



Cerulean Park at WaterColor

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ONLINE NOW

If you'd like to dig into how your home uses electricity to better understand your bill, CHELCO offers online energy calculators at CHELCO.com.



A Touchstone Energy Cooperative



CHELCO's Annual Meeting goes virtual

In a fairly quick turn of events due to the COVID-19 pandemic, CHELCO held its Annual Meeting virtually for the first time in its 79-year history on Saturday, April 18.

As the meeting came to order, CEO Steve Rhodes said that in his 32 years of service to electric co-ops, the COVID-19 pandemic is the most challenging crisis he has faced over an extended period of time.

"I can't say I ever thought this would happen," Rhodes said. "That is, holding a co-op annual meeting without members present. But here we are, and we're making every attempt to make the best of a bad situation."

Rhodes announced that there would be no base rate increase in 2020, and that CHELCO plans to begin construction on an administrative wing at its Technology Center on US Hwy. 331 N. in DeFuniak Springs sometime later this year.

The Board of Trustees election results were reported, and the three unopposed incumbents were re-elected to the Board for three-year terms: James Bishop, District 3; Ronald Jones, District 5; and Gayle Hughes, District 8.

Rhodes also announced that in addition to no base rate increase, CHELCO would be making a special retirement of \$1.4 million in capital credits due to cost saving measures. This marks the second time in the past six months that CHELCO has retired capital credits.

"This year's special capital credit retirement is especially timely due to the coronavirus crisis and the devastating financial impact it's having on some of our members," Rhodes said.

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Behind the scene at the 2020 virtual Annual Meeting

CHELCO sends linemen to Covington Electric after devastating storm

After a devastating line of storms swept throughout the southeast the night of April 19 and into the morning of April 20, more than 9,000 members of Covington Electric Cooperative in Andalusia, Alabama, were without power, and many had extensive property damage. In the spirit of cooperation among cooperatives, CHELCO sent six line technicians to help with storm restoration on April 20.

On their Facebook page, Covington Electric Cooperative expressed their appreciation for co-ops like CHELCO who stepped up to help with their recovery efforts.

“CEC would like to thank our employees and every assisting contract crew (Lee Electric, Asplundh, Harper Electric and HTC) and cooperative crew (Southern Pine, Escambia River, West Florida and CHELCO) for helping us meet this challenge with determination and dedication,” the post said.

Restoration efforts were completed by April 23 to all homes that could receive power.



CHELCO Linemen helping Covington Electric Cooperative restore power

Downed and Dangerous

If you see a downed power line, always assume it is energized and dangerous. Avoid going near it or anything in contact with the power line.



Downed power lines can energize the ground up to 35 ft. away – so keep your distance.



Never drive over a downed line or through water that is touching the line.



If you see a downed line, notify the local authorities immediately.



Never try to move a downed power line, even if you think the line is deenergized or if you're using a non-conductive item - this will not prevent injury or death!

Five ways to make your home safer

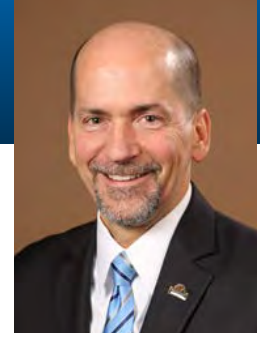
May is National Electrical Safety Month, and there are many things you can do around your home to ensure that your family is safe.

- 1: Use GFCI outlets: Ground fault circuit interrupters prevent electric shock, and they're required by code in certain rooms.
- 2: To prevent the risk of scalding your skin, set your hot water heater to around 120 or below.
- 3: Cover your outlets: Old-school outlet covers can be hard to use, but your outlets should be covered, especially if you have young children or pets in your home.
- 4: Invest in surge protectors: Surge devices protect your electronic devices from surges of electricity, such as those caused by lightning strikes. Such surges can fry your electronics, causing thousands of dollars in damage to your appliances, and creating a safety hazard.
- 5: Replace batteries in smoke detectors. Regularly check your smoke detectors to ensure the batteries are still good.

We value your feedback

A phone survey will be conducted in June on the behalf of CHELCO. We appreciate you taking the time to help us improve.





Safety is our top priority

May is a month in which we highlight safety at CHELCO, but it is something that we take seriously throughout the entire year. To keep themselves, members and communities safe, our employees strictly follow CHELCO's safety guidelines and precautions. After all, delivering safe and reliable electricity to our members is, and always will be, our top priority.

Throughout the year, we administer first aid and general safety training to our employees, as it is essential in the co-op world to make sure our employees are ready to respond to many situations. Thankfully, we plan for many types of disasters and emergencies, and we were prepared to handle the curveballs the coronavirus pandemic has brought with it.

CHELCO provides an essential service – electricity – and COVID-19 has quickly taken center stage in our business and throughout the rest of the world. With families at home, as much as ever, it is critical to maintain reliability while keeping our employees safe and healthy.

"After all, delivering safe and reliable electricity to our members is, and always will be, our top priority."

On March 19, we closed our business offices to the public. Shortly following on March 24, employees who could perform work duties efficiently from home began teleworking, and those whose duties

require them to be onsite must disinfect workstations several times per day, work in small groups and maintain social distancing of at least six feet. We allow only one person at a time in the elevator, and if you happen to see our crews out working in the field, you will notice new signs asking visitors to keep their distance.

Although we have adjusted our business functions to comply with COVID-19 recommendations, safety has remained our top priority.

Admittedly, it has not been easy to proceed with business as usual, but I'm proud of the hard work that our employees have done to keep everything running smoothly in the midst of the chaos.

CHELCO's Annual Meeting goes virtual *from page 1*

After the business portion of the meeting, the Board of Trustees met in a re-organizational meeting and elected the following officers: President, Gerald Edmondson; Vice President, Brady Bearden; Secretary/Treasurer, Gayle Hughes; Assistant Secretary/Treasurer, Bert Prutzman.

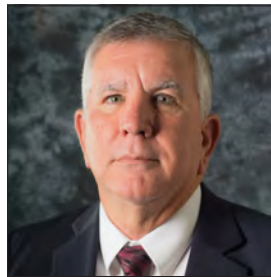
In addition to the business report, six scholarships were awarded and 30 prizes were drawn for members who voted in the Board of Trustees election in 2020.

Members can view the 2020 Annual Meeting video and the 2019 Annual Report on CHELCO.com.

Trustee election winners



James "Jim" Bishop
District 3
Santa Rosa Beach



Ronald Jones
District 5
DeFuniak Springs



Gayle Hughes
District 8
Niceville

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.

Potter - 201048063

COVID-19 CHELCO RESPONSE



Closed offices to the public on March 19 to comply with the CDC recommendations



Held our 2020 Annual Meeting virtually on April 18.



Suspended disconnections for non-payment and continue to work with our members who are struggling financially due to COVID-19



Began staggering crew hours and provided them with signs to promote safe-distance work environments in the field



Supported locally owned businesses by buying gift cards for Annual Meeting prizes, raising money for local restaurants through internal fundraisers and purchasing food to feed our employees and first responders



More than 40 employees began to work at or from home to limit face-to-face interactions. Employees who could not work from home remain onsite and are practicing social distancing.