

CHELCO NEWS

POWERED *by* YOU

JUNE 2023 | VOL. 28 NO. 6

CHELCO is prepared for 2023 hurricane season



Pictured above: A CHelco lineman cuts a tree that had fallen on our lines during Hurricane Sally in September 2020.

With summer now upon us, we're excited to enjoy the many traditions that come with it. Unfortunately, with summer also comes the Atlantic Hurricane Season, which began June 1 and will last through November 30.

At CHelco, we prepare for hurricane season well before June 1 to ensure everyone understands their role. In April, the CHelco key hurricane coordinators held their annual preparation meeting to review the hurricane response plan and to address any questions or concerns.

CEO Steve Rhodes said that while we hope to avoid hurricanes, it's crucial to be ready to respond.

"We've seen increasingly active hurricane seasons for the past several years," Rhodes said. "While we've been fortunate at CHelco to

avoid catastrophic storms in recent years, we absolutely must remain alert and ready."

At CHelco, we also want our members to be prepared for the season. Featuring resources from NOAA, local emergency management organizations and Ready.gov, our Storm Center page on CHelco.com is an excellent resource for members. These pages also feature tips for your family before, during and after a hurricane, steps to restoring power, generator safety tips and live outage monitoring.

CHelco.com/storm-center is an excellent resource.

For all these resources and more, visit CHelco.com/storm-center, or visit Ready.gov to prepare your family for hurricane season.



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Inside

Page 2

CEO Insights: Maintaining right-of-way is crucial for excellent service

Page 3

Six students win \$1,000 CHelco Scholarship

Page 4

Steps to restoring power for major outages

Did you know...

CHelco's wholesale power provider, PowerSouth Energy Cooperative, will soon be adding 80MW of solar energy to their mix. The solar generation facility is located in Covington County, Alabama, and is named Wing Solar. Energy produced at this site will be enough to serve a portion of the needs of approximately 13,000 homes annually.



CEO Insights: Maintaining right-of-way is crucial for excellent service

One of the things I love most about our communities is the natural beauty that surrounds us. We are fortunate to have so many trees that offer beauty, shade and a habitat for all sorts of wildlife. We know that you appreciate our community for many of the same reasons.

At CHELCO, we strive to balance maintaining beautiful surroundings and ensuring a reliable power supply by keeping power lines clear in the right-of-way.

While we recognize and appreciate the beauty of trees, there are many benefits to tree trimming in right-of-way areas. However, before going into more detail on that, let me explain what a “right-of-way” is and how it may impact you.

What is the right-of-way?

A right-of-way is the land we use to construct, maintain, replace or repair underground and overhead power lines. Rights-of-way enable the co-op to provide clearance from trees and other obstructions that could hinder power line installation, maintenance or operation. CHELCO must be able to maintain the power lines above and below the right-of-way. The overall goal of our vegetation management program is to provide reliable power to our members while maintaining the beauty of our community. Proactive vegetation management benefits co-op members in three tangible ways: safety, reliability and affordability. Our wholly-owned subsidiary, Southland Utility Services, performs most right-of-way maintenance on our system.

Safety

First and foremost, we care about our members and put their safety

and that of our employees above all else. Overgrown vegetation and trees near power lines pose a safety risk. For example, if trees are touching power lines in our members’ yards, they could potentially be dangerous to families. If children can access those trees, they can potentially climb into the danger zone. Electricity can arc, or jump, from a power line to a nearby conductor like a tree. A proactive vegetation management approach also diminishes the chances of fallen branches or trees during severe weather events that make it more complicated and dangerous for lineworkers to restore power.

Reliability

Of course, one of the biggest benefits of a smart vegetation management program is reliability. Strategic tree trimming reduces the frequency of downed lines causing prolonged power outages. Generally speaking, healthy trees don’t fall on power lines, and clear lines don’t cause problems. Proactive trimming and pruning keeps lines clear to promote reliability.

We also use data and technology to maximize the efficiency of our

operation. This includes our vegetation management plan, in which we utilize drones to more clearly identify which areas of our right-of-way are in need of maintenance.

Affordability

As a not-for-profit electric cooperative, we strive to keep our controllable costs in check and our rates affordable. This extends to our approach to vegetation management. If trees grow too close to power lines, the potential for expensive repairs increases. Effective tree trimming and other vegetation management efforts keep costs down for everyone.

Our community is a special place. We appreciate the beauty that trees offer, but we also know you depend on us to provide reliable energy. Through vegetation management, we are better able to keep the power lines clear, prepare for future weather events and secure the reliability of the grid. Learn more at chelco.com/vegetation-management.

Steve Rhodes,
Chief Executive Officer



Southland's SkyTrim tree trimmer can extend to cut up to 75 feet high.

Six students win \$1,000 CHELCO Scholarship



L to R: 2023 scholarship recipients Natalie Larsen, Charles Barker, Paetyn Hoffmann, Lukas Burgis, Calypsa Coarsey and Jaden Stevenson.

During the CHELCO Annual Meeting on April 15, six member dependents were awarded a \$1,000 scholarship to pursue their undergraduate degrees.

Each year, CHELCO offers six \$1,000 scholarships to members or member dependents who plan to attend college or trade school in the next school year. Applicants must have a GPA of at least 2.5, live on CHELCO lines and attend the CHELCO annual meeting. Winners are selected via random drawing at the annual meeting.

Scholarship applications are available beginning in January and are accepted through mid-March. To learn more, please visit CHELCO.com/scholarships.

2023 CHELCO Scholarship Recipients

Natalie Larsen
Niceville High School

Charles Barker
South Walton High School

Paetyn Hoffmann
Niceville High School

Lukas Burgis
South Walton High School

Calypsa Coarsey
Niceville High School

Jaden Stevenson
Walton High School

ACRE rebranded to AEC PAC

The National Rural Electric Cooperatives Association's (NRECA) political action committee has been rebranded. The Action Committee for Rural Electrification (ACRE) has been replaced by America's Electric Cooperatives (AEC) PAC to better reflect the PAC's goals. AEC will continue to raise grassroots funds from cooperative members for political candidates that support cooperatives.

To learn more about how you can get involved in supporting the AEC PAC, please visit electric.coop/pac.

Recipe of the Month



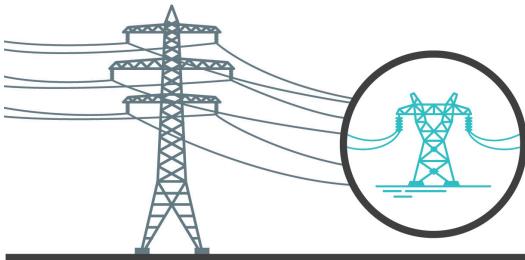
Lemonade

Summer is here, and we all love a cold glass of fresh squeezed lemonade! Learn this recipe 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.

Steps to restoring power for major outages

When a major outage occurs, our crews restore service to the greatest number of people in the shortest time possible – until everyone has power.



1. High-Voltage

Transmission Lines

These lines carry large amounts of electricity. They rarely fail but must be repaired first.



2. Distribution Substations

Crews inspect substations, which can serve hundreds or thousands of people.



3. Main Distribution Lines

Main lines serve essential facilities like hospitals and larger communities.



4. Individual Homes and Businesses

After main line repairs are complete, we repair lines that serve individual homes and businesses.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Stay cool this summer by properly utilizing fans and shades in your home. Closing your south and west-facing blinds will prevent some heat from entering your home, and using fans will keep you feeling cool while circulating the conditioned air in your home, using less energy and saving you money on your bills. It also helps prolong the life of your air conditioning unit by reducing its use.



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

Build Your Disaster Supply Kit

Now that hurricane season is upon us, it's a great time to make sure you have the essentials stored away in case of prolonged power outages. Batteries and battery-powered tools, non-perishable food, water, medicine and hygiene supplies are just a few of the items you'll want to have on hand in the event of a storm. Visit FloridaDisaster.org for a full list of items to help you build your disaster supply kit.

In this episode of 'On the Grid'...

In this month's episode of the CHELCO podcast, On the Grid, we hear from a few long-time CHELCO employees and their best stories from hurricane response efforts over the years.

To hear this episode and more, visit [CHELCO.com/podcast](https://www.chelco.com/podcast), or listen on Apple Podcasts, Spotify or Google Podcasts.

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:

Kimbril - 58648809