

# CHELCO NEWS

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# CHELCO



A Touchstone Energy®  
Cooperative 



CHELCO VP of Member Services & External Affairs Emily Cowan (right) presents a \$5,000 grant check to Food for Thought CEO Tiffanie Nelson.

## Members provide children with meals through Operation Round Up

Through the Operation Round Up program, a member-funded program that gives back to local non-profits, CHELCO recently presented a \$5,000 grant to Food For Thought.

Food For Thought provides backpacks filled with healthy, easy to prepare food for students who are dependent on free or reduced school meals. Their goal is to bridge the gap between school meals during weekends and holiday breaks. During school closures due to the coronavirus pandemic, their workload was greatly increased, but they continued to provide meals to students in the extended absence.

“Food For Thought does a great job of supporting our community’s children with these meals,” CHELCO CEO Steve Rhodes said. “We’re proud of Operation Round Up and our members who help us support great organizations like Food For Thought.”

Operation Round Up is a voluntary program that allows members to round up their monthly bills to the next whole dollar amount, and the spare change is given back to local non-profits like Food For Thought in the form of grants. To opt in, call us at (850) 892-2111 or visit CHELCO.com and fill out a short form on our Operation Round Up page.

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### Announcement

#### Masks requested in CHELCO offices

Effective July 23, we strongly request that members and other visitors wear masks while in our offices to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.



## CEO Insights: The value of electricity

When do you truly consider the importance of electricity in your life? When the power goes out, right? All of a sudden, the light switch no longer works, and it is impossible to charge electronic devices. Don't open the refrigerator, and you won't be watching TV until the power is back on. We all take power for granted and appreciate it when it's gone. What we do not always appreciate is the price.

We consider price for groceries and clothing. We certainly consider cost when we are evaluating larger purchases, like a house or a vehicle, but not necessarily when we reach for the coffee maker in the morning or when moving the thermostat down just a smidge.

Given how electricity powers our modern lifestyle every day, it is a great value, especially when compared to other common services and expenses. For example, think back to the cost of a gallon of gasoline 20 years ago. Since 2000, the cost has nearly doubled. Consider the cost of bread or a can of your favorite soda from a few years back. In 20 years, bread has increased by 50 percent, and if you put two quarters in a vending machine for a soda, it'll ask for two more.

The average cost of rent has gone up 4 percent since 2014, and medical care and education went up by around 3 percent in the same period, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index (CPI).

In comparison, the cost of electricity has remained largely flat, unlike most other consumer goods. Since 2014, the price of electricity has increased by only 0.4 percent.

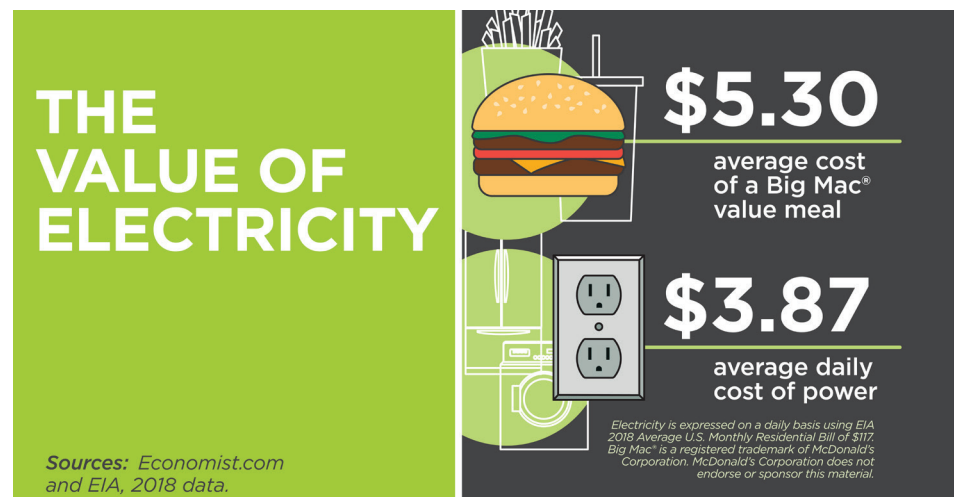
Like many of you, I have a cell phone to stay connected, and I subscribe to satellite TV and Netflix so I can enjoy more viewing options. Many of us consider these necessities for modern day life. We can see what we're getting for our money, and we pay the price for those services. In contrast, when we use electricity, we don't always "see" all that we're getting for our money.

The bottom line: electricity brings everyday value. I'm especially proud of our track record of keeping costs low at CHELCO. Because we're a co-op, we have always watched our costs closely. However, seven years ago we took it to the next level and set a goal of ranking in the top 25 percent nationally in controlling our

local costs. Given that there are nearly 900 electric cooperatives across the country, this was an ambitious goal. I'm pleased to report that we lowered our controllable costs by 21 percent and met this goal in 2018. As a result of our efforts, we have not raised base rates since 2013. In fact, the last base rate adjustment at CHELCO was a rate DECREASE in 2015! The total cost for electric service paid by the average CHELCO residential member is less than \$4 per day.

CHELCO is your electric co-op, and our sole purpose is to serve you and the needs of our community. The next time you flip on a light switch, charge your phone, open the refrigerator or turn on the TV, think about the convenience and affordability of electricity. That's everyday value.

**Steve Rhodes,**  
Chief Executive Officer



## CHELCO Prepaid and Miscellaneous Rates Updated

Effective August 1, 2020, all members on a residential rate will have an identical rate structure, including new prepaid metering accounts. The daily service and availability charge on prepaid will be \$0.86, which will average \$26 per month. This monthly service charge is consistent with postpaid energy accounts. The energy charge also mirrors the current residential rate of \$0.0746 per kWh.

Current members may remain on the existing rate until August 1, 2021, at which point they will be automatically migrated to the new rate. If you are interested in an account analysis to see which rate is right for you, please call our offices at (850) 892-2111 during business hours, 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

As many of you have experienced, CHELCO has a cost recovery rate structure for additional services provided to accounts, labeled "miscellaneous charges." These charges cover trips to a member's home to disconnect service, for construction work, or to deliver a notification about your account. Listed among these charges is a service connect fee, which has been lowered from \$27 to \$15. The investment of technology has helped streamline that process, so we are passing the savings along to you, our members.

Both the miscellaneous charges and prepaid rate can be found at CHELCO.com, under Member Service/CHELCO Rates. Please feel free to reach out to us for more detailed information or questions.

## Don't like monthly bills? Prepay may be for you

CHELCO's prepay program is a great option for members who don't want to pay for their electricity monthly in larger sums. Instead, our prepay program allows you to load funds on your own schedule, and your account is charged daily for the electricity you use. Prepay members receive daily notifications on account balance, usage and charges, so you'll always be up to date on your account's status.

Existing members may switch to the prepay program if they feel that it better suits their needs. Any deposits on your existing account will be credited toward your prepay account balance.

New members may join our prepay program without the need for a security deposit. In fact, you can start your prepay service for as little as \$70.

To join CHELCO prepay, call member services at (850) 892-2111 and we'll be happy to set up your prepay account.

## Stay Back!

Know the difference between types of lines and wires. If you see a downed electric line, be aware that it could be live and dangerous!

### Electric Wire

Electric wires are larger and can be easily identified by the three separate twisted wires, one being uniquely silver or uninsulated.

### Cable Wire

Cable lines are round and look similar to the coaxial cable that connects to the TV in your home.

### Phone Wire

Telephone wires are typically smaller, flat wires.

CHELCO is governed by a nine-member board of trustees: Lee Perry, District 1; Terry Pilcher, District 2; Jim Bishop, 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; Burt Cosson, District 9.

# Thinking Solar? We have a new rate for that!



Effective August 1, 2020 CHELCO will offer a time-of-use net metering rate for all members deploying solar or other renewable energy projects. What does that mean? Let's break it down:

Time-of-use is a rate plan in which energy costs vary according to the time of day and time of year the energy is used or sold to CHELCO. Higher rates are charged and credited during the peak hours of demand for energy.

Net metering occurs when the energy your renewable energy system produces is greater than the activity at your home. As a result, you sell or are credited back on your power bill for the excess energy placed on the CHELCO electrical grid.

Members can benefit from the net metering time-of-use rate by shifting energy use to off-peak hours and by increasing the energy their renewable system produces during on-peak hours.

An example of time-of-use cost savings is running large energy use appliances like dishwashers, washing machines, water heaters, and pool pumps in off-peak hours. Members could also pre-cool their homes or charge their electric vehicles during off-peak times.

Why did CHELCO switch to this new approach in billing for members with renewable energy systems? We need renewables to produce electricity during peak hours when most people are using electricity. Net metering is a significant component in determining what CHELCO's costs to provide electricity to our members will be. While we appreciate energy production in off-peak hours, it is not as valuable to the system as the energy produced during the on-peak hours of 2-7 p.m. in the spring and summer, and 5-9 a.m. in the fall and winter.

Because participating net metering members purchased their renewable system using our old net metering rate to determine the cost effectiveness of their investment, a 15-year grandfathered period has been established allowing them to continue on the old rate. For more details, visit CHELCO.com.

CHELCO has notified all local solar PV vendors of the new rate, which can be found on our website at CHELCO.com under the member service tab. If you are considering becoming a net meter participant, contact CHELCO's Energy Services department at [energyservices@chelco.com](mailto:energyservices@chelco.com) or call 850-307-1122 for advice to help you get the most out of the new rate.

## Connections Corner

The Co-op Connections discount program is another benefit of being a CHELCO member. Local businesses, participating pharmacies and thousands nationally, offer discounts to co-op members. Don't forget to download the Co-op Connections app!

This month, we highlight and thank the following businesses:

**Bruno's Pizza**  
(850) 231-1452  
Santa Rosa Beach  
15% off menu items

**4C BBQ**  
(850) 892-4BBQ  
DeFuniak Springs  
2 free drinks (tea or soda) with a \$20 purchase (before tax)

**Best Western Crossroads Inn**  
(850) 892-5111  
DeFuniak Springs  
10% off rack rate (not valid with any other discounts)

For more information, visit CHELCO.com, email [energyservices@chelco.com](mailto:energyservices@chelco.com) or call CHELCO's energy services department at (850) 307-1122.

## IS \$25 YOURS?

If the account number below matches yours, sign this page and mail it with your bill to CHELCO or drop it off at any Office. You'll win a \$25 credit on your next bill.

**Miller - 9000116854**