

# CHELCO NEWS

Sunrise in north Okaloosa County.

FEBRUARY 2019 | VOL. 24 NO. 2

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## ONLINE NOW

CHELCO offers a variety of payment options to fit members' needs. Check them out at CHELCO.com



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



## CEO Insights

Steve Rhodes, Chief Executive Officer



## CHELCO's new facilities: We're moving in



*CHELCO's Technology Center.*

CHELCO employees and office locations will be doing some shifting in 2019.

Some CHELCO employees will be moving into the new Technology Center sometime in March. It is located south of the Operations Center on U.S. 331 North, DeFuniak Springs. The Tech Center will be home to the engineering, metering, purchasing and power quality departments, as well as our call center and a portion of our information technology department. Together the Operations Center and Tech Center will be called the CHELCO West DeFuniak Springs Campus.

A state of the art control center is located in the Tech Center and housed in a hardened portion of the building, which will provide extra protection from hurricanes and other potential disasters. The destructive forces of

Hurricane Michael serves as a reminder that we must be prepared. It is critical that we retain internal and external communications as well as technological connectivity. The hardened area of the Tech Center will assure that mission critical aspects of our operation remain functional in almost any situation. This building will not accept payments or member applications.



*CHELCO's Eglin Operations Center.*

Also, CHELCO employees moved into CHELCO's Eglin Operations Center on Eglin AFB in January. CHELCO officially assumed ownership and began to maintain and operate the electrical system at Eglin AFB in August 2017. The new building will be home to CHELCO's operations, engineering and support staff who serve Eglin AFB.

*continued on page 3*



## IN BRIEF

### **Come see us at CHELCO's annual meeting**

Attend CHELCO's annual meeting Saturday, April 27, for a fun day with the family! The meeting will be at Freeport High School.

Each year your cooperative hosts the annual meeting to provide an update on the co-op, entertainment, fun for the kids and more. Eat a free breakfast while you enjoy the exhibits or watch the entertainment. Each membership will receive one gift. Bounce houses will be open for the kids.

During the meeting, CHELCO will announce the results of the Board of Trustees election. Be on the lookout for your ballot packet in the mail mid-March.

The annual meeting celebration is just another reason to be proud to be a member of an electric cooperative!

### **Scholarship applications due Feb. 15**

The Feb. 15 deadline to apply for one of three \$1,000 CHELCO scholarships is quickly approaching. Please contact Bonnie Whitfield at (850)307-1120 for more information or download the application packet at CHELCO.com.

### **CHELCO closed for Presidents' Day**

CHELCO offices will be closed Monday, Feb. 18, in observance of Presidents' Day.



### **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.

**Wilkerson - 5419846562**

## **CHELCO appoints Avery senior vice president of engineering and operations**

J. Matthew Avery was recently promoted to senior vice president of engineering and operations.

Matthew started with CHELCO in 2003 and was previously the vice president of engineering. He was promoted to his current role after the retirement of Donny Fugate, former vice president of operations.

Matthew will be responsible for working with senior leadership to develop and implement the goals, objectives and strategies of the organization and lead managers in the development and implementation of division tactics that align with the strategic plan. He will oversee the Eglin AFB utility privatization (UP) contract, engineering planning and design, planning for commercial and residential development; geographic information systems, which includes easement acquisition; 24-hour energy control center; vegetation management; and construction and maintenance of the electrical distribution and transmission system. Matthew is also responsible for leveraging technology to reduce wholesale power costs.

"With rapid changes in the electric utility industry, it's an exciting time to work for an electric cooperative," said Matthew. "I'm humbled and honored to have this opportunity to continue serving with my CHELCO family."

Matthew worked in the utility industry since 1996 with another electric cooperative, an investor-owned utility and a fiber optic company. Matthew also worked in the residential and commercial construction industry.

Matthew received his master's degree in business administration from the University of West Florida and his bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from Auburn University. Matthew is a registered professional engineer in the State of Florida and Alabama. He is also a graduate of the Robert I. Kabat Management Internship program through The University of Wisconsin School of Business and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Matthew is a board member of the Walton County Economic Development Alliance, a board member of the Okaloosa/Walton United Way, a member of the All Sports Association, past-president for the Walton Area Chamber of Commerce, past-president of the Niceville-Valparaiso Kiwanis Club and past chairman of Mentoring Emerald Coast. Matthew was also an honorary commander with the 16th Electronic Warfare Squadron, 53rd Wing, Eglin AFB. Matthew is an active member of Crosspoint United Methodist Church and serves on the board of trustees. Matthew lives in Bluewater Bay with his wife, Jamie, and their two children.



*Senior Vice President of Engineering and Operations Matthew Avery*



Renovations at the headquarters campus on Baldwin Avenue in DeFuniak Springs is expected to begin later this year. During the renovations, the member services center will be located at the current Southland Utility Services office, 99 S. 18th St., DeFuniak Springs. It is across the street from the DFS post office. We will accept payments there, but there will no drive through. A 24-hour kiosk will be available.

Modernization of headquarters will result in improved access and

increased parking for members. We will accept payments at our Baldwin Avenue location when the remodeling is complete.

CHELCO hasn't added major office facilities or remodeled buildings in DeFuniak Springs since 1999. Since then our membership has grown by more than 60 percent, the employee group has increased by more than 20 percent, and our engineering department was relocated from Baldwin Avenue to a Regions Bank building due to space limitations. The

co-op's existing offices are cramped, inefficient and in dire need of modernization.

CHELCO will be going through many transitions as we shift in and out of locations over the next two years. It might take a little time to adapt to the new locations, and we appreciate your patience while we modernize for our members' benefit. We promise that we will stay true to our mission of safely providing reliable electricity and quality service at affordable rates.

## CHELCO Connect: We have an app for that

If you haven't already, download the CHELCO Connect app.

The free app is available in the iTunes and Google Play stores. With the app, members have one-touch access to

pay their bill, review usage, report an outage, call CHELCO, view maps to our six locations and directly link to our Facebook page.

Search "CHELCO" on the iTunes or

Google Play stores and download the free app. To use the app's features, you must set up an online account at CHELCO.com. Your user name and password are the same as your online account.

## Special needs shelter registration program

The Florida Division of Emergency Management in coordination with each local emergency management agency in the state, developed a registry to allow residents with special needs to register with their local emergency management agency to receive assistance during a disaster. The statewide registry provides first responders with valuable information to prepare for disasters or other emergencies.

### Why should you register?

- To receive important information from local emergency management officials about evacuations.

- It may save your life.
- CHELCO is not able to provide priority service restoration during power outages.

If you need assistance during evacuations and sheltering because of physical, mental, cognitive impairment or sensory disabilities, please register with the local emergency management agency.

**Walton County  
Emergency management**  
(850) 892-8065

**Okaloosa County  
Emergency Management**  
(850) 651-7150



### Tip of the Month

Laundry Tip: Dry towels and heavier cottons separately from lighter-weight clothing. You'll spend less time running the dryer for lighter-weight items, which saves energy.

**Help CHELCO control wholesale power costs and collect rewards as well by allowing CHELCO to install a switch on your electric water heater. CHELCO offers members a \$75 payment, plus bill credits worth \$18 per year, for participating in our Switch to Save program. Call (850) 307-1122 for more information or fill out the online sign-up form at CHELCO.com.**

# Electric meter: Who's responsible for what?

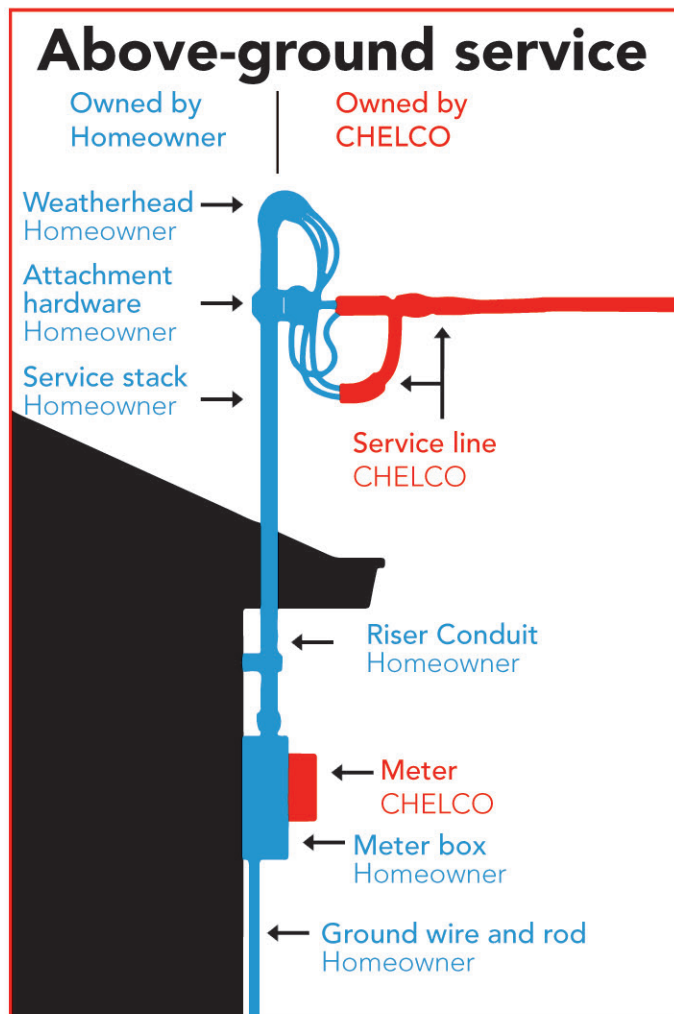
Our members sometimes ask who is responsible for maintaining and repairing the equipment that provides electricity to their home. Homeowners are responsible for installing, maintaining and repairing all equipment beyond their service connection point, except for the electric meter.

Your connection has two parts, the meter and the meter base. The meter is round and typically enclosed in clear plastic or glass. The meter base is typically a rectangular metal box mounted to the outside of your home or place of business. The meter is owned by CHELCO, but this is not true of your meter base; this important part of your electric system does NOT belong to CHELCO.

The member is responsible for all wiring inside the house. Outside the member owns the wire from their breaker or fuse panel up the wall of their house to the connection to our wire. We supply the meter, but the member owns the meter socket along with the

wire in the conduit going up to our wire. If for whatever reason the service is pulled off the house to the ground, we can only put our wire back up to your house. You will need to call an

electrician to replace what's broken and put your service back up; then we can reconnect it to our wires to get the power back on.



The meter base is the responsibility of the member. If it's damaged by weather or accident, repair is the member's responsibility. CHELCO cannot, by regulation, connect power to a damaged meter base.

"Members can feel tremendous frustration at the restriction. It is understandable--after waiting for power to be restored, who wouldn't be frustrated by having to wait to have your power restored," said Meter Services Supervisor Joe Hollington. "Still, if the meter base (or the mast pipe, on top or below it, which contains the service wire) is damaged, per National Electric Code (NEC) regulations, a professional electrician must repair it to NEC code before CHELCO is allowed to restore your service. A county inspection is needed to determine if it meets code."

We hope this graphic and explanation will help answer any questions you may have.

## CONNECTIONS CORNER

The Co-op Connections discount program is another benefit of being a CHELCO member. Dozens of local businesses, plus thousands nationally, offer discounts to co-op members. There are also discounts available on prescriptions at participating pharmacies. Don't forget to download the Co-op Connections app. This month, we highlight and thank the following businesses.

### Sleep Inn

(850) 307-9000  
Mossy Head  
10% off best available rate.

### That Pizza Place

(850) 520-4505  
DeFuniak Springs  
10% discount excluding beer & wine.

### 4C BBQ

(850) 892-4BBQ  
DeFuniak Springs  
Two free drinks (tea or soda) with a \$20 purchase (before tax).

For more information, or, if you own a business and want to sign up to offer CHELCO's 50,000+ member accounts a discount, email [marketingservices@chelco.com](mailto:marketingservices@chelco.com) or call CHELCO's marketing department at (850) 307-1122. You can find all the local and national deals by searching co-op connections at [CHELCO.com](http://CHELCO.com).