

CHELCO NEWS

POWERED *by* YOU

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CHELCO establishes new safety record



On Oct. 19, CHELCO broke its record for consecutive days without a lost-time injury in recorded history at 805.

“Safety is always our top priority,” said CEO Steve Rhodes. “We work hard to make sure the general public, as well as every employee, remains safe. One of the methods we use to measure the effectiveness of our safety program is the tracking of lost-time injuries.”

Over the past 19 years, we have had several streaks of 500-plus days without a lost-time injury, most

recently a streak of 804 days that ended in 2019.

“The credit for setting this record goes to each and every CHELCO employee,” Rhodes said. “What they do on a daily basis determines the success or failure of our safety program. As an organization, we stress the importance of working safely and abiding by the safety rules, but at the end of the day, it’s up to every employee to take responsibility for their own safety and the safety of others. It’s a team effort, and setting an all-time record clearly demonstrates that everyone is diligent about doing their part.”

Holiday Office Closures

CHELCO offices will be closed Friday, Dec. 24, for Christmas Eve, and Monday, Dec. 27, in observance of Christmas Day. CHELCO offices will also be closed Friday, Dec. 31, in observance of New Year’s Day.

CHELCO

A Touchstone Energy[®] Cooperative 

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Did you know...

CHELCO Board of Trustees elections take place every spring, and the results of these elections are announced at the Annual Meeting in April. In 2022, Districts 2, 4 and 6 will be up for election. Stay tuned for more information on elections in the January edition of CHELCO News.



CEO Insights: Merry Christmas - CHELCO retiring capital credits

It's the most wonderful time of the year! Like most children when I was growing up, my favorite thing about Christmas was receiving gifts, but as we age, our priorities shift. Now during the holiday season, I most look forward to celebrating the birth of Christ and spending time with loved ones.

This year will mark a return to normal for my extended family. Last year, we celebrated Christmas with a much smaller group than usual - just my parents, my brothers and our wives. We did this to protect ourselves (especially our parents) from COVID transmission. It will be a blessing to have the entire family, all four generations, together again this year.

At CHELCO, the Christmas season is also a time to return a portion of capital credits to our membership. This year, CHELCO is retiring over \$2.8 million in capital credits to

more than 66,000 current and former members.

What are capital credits?

As a member-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperative, CHELCO does not exist to make a profit, but to provide at-cost services. If we have excess margins remaining after expenses are paid, they are returned to members via capital credits.

Each year, our Board of Trustees determines if our co-op's financial condition will allow the retirement of a portion of capital credits. Due to our entire team's dedication to work efficiently and reduce controllable costs, I'm proud to say our members have received approximately \$40 million in capital credit retirements over the years.

CHELCO retires capital credits on a 20-year cycle, meaning that if you were a CHELCO member in 2001

and/or 2020, you will receive a capital credit check based on how much business you did with CHELCO in those years.

When I joined CHELCO as CEO in 2013, one of my primary goals for the cooperative was to reduce controllable costs, which includes all costs except wholesale power, depreciation, interest and taxes. Our team embraced this goal and has worked hard to identify ways to streamline processes and maximize efficiency. Thanks to their belief in that vision, our co-op is in a strong financial position, and I'm proud that we are able to give back to our members just in time for Christmas.

No matter what holiday tradition you most look forward to, I hope you and your family have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Steve Rhodes,
Chief Executive Officer



Christmas Energy Saver
When the lights are twinkling,
turn off lamps and enjoy
the cozy ambiance!

**Merry Christmas, Happy
Holidays and a Happy New
Year from your cooperative!**
-CHELCO

Youth Tour 2022 is just around the corner



Students from the 2020 Youth Tour visit the Florida Senate Chambers.

It's almost 2022, and that means we're only a few short months away from Youth Tour 2022! Youth Tour is an annual program for high school juniors (*and seniors this year*) whose parents are CHELCO members. Participants get to experience a two-day, expenses-paid trip to Tallahassee in February to learn about the state government, electric cooperatives and their relationship with one another. It's also a great time to meet new friends and make lifelong memories.

"I had a really great time," said Daniella Sanchez, a representative in the 2020 Youth Tour. "I'm so happy to have gotten the opportunity to go on this trip and meet some new friends."

Those who attend the Tallahassee trip will compete for a chance at a weeklong trip to Washington, D.C., to visit the nation's capital in June with Youth Tour students from around the country. We are

especially excited for this year since we were unable to participate in Youth Tour in 2021 due to COVID-19.

Each of our area schools' guidance counselors have been given registration packets, so if you are interested in Youth Tour, ask them about signing up. For more information, visit the Youth Tour page on CHELCO.com or contact your guidance counselor.

Important Dates

December: Counselors submit representatives to CHELCO

Jan. 24-28: CHELCO will meet with each school's winners

Feb. 16-17: Tallahassee Trip

June 14-19: Washington, D.C., trip

Winter Safety Tips

Don't plug space heaters into extension cords or power strips. Power strips and extension cords are not designed to handle the high current that space heaters require. Plugging them directly into the wall is the safest option.

Make sure outdoor extension cords and Christmas lights are marked for outdoor use. Outdoor and indoor extension cords are different! Outdoor extension cords have more durable insulation and are often three-pronged to reduce the chance of electrical shock or fire.

Don't overload outlets. A good rule of thumb is to only plug one high-wattage decoration into each wall outlet to avoid overloading electrical outlets. Plug your Christmas tree lights into a surge protector to help avoid a voltage spike, causing the lights to burn out.

Recipe of the Month



Peppermint Bark

Visit [CHELCO.com/recipes](https://www.chelco.com/recipes) to learn this Christmas recipe!

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.

Cooperative Solar subscriptions available



Are you interested in renewable energy but don't want the hassle and costs associated with installing and maintaining a solar array at your home? Cooperative Solar may be for you!

In 2017, in partnership with a group of our members who committed to bring the Cooperative Solar program to CHELCO's membership, CHELCO installed a 524-panel, 132 kW solar array on the roof and lawn of the CHELCO Operations Center. Those who subscribe to Cooperative Solar purchase a share of the output from the array for a flat fee each month.

Currently, a few of the 96 solar blocks of energy are available for subscription.

Why Cooperative Solar?

Not every rooftop can host solar panels, nor is every residence practical for an on-site installation. For instance, some yards may be too shaded for solar panels to be effective, or you may be renting a home and don't have permission to install solar panels.

Solar panels now available for subscription

Cooperative Solar is for all! Whether you're a homeowner, renter or a member who lives in a multi-family dwelling, you can participate. There are no up-front expenses for design, permitting, installation or insurance. Best of all, members don't have to worry about maintenance and management.

Another benefit is that the subscription is portable. As long as subscribers remain in the CHELCO service territory, their subscription can move with them.

Visit CHELCO.com to learn more about Cooperative Solar, renewables and more. **To sign up for Cooperative Solar, call our Energy Services Department at (850) 307-1122 and let us know you'd be interested in participating.**

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:

Taco City

915 Hwy 90 W., DeFuniak Springs
(850) 520-4611
10% off order of \$10 or more

Body-B-Healthy

2227 S. Ferdon Blvd., Crestview
(850) 682-8893
15% off all vitamins and supplements (groceries not included)

Bob Taylor's Carpet One

641 N. Ferdon Blvd., Crestview
20% off regular price of any purchase (maximum discount \$25)

For more information, visit CHELCO.com, email 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.

Thomas - 203141882

To find unclaimed capital credits, visit CHELCO.com/capital-credits.