

CHELCO NEWS

POWERED *by* YOU

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CHELCO's rapid growth continued through 2021



Crews perform work at the Auburn substation north of Crestview in May.

It's no secret that the Emerald Coast is one of the most sought-after places to live in the country. The sugary-white beaches, nearly endless career opportunities, Southern hospitality and warm, sunny days attract thousands of new residents from all over the world.

Each year, we measure our growth via net services and meter points. Simply put, our net growth numbers account for new members joining CHELCO and subtracts existing members who move off our lines. Dating back to 2004, we have grown every year, including our peak growth year of 2020, when we grew by 2,467 meters. We added 2,155 meters in 2021, nearly keeping the blistering pace that 2020 produced.

"System growth has many benefits, including the opportunity to upgrade

the electrical system," said CEO Steve Rhodes. "It also provides job creation, because growth requires more employees to build and maintain the system. We also have the opportunity to spread system maintenance expenses over more members, which reduces costs for all members."

In addition to growth on our system, our neighboring investor-owned utility, Florida Power & Light (formerly Gulf Power), is constructing a new transmission line along US Hwy. 331 S. between DeFuniak Springs and Santa Rosa Beach. While this is not our construction, we all benefit from growth to our area. However, growth also has its challenges.

"The biggest challenge we have faced as a result of a rapidly growing

(cont. on p. 2)



A Touchstone Energy[®]
Cooperative 

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Did you know...

CHELCO is a great place to work! We don't always have available positions, but when we do, we're excited to add to the CHELCO family. If you think you'd be a good fit, check out [CHELCO.com/careers](https://www.chelco.com/careers) to check for job openings today.



CEO Insights: CHELCO avoids \$1M in wholesale power costs

All of us want to maximize cost saving efforts, no matter what it is that we're doing. One of our nation's great founding fathers, Benjamin Franklin, once said, "A penny saved is a penny earned." It's always a nice feeling to find an item you want on sale or to use a coupon to save on your purchase. Now, as much as ever, it's important to use our money efficiently and get the most out of our dollar.

At CHELCO, I especially appreciate efficiency when it means saving our members money. Controlling power consumption or load during times when members use a lot of energy is critical to saving money. In 2021, our load control efforts led to avoided wholesale power costs of \$1,005,687.11, an average of nearly \$20 per member. These savings

would not be possible without a full team effort, including our members' participation in our "Beat the Peak" load management efforts, water heater switch program and other internal load management programs.

Our biggest months for electricity usage reduction came in January and February, typically the coldest months of the year. During these peak months, we encourage our members to limit their power usage and "Beat the Peak" on the coldest mornings from around 6 to 8 a.m. It is during this period that many members wake up and use a significant amount of electricity, such as their water heater or heating system. When CHELCO members use less power during high load periods for electricity, it saves all

members money by controlling wholesale power costs.

These efforts to limit our peak usage resulted in total savings of \$131,000 in January and over \$234,000 in February. Even in our off-peak periods, we were able to avoid tens of thousands of dollars per month in controllable costs, leading to a very efficient year.

In simple terms, CHELCO is continuously looking for ways to improve your service and save you money while always putting safety first. With your help, we avoided over \$1 million in wholesale power costs this year. I'm proud of the efforts made by our entire team, including our members, to accomplish that.

Steve Rhodes,
Chief Executive Officer

CHELCO's rapid growth continued through 2021 (cont. from p. 1)

cooperative is staffing," said Matthew Avery, SVP of Engineering and Operations. "Having the right number of capable employees is critical to providing the excellent service CHELCO members have come to expect. It takes several years to train our employees in technical positions, so it's critical to plan ahead, staff appropriately and have a good succession plan in place."

Avery said another challenge is upgrading the electrical system while practicing fiscal responsibility.

"We like to perform upgrades 'just in time', which requires a combination of engineering analysis, long range planning and constant



Our beautiful beaches are one of the many reasons people move to our area.

communication with builders and developers in the area," Avery said. "This effort helps us spend our members' money not too early and not too late... 'just in time.'"

We also have plenty in store for 2022, including meter upgrades, construction of a new substation and much more. Stay tuned for another exciting year of growth at CHELCO!

Annual Meeting scheduled for April 9



CEO Steve Rhodes speaks at CHELCO's virtual annual meeting. Due to COVID-19, we have not hosted an in-person annual meeting since 2019.

- Annual Meeting is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, April 9 at Freeport High School.
- General updates on the co-op, board election results, scholarships, prizes and entertainment will make it a fun event for the whole family!
- Due to COVID-19 and its uncertainty, we may change the 2022 Annual Meeting to a virtual-only format, similar to the previous two years.
- For regular updates, follow us on Facebook, @MyCHELCO.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Around 30% of a home's heating energy is lost through inefficient windows. Caulk and weatherstrip all windows to seal air leaks.

When running your home heating system, lock all windows to ensure the tightest seal possible.

To save even more on your monthly heating bill, bump the thermostat down a few degrees when you leave the house.



Scholarships open through March 18

CHELCO members or member dependents who plan to attend college or trade school as undergraduate students in the 2022-23 school year are eligible to apply for the CHELCO Scholarship. Applicants must have at least a 2.5 GPA and be in good standing with their school.

The deadline to apply for scholarships is March 18. Winners will be announced at the 2022 Annual Meeting at Freeport High School on April 9, and applicants must be in attendance in order to win. If the Annual Meeting is reformatted to virtual-only due to COVID-19, there will be no attendance requirement.

Visit CHELCO.com/scholarships to learn more about CHELCO Scholarships.

Recipe of the Month



Poppy Seed Chicken Casserole

Visit CHELCO.com/recipes to learn this recipe!

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.

Wilkerson appointed Manager of Operations



Operations Manager Kevin Wilkerson has been with CHELCO for 28 years.

Kevin Wilkerson was recently promoted to fill the Manager of Operations position held by recently-retired Larry Tankersley.

Wilkerson has been with CHELCO since 1994 and most recently served as an Operations Supervisor, a role he held since 2016.

As the Manager of Operations, Wilkerson will provide strategic direction and leadership to the Operations Department, specifically in the areas of distribution system construction and maintenance, lighting installation

and maintenance, vegetation management and system services. Wilkerson will lead a team of more than 40 highly-skilled employees, overseeing the construction, maintenance and planning of CHELCO's electrical distribution system to provide safe, high-quality and cost-effective electric service to members.

"I have no doubt that Kevin will be a forward thinking, dedicated and knowledgeable leader," said Matthew Avery, SVP of Engineering and Operations. "Our Operations Department is in good hands."

CHELCO moving Headquarters in March

Our long-awaited move to our new Headquarters on US Hwy. 331 N. in DeFuniak Springs will take place in March. While we don't have an exact date, we anticipate our move to be complete by March 22 at the latest. Upon this move, our office on Baldwin Avenue will no longer be in service.

For frequent updates on our move, follow us on Facebook, @MyCHELCO, or check for press releases on our website, CHELCO.com.

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

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:

Computer Works

174 WaterColor Way, #103, Suite 264, Santa Rosa Beach
(850) 687-3161
Free anti-virus installed on any computer

Granny's Attic

337 N. Main St., Crestview
(850) 682-3041
10% off sewing & craft supplies

Sarge's Cellular Repair, Inc.

98 S. John Sims Pkwy., Valparaiso
(850) 389-4301
10% off any repair (not including prepaid refills, not valid with any other offer)

For more information, visit [CHELCO.com](https://www.chelco.com), email 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.

Inns - 9000074332