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CHELCO crew deploys to assist after Hurricane Irma

DEFUNIAK SPRINGS, Fla. (Sept. 12, 2017) -- A local electric cooperative is sending line crews, trucks, equipment and supplies to south Florida Tuesday, Sept. 12, to help restore power to areas hit by Hurricane Irma Sunday.

Twelve CHELCO linemen packed up bucket trucks and supplies and are traveling to Glades Electric Cooperative (GEC) in Moore Haven to help restore power after Hurricane Irma funneled through the state.

Among CHELCO's supplies are four pallets of water donated by Lowe's Home Improvement store in DeFuniak Springs.

"We are always happy to assist where we can to help other cooperatives restore power to their members," said Operations Supervisor Larry Tankersley. "It is the cooperative way. They have helped us in the past and would do it for us if we were in their situation."

GEC has more than 16,000 members without power due to high winds felling poles and lines. The CHELCO crew, which includes three employees from CHELCO subsidiary Southland Utility Services, expects to join Yazoo Valley Electric from Yazoo City, Mississippi, and other cooperatives to help GEC restore power more quickly.

Roughly 6 million people are estimated to be without electricity due to the storm in Florida. Roughly 785,000 of these are on electric co-op lines.

CHELCO is a not-for-profit electric distribution cooperative serving more than 50,000 accounts in Walton, Okaloosa, Holmes and Santa Rosa counties.