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A Touchstone Energy[®] Cooperative



CHELCO dedicates solar array to former Board Trustee Pat Carlyle

CHELCO recently dedicated the solar array at the Operations Center to former Board Trustee Pat Carlyle, who served on the Board from 2006 to 2019. Pat passed away Aug. 6, 2019, after a brief illness. She was an early advocate for CHELCO's solar program, and she served on the CHELCO Board of Trustees proudly for 13 years.

"Pat was an encouraging supporter of the cooperative's solar project," CEO Steve Rhodes said. "Her memory lives on in the projects she believed in, and she helped build a strong foundation for many projects at our co-op."

Ballot packets mailed this month

The 2020 Board of Trustees election ballots will be mailed March 13. Please keep an eye out for yours.

Members will elect trustees for Districts 3, 5 and 8 through mail-in balloting. Elections are at-large, so please vote for one candidate from each district, regardless of your district, even if that candidate is unopposed.

The ballot packet will include a certification card and a self-addressed, postage-paid envelope to make voting easy and convenient. All ballots must be received no later than April 13, and the election results

will be announced at the annual meeting on Saturday, April 18, at Freeport High School. All voting will be conducted by mail.

IMPORTANT: Members must return BOTH registration card and ballot for the vote to be counted. Members who vote will be entered in drawings for a prize and bill credits.

If you enjoy live music, delicious local coffee, activities for the kids, huge prize giveaways and bill credits, join us on April 18 at Freeport High School for our Annual Meeting.

CFO Wayne Thompson retiring after 35 years

Chief Financial Officer Wayne Thompson is retiring in March after 35 years of service at CHELCO. Thompson began his CHELCO career in 1985 and worked on special projects. In his time at CHELCO, he says he is proud of how the co-op has grown and expanded while staying on top of finances.

"I'm proud of the whole financial position of CHELCO," Thompson said. "We've gone from a very small co-op to a pretty good sized one, but we've been in good financial shape in our growth. I'm glad to have been a part of the efficient expansion and advancement at CHELCO."

Thompson's division includes accounting, meter services, revenue and billing, and purchasing and materials. Manager of Accounting Robin Shaw said that Thompson's impact on CHELCO will live on.

"As a CFO who was not afraid of change, Wayne's contribution to this organization will remain long after he retires," Shaw said. "His progressive ideas and outside-the-box thinking have pushed us to pursue new trends and technologies, helping elevate CHELCO among our peers. He will be greatly missed."

Thompson graduated from the University of West Florida with a bachelor's degree in accounting. Before employment at CHELCO, Thompson was the City Clerk of DeFuniak Springs.

CEO Steve Rhodes commended Thompson's service to CHELCO, and wished him a long, happy and healthy retirement.

"Wayne has made a tremendous impact on the growth and betterment



of CHELCO," Rhodes said. "We are losing a very knowledgeable and experienced leader at our cooperative, but he has earned his retirement and we truly wish him all the best."



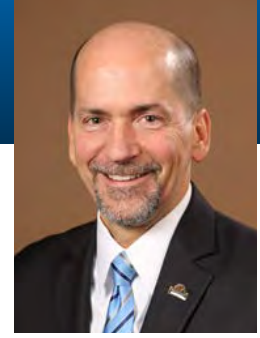
CHELCO area students visit Tallahassee for Youth Tour

In February, CHELCO escorted 12 high school juniors to Tallahassee to participate in the annual Florida Electric Cooperative Association's Youth Tour.

CHELCO's Youth Tour students joined students from cooperatives around the state and attended a demonstration on electromagnetism at the Challenger Learning Center, observed the budget debate at the Florida House of Representatives, performed a mock session in the Florida Supreme Court, participated in a student-led Senate mock session, met with state representatives and learned about electric co-ops.

The same students will compete in an interview process for the national Youth Tour trip to Washington, D.C., in June and will join over 2,000 Youth Tour representatives from around the country.

"I had a really great time," Crestview student Daniella Sanchez said. "I'm so happy to have gotten the opportunity to go on this trip and make so many new friends!"



Value-added services enhance the co-op experience

The number one priority at any electric cooperative is to safely transmit electricity to members. The same is true at CHELCO, and we have consistently been ranked among the best in providing safe and reliable electricity while keeping our costs among the lowest in the nation.

While we tirelessly perform tasks to ensure that our number one priority is always up to the CHELCO standard, we also work hard behind the scenes to make your experience with us more positive and interactive. These behind-the-scenes projects are our value-added services, which include energy audits, lighting, right-of-way coordination, in-depth member assistance and much more.

Energy audits are performed by our energy advisors. These audits can help identify aspects of your home that are prone to drive your energy bill higher than you would like. Our energy advisors are available to conduct an assessment of your

home's energy efficiency and give you tips on how to reduce energy consumption and costs.

It can get fairly dark in the rural areas throughout our service territory, but our lighting program allows you to install exterior lights to bring illumination to your property. We offer both residential and development lighting, which use LED technology to efficiently light streets and homes. CHELCO installs and maintains the lights, providing reliable lighting where you need it most.

Tree trimming is another value-added service that contributes greatly to our mission of efficiently maintaining our lines and your power supply. Southland Utility Services is a wholly-owned subsidiary of CHELCO, and they perform our right-of-way clearing and maintenance. Maintaining invasive vegetation helps limit loose branches and tree limbs falling on our lines and causing unwanted safety concerns or outages.

Member-owned electric cooperatives have local roots in their communities, and CHELCO is proud to be a staple in the areas we serve. The member service representatives at our area offices are happy to answer your questions, provide billing assistance and offer general co-op information. Convenience is something we aim toward, and having our representatives in each area office makes it easier for our members to interact with us in person, adding a valuable service to our cooperative.

There are many other things we do behind the scenes that members would not necessarily notice, such as accounting or human resources and training, but these crucial services help keep the cooperative running like a well-oiled machine. CHELCO's top priority will always be to keep you safely and efficiently powered, but we take pride in the many additional services we offer to help create an engaging and rewarding experience for you, our members.

Install a switch and receive \$75

You can help control the cost of electricity by joining CHELCO's Switch to Save program. When CHELCO members use less power during high demand periods for electricity, it saves all members money by controlling wholesale power costs.

As a reward for joining Switch to Save, CHELCO offers two incentives. First, you will receive a \$75 bill credit when the switch is installed. Next, you will get a \$3 bill credit during peak months, which are December, January, February, June, July and August.

How it works

With the Switch to Save program, CHELCO will install a switch on your electric hot water heater. A signal is sent to

the switch through the power lines to turn off the electricity to your tank's heating elements.

During peak times, a signal is sent to the switch and power to the unit will be cut for a short while, usually for around two hours. Even with the interruption, your water heater will keep water hot for hours, leaving you plenty of hot water for showers, laundry, dishwashing and all of your family's needs.

How to join Switch to Save

If you would like to participate in CHELCO's Switch to Save program, contact our Energy Services department at (850) 307-1122, or email energyservices@chelco.com and ask about the Switch to Save program.

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

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.

Nook & Cranny Consignment

- (850) 865-2976
- DeFuniak Springs
- *Free drink from coffee shop with purchase*

Rhodes Jewelers, Inc.

- (850) 892-3621
- DeFuniak Springs
- *20% off regular priced items*

Sweeney's Lock and Key

- (850) 865-1212
- DeFuniak Springs
- *10% off total bill*

For more information, or, if you own a business and want to sign-up to offer CHELCO's 56,000+ member accounts a discount, email marketingservices@chelco.com or call CHELCO's energy services department at (850) 307-1122. You can find all the local and national deals by searching co-op connections at CHELCO.com or download the Co-op Connections app.



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.

Blocker - 9000050422

Protect your appliances with surge protectors

Florida is the lightning capital of the world, and you've probably experienced property loss or damage from lightning strikes. Surge protectors are relatively inexpensive solutions that can be used on all types of buildings, particularly in areas like ours where lightning often strikes. When used alone, meter-based surge protectors provide protection at your service entrance against lightning attempting to enter your home or business through power lines. While these devices are not capable of handling a direct lightning strike, in combination with other surge protection devices, they are capable of handling a broad range of lightning events.



Modern surge protection systems include a meter-based or panel-mounted surge protector at the incoming power service. These meter-based surge protectors are designed to protect the electro-mechanical or motor-driven portion of a home or business's appliances and machinery. Plug-in or point-of-use protectors should be used to protect sensitive microprocessors and other critical equipment. A meter-based surge protector can handle high-energy power surges that enter through the electric service. Small plug-in protectors provide secondary defense for electronic equipment needed to guard against lightning that may come through non-electric sources such as telephone, data and coaxial lines.

In order for surge protection equipment to work properly, it is critical for your home or business to have a properly bonded grounding system with a single ground reference to which all building system grounds are connected. Without proper grounding, surge protection is less effective.

Helping safeguard your home or business from nearby lightning strikes is simple; call and ask to sign up for CHELCO's surge protection program. One of our Energy Advisors will schedule a surge protection site evaluation and make recommendations for how you can mitigate your risks from future damage. If you are interested in further protecting your investments, one of our trained technicians can install both meter-based and point-of-use surge protectors.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Placing hot food in the refrigerator makes the appliance work harder than necessary, using more energy. Allow food to cool down before you place it in the fridge.

