

# CHELCO NEWS

POWERED *by* YOU

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# CHELCO



A Touchstone Energy<sup>®</sup> Cooperative 

## CHELCO retires \$2.5 million in capital credits

### You have a capital credit!

PAY TO THE  
ORDER OF

Valued Member

\$

Capital Credit



This year, CHELCO is retiring more than \$2.5 million in capital credits to be returned to members in the form of a bill credit or check.

Being a member of a not-for-profit electric cooperative provides benefits that pay off. What sets CHELCO and the hundreds of other electric cooperatives apart from for-profit electric providers is that you, as a member, are a part owner.

Cooperatives exist not to make a profit, but to provide at-cost services. If we have excess margins above the cost of providing services, they are returned to members via capital credits.

Active members with a retirement of less than \$40 will have the amount credited on December's electric bill, while those with a retirement over \$40 will receive a check.

"Thank you so much!!!"  
-Jovetta S.

"Yippee!"  
-Mary N.

Those who are not currently members but were members in 2000 will receive their capital credits via check, regardless of the amount of the retirement.

We thank you for your membership, and we look forward to what we may continue to do together. We hope this retirement helps you and your family have a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!

"Thank you so much for giving us a credit. We appreciate everything CHELCO does."  
-Loretta S.

## Inside

### Page 2

CEO Insights: Christmas season is upon us

### Page 3

CHELCO breaks ground on Administrative Wing

### Page 4

CHELCO Board Members earn certifications

## Announcement

### Holiday Closures

CHELCO's offices will be closed Thursday and Friday, Dec. 24-25, for Christmas. CHELCO offices will also be closed Friday, Jan. 1, for New Year's Day.





## CEO Insights: Christmas season is upon us

Growing up, Christmas at our home was always a fun, boisterous gathering with food, cheer and fellowship. Between my brothers and I, and more recently our families, we have always kept my parents busy and entertained. Traditions my family has shared for years will be different this year due to COVID-19, as it will with many other families.

A lot has changed since last holiday season. Traveling and hosting large groups has not been encouraged. Zoom is now a verb... 'Do you want to Zoom?' Hugs for family and friends are tricky, especially those of us lucky enough to have older relatives or newborn babies around. Social distancing has increased personal space beyond anything we ever thought we needed. Facemasks

are not the 'extra' we thought we would be adding to our festive outfits.

I have faith that we will adjust to celebrate this meaningful season. Packages will be delivered on front porches while the gift giver stands back six feet. Christmas church service likely will be online at home with your loved ones. A handwritten card with pictures will mean so much more from those we have not seen in months. It will be the small things and the efforts that matter.

Our upcoming Christmas and the New Year celebrations will be ones we remember for years to come. Let us all try our best to make those fond memories. We can enjoy the slower pace and remember to be thankful for those around us.

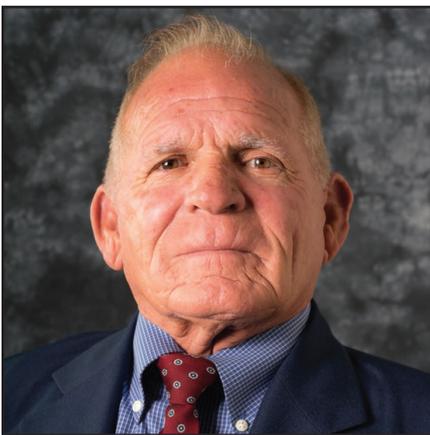
I am particularly grateful for the CHELCO employees. Throughout the pandemic, they courageously showed up and worked diligently for our members who were home in quarantine. They even gave out of their own pockets to help others in our local communities. As you plug in your Christmas tree lights, please join me in thanks to the men and women of CHELCO for their dedication this year and to their families who support them.

From all of our families at CHELCO to all of yours, we wish you a magical, joyous Christmas and a safe, healthy New Year.

God bless you all.

**Steve Rhodes,**  
Chief Executive Officer

## CHELCO Board Member Jim Bishop passes away



**James "Jim" Bishop**

CHELCO Board Trustee James "Jim" Bishop passed away unexpectedly Nov. 11. He served as the District 3 Trustee on the CHELCO Board since 1990 and served a portion of that time as the Board's Vice President.

"Jim was dedicated to CHELCO and had a heart for electric cooperatives," CEO Steve Rhodes said. "His contributions to this organization over the years were plentiful and he will most certainly be missed."

In addition to serving on CHELCO's Board of Trustees, Bishop also served as past chairman of Southland Utility

Services, a subsidiary of CHELCO. Bishop was a retired teacher and coach with the Walton County School District, a member of Seagrove Baptist Church and a United States Army Veteran.

"Those who knew Jim well at CHELCO knew he truly cared about his role as a Board member," said Gerald Edmondson, President of the Board. "His knowledge and perspectives were a great asset to the board. He was admired for sticking to his values and will be greatly missed."

## CHELCO breaks ground on Administrative Wing



L to R: Contractors Bret Parrish and Spike Lord, Board President Gerald Edmondson, CEO Steve Rhodes and Contractor Nolan Baker.

CHELCO's tremendous growth in the past three decades has prompted us to revamp our work locations to better serve you, our members. The first step in modernizing our facilities was to design and complete construction on the new Technology Center just south of our Operations Center on Highway 331 N in DeFuniak Springs.

After moving into the Tech Center in the summer of 2019, we began planning our next phase. After careful consideration and financial analysis, we will relocate our headquarters currently located on Baldwin Avenue to join our West DeFuniak Springs campus. Once again we can proudly say that we are opening another state-of-the-art location without the need for a rate increase for our members.

On Oct. 30, we broke ground on our Administrative Wing, an addition to

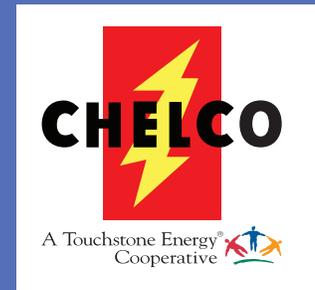
the Technology Center, which will allow our employees to work more closely with one another at one location.

We'll also be reworking our 331 N campus to house our payment center, where you'll be able to pay your bills and conduct all other business with our representatives.

Our contractors estimate that construction should be complete by early 2022. Our Board of Trustees and management team have carefully analyzed every detail of this historic project to ensure we are making a responsible decision to upgrade from our current offices.

As construction progresses and eventually completes, we look forward to serving you from our new and innovative location for years to come.

## Download the CHELCO Connect App



Download the CHELCO Connect app today to enjoy many useful features right at your fingertips!

The CHELCO Connect app allows members to log in with their online CHELCO account and make bill payments, track daily and monthly energy usage, report and monitor outages, contact CHELCO, update your information or report light outages.

To download the CHELCO Connect app, simply type "CHELCO Connect" in the App Store or Google Play. Your login information will be the same as your online account portal.

For more information, or step-by-step instructions on how to download the app, call us at (850) 892-2111 or toll-free at (800) 342-0990.

CHELCO is governed by a nine-member board of trustees: Lee Perry, District 1; Terry Pilcher, District 2; Jim Bishop, District 3; Brady Bearden, Vice President, District 4; Ronald Jones, District 5; Gerald Edmondson, President, District 6; Bert Prutzman, Assistant Secretary/Treasurer, District 7; Gayle Hughes, Secretary/Treasurer, District 8; Burt Cosson, District 9.

## CHELCO Board Members earn certifications

Board Trustees at cooperatives around the country are always learning how to better serve their members. Part of that process includes earning certifications

to equip board members with the knowledge they need to serve successfully. Recently, the following CHELCO Board Trustees earned these certifications.



**Lee Perry**  
Credentialed  
Cooperative Director  
Certificate



**Bert Prutzman**  
Board Leadership  
Certificate



**Brady Bearden**  
Board Leadership  
Certificate & Gold  
Director Credential

## Avery joins NRTC Advisory Board

Matthew Avery, CHELCO's Senior Vice President of Engineering and Operations, was recently named to the Smart Grid Member Advisory Board for the National Rural Telecommunications Cooperative.

The NRTC Smart Grid Member Advisory Board consists of 10 cooperative executives from across the country, with the size of the cooperatives involved ranging from 5,000-100,000 members.

"I'm honored to be a part of the inaugural Member Advisory Board for NRTC," Avery said. "Our objective is to develop a Smart Grid Technology Roadmap that NRTC can use to help cooperatives plan for future technological improvements. The process is expected to take about two years, and we're excited to roll out our plans that will help streamline these improvements for co-ops around the country."



## Connections Corner

The Co-op Connections discount program is another benefit of being a CHELCO member. Local businesses, participating pharmacies and thousands nationally offer discounts to co-op members. Don't forget to download the Co-op Connections app!

This month, we highlight and thank the following businesses:

**Bank of England Mortgage**  
(850) 865-7907  
(850) 590-8992  
348 Miracle Strip Pkwy SW  
Fort Walton Beach  
\$500 credit toward closing cost

**Coastal Roofing Professionals**  
(850) 729-7767  
4516 Hwy. 20 E, Niceville  
5% off

**CRC Data Technologies**  
4014 Commons Drive West  
Suite 122, Destin  
20% off services

For more information, visit [CHELCO.com](http://CHELCO.com), email [energyservices@chelco.com](mailto:energyservices@chelco.com) or call CHELCO's Energy Services department at (850) 307-1122.

## 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.

**Smythe - 82047267**