

# CHELCO NEWS

POWERED *by* YOU

SEPTEMBER 2022 | VOL. 27 NO. 9

## Celebrating 5 years of Eglin UP Contract



### Eglin leadership meets with CHELCO for a briefing on the co-op.

It has been five years since CHELCO was awarded the utility privatization (UP) contract to serve Eglin AFB, and CHELCO's work on base has promoted reliability, resiliency and an overall improved energy grid.

### What is Utility Privatization?

Utility Privatization is a program the government uses to transfer ownership, maintenance and operation of government-owned assets and infrastructure to a company or cooperative through a bill of sale. What the UP contract means for CHELCO and Eglin AFB is that CHELCO now owns and maintains all electric transmission and distribution infrastructure on base.

Since 2017, CHELCO has improved reliability on base significantly and continues to upgrade old equipment.

"Base personnel have frequently commended us on our excellent response times to outages, as well as our overall efforts to upgrade their system," said Rocky Hudson,

CHELCO Director of Engineering and Operations for Eglin AFB. "We've completed significant initial system deficiency corrections in five years, and now we've turned our focus toward rebuilding the system as it comes due for repairs and replacements."

SVP of Engineering and Operations Matthew Avery said he's proud CHELCO helps support the military.

"Knowing that we are helping support our national interests by providing reliable, resilient service to Eglin AFB is very rewarding," Avery said.

CEO Steve Rhodes recalled that winning the 50-year contract took a great effort spanning several years.

"I'm very proud of our employees for the great work they do on the contract," Rhodes said. "Over the next 45 years, I'm confident that CHELCO will provide the high level of service that Eglin and all of our members expect and deserve."



A Touchstone Energy®  
Cooperative 

## Inside

### Page 2

CEO Insights: Supply chain issues hitting close to home

### Page 3

Follow these safety tips for generators

### Page 4

Former Youth Tour student thrives as employee

## Did you know...

CHELCO's customer charge has not changed in over 10 years! Since CHELCO passes generation costs along to our members at cost, members will see monthly fluctuations in the Wholesale Power Cost Adjustment (WPCA) on their bills. These charges are paid directly to our power provider and are not retained by CHELCO. In total, including the basic service charge, standard rate, WPCA and distribution cost adjustment (DCA), CHELCO members pay an average of 12.7 cents per kWh. This is 2.2 cents lower than the national average for electric utilities.



## CEO Insights: Supply chain issues hitting close to home

I would love for some things to be as they were three years ago: Plenty of supply to meet the demand of global consumers, steady but sustainable housing growth and an abundance of qualified people in the workforce.

Much like everyone else, there have been many times when I've walked into a grocery store to see shelves with a limited supply of essential products, including dairy, eggs and even one of my favorite snacks: tortilla chips and salsa. Some aspects of everyday life have returned to a somewhat "normal" state, but the widespread effects of the pandemic continue through supply chain issues.

Electric utilities like CHELCO are not immune to this. Months of

constricted operations at electrical transformer factories have strangled inventory of essential grid services. Add to that spiking demand from new housing developments, scarcity of raw and finished materials, bottlenecks at shipping ports and driver shortages, and it's a recipe for a long-term supply crunch.

Fortunately, CHELCO's growth over the past several years has prompted us to execute an aggressive short and long-term planning strategy in purchasing electric distribution equipment.

Turnaround times for transformers, meters and other essential materials have increased significantly. At one time, it took around eight weeks to receive a transformer. Due to steel and other supply shortages, that

number is now roughly 52 weeks. Because of the extreme nature of these delays, I encourage new businesses and residential developers to let us know their plans as early as possible so we can order material in time to meet their needs.

While CHELCO has very little control over global issues, we do have control over how we handle adversity. In a few years, I hope to look back on this time as a speed bump in our road to serving our members and enhancing your lives, because these challenges will ultimately help us grow stronger as a cooperative. However, I'd prefer not having to worry about finding good chips and salsa...

**Steve Rhodes,**  
Chief Executive Officer

## CHELCO Scholarship winners pursuing their dreams

School is back in session, and that means this year's six CHELCO scholarship winners are off to college. Let's take a look at their plans, starting from the left:

**Jake Powell:** Jake is a recent graduate of Walton High School, and he will attend the University of South Alabama. He will major in Mechanical Engineering and after graduation hopes to start a business.

**Brandilyn Ring:** Brandilyn graduated from Rocky Bayou Christian School, and she will be attending Northwest Florida State College. She will major in Elementary Education and hopes to teach elementary school one day.

**Hannah Blanton:** Hannah, a graduate of Niceville High School, is enrolled



at the University of Florida and will major in Biomedical Engineering. After college, she plans to find a job building prosthetics.

**Ty Sheriff:** Ty graduated from South Walton High School and will attend Florida State University.

**Emily Casey:** A graduate of Walton High School, Emily Casey will attend the University of West Florida and will be majoring in Nursing. She

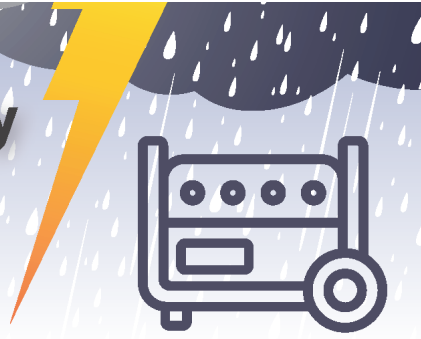
plans to become a pediatric nurse and earn a Master's degree to become a Family Nurse Practitioner.

**Brooke Lewis:** Brooke graduated from Niceville High School and will attend the University of Florida, where she will major in applied physiology and kinesiology. After college, Brooke aspires to become a pediatric occupational therapist or physician's assistant.

## Follow these safety tips for generators

### Generator Safety Guide

With proper use and maintenance, generators provide great convenience during a power outage. However, portable generators must be operated safely, as they can present several hazards to you and to utility crews. Follow these tips to ensure that you are using your generator safely.



#### SAFETY TIPS:

Never connect a generator directly to your home's wiring unless your home has been wired for generator use.

- This can cause backfeeding along power lines and electrocute anyone who comes in contact with them.
- Have a licensed electrician install the equipment to ensure your generators are connected safely.
- Always plug appliances directly into generators.

Use heavy-duty, outdoor rated extension cords.

- Make sure that cords do not have cuts or tears and that the extension is three-pronged.
- Overloaded cords can cause fires or equipment damage.

Never overload a generator.

- Portable generators should only be used when necessary to power essential equipment or appliances.
- Read and adhere to the manufacturer's instructions for safe operation and to ensure your generator is properly rated to handle the load that you are plugging into it.

## Report Street Light Outages

CHELCO appreciates members' help in identifying non-working street lights. To report a non-working street light, call (850) 307-1126; email [lighting@chelco.com](mailto:lighting@chelco.com); visit the CHELCO online member portal; or download the CHELCO Connect app.

When reporting a street light outage, please include the street light number, which is on the pole.

For more information on outdoor and decorative lighting, visit [CHELCO.com](http://CHELCO.com).

## Recipe of the Month



### Tex Mex Dip

It's football season! There's no better time to whip up a great snack to enjoy while watching the game (or games). Learn this recipe and more at [CHELCO.com/recipes](http://CHELCO.com/recipes).

## CHELCO gets special visitor



CHELCO had a special visitor last month! Lucas, one of our four-legged members, stopped by on a motorcycle with his chaperone, Roger.

We love all of our members, including those with more than two legs!

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.

## Former Youth Tour student thrives as employee



Rigby places a stake in the ground to mark the location of a future guy wire.

“Better than I deserve,” says CHELCO Senior Engineering Representative Josh Rigby. That’s his response most times when anyone asks how he’s doing. Now with CHELCO for more than 17 years, Rigby’s co-op story is one worth sharing.

Approached by one of his teachers while he was attending Paxton High School, Rigby was encouraged to participate in CHELCO’s Youth Tour program, which brings local students to Tallahassee for a two-day trip where they learn about cooperatives and the state government.

“Youth Tour was an awesome experience for me,” Rigby said. “After going to Tallahassee, I was awarded the trip to Washington, D.C., and I really enjoyed the learning experience.”

Rigby says Youth Tour was what first introduced him to the co-op world. Less than a year later, he applied for a job, and the rest is history.

“My dad and I saw in the newsletter where CHELCO was hiring an apprentice lineman, and he

encouraged me to apply,” Rigby recalls. “I probably never would have thought about it as a career choice had I not gotten the opportunity to experience Youth Tour.”

After serving 15 years on CHELCO’s line crews, Rigby moved into the Engineering Department in 2020, where his job consists of anything from meeting with members to inspecting equipment.

“The experience I had working as a lineman was invaluable,” Rigby said. “For my aspirations, I thought it would benefit me to work in a different area to learn more about the co-op as a whole. I love my job, and I can’t think of anywhere else I’d rather be.”

As for Youth Tour, Rigby still thinks about his experience and the doors that it opened.

“I would highly encourage students to apply for CHELCO’s Youth Tour,” Rigby said. “Life-changing is a term that is thrown around a lot, but there’s not a better way to describe what that experience did for me.”

## 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:

### White Sands Tanning and Full Beauty Salon

265 North Main St., Crestview  
(850) 682-0648  
10% discount on 1 month tanning

### Vacuum Center

36054 Emerald Coast Pkwy.  
Destin  
(850) 269-0505  
20% off bags, belts and filters (limit 4) and \$10 off any full service or repair

### Trinity Air Services, Inc.

679 Denton Blvd. NW 1  
Ft. Walton Beach  
(850) 244-0747  
\$25 discount on any home repairs;  
\$59 tune up on A/C system

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.

**Little - 900008908**

For unclaimed capital credits, visit [CHELCO.com/capital-credits](http://CHELCO.com/capital-credits).