most visible employees at CHELCO, we have an entire team of highly skilled professionals working to keep the co-op running. Our engineering and operations, finance, administration and member services and external affairs divisions each play a critical role in running a successful co-op that strives to meet and exceed our members' needs.

I'm proud to lead our team of more than 170 employees on our mission to deliver safe, reliable and affordable power as we strive to impact our surrounding communities. Please join me this month in celebrating the power behind your power on April 10.

**Steve Rhodes,**  
Chief Executive Officer

## Four students win trip to Washington, D.C., for annual Youth Tour program



**Lily Adams**



**Kaitlyn Christensen**



**Sophie Palm**



**Kristina Polanco**

Four local high school juniors were recently selected to represent CHELCO and the Florida Electric Cooperatives Association (FECA) on a weeklong trip to Washington, D.C., this summer. As part of the National Rural Electric Cooperatives Association (NRECA) Youth Tour program, these four students will travel to our nation's capital along with hundreds of other cooperative representatives around the country. Our winners are Lily Adams (Baker School), Kaitlyn Christensen (Freeport High School), Sophie Palm (Baker School) and Kristina Polanco (Walton High School). Congratulations to these young ladies, and we wish you a safe and enjoyable trip to D.C.!



## CHELCO hosts Member Appreciation Night



CHELCO hosted Member Appreciation Night on March 10 at Freeport High School, granting free admission to the baseball and softball games for all CHelco members. Thank you to Freeport High School for allowing us to host this great event, and thank you to all the fans who came out to see us! Make sure to visit [CHELCO.com](https://www.chelco.com) or follow us on social media, @MyCHELCO on all platforms, to make sure you don't miss our next member appreciation or community event!



Line Technician Michel Armbruster and Freeport softball player Graison Dorr (granddaughter of Board Vice President Brady Bearden) pose for a picture before the softball game.



Our linemen brought some gear to share with our younger members!



Senior Line Technician Curtis King, his wife Jessica and daughter Ella.

## New MyCHELCO App



The new MyCHELCO app will be available beginning April 20. Upon its release, the old CHelco Connect app will no longer be in service.

The new app will feature tools to report outages, make payments and monitor your monthly bills and usage. To install the app, visit your smart device's app store and search for "MyCHELCO" after April 20.

## Recipe of the Month



### Spaghetti Casserole

Enjoy a taste of Italy with this delicious recipe! Learn this recipe and more at [CHELCO.com/recipes](https://www.chelco.com/recipes).

CHELCO is governed by a nine-member board of trustees: Lee Perry, District 1; Terry Pilcher, District 2; Reese Harrison, District 3; Brady Bearden, Vice President, District 4; Ronald Jones, District 5; Gerald Edmondson, President, District 6; Bert Prutzman, Assistant Secretary/Treasurer, District 7; Gayle Hughes, Secretary/Treasurer, District 8; Dwayne Davis, District 9.

## Tee it up at the 2023 CHELCO Charity Golf Tournament!



Join us for the annual CHELCO Charity Golf Tournament at Blackstone Golf Course on May 19, benefiting the American Heart Association, American Cancer Society and Emerald Coast Autism Center! Last year, we were able to donate \$3,000 to each of these great organizations because of the support of our sponsors, and we're looking forward to another successful event this year.

The 18-team tournament format will be a four-person scramble, with prizes available for the top three teams, longest drive and closest to the pin. The team entry fee is \$400. Corporate sponsorships are available for \$500, \$750 and \$1,000, and each includes a four-person team. Additionally, we offer a water and

snack hole sponsorship for \$200 and hole sponsorship for \$100. In-kind donations will also be accepted in lieu of sponsorships. We will also be offering mulligans, tee-busters and other on-course activities to help your team come out on top. In addition to golf, we will also be serving breakfast and lunch to everyone in attendance.

For full sponsorship details, and for the team registration form, visit [CHELCO.com/golf](https://CHELCO.com/golf). Sign up soon, because the tournament will sell out at the first 18 teams! All teams must be registered by May 5 in order to have their company logo displayed at the event.

If you have any questions, please email [communications@chelco.com](mailto:communications@chelco.com) or call (850) 307-1121.



## CHELCO's podcast now available

CHELCO's podcast, *On the Grid*, has officially released! In our first episode, we had a great conversation with the three CHELCO linemen who recently participated in the Powering Guatemala Project, in which 14 linemen from Florida co-ops brought electricity to a rural village that had never had it.

*On the Grid* is available at [CHELCO.com/podcast](https://CHELCO.com/podcast), Spotify, Apple Podcasts and Google Podcasts. New episodes will be released on the third Friday of each month.



## IS \$25 YOURS?

If the account number below matches yours, call us at (850) 892-2111 or stop by any CHELCO office to claim a \$25 credit on your next bill! This month's winner is:

**Morris - 9000171572**

For unclaimed capital credits, visit [CHELCO.com/capital-credits](https://CHELCO.com/capital-credits).