

CHELCO NEWS

POWERED *by* YOU

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Congressman Jimmy Patronis visits CHELCO



U.S. Rep. Jimmy Patronis (FL-1) (center) visited CHELCO on Aug. 10 for a tour of the Energy Control Center and an insightful discussion on electric cooperatives.

CHELCO welcomed **U.S. Representative Jimmy Patronis (FL-1)** to its headquarters on Aug. 10 for a discussion about the important role electric cooperatives play in serving their communities. CHELCO leadership was joined by representatives from the **Florida Electric Cooperatives Association (FECA)** and **PowerSouth Energy Cooperative** for the conversation.

During the visit, CHELCO staff discussed the cooperative business model, CHELCO's mission and values, and its history of serving members across Okaloosa, Walton, Holmes and Santa Rosa counties. The conversation also touched on the cooperative's

continued growth, its partnership with Eglin Air Force Base through a 50-year Utility Privatization (UP) contract, and issues affecting cooperatives nationwide.

"We had a great discussion with Rep. Patronis about the work that we and cooperatives across the country are doing to serve our members," said CEO Steve Rhodes. "It's important for cooperatives to have a voice in policy decisions that impact our ability to provide safe, reliable and affordable electric service. We appreciate Rep. Patronis taking the time to meet with us and discuss the issues that are important to electric cooperatives and the communities we serve."



Rep. Patronis (left) looks on as CHELCO CEO Steve Rhodes leads a presentation on CHELCO and electric cooperatives during the Congressman's visit.



A Touchstone Energy®
Cooperative 

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Announcement

The CHELCO office located at Freeport City Hall has relocated to our new campus at **359 County Highway 83A West**.

The Member Services payment center and payment kiosk are both operational.

Please visit **CHELCO.com** to learn more about this transition.





CEO Insights: A Dedicated Team - The Power Behind Your Power

At CHELCO, we often talk about reliability, service, and growth. Those are important measures of a successful electric cooperative, but they are only possible because of the people who make them happen every day.

Each August, we take the opportunity to celebrate and thank our employees during our annual **Employee Appreciation Day**. While a single day can never fully capture our gratitude, it provides a chance to recognize the hard work, teamwork, and dedication that are often carried out behind the scenes.

PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

National Rankings: Top 25%

Among more than 800 electric cooperatives in the United States.

- Member Satisfaction
- Cost Control
- 1 out of 2 Safety Metrics
- 2 out of 3 Reliability Metrics

Operational Performance

- Service Orders Completed: 50,607
- Calls Fielded: 313,726
- Payments Processed: 827,113

American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) Score:

- 90 out of 100

As a member-owned cooperative, our mission is to provide safe, reliable, and affordable electricity. Fulfilling that mission requires the efforts of 190



Safety, Credit, Member Services, Human Resources & Training, and Revenue & Billing staff

employees working in a variety of roles—from Lineworkers and Energy Control Operators to Engineers, Member Service Representatives, Warehouse staff, IT professionals, Accountants, and many others. Each person plays a vital role in keeping the lights on and serving our members.

Over the past year, our employees have accomplished a great deal. CHELCO added nearly **3,000 new members in 2025**, making us one of the fastest-growing electric cooperatives in the nation. Our teams have continued to strengthen the electric system through substation improvements, infrastructure upgrades, and ongoing maintenance projects designed to improve reliability for current and future members.

POWERED by SAFETY

One accomplishment that deserves special recognition is our continued commitment to safety. Through

personal accountability, attention to detail, and a culture that encourages employees to look out for one another, CHELCO's **No-Lost Time Injury streak** is on track to reach **1,700 days** on Sept. 3. This achievement reflects the dedication of every employee to prioritizing safety, even when no one is watching.

Because of our employees, CHELCO is in a strong position today and well-prepared for the future. Their efforts help ensure that we can continue delivering the reliable service our members expect while supporting the growth and prosperity of the communities we serve.

On behalf of CHELCO's Board of Trustees and leadership team, thank you to every employee for your hard work and commitment. And to our members, thank you for allowing us the privilege of serving you.

Steve Rhodes,
Chief Executive Officer



Member Services staff



Operations staff

All About Easements: Working Together to Power Our Communities



CHELCO Easement Specialists Sharmen Skipper and Tonya Rice often meet with members to discuss easements.

When CHELCO extends electric service to a new home, upgrades existing facilities, or maintains power lines, easements often play an important role.

Easement or Prescriptive

Easement - A legal agreement that allows a utility to place and maintain electric equipment on a portion of a property while the property owner continues to own the land.

In simple terms, granting an easement does not mean selling property to CHELCO. While some utilities purchase easements, CHELCO does not. Instead, property owners grant permission to use a specific area for electric distribution equipment, including but not limited to poles, wires, and transformers.

A typical easement is **30 feet wide for overhead power lines** and **10 feet wide for underground facilities**.

While property owners retain ownership of the land, they cannot construct buildings within the easement area or plant trees there once the easement is in place.

As a not-for-profit electric cooperative, CHELCO works collaboratively with members to

secure easements, explaining the request and answering any questions. CHELCO strives to minimize impacts on private property by using existing rights-of-way and routing facilities along property lines when practical.

Prescriptive Easements

In many cases, CHELCO relies on a prescriptive easement rather than a standard recorded easement. Under Florida law, a prescriptive easement can be established when electric distribution facilities, such as poles or power lines, have remained in place and continuously served the public for at least 20 years. Unlike a standard easement, which is granted by a property owner through a written agreement, a prescriptive easement is created through long-term use.

Why Easements Are Important

Easements give CHELCO the ability to build, maintain, and upgrade electric infrastructure. They also allow crews to access equipment, trim vegetation near power lines, and restore service after storms. Without easements, providing and restoring reliable electric service to homes and businesses would be much more difficult, leaving some in the dark.

One important thing to remember is that easements stay with the land, even when ownership changes. Future property owners are subject to the same easement agreement.

CHELCO's Easement Specialists often remind members that easements are ultimately about neighbors helping neighbors. Just as someone may have granted an easement to help bring power to their property, granting an easement today may help provide service to another member tomorrow. That cooperative spirit helps ensure CHELCO can continue delivering safe, reliable electricity throughout the communities we serve.

Report Non-Working Street Lights

CHELCO appreciates members' help in identifying non-working street lights.

There are several ways you can report a non-working street light:

- **Call:** (850) 307-1126
- **Email:** lighting@chelco.com
- **Online:** Member Portal
- **App:** MyCHELCO

When reporting a street light outage, please include the street light number, which can be found on the pole, if possible.

For more information on outdoor and decorative lighting, visit CHELCO.com or scan the QR code below.



Update Contact Info

It's important to keep your contact information up-to-date so CHELCO can reach you for:

- Important Announcements
- Planned Maintenance
- Capital Credit Retirements
- Reminders and more!

Visit the online member portal, CHELCO.com or the MyCHELCO mobile app to update yours today.

Local charities receive \$17,946 from golf tournament



The **CHELCO Charity Golf Tournament** raised **\$17,946.27** for **Children in Crisis, Emerald Coast Autism Center, and Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy Center**. Each charity received \$5,982.09 to support their missions and improve the lives of local children in our communities.

Transmission vs. Distribution Outages



When the lights go out, it's natural to assume the problem is on CHELCO's electric system. However, not all outages originate on our distribution lines, especially those that impact thousands of members at once.

Transmission outages occur on the high-voltage lines that deliver electricity from our generation and transmission cooperative, PowerSouth, to CHELCO substations. If a transmission line is damaged, an entire substation can lose its power supply, impacting a large number of members. These lines are owned and maintained by PowerSouth, and repairs must be made by their crews before power can be restored to the substation.

Distribution outages occur on CHELCO's local system,



including substations, power lines, transformers, and other equipment that deliver electricity directly to homes and businesses. These outages are restored by CHELCO crews.

How We Respond

No matter where an outage originates, CHELCO works quickly to identify the cause and communicate updates. During transmission outages, our Operators coordinate closely with PowerSouth while exploring options such as back-feeding power from neighboring substations when possible. For distribution outages, CHELCO crews are dispatched to locate and repair the problem.

Whether the issue is on the transmission or distribution system, our goal remains the same: restoring power as quickly as possible.

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

Committed to Safety on the Roads



Tim Lamica and Matthew Mitchell (CHELCO Safety Department) with presenters from Walton County Sheriff's Office and Fire & Rescue.

At CHELCO, commitment to safety goes well beyond the job site. That commitment was recently reinforced during a distracted driving training session led by the **Walton County Sheriff's Office**.

The training highlighted the dangers of texting, using mobile devices, and other distractions behind the wheel, reminding employees that even a brief lapse in attention can have serious consequences.

While CHELCO's driving safety performance has steadily improved in recent years, safety is a never-ending commitment. Through educational opportunities like this training, CHELCO continues to strengthen awareness, accountability, and responsible decision-making, ultimately helping create a safer workplace and a safer community.



\$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!

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