

CHELCO NEWS

POWERED *by* YOU

JULY 2025 | VOL. 30, NO. 7

Educational programs available to schools, first responders, civic groups



CHELCO offers several educational programs tailored to the audience.

Live Line Safety

This outdoor event is perfect for audiences of all sizes and is ideal for first responders, students, civic organizations, and the general public. Using a full-scale model of power lines, poles, and equipment, CHELCO experts create dramatic, real-life scenarios with live wires and electric arcs to show just how dangerous electricity can be—and how to stay safe around it. Due to the use of live electricity, demonstrations require suitable locations and fair weather conditions.

EV 101

Get a hands-on introduction to the world of electric vehicles. This presentation covers the basics of EV ownership, charging, and how CHELCO is helping lead the charge with programs and resources for current and future EV drivers.

Co-op Environment

This professionally-led, hands-on experience introduces students to local wildlife living on our wireways while teaching them about the electric cooperative model and how our community works together to keep the lights on.

All of CHELCO's educational programs are free, but due to high demand requests should be made in advance. You can fill out an interest form on our website at www.chelco.com/education-programs or call (850) 307-1122 and ask to speak to an energy advisor.



Co-op Environment presentation at the 2025 CHELCO Annual Meeting



A Touchstone Energy®
Cooperative 

Inside

Page 2

CEO Insights: Beat the heat without breaking the bank

Page 3

Trustees represent co-op beyond boardroom

Page 4

TripSavers help keep the lights on

Office Hours Changing in August

Starting the week of August 27, 2025, Choctawhatchee Electric Cooperative, Inc. (CHELCO) will implement new hours of operation. The electric cooperative will be closed every other Friday beginning Friday, August 29, 2025. While offices will be closed every other Friday, your cooperative never stops working. Members can still access their account through select area office kiosks, the MyCHELCO app, phone payments, online account, and drop boxes.



FOR MORE INFO, VISIT
WWW.CHELCO.COM/CHELCO-OFFICES-HOURS



CEO Insights: Beat the heat without breaking the bank

As summer temperatures rise, so can our electric bills—especially with air conditioners running around the clock. At CHELCO, we understand the strain this can place on your wallet. As your local, not-for-profit electric cooperative, we're committed to helping you stay cool while keeping your energy costs in check.

That's why we offer a variety of energy-saving tools and programs designed with your comfort—and your budget—in mind.

Home Energy Audits

CHELCO's energy advisors can perform an in-person energy audit to pinpoint where your home may be losing energy. From insulation and windows to air leaks and appliances, we'll help you identify areas for improvement and offer practical recommendations to boost efficiency and reduce your monthly bills.

Prefer a DIY approach? Our virtual energy assessment tools allow you to evaluate your home's energy use in minutes. Just visit the Energy Calculators page at www.chelco.com/energy-calculators for instant feedback and savings tips.

Rewarding Smart Energy Choices

When you invest in energy-efficient upgrades, we believe you should be rewarded. CHELCO offers rebates on a variety of purchases, including electric vehicles, heat pumps, water heaters, and more. Learn more about how to earn bill credits by visiting www.chelco.com/rebates.

One standout opportunity is our Switch to Save program, which we reintroduced last year with more incentives! This voluntary initiative helps manage electricity demand by installing a load control switch (LCS) on your electric water heater. The switch is activated sparingly for short periods of time, helping us reduce strain on the system and saving everyone money.

As a thank-you for participating:

- You'll receive a one-time \$25 bill credit when the switch is installed.



Above: A CHELCO energy advisor (right) speaks with a member in their home about a LCS switch being installed on her hot water heater

- You'll continue to receive a \$3 monthly credit as long as the switch remains in place.
- It's an easy way to support your cooperative—and your budget.

Tips to Tame Your Summer Bill

Every small step adds up. Here are some simple ways to stay comfortable while keeping your energy use in check:

- Set your thermostat to the highest comfortable temperature.
- Use ceiling fans to circulate air—but remember to turn them off when leaving the room. Fans cool people, not rooms.
- Grill outside instead of using the oven to keep indoor temperatures lower.
- Change your air filters regularly to help your HVAC system run efficiently.



We're Doing Our Part, Too

Behind the scenes, CHELCO has been working to reduce energy demand during peak times through load management tools like water heater switches and voltage adjustments. These efforts help us avoid buying high-cost wholesale power—savings that are passed directly to you.

In 2024 alone, these strategies saved our members \$1.5 million—an average of \$23 per account. And for a typical residential member who's been with us for the past decade, that adds up to over \$200 in savings.

\$12.2 MILLION SAVED
Through CHELCO's load management efforts since 2014.

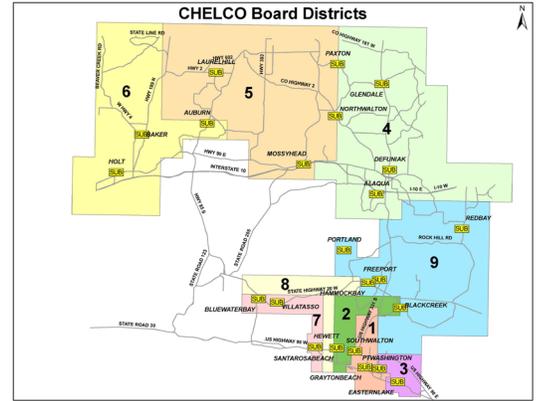
Summer energy costs don't have to be a burden. Contact us today to learn more about how we can help you save energy and money—without sacrificing comfort.

Together, we can make this summer a breeze.

Steve Rhodes,
Chief Executive Officer

Trustees represent co-op beyond the boardroom

A cooperative is powered by three different, but vitally important, groups — members, elected trustees and employees. Between the three, management of the cooperative’s business is tasked to those elected to serve on the cooperative board. These nine individuals act as representatives and the collective voice for the defined districts of CHELCO. They take the information provided by the members and the action of the cooperative staff and use it to ensure reliable, safe service and the sustainability and health of our cooperative.



(Pictured above: Back row from L. to R.: Lee Perry, Dwayne Davis, Ronnie Jones, and Reese Harrison. Front row from L. to R.: Gerald Edmondson, Bert Prutzman, Gayle Hughes, Brady Bearden, and Terry Pilcher)

BOARD OFFICERS

President: Gerald Edmondson
 Vice President: Brady Bearden
 Secretary/Treasurer: Gayle Hughes
 Asst. Secretary/Treasurer: Bert Prutzman

BOARD MEMBERS BY DISTRICT

Lee Perry / District 1
 Terry Pilcher / District 2
 Reese Harrison / District 3
 Brady Bearden / District 4
 Ronnie Jones / District 5
 Gerald Edmondson / District 6
 Bert Prutzman / District 7
 Gayle Hughes / District 8
 Dwayne Davis / District 9

Hurricane Season: Plan & Prepare

While living in and visiting Florida offers many benefits and advantages, it is important to keep in mind severe weather hazards and potential threats. Everyone should have predefined emergency plans and always keep an emergency supply kit ready and stocked.

Special Needs Registry

The Florida Department of Health, in coordination with county health departments and local emergency management agencies, developed a registry for persons with special needs to receive assistance during a disaster. This statewide registry provides first responders with valuable information to prepare for disasters or other emergencies.

Register at snr.flhealthresponse.com/.

Prepare before the storm

In the event of a power outage, be prepared by keeping essentials such as water, food, tools and medical necessities easy-to-find.

Generator safety

When used properly, portable and standby generators are a great option to provide backup power during outages.

For additional Storm Prep and Resources, visit www.chelco.com/storm-center or scan the QR code below.



CHELCO Outage Resources

If you experience an outage, please call our offices any time of the day or night using our local numbers or toll-free numbers or the MyCHELCO App:

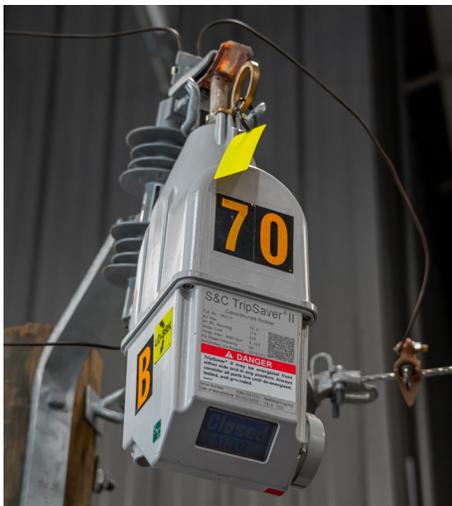
- To report an outage, call (850) 307-1211, or (800) 342-0990 toll-free.
- To report an outage, download the “MyCHELCO” app in the App Store or Google Play.

Give the Energy Control Center Operator your name and address. If you have a bill stub, give them your member number. If you cannot get through, please be patient and remember that other members may be calling to report the outage. We value your phone calls because they allow us to track the size and severity of the outage.



CHELCO is governed by a nine-member board of trustees: Lee Perry, District 1; Terry Pilcher, District 2; Reese Harrison, 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; Dwayne Davis, District 9.

"TripSavers" continue to keep the lights on



With the threat of severe weather always a possibility, power outages can happen—often caused by lightning, strong winds, animals, or falling tree limbs. In fact, around 75% of outages are linked to those types of events.

That's why, since 2023, CHELCO has invested in new technology that helps reduce outages and gets power back on faster when they do occur.

One tool we're using is called a TripSaver. It replaces the traditional fuse that many electric lines use. A typical fuse works a lot like the ones in your home—it shuts off power when something goes wrong to keep things safe. But once that fuse blows, the power stays off until a crew can arrive, figure out the issue, and make repairs.

TripSavers work differently—and smarter. By the end of 2025, CHELCO plans to have installed more than 60 of these high-tech devices across our system. Here's how they help:

Faster response

When a temporary problem happens, like a tree branch brushing against the line or a squirrel making contact, the TripSaver can tell when the issue has cleared up and

automatically turn the power back on—usually in just a few seconds.

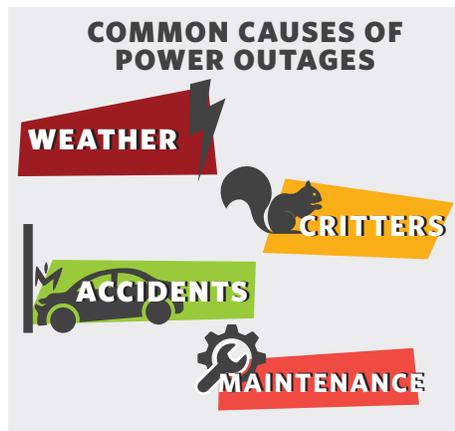
Smarter isolation

If there's a bigger issue, like a tree that's fallen and is still blocking the line, the TripSaver keeps the problem from spreading. It cuts power only to the affected area, so fewer people lose electricity.

Better troubleshooting

These devices also help our crews quickly pinpoint where the problem is and what caused it, so they can make repairs faster and more safely.

TripSavers are just one more way we're working to provide reliable power to our members—no matter what the weather brings.



60+ TRIPSAVER DEVICES INSTALLED

150+ PROTECTING MILES OF LINE

3K+ MEMBERS ON LINES IN RURAL AREAS



\$25 BILL CREDIT
If the account number below matches yours, call (850) 892-2111 to redeem a \$25 bill credit on your next power bill!
#78819182 LEHMANN JR.

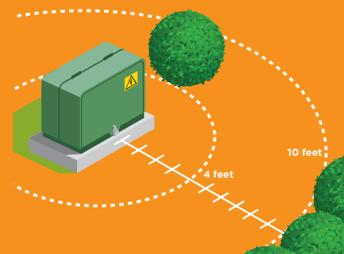
SAFETY TIP: AVOID THE BIG GREEN BOX

Please stay away from pad-mounted transformers (the big green box). While safe, they are not meant for touching, climbing or playing. Pad-mounted transformers carry high voltages of electricity that serve many homes in our communities.

Never touch, climb or play on pad-mounted transformers. Never put fingers, sticks or other objects through cracks in the transformer.



Keep areas surrounding the pad-mounted transformer clear so that workers can safely maintain transformers as needed. Keep shrubs and structures at least 10 feet away from the transformer doors and 4 feet away from the sides.



Never dig near a pad-mounted transformer. They are surrounded by underground cables. Hitting the cable could result in electrical shock or disruption of service. Always dial 8-1-1 before you dig.



If you notice an unlocked transformer or one that has been damaged, please contact us immediately.

For unclaimed capital credits, visit [CHELCO.com/capital-credits](https://www.chelco.com/capital-credits).