

CHELCO NEWS

POWERED *by* YOU

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CHELCO's 2024 Annual Meeting is April 6



Board President Gerald Edmondson gives updates at the 2023 Annual Meeting.

It's that time of year again! We are once again gearing up for the CHELCO Annual Meeting, which will be held April 6 at Freeport High School.

Day of Family Fun

Each year, the CHELCO Annual Meeting is an event filled with fun activities for the whole family, including bucket truck rides for kids, live entertainment, energy efficiency presentations and more! Doors will open at 9 a.m., so make sure to join us then to get the full experience.

Prizes, Scholarships & More

All members in attendance will be eligible for the drawing of nearly \$5,000 in total prizes, and there will be kids' prizes for those in attendance 13 and under. Additionally, those who vote in the Board of Trustees election will be entered into a drawing for four \$100 bill credits. And even if you don't win a prize, all members in attendance will receive a \$10 bill credit (limit one per household).

Immediately following the business portion of the Annual Meeting, CHELCO will draw for six winners of the \$1,000 scholarship. Applicants must be in attendance to win.

Trustee Elections

Districts 1, 7 and 9 of the Board of Trustees are up for election in 2024, and election packets will be mailed soon. Included in the packet are the certification card and a self-addressed, postage-paid envelope. Additionally, you will receive a Notice of CHELCO's Annual Meeting, which will include information on each candidate running for the Board of Trustees and additional voting instructions.



CHELCO offers bucket truck rides for kids 15 and under at Annual Meeting.



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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CHELCO Scholarship

The CHELCO Scholarship is now available to all members and member dependents who will be attending college or trade school as an undergraduate student in 2024-25. Six recipients will receive \$1,000 to use toward their education. Winners will be drawn at the Annual Meeting on April 6. Applicants must be in attendance to win. Visit CHELCO.com/scholarships for eligibility requirements and to apply today. The deadline to apply is March 22.



CEO Insights: Winter storm a lesson in overcoming adversity

Sometimes in life, it's good to face adversity. While it may not always be pleasant, overcoming difficult things makes us stronger in the long run.

The same can be said in the co-op world. We recently faced and overcame adversity of our own when a surprisingly strong line of storms swept across much of the southeast in a system that stretched as far to the north as Illinois and spanned several states in width.

In the early morning hours of Jan. 9, CHELCO's service area began feeling the effects of this dangerous weather system. By the time the sun had risen, multiple reported tornadoes, strong wind gusts and heavy rain left nearly 11,000 members without power at the peak of our system outages. In total, more than 15,000 meters were out of power at some point during the storm, equivalent to nearly one-fourth of our entire system.

During events like these, regular day-to-day operations take a pause, and the focus shifts to restoring power to all members in a safe and efficient manner. With crews and support staff working long hours and targeting the largest outages first, all but around 1,000 members were restored within 24 hours.

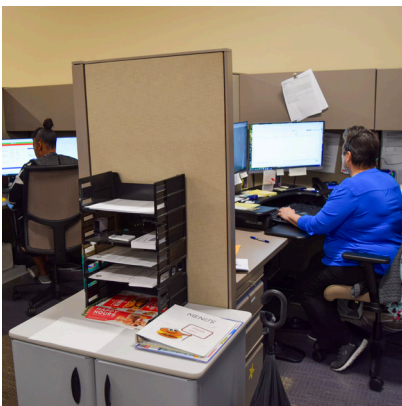
The hardest hit locations were south of Freeport, Red Bay and Knox Hill. A full team effort was directed at those areas, including assistance from Covington and Escambia River Electric Cooperatives, who each sent seven linemen to assist. Power was fully restored late the night of Jan. 10.

I'm grateful to our entire team for the outstanding job of restoring power to our members after this severe weather. Their dedication to our members was on full display and was appreciated not only by me, but our members and Board of Trustees as well.

I would like to thank Covington and Escambia River Electric Cooperatives, as well as contract crews from PowerGrid Services. I also greatly appreciate our wholly-owned subsidiary, Southland Utility Services, for cutting trees, limbs and other debris away from the rights-of-way, as well as providing other support services, allowing our crews to more efficiently restore power. Finally, thank you to our members, many of whom waited patiently for hours while we restored power. Your patience and resilience did not go unnoticed, and we all appreciated the kind words shared on social media and to our staff directly.

Storms like these, while frustrating for us and our members, bring us together in ways that only adversity can. We're glad it's over, but now, we are better for it. Have a great month!

Steve Rhodes,
Chief Executive Officer





Have you received alerts asking you to limit your energy usage during “peak” times? If so, this is what we call a “Beat the Peak” alert.

What is Beat the Peak?

Beat the Peak is a free and voluntary program that helps control energy costs for all CHELCO members. When a potential peak demand for electricity has been predicted, members may receive phone calls, emails or text alerts encouraging them to reduce electricity consumption during that short period of time.

What determines when a Beat the Peak alert goes out?

Alerts are activated only when extreme weather conditions are predicted to cause unusually high energy usage by a large number of members at the same time. Most commonly, we activate Beat the Peak alerts during the coldest winter mornings, typically from around 6-9 a.m. Occasionally, we may also send out Beat the Peak alerts on extremely hot summer afternoons.

Why should members participate?

Our members collectively have the means to help control what CHELCO must pay for wholesale power, which affects rates for all members. The single largest expense CHELCO has

is the price of energy we deliver to our members. When demand for electricity rises, the wholesale cost to buy it rises. When CHELCO purchases large amounts of energy during these peak periods when prices are highest, it can have a significant impact on rates. Through our Beat the Peak efforts, our goal is to keep the amount of power we have to buy as low as possible so the rates are controlled over the course of the year.

How can members help the cause?

During peak hours, members are encouraged to reduce or postpone power-intensive activities for a short amount of time, typically not exceeding a few hours. We understand you can’t always postpone certain things, but when possible:

- **Adjust thermostat by 3 degrees higher in summer, lower in winter.**
- **Delay hot water consumption if you have an electric water heater.**
- **Postpone using large appliances like your electric oven or dryer.**

The next time you receive an alert, you’ll be ready to help ALL members keep their rates affordable as we join together to Beat the Peak.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Before Spring arrives, now is a great time to schedule your air conditioning system to be serviced. There are routine maintenance tasks that you can perform to keep your unit at peak performance, such as changing the filter regularly, cleaning dirt and dust debris from the air conditioning coils and ensure the aluminum fins on the coils are not bent, restricting air flow. Hire a professional service technician to ensure a thorough and accurate inspection and maintenance. Typically, the technician will check that the unit has the appropriate amount of refrigerant, test for refrigerant leaks, check for leaks in the ductwork, measure airflow and inspect electrical components of the unit.

Recipe of the Month



Chicken Breast Delight

Enjoy a nice, home-cooked dinner with this simple recipe. Learn this recipe and more at 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.

Live Line crew visits Paxton School for STEM Day



CHELCO Engineering Representative Kevin Campbell speaks to a group of Paxton students at the school's STEM Day (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics). The Live Line safety demonstration helps educate students about the dangers of electricity, specifically when faced with downed power lines and car accidents involving power poles. The Live Line demos are available upon request. Please contact CHELCO at (850) 892-2111 and ask about hosting a Live Line demonstration for your event.



Linemen Dusty Taylor and Chase Horton demonstrated different scenarios to students, including a simulated electrical shock.

BEST BETS FOR

Winter Savings

Energy consumption spikes during winter months as we spend more time indoors and heating systems work overtime. You can help reduce demand and strain on the electric grid by conserving during peak energy times. Reducing energy use will also help lower your energy bills.

UNPLUG WHEN POSSIBLE

Turn off unnecessary lights and electronics when you aren't using them.

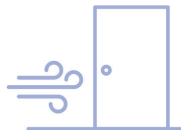


MAINTAIN HEATING EQUIPMENT

Maintain your heating system by replacing dirty, clogged filters and scheduling an annual inspection for necessary maintenance.

ELIMINATE DRAFTS AND AIR LEAKS

Seal air leaks and drafts around windows and exterior doors.



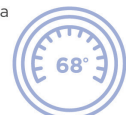
USE APPLIANCES WHEN ENERGY DEMAND IS LOWER

Run large appliances like clothes washers, dryers and dishwashers early in the morning or before you go to bed.



LOWER THE THERMOSTAT

Home heating accounts for a large portion of energy consumption. Adjust your thermostat to the lowest comfortable setting (68 degrees or lower).



ACRE Supports Co-ops

The Action Committee for Rural Electrification (ACRE) is a grassroots political action committee (PAC) that supports and advocates for co-ops around the country. Co-ops just like CHELCO have ACRE's support to help implement policies at the state and federal level that are beneficial to cooperatives and their members. ACRE contributions to candidates are backed by nearly 40,000 eligible members across 47 states.

For more information, and to learn how you can get involved to make sure your co-op is fairly represented in office, visit electric.coop/pac.

Holiday Office Closure

CHELCO offices will be closed Monday, Feb. 19, in observance of Presidents Day.



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:

Bachmann - 9000102272

For unclaimed capital credits, visit CHELCO.com/capital-credits.