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## NEWS RELEASE

**Choctawhatchee Electric Cooperative**  
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### **CHELCO and partner donate \$5,000 to Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance**

CHELCO and a cooperative bank have donated \$5,000 to the Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance (CBA) to help purchase a motor on the CBA's research and monitoring boat.

CHELCO applied for and received a matching grant from CoBank's Sharing Success program.

Much of the CBA's volunteer and staff time is spent on the water and a reliable boat motor is a necessity for gathering research and monitoring water quality. CHELCO is a member of the CBA and saw an opportunity to get the group's boat running again by making a donation and getting a matching grant from CoBank.

Based in Santa Rosa Beach, CBA is a non-profit organization responsible for sustaining healthy local waterways through monitoring, education, restoration and research. For 20 years, CBA has promoted water stewardship within the Choctawhatchee watershed, growing the network of supporters who join in CBA's mission to provide a future for these precious, natural resources.

“CHELCO is very supportive of preserving Choctawhatchee Bay and its watershed,” said CHELCO VP of Member Services Steve Wolfrom. “The environmental health of the river, the bay and the Gulf of Mexico is vital to the quality of life and the economy of our area and our members. CHELCO supports numerous community organizations through contributions, donations and volunteer time because commitment to community is one of the seven cooperative principles.”

CBA was gifted a 19-foot Mako boat two years ago to assist with monitoring and restoration programs. Unfortunately, the motor that came on the boat was very old and recently stopped working, making it difficult for CBA to carry out the monitoring programs initiatives. The boat is critical to the program that requires monitoring of over 130 sites throughout the Choctawhatchee watershed. It is important that CBA has reliable operating equipment to conduct long term data collection and analysis.

“We are so grateful to CHELCO and CoBank for considering CBA for this grant,” said Allison McDowell, CBA’s director. “The boat motor has been through many repairs, and finally, we were advised it was simply time to replace it. We have it at the marine shop, ready to be replaced so we can get back to work.”

CHELCO’s \$2,500 donation was matched by CoBank through its Sharing Success program. Sharing Success was established in 2012 to celebrate the International Year of the Cooperative. The response from the bank’s customers was overwhelmingly positive, and the bank has renewed the program each year since. CoBank and its customers have together provided nearly \$20 million in support to charitable organizations across the nation.

“Sharing Success has become one of the cornerstones of CoBank’s multifaceted corporate giving program,” said Robert B. Engel, CoBank’s chief executive officer. “It leverages the passion, expertise and local knowledge of our customers to identify and support the causes and programs that best address the unique needs of rural communities. We’re delighted our board has generously re-authorized this program and proud to partner with CHELCO on this important initiative.”

### **About CHELCO**

CHELCO is a not-for-profit electric distribution cooperative serving more than 48,000 members in Walton, Okaloosa, Holmes and Santa Rosa counties. Please visit [www.chelco.com](http://www.chelco.com) for more information.

### **About CoBank**

CoBank is a \$118 billion cooperative bank serving vital industries across rural America. The bank provides loans, leases, export financing and other financial services to agribusinesses and rural power, water and communications providers in all 50 states. The bank also provides wholesale loans and other financial services to affiliated Farm Credit associations serving farmers, ranchers and other rural borrowers in 23 states around the country.

CoBank is a member of the Farm Credit System, a nationwide network of banks and retail lending associations chartered to support the borrowing needs of U.S. agriculture, rural infrastructure and rural communities. Headquartered outside Denver, Colorado, CoBank serves customers from regional banking centers across the U.S. and also maintains an international representative office in Singapore.

For more information about CoBank, visit the bank's web site at [www.cobank.com](http://www.cobank.com).



Tina Rushing, CHELCO Marketing Representative, and Brandy Foley, CBA Monitoring Coordinator discuss how crucial the new boat motor is to continuing the CBA mission.