

# CHELCO NEWS

POWERED *by* YOU

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## New Automated "TripSaver" Devices Help Reduce Duration of Power Outages



Before the end of 2023, CHELCO began installing automated "TripSaver" reclosing devices along lines in its service area, including Eglin Air Force Base, to help limit the frequency, duration and scope of service interruptions. The programmable devices work like a circuit breaker in a home with the added benefit of automatically re-energizing a power line within seconds to keep power safely flowing to customers.

Crews place TripSavers on distribution lines that run off an area's main power line. When there is a temporary problem with the line, such as a tree limb contacting the line, the TripSaver can sense when the branch is gone and automatically re-energize the line to prevent an extended outage in the neighborhood – all in a matter of seconds.

If the TripSaver detects a more severe issue, such as a fallen tree on the power line, it will isolate the

outage to that area and limit the total number of affected customers. The device's innovative technology quickly pinpoints the location of the electrical fault and helps utility personnel better understand the cause of the outage to help speed restoration.

"TripSavers allow us to automatically restore service to customers rather than send a truck and crew to investigate the issue, which is especially useful in rural areas of our service territory," said Kevin Jones, CHELCO Manager of Engineering. "These devices are intended to provide safer and more efficient service restoration for employees and members."

The use of this technology saves the cooperative time and money while also improving reliability.

To date, nearly 15 TripSavers have been installed and at least 25 more will be installed in the coming months.



A Touchstone Energy<sup>®</sup> Cooperative 

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### Save the Date for 2024 Annual Meeting

Mark your calendars for Saturday, April 6, for the 2024 CHELCO Annual Meeting at Freeport High School. Join us for a day of activities, entertainment, refreshments and updates on the co-op, a bill credit for all in attendance and a chance to win some great prizes.

We hope to see you and your family there on Saturday, April 6, at Freeport High School!



## CEO Insights: What's on deck for 2024 at CHELCO?

As we embark on a new year at CHELCO, we look forward to continuing to deliver safe, reliable and affordable power to our members.

### Community Affairs

In our ongoing effort to provide more to our members than the tried and true distribution of their power, we look forward to continuing to host community events in our service territory. Be on the lookout for more information about our bi-annual Member Appreciation Events and our Annual Meeting, planned for April 6 at Freeport High School.

### Infrastructure

2024 will also bring more improvements to our system. We are working alongside PowerSouth Energy Cooperative, our wholesale power provider, on a 3-5-year work plan that includes upgrades and improvements to our substations as part of our commitment to strengthening the power grid against severe weather and preparing our

system to serve a growing area.

### Eglin Air Force Base

As a proud mission partner of Eglin Air Force Base (Eglin AFB), having been awarded the 50-year utility privatization (UP) contract in 2016, we look forward to continuing to work closely with Eglin leadership and personnel to own, operate, and maintain their electrical system infrastructure. Alongside our contracted work, CHELCO has been proud to assist with new projects related to security and technology upgrades on base.

### Growing to Meet Member's Needs

As many know, Freeport, Florida, is one of the fastest-growing areas within CHELCO's service territory and the state. While we have recently completed the new substation to help carry the load the influx of people will need, we know that we will also need to build a new office in Freeport to have more hands onsite for our member's needs. We are in the preliminary

stages of planning and design for a new Freeport area office. Until then, we will continue to happily serve members from our office in the Freeport City Hall.

### Beat the Peak

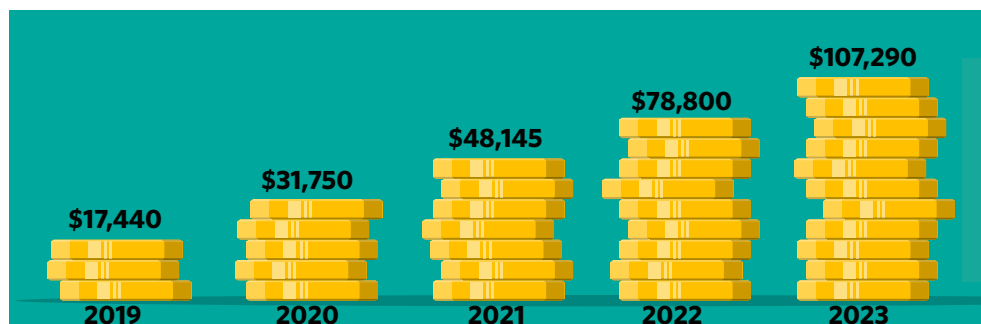
The single most significant expense CHELCO has continues to be the price of energy we deliver to our members. When demand for electricity rises, the wholesale cost to buy it rises. Through our Beat the Peak campaign, we aim to keep the amount of power we have to buy as low as possible, so the rates are controlled over the year. Through these efforts, our members collectively have the means to help control what CHELCO must pay for wholesale power, which affects rates for all members.

While the new year is under way, we look to the future with great expectations, and will continue to keep the lights on.

**Steve Rhodes,**  
Chief Executive Officer

## Operation Round Up 2023 Recap

Since beginning in 2019, thousands of CHELCO members have opened up their hearts and joined Operation Round Up. The program is simple, but its impact is tremendous. Members who participate choose to round up their monthly electric bill to the next whole dollar amount, and the spare change is pooled then distributed to non-profits in our community. In 2023, nearly \$108,000 was distributed to over 40 501c3 organizations in CHELCO's service territory. The chart below shows the money invested locally over the last five years.



## CHELCO Scholarship Now Available

CHELCO's annual college scholarship program is designed to help members or their dependents with college expenses. Six recipients will receive \$1,000 to use towards their higher education.

Winners will be drawn on April 06 at the CHELCO Annual Meeting. Applicants must be in attendance to win.

To learn more, please visit [chelco.com/scholarships](https://chelco.com/scholarships) for eligibility, deadlines and the application to complete. The deadline to apply for scholarships is March 22, 2024.

## The Good Kind of Audit

Colder weather typically results in higher energy bills. With winter in full swing, CHELCO wants to remind you about an affordable service that can help you boost efficiency and save money. As your trusted energy partner, we believe savings and efficiency are within reach for everyone, and we want to help you get there. For only \$19, an energy audit provides a holistic view of your home's efficiency. Understanding how your home uses energy can help determine the best ways to adjust energy consumption, improve problem areas, and ultimately keep more money in your wallet. An energy audit can also identify potential safety issues surrounding electrical wiring and HVAC systems, making your home safer. You could say this is a good kind of audit.

To request an energy audit or for more information on the service, call (850) 307-1122 or email [energyservices@chelco.com](mailto:energyservices@chelco.com). For more ways to save, check out our additional efficiency programs at [www.chelco.com/energy-efficiency](http://www.chelco.com/energy-efficiency).

### Four Ways an Energy Audit Can Benefit You

A home energy audit can determine the overall efficiency of your home or business and ways to improve it. Here are the main benefits of conducting an energy audit.

- \$ An audit will identify where most of your energy use is going and ways to use energy more efficiently to save money.
- \$ It can determine if appliances and heating/cooling equipment are properly sized for the home or business.

- \$ An audit can identify potential safety issues with home wiring and ventilation.

- \$ Making changes based on the audit recommendations will raise your property value.



### Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

During winter months, ensure your home is well-sealed and properly insulated to reduce the need for excessive heating. Seal air leaks around your home and add insulation where needed to save up to 10% on annual energy bills. Install weather stripping on exterior doors and apply caulk around windows. Check attic insulation levels and hire a qualified contractor if additional insulation is needed. (Source: [energystar.gov](http://energystar.gov))

## New Substation Energized in Walton County

Recently, CHELCO and PowerSouth crews energized the new Owls Head Substation in Freeport, Florida. The new substation helps enhance energy grid reliability for approximately 2,000 members in the area and alleviates a portion of the load off of the existing substation in the area.

"Increasing the capacity of the local electric system through this project will help provide a more resilient electric grid for thousands of members we serve," said CHELCO Senior Vice President of Engineering and Operations Matthew Avery. "We continually invest in system enhancements such as this as part of our commitment to delivering safe, reliable power to all of our members."

### Recipe of the Month



#### Broccoli Casserole

This easy broccoli casserole recipe is a simple side dish. Learn this recipe and more at [CHELCO.com/recipes](http://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.

## GEM of the Year Recipients Announced



Throughout the year, CHELCO employees may nominate coworkers who have gone above and beyond for the GEM (Going the Extra Mile) award. These employees are recognized quarterly, and of all the quarterly winners, one GEM of the Year is selected.

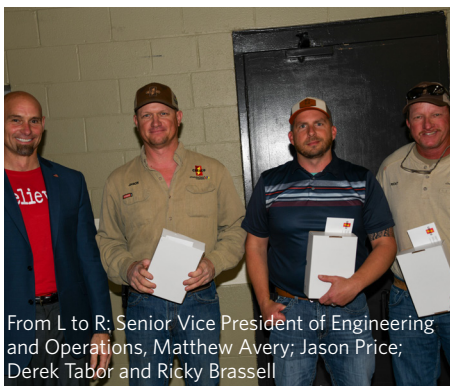
That is, until this year. Uniquely, there were four winners of the prestigious award.

The first recipients were CHELCO linemen Ricky Brassell, Jason Price, and Derek Tabor, who traveled to the small village of Guishoro, Guatemala, outside of the city of

Jalapa, to bring power to the remote village as part of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) International Powering Guatemala project.

The other recipient was CHELCO Senior Member Services Representative Audrey Morris.

Audrey was nominated multiple times in the fourth quarter for her compassion and bravery when abruptly faced with a threatening situation. Audrey stood as a pillar of strength for those around her and was an incredible representation of CHELCO.



From L to R: Senior Vice President of Engineering and Operations, Matthew Avery; Jason Price; Derek Tabor and Ricky Brassell

"The GEM of the Year Award is among the highest honors a CHELCO employee can receive," said CEO Steve Rhodes. "The fact that we were able to recognize four employees this year speaks highly of the quality of staff we are proud to have here at CHELCO."

## CHELCO Holiday Schedule - Offices Closed

**New Year's Day:** Monday, Jan. 1

**MLK Day:** Monday, Jan. 15

**Presidents Day:** Monday, Feb. 19



## Board of Trustees election timeline

CHELCO's Board of Trustees elections are coming up. If you are eligible and interested in running, applications are available at CHELCO offices and online at [CHELCO.com/trustees-and-elections](https://CHELCO.com/trustees-and-elections).

This year, **Districts 1, 7 and 9** are up for election. Each trustee represents a geographical area of CHELCO's service territory, and candidates must be a member in good standing and live in their district for at least one year before running.

Applications are due to CHELCO by 4 p.m. Jan. 24. Your current district number can be found on your bill to see if you are eligible to run this year.

## Download the MyCHELCO app

The MyCHELCO Mobile App makes access to your account easy whenever and wherever you need it. The app allows you to pay your bill, check energy usage, update contact information, monitor or report outages and more. Available in the Apple Store or Google Play.

## 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:

**Rodriguez - 9000178553**

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