

CHELCO NEWS

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CHELCO



A Touchstone Energy®
Cooperative 

CHELCO Charity Golf Tournament raises over \$17,000 for local children's non-profits



CHELCO members, sponsors, and community partners came together once again for a day of camaraderie and charitable giving at the annual **CHELCO Charity Golf Tournament**—and this year's event set a new record. Thanks to the generosity of our participants and supporters, the tournament raised its highest total to date for three local nonprofits serving children and families in CHELCO's service territory: **Emerald Coast Autism Center, Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy Center, and Children in Crisis.**

Along with our sponsors, CHELCO extends sincere appreciation to **Eagle Springs Golf and Recreational Center**, our host course, for their partnership and support in making this event possible.

To learn more about CHELCO's charitable efforts and the organizations we support, visit chelco.com/charitable-chelco.

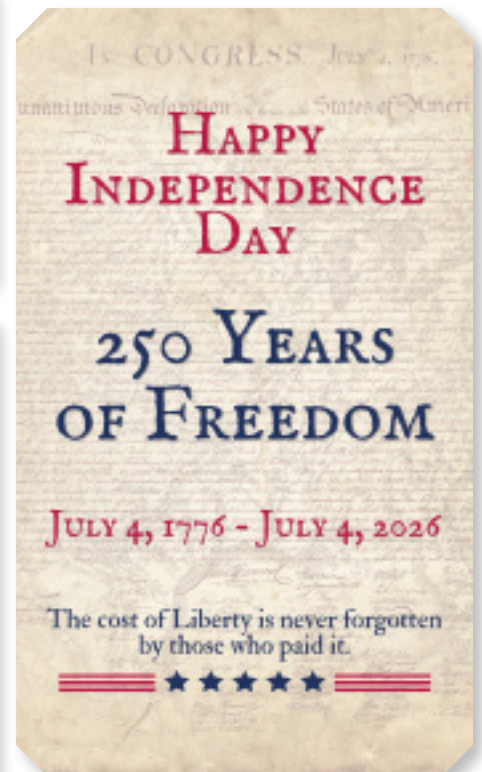


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CEO Insights: Freeport Campus Nearing Completion

I'm excited to share that another major step in CHELCO's long-term facilities plan is nearing completion. Over the past 12 years, this plan has guided several transformative projects designed to strengthen service for our members, including the construction of our Headquarters Campus in DeFuniak Springs. Now, construction of our new Freeport Campus, which began in December 2024, is entering its final stages. While CHELCO's headquarters will remain in DeFuniak Springs, the Freeport Campus will enhance our service to members in Freeport, Choctaw Beach, Bluewater Bay, Santa Rosa Beach, and surrounding communities.

Since we first announced plans for the new campus, more than **6,000 new members** have moved onto CHELCO lines. That growth underscores exactly why this facility is so important—and why we want to ensure every member, especially those new to the cooperative, understands the value this campus will bring to our community.

For years, members in and around Freeport have relied on our satellite office inside Freeport's City Hall. We remain grateful for the partnership with Mayor Barley and the city staff, but the rapid expansion of residential and commercial development in the area requires a dedicated, full-service facility capable of meeting today's needs and tomorrow's demands. The new campus delivers on that



Situated on a 14.4-acre parcel, the campus includes a 28,700-square-foot main building, a 10,000-square-foot storage facility, and approximately eight acres of improved surface for equipment laydown—critical for staging transformers, poles, and other materials needed to support reliable service.

need. Unlike our current satellite office, which houses only Member Service Representatives, the Freeport Campus will include space for Operations personnel, including Line Technicians who respond to outages around the clock. Having crews based directly in this region will help to reduce response times for outages in areas such as Santa Rosa Beach, Freeport, and Bluewater Bay.

As construction nears completion, the foresight of CHELCO's Board of Trustees is clearer than ever. Their decision to purchase this land in 2015—long before the area's current wave of growth—enabled CHELCO to make a strategic, cost-effective investment that strengthens an already reliable electric system and prepares us to serve a rapidly growing community well into the future.

While construction timelines can shift, we remain on track to open the new Freeport Campus in the third quarter

of this year. The building is now in its final phases, and each milestone brings us closer to welcoming members into a modern, efficient, and accessible facility.

As we get closer to announcing an official opening date, we will be sure to share more updates. Because this newsletter is published only monthly, we encourage members to follow CHELCO on **Facebook, Instagram, X, and YouTube** for the most timely information. Opening dates will also be posted on **CHELCO.com** and shared via email with members whose email addresses we have on file.

This is also a good reminder: if your contact information—phone number, mailing address, or email—is not up to date, you can update it anytime at [CHELCO.com/update-contact-information](https://www.chelco.com/update-contact-information). Keeping your information current ensures you receive important updates about this project and other cooperative news.

To our long-time members and to the thousands who have joined us in recent years, thank you for your trust and support. This campus is more than a new building—it is a commitment to reliability, responsiveness, and the cooperative values that guide everything we do.

Steve Rhodes,
Chief Executive Officer



Renderings of the new CHELCO office and operations center in Freeport, Florida

OVERHEAD POWER LINE SAFETY

1 Locate all overhead power lines.

2 Keep self and equipment 10 feet away from all overhead power lines.

3 Do not touch anything that is in contact with the power line.

4 Beware of fencing near power lines.

5 Carry ladders and other equipment horizontally.

6 Lower equipment apparatus before driving.

7 Never spray water near power lines.

8 Stay at least 35 feet away from fallen power lines.

www.facebook.com/ESF1.org
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Freeport Payment Kiosk Moving September 1



Our payment kiosk currently located at Freeport City Hall will be relocating to the new Freeport Campus **effective September 1, 2026**. The new facility is located at: **359 County Hwy 83A West, Freeport, FL 32439.**

Members can always explore additional ways to pay by visiting [CHELCO.com/ways-pay](https://www.chelco.com/ways-pay) or by calling **850-892-2111** to speak with a Member Service Representative.

Pay Your CHELCO Bill Where You Shop!



Checkout by PayGo is a fast, simple, and convenient way to pay your electric bill at the checkout counter of participating retailers — just like buying groceries!

Local participating retailers include Walmart, Dollar General and Walgreens.

Visit [CHELCO.com/](https://www.chelco.com/) **CheckOut-PayGo** or scan the QR code to generate your barcode.



Take an Active Role in Your Safety this Hurricane Season

Go to [Ready.gov/hurricanes](https://www.ready.gov/hurricanes) and use FEMA's **Guide for Alerts and Warnings** to learn more about hurricane watches and warnings. Download the **FEMA app** to get more information about how to prepare.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION KIT

- MAKE A PLAN
- BUILD A KIT
- BE INFORMED

FOOD AND BEVERAGE

MEDICINE AND HYGIENE

ADDITIONAL ITEMS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

TOOLS AND ELECTRONICS

BABIES

CLOTHING AND BEDDING

DOCUMENTS

PETS

CHELCO is governed by a nine-member Board of Trustees: Lee Perry, District 1; Terry Pilcher, District 2; Brantlee Lawrence, District 3; Brady Bearden, Vice President, District 4; Ronnie 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. For more information, please visit [CHELCO.com/board-trustees](https://www.chelco.com/board-trustees).

Local students visit DC for NRECA Youth Tour

Each summer, the **NRECA Youth Tour** brings together more than 1,600 high school students from 44 states for a week in Washington, D.C. Since its beginnings in the late 1950s, the program has grown into a signature youth leadership experience of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), connecting students from electric cooperatives nationwide.

This year, CHELCO was represented by four student delegates: **Calie Brackin** (Walton High School), **Noah Seeliger** (Collegiate High School at NWFSC), **Rose Weinacker** (Niceville High School), and **Kaylee Yeakos** (Paxton School).

Selection for the program is competitive, with students submitting video entries that are reviewed and scored by independent judges who are familiar with Youth Tour but not affiliated with CHELCO.

Although the itinerary includes visits to well-known historic sites, the true focus of Youth Tour is leadership and learning. Students have the opportunity to engage with public officials, explore the role and history of electric cooperatives, and connect with peers from across the country in an environment designed to inspire civic understanding and lifelong relationships.

To be eligible, applicants must be high school juniors and have a parent or guardian who is a CHELCO member.



L to R: Rose Weinacker, Noah Seeliger, Kaylee Yeakos, and Calie Brackin pose in front of the US Capitol Building during their adventures in Washington.

Applications are distributed through school counselors each fall and are also available at CHELCO.com.

More information can be found at CHELCO.com/youth-tour.

Morgan appointed PowerSouth CEO



CHELCO's wholesale power provider, **PowerSouth Energy Cooperative**, has named **Damon Morgan** as its new **President and CEO**, effective June 1. PowerSouth supplies the electricity CHELCO delivers to members and serves electric cooperatives across Alabama and the Florida Panhandle.

Morgan brings more than 40 years of experience with PowerSouth, most recently serving as the Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer.

He succeeds **Gary Smith**, who has retired after 36 years of service at PowerSouth, including 26 years as CEO.

Visit CHELCO.com to learn more about this transition.



Summer Energy Efficiency Tip

Raise your **thermostat** a few degrees while keeping your home comfortable, and use **ceiling fans** to circulate cool air. Fans can make rooms feel several degrees cooler, allowing your air conditioner to run less often.



\$25 BILL CREDIT

If the account number below matches yours, call (850) 892-2111 to redeem a \$25 bill credit on your next power bill!

#9000110243 - KARO

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