

CHELCO NEWS

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CHELCO



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Updates from the CHELCO Annual Meeting

CHELCO held its Annual Meeting on April 15 at Freeport High School, welcoming hundreds of CHELCO members for a day of activities, entertainment, updates on the co-op and more.

During the business meeting, Board President Gerald Edmondson shared that CHELCO's rates were the lowest of all the electric cooperatives in the state of Florida, and that CHELCO continues to make an impact on our community and make decisions with our members' best interest in mind.

"CHELCO's rates are the lowest of all the electric co-ops in Florida."

Also during the meeting, the results of the Board of Trustees elections were announced. Reese Harrison (District 3), Ronald Jones (District 5) and Gayle Hughes (District 8) all ran unopposed and were re-elected to serve three-year terms.

CEO Steve Rhodes discussed CHELCO's accomplishments from 2022 and highlighted some of the challenges facing our cooperative, most prominently our area's rapid growth, supply chain issues and inflation.

Rhodes also spoke to the membership on several projects at CHELCO, including the facilities plan, which included updates on the new vehicle shop and maintenance building, as well as the final piece in



Board President Gerald Edmondson speaks at the 2023 Annual Meeting.

our multi-year construction plan, the construction of an Operations and Member Service Center at Hammock Bay near Freeport.

In the best news of the day, Rhodes announced there would be no distribution rate increase in 2023, a streak that extends back to 2013.

"It's an exciting time here at our cooperative," Rhodes said in closing. "We look to the future with great expectations, and we look forward to the challenges that lie ahead."

"No distribution rate increase in 2023."

Following the business meeting, CHELCO awarded six scholarships to member dependents and gave away more than \$4,000 in prizes to those in attendance.

A video of the annual meeting is posted on CHELCO.com.

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ANNOUNCEMENT

CHELCO's Bluewater Bay office will be undergoing construction updates during the month of May. Construction may require us to close the office on certain days, so please check our website and social media pages for updates or give us a call if you have any questions. Thank you for your patience as we work to update our facilities.



CEO Insights: Answering some frequently-asked questions on EVs

The term electric vehicle (EV) is far more common in our everyday vocabulary than it was five years ago. As many automakers have announced plans to electrify large portions of their fleets over the next 10 years, I expect the number of these vehicles we see on the roads will also become more common.

We receive inquiries regularly about electric vehicles from CHELCO members, so I thought it would be helpful to respond to some of those frequently asked questions in this month's column.

Q: Why is CHELCO communicating about electric vehicles?

A: It's no secret that consumer interest in electric vehicles (EVs) is growing. CHELCO provides information about anticipated changes to the energy landscape, especially regarding EVs, so that our members can make informed decisions when considering an EV purchase.

Q: Does CHELCO have an EV?

A: CHELCO works continuously to introduce energy-efficient and environmentally friendly practices in

our workplace, including our fleet. CHELCO owns a Nissan Leaf EV for research and development purposes. Our EV and charging station help us access critical data and gain insights into how EVs operate and what infrastructure is needed to support them. While the Nissan Leaf is part of our vehicle fleet, its primary purpose is to give our staff a first-hand understanding of EVs and to help raise awareness and promote understanding of EV technologies.

Q: How is CHELCO involved in EV infrastructure issues?

A: All electric utilities are planning how to ensure they have the essential electric infrastructure to meet future EV charging needs – without jeopardizing the ability to keep reliable power flowing to our local homes and businesses. As your local energy provider, CHELCO and our Energy Services staff are continually educating themselves on EVs so that we can confidently advise and help our members and local businesses plan for the electric vehicle future.

Q: Will an EV meet my daily driving needs?

A: For most consumers, an EV will meet your daily driving needs. While the earliest EVs had a limited range, new developments in EV technology have allowed for ranges comparable to gas-powered vehicles.

Q: Should I let my co-op know if I purchase an EV?

A: If you purchase an EV, please let us know so we can better serve you. As more CHELCO members buy EVs, it's helpful to know where they're located in our area to ensure we have the necessary infrastructure to meet charging needs and provide reliable power to our local homes and businesses.

We understand making the switch to an EV is a big decision. Whether you're ready to make an EV purchase or wondering if an EV can meet your daily driving needs, we're here to help you make an informed decision. Visit our Electric Vehicles page on CHELCO.com or contact our Energy Services Department at energyservices@chelco.com for all your EV inquiries.

Steve Rhodes,
Chief Executive Officer



May is National Electrical Safety Month

Every year in the month of May, CHELCO, cooperatives and many other industries recognize National Electrical Safety Month. While our employees are required to put safety first, we also strive to educate our members about the importance of safety around electrical equipment.

Safety Around Power Lines

If possible, the best way to be safe around power lines is to avoid being near them. This is especially true for downed power lines. If you see a downed power line or your car comes into contact with them, the best thing to do is to stay inside your vehicle and call 911 immediately. If a fire or other immediate threat forces you to exit the vehicle, jump out

and away from the vehicle as to not touch the ground and your vehicle at the same time. Then, carefully shuffle your feet until you are 30 or more feet away.

In addition to overhead power lines, it's important to remember that there is high-voltage underground equipment to be mindful of. If you need to dig for a project, call 811 first. Our subsidiary, Southland Utility Services, will locate and identify any underground equipment so you can complete your project safely.

For other electrical safety tips, please visit Electric.coop



Board of Trustees re-elects officers

Immediately following the CHELCO Annual Meeting, the Board of Trustees met to elect officers on the board. There were no officer changes, and the following trustees will continue to serve as officers for the next year:

President:

Gerald Edmondson, District 6

Vice President:

Brady Bearden, District 4

Secretary/Treasurer:

Gayle Hughes, District 8

Asst. Secretary/Treasurer:

Bert Prutzman, District 7

Recipe of the Month



Waffle Cookies

Delicious cookies you can make with just six ingredients and a waffle iron! 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.

Follow these guidelines when planting trees near power lines

Plant Trees Safely

Before you dig, call 811 to locate buried utility lines.

LOW TREE ZONE

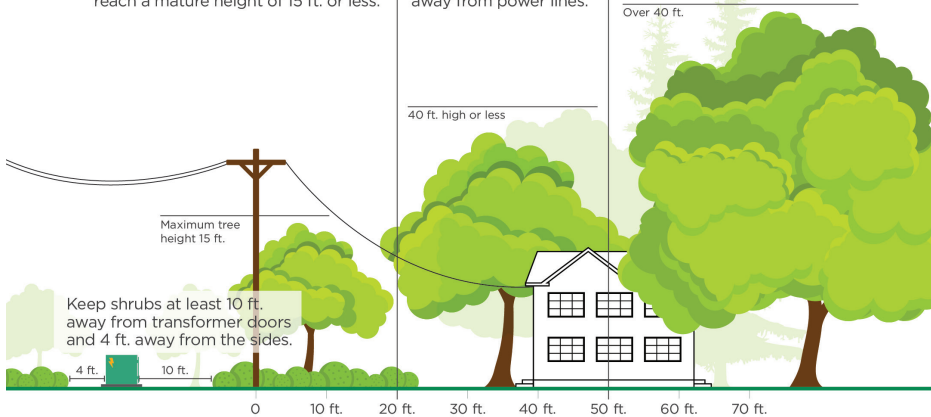
Avoid planting within 20 ft. of power lines. If planting is unavoidable, only plant shrubs and small trees that reach a mature height of 15 ft. or less.

MEDIUM TREE ZONE

Plant medium trees (under 40 ft. when mature) at least 25 ft. away from power lines.

LARGE TREE ZONE

Plant large trees (over 40 ft. when mature) at least 50 ft. away from power lines.



The best prevention for electrical tree worker accidents and service interruptions is to keep trees clear of power lines. If you have vegetation that you believe may interfere with your electric service or create a safety hazard, please contact (850) 892-2111.

Notice of PURPA Consideration and Hearing Process to All Eligible Participants

Choctawhatchee Electric Cooperative, Inc., d/b/a CHELCO, (the "Cooperative") hereby gives its members notice regarding the process to be followed in implementing the statutory directives in the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (2021 Infrastructure Bill), which amended the Public Utilities Regulatory Policies Act of 1978 (PURPA). The 2021 Infrastructure Bill established new Federal standards under Section 111(d) of PURPA, which each non-regulated electric utility (such as the Cooperative) is required to consider and to "make a determination whether or not it is appropriate to implement such standard[s]" within certain defined timelines based on evidence collected from interested persons after public notice and hearing. A complete public notice issued May 2, 2023, providing a description of the PURPA amendments and the procedures to be followed by the Cooperative in carrying out the mandate of the 2021 Infrastructure Bill is available on the Cooperative's website at www.CHELCO.com or can be obtained by calling the Cooperative at (800) 342-0990. The schedule of key events is as follows:

- *Official Notice of Public Hearing Process and Procedural Schedule* – issued May 2, 2023
- *Initial Comments* – to be submitted on or before July 1, 2023
- *Reply Comments* – to be submitted on or before September 1, 2023
- *Determination Announcement by the Cooperative's Board of Trustees* – to be rendered on or before November 15, 2023

Should any change occur in the above schedule, it will be posted on www.CHELCO.com.

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

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

Episode 2 of CHELCO's podcast, *On the Grid*, is now available! This month, we finish up our great conversation with the three CHELCO linemen who visited Guatemala to bring power to a remote mountain village. *On the Grid* is available at CHELCO.com/podcast, Spotify, Apple Podcasts and Google Podcasts.

New Net Meter Time of Use (TOU) Rate

CHELCO's net metering program allows members to connect renewable generation to CHELCO's utility infrastructure. Members who choose to interconnect can sell excess energy to CHELCO at our wholesale power cost. The CHELCO Board of Trustees adopted a new rate tariff for our net metering program, effective May 1, 2023. For more information, call our Energy Services department (850) 892-2111 or visit <https://www.chelco.com/renewables>.

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:

Davis - 9000169980