

CHELCO NEWS

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A Touchstone Energy[®] Cooperative 

CHELCO earns Spotlight on Excellence Award



L to R: Tyler Wood, Bonnie Whitfield and Emily Cowan coordinated the “We’re in this Together” campaign to support the community in 2020.

The National Rural Electric Cooperatives Association (NRECA) announced the 2021 Spotlight on Excellence winners in May, and CHELCO received a “Silver” award in the “Best Total Communication Plan” category for our “We’re in this Together” campaign during COVID-19.

Each year, the NRECA recognizes the outstanding work produced by electric cooperative communication and marketing professionals from across the country. The 16 categories reflect the wide scope and valuable contributions of co-op communicators today.

Throughout our “We’re in this Together” campaign, CHELCO emphasized our support for the local community by buying lunches for

employees from locally-owned restaurants that were impacted by lockdowns. We also delivered cookies to health care workers and pizza to first responders to show our support during the pandemic.

“We’re in this Together” also included our members. We temporarily suspended disconnects for nonpayment to help those who may have been struggling financially during the first months of the pandemic.

“This is a big deal for us. Since I joined CHELCO in 2013, we had not yet won a Spotlight on Excellence Award,” said CEO Steve Rhodes. “Our team did a fantastic job of coordinating this campaign, and I’m proud that they have been recognized for their excellent work.”

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Office Closure

CHELCO offices will be closed Monday, July 5, in observance of Independence Day.





CEO Insights: Balanced energy mix promotes reliability

The energy industry is undergoing a dramatic transformation as consumer demand for more renewable energy sources grows, and innovation and technology continue to advance exponentially. You're likely witnessing this energy evolution firsthand.

In addition, national studies indicate that consumers expect companies to operate ethically and responsibly--including when it comes to the environment.

At CHELCO, we have always made the good of our community a priority. While our primary function is to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy to our members, we are more than an electricity provider. Because we are a co-op, our primary objective is to enrich our members' lives and serve the long-term interests of our community. We're doing both by investing in renewable energy sources.

Green energy is certainly not new. Solar, wind and hydropower have been around for decades. However, recent innovations and advances in renewable technology have led to sharp decreases in cost, making it more feasible and accessible. In recent years, our generation and transmission (G&T) co-op, PowerSouth, has adjusted our fuel mix by reducing the use of coal and utilizing more renewables. Currently, hydro and renewables account for 6% of PowerSouth's energy mix, and coal use has been reduced from 30% in 2014 to 8% in 2020.

To borrow a nautical analogy, it takes a long time to turn the direction of a large ship--and changing the energy mix we use to power homes and businesses doesn't happen overnight. While renewable energy use is increasing, we will still depend on traditional forms of energy to keep power flowing reliably to your home. After all, solar and wind

energy are referred to as "intermittent" power since the sun does not always shine and the wind does not always blow. This fact, coupled with the growing demand for renewables, creates its own challenges. That's why there is real value in maintaining a balanced mixture of fuel types to ensure reliability, resiliency and meet the growing demand for electricity.

Albert Einstein once observed that "Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving." CHELCO strives to take advantage of advances in technology and market opportunities as they become available. This means we can leverage the flexibility of the grid to offer a wider range of renewable power selections as we continue to bring safe, reliable and affordable power to our community.

Steve Rhodes,
Chief Executive Officer



Follow these tips to avoid utility scams



Over the past several years, many CHELCO members have been targeted by scammers, where they demanded immediate payment and threatened to shut off power if the money was not received. Remember, CHELCO will never call you and demand immediate payment.

We want you to be aware of two common scam tactics. One is the overpayment scam, where a scammer will contact you and claim that you have overpaid on your monthly bill. Often, they will ask for your personal banking information to deposit the credit back into your checking account. Don't fall for this scam! If you make an overpayment on your energy bill, CHELCO will apply the credit to your account, which will carry over to the next billing cycle.

Another common scam is SMS phishing. Many consumers know to watch out for suspicious emails, but we tend to trust text messages sent to our phones. As a rule of thumb, always question suspicious texts, especially from someone claiming to

represent a utility. CHELCO will only send you important updates via text if you've signed up for text alerts.

Take your time. Utility scammers try to create a sense of urgency so that you'll act fast and hand over personal information. Take a moment to think about the situation before acting.

Be suspicious. Scammers typically request immediate payment through prepaid debit cards or third-party apps. If the request seems strange or out of the ordinary, you're likely being targeted by a scammer.

Confirm before you act. If you're contacted by someone claiming to represent CHELCO, just hang up the phone and call us directly. You can reach us at (850) 892-2111 to verify the situation.

Be vigilant, and please report any utility scams to us so we can let others in our community know. Together, we can help prevent our friends and neighbors from being victimized.

Like convenience? Bank draft may be for you

We know your life is all about convenience. That's why we offer automatic bank draft - just set it and forget it.

There are several benefits to signing up for automatic bank draft, including no late fees or credit card fees and no paper bills.

To sign up for automatic bank draft, visit CHELCO.com and visit our "Ways to Pay" page. There, you can download the bank draft form to submit to any of our offices.

Recipe for Summer



Strawberry Pretzel Salad

Looking for a new summer dessert to try out? Strawberry Pretzel Salad is a simple, yet delicious combination of salty and sweet. Served cold, it can cool you off on the hottest of summer days. Visit CHELCO.com/recipes to learn this awesome dessert!

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.

Tips to save big on your summer energy bill



Heating and cooling costs account for around half of a user's energy bill, so when it comes to reducing usage and cutting home energy costs, the most impact can be made by adjusting the thermostat. New technology is making it easier than ever to achieve ideal thermostat settings to help you save big. However, even with traditional thermostats, you can follow a few basic rules of thumb to cut your energy bill significantly.

Utilize fans in your home. While fans won't cool the air, they will circulate the air to make you feel cooler, helping take some workload off your A/C unit. Find a temperature that is comfortable, then bump the thermostat up two or three more degrees and turn on a fan. You'd be surprised how cool you'll feel and how much you could save.

Adjust your thermostat when you leave. If you have a smart thermostat with pattern tracking enabled, your thermostat can

automatically bump the temperature up while no one is home. Even if you don't have these features, you can still save big by adjusting the temperature by about 10 degrees before you walk out the door. Your home won't notice the difference, and you can bump it right back down when you get home.

Seal windows and doors.

Weatherstripping and caulking will help keep the hot air out and the cool air inside. Air sealing on older homes can save more than 20% on heating and cooling costs. To find out which type of weatherstripping or caulk would be best for your home, visit energy.gov.

While these aren't all the things you can do to save energy this summer, they're certainly the most impactful. Follow these tips and you'll be glad you did when it comes time to pay your bill. For more energy-saving tips, visit us on social media, **@MyCHELCO**, or on our website at CHELCO.com.

Visit our in-depth Electric Vehicles page

CHELCO's Electric Vehicle (EV) page is a great resource for facts about EVs. Visit CHELCO.com/electric-vehicles to learn more!



To find unclaimed capital credits, visit 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:

AAA Accounting & Management Services

1512 John Sims Pkwy., Niceville
(850) 345-2250
Free Quickbooks review and assessment (\$255 value)

Beach Brothers' Beach Service

102 Lauren Ln., Santa Rosa Beach
(850) 737-1499
15% off total rental charge

Best Western Crossroads Inn

2343 US Hwy 331 S, DeFuniak Springs
(850) 892-5111
10% off rack rate (not valid with any other discounts)

For more information, visit 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.

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