

CHELCO NEWS

POWERED *by* YOU

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CHELCO



A Touchstone Energy[®] Cooperative 

CHELCO retiring \$3.4 million in capital credits

You have a capital credit!

PAY TO THE ORDER OF Valued Member \$ Capital Credit

Your membership in 2002 and/or 2021 has earned a credit!

69,000 past and current members in 2002 and/or 2021 will receive capital credits totaling \$3.4 million, an average of nearly \$50 per account!

At CHELCO, the Christmas season is a time of giving, and we're doing just that!

This year, due to continued cost-saving measures, CHELCO is able to retire \$3.4 million in capital credits to more than 69,000 current and former members.

What are capital credits, and how do they work?

As a member-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperative, CHELCO does not exist to make a profit, but to provide safe, reliable and affordable service to our members.

Think of capital credits as your "equity" in CHELCO. Since we are owned by you, our members, we do not have to maximize profits for shareholders. If we have excess margins remaining after expenses are paid, and the board of trustees deems the co-op financially secure,

capital credits are returned to members.

CHELCO retires capital credits on a 20-year cycle, meaning that if you were a member in 2002 and/or 2021, you will receive a capital credit check based on how much business you did with CHELCO in those years.

All active members whose capital credit amount is less than \$30 will receive a bill credit, while all those with amounts of \$30 or more will receive a check. All past members receiving capital credits will receive a check.

"Our team continues to work hard to manage controllable costs and identify ways to streamline processes and maximize efficiency," said CEO Steve Rhodes. "Our co-op is in a strong financial position, and I'm proud that we are able to give back to our members just in time for Christmas."

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Holiday Schedule

CHELCO offices will be closed Dec. 23 in observance of Christmas Eve and Dec. 26 in observance of Christmas Day. Offices will also be closed Jan. 2 in observance of New Year's Day. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!





CEO Insights: The most wonderful time of year is upon us

For me, time seems to speed up as the years go by, and I know many of you can relate. It's hard to believe that the Christmas season is already upon us when it seems like summer was just a few short weeks ago.

While living life at a fast pace is something many of us have grown accustomed to, there's something about the holidays that encourages us to slow down and appreciate all of life's blessings.

I'm thankful for my family and the opportunity to spend more time with them during this special time of year. I'm also thankful for the opportunity to lead this co-op and work with a great group of employees. Plus, as I write, Ohio State is in the midst of an undefeated season, and I'm happy

about that, too. I just hope that's still the case by the time this reaches you!

This season also gives me a chance to reflect on everything we were able to accomplish at CHELCO in the past year. I'm proud of our work in 2022, keeping costs low in the face of global inflation and supply chain issues while welcoming hundreds of new members to our lines each month. Meanwhile, we moved into our new headquarters across town in DeFuniak Springs, coordinating a substantial relocation project after being at our Baldwin Avenue campus since the 1940s. We also had record attendance at our first in-person annual meeting since 2019, continued to provide impactful

support to community organizations and created a strategic plan to guide us through 2025. Our success has put us in a strong financial position to serve our members and the community.

I'm proud of everything we've accomplished and all that we have planned for the coming year. Our employees have worked hard this year, and I appreciate their efforts in serving you, our members.

This Christmas, I hope you can make time to slow down, reflect and enjoy what little time we have left in 2022. I extend my best wishes to you and your family in the coming year!

Steve Rhodes,
Chief Executive Officer

New CHELCO app in development, scheduled for March 1 release



Members can expect a March 1, 2023 release for the new-look CHELCO app.

CHELCO will soon be getting an updated member app, which will feature essential tools necessary to pay your bill, monitor your usage, report and track outages, update your

contact info and more. Several CHELCO employees have been testing the app over the past few months to ensure that all functions are working properly. To date, there

have been no major issues with the core tools of the app, which will provide a modern, user-friendly experience to members.

The CHELCO app is currently on schedule to be released March 1. Once this app is released, our current app will no longer be supported, and we will share installation and login instructions for the new app. The app will be compatible on smartphones, tablets and other smart devices, and it will be available for download through the Apple App Store and Google Play.

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram, @MyCHELCO, or check our website, CHELCO.com, for updates on the CHELCO app and more!

CHELCO trustee elections coming soon



Democratic member control is one of the seven cooperative principles that separate CHELCO from investor-owned utilities. Each member has a vote, and members are elected to represent their district on the Board of Trustees that governs CHELCO. The Board of Trustees establishes CHELCO policies and rates.

Each year, three of the nine positions on CHELCO's Board of Trustees are up for election. This year, members will elect trustees representing Districts 3, 5 and 8 through mail-in balloting. All members may vote for each district regardless of their membership district. Results will be announced at the CHELCO Annual Meeting on April 15.

Each trustee represents a geographic 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. Trustee election application packets will be available by mid-

January at any CHELCO office or online at CHELCO.com. A nominating committee reviews the applications and selects candidates. Members may also use a petition process, which is described in the bylaws on our website, to become a candidate. **Your district number can be found on your bill to see if you are eligible to run this year.**

Important Dates

- **Feb. 2:** Applications to CHELCO by 4 p.m.
- **Feb. 14:** Candidates' names posted in offices
- **Feb. 24:** Deadline for nominating by petition
- **March 10:** Election ballots mailed
- **April 10:** Ballots must be returned
- **April 15:** Annual Meeting

CHELCO raises \$2,000 for Community Christmas

At our annual Halloween Happenings fundraiser, CHELCO raised money to benefit the Matrix Community Outreach Center's Community Christmas program. Employees from CHELCO and our wholly-owned subsidiary, Southland Utility Services, teamed up to raise a total of \$2,000, which will go directly toward purchasing Christmas gifts for local children in need.

If you would like to help the Matrix provide for children in our community this Christmas, follow them on Facebook, @MatrixCommunityOutreach, and check out all the ways you can help make a difference!

Recipe of the Month



Christmas Butter Cookies

Thank you to CHELCO member Ruthanne Buchanan for sharing this Christmas cookie recipe with us! Learn this recipe and more at [CHELCO.com/recipes](https://www.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.

Rhodes' Touchstone Energy journey is 'Something Worth Remembering'

Elvis Presley famously said, "Do something worth remembering." That means different things to different people. Something worth remembering can be a kind word or a charitable donation. Once in a blue moon, an opportunity presents itself to be a part of something that reaches far beyond your imagination.

In 1997, a national survey of cooperative members identified rural electric cooperatives as primarily relationship-based organizations emphasizing personalized service - not just a utility or a service provider. Based on these findings, a group of generation and transmission (G&T) cooperatives assembled a grassroots steering committee. This group of professionals were tasked with creating a shared national brand that could tell the collective story of electric cooperatives and offer recognizable continuity among cooperatives across the country. One of these utility professionals was CHELCO CEO Steve Rhodes.

Back then, he was the CEO at Western Michigan Electric Cooperative in Ludington, Michigan. After much investment of time, resources and creativity from the grassroots committee, alongside an advertising group from Madison Avenue in New York City, Touchstone Energy (TSE) was born, along with the tagline "The power of human connections."

While the brand had been created, the work was far from over. Rhodes and his colleagues set out to share the value of the brand with other rural electric cooperatives. He then served on the partner relationship



committee, later returning in 2005 to serve on the co-op relations advisory committee. In 2010, he was elected to Touchstone Energy's Board of Directors and served for four years before being elected chairman in 2014, serving another two years.

During Rhodes' time as chairman, he led the effort to change the governance of the brand, establishing one-member, one-vote for all member cooperatives and a pathway for members unaffiliated with a G&T to serve on the board. This significant step forward helped all member co-ops have a say in the governance of their national brand.

Today, over 700 electric cooperatives are members of Touchstone Energy. The organization provides not only a shared brand but also unparalleled, affordable resources and services to participants. For 25 years, the trusted brand has been synonymous with quality, human connection and "cooperation among cooperatives," the sixth guiding principle of cooperatives.

Touchstone Energy's silver anniversary will be celebrated in 2023. So, it's probably not a stretch to say Elvis Presley would have counted Rhodes' contribution to this grassroots effort as "something worth remembering."

Guatemala, here we come!

Three CHELCO linemen departed Nov. 30 to help bring power to a remote village in Guatemala that has never had access to electricity. Each of our linemen participating in Powering Guatemala, along with 11 other linemen from Florida co-ops, are proud to be a part of this life-changing project. They are scheduled to return in mid-December. Follow our Facebook page, @MyCHELCO, for updates!

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Energy bills are often highest during the cold winter months, even here in the Florida Panhandle. To help limit your winter bills, remember to adjust your thermostat before you leave for the day. For example, if you normally run your heat on 70 degrees while you are home, bump it down to 65 while you're away. If you are traveling and won't be home for an extended period of time, you can set it even lower - around 58 degrees - to save big on your bills this winter!



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.

Gusler - 9000008938

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