



# Pole to Pole News

We continue with another throwback edition of CHELCO News in celebration of our 85th anniversary!  
CHELCO News archives are available at [CHELCO.com/CHELCO-News](http://CHELCO.com/CHELCO-News) and date back to 2014.

## Charity Golf Tournament raises thousands for local children

**GOLD SPONSORS**

**SILVER SPONSORS**

**BRONZE SPONSORS**



Cooper Douglass from the Baker Engineers team hits a shot during the 2025 CHELCO Charity Golf Tournament.

CHELCO hosted its annual Charity Golf Tournament on May 16, raising more than \$12,000 to benefit Children in Crisis, Emerald Coast Autism Center and Emerald Coast Children’s Advocacy Center. Since 2021, this annual event has raised more than \$50,000.

This year’s tournament was a tremendous success, with more than 20 teams participating, the most we’ve ever had. We would like to thank the teams who joined us, as well as all of our sponsors, for making this event possible. Also, a big thank you to Bill Putz and all the staff at Blackstone Golf Course for hosting this event each year, and to all the CHELCO employees who helped make it happen! Together, we have made a huge impact.



A few of the CHELCO team members who helped us host a very successful golf tournament. Thank you all!





## CEO Insights: Prepared for the Season - The Power of Readiness

With its arrival, June brings many of the year's best moments—longer days, family vacations, and backyard cookouts, just to name a few. But alongside the joys of early summer comes something less welcome...

As you may know, the Atlantic Hurricane Season officially begins on June 1. At CHELCO, however, our storm preparations begin long before that date. This month, I'd like to take a few minutes to share how CHELCO prepares for hurricane season—and how you can, too.

### **CHELCO's Hurricane Preparedness Plan**

CHELCO has a comprehensive hurricane plan that guides our leadership and employees in preparing for and responding to tropical weather that could impact our service area. The plan includes detailed work assignments for each department and employee, defining roles that go beyond day-to-day responsibilities. Every major task is paired with both a primary coordinator and a backup, so our team always knows who to contact with questions or concerns.

Our plan also outlines specific steps to take at key intervals—five, three, two, and one day before a projected landfall—so that our response is proactive and timely.

Importantly, this plan isn't something we dust off once a storm is approaching. We review and refine it throughout the year to stay ready for any large-scale event. Even severe thunderstorms can lead to widespread outages in our area, requiring activation of our storm response protocols. These smaller-scale events give us valuable opportunities to fine-tune our approach, ensuring smoother operations when larger storms come our way.

In the spirit of Cooperation Among Cooperatives – one of the Seven Cooperative Principles that guide co-ops – CHELCO maintains close relationships with our sister co-ops. In 2024, Hurricanes Helene and Milton left devastation in their paths. While CHELCO's service area was not impacted by either of these storms, we sent crews to assist where needed to help speed up the restoration process. If the roles were reversed, we could expect similar assistance from our fellow co-ops. In the co-op world, we call this "Mutual Aid." If you'd like to learn more about our efforts to help our sister cooperatives last year, visit our YouTube page, @MyCHELCO, and watch the

video, "CHELCO Mutual Aid: Hurricanes Helene & Milton."



*Our mutual aid crew from 2024's Hurricane Milton response*

Our overall preparations ensure that our entire team is ready to respond as soon as they are called upon. If you're interested in learning more about CHELCO's storm response, I encourage you to check out our podcast episode on hurricane season at [CHELCO.com/podcast](https://CHELCO.com/podcast).

### **Make a Plan for Your Home and Family**

While CHELCO is preparing, it's just as important for you to have a plan in place for your household. Though our area has been fortunate to avoid direct hits from major hurricanes in recent years, storms like Hurricanes Helene and Milton reminded us just how quickly conditions can change.

To prepare, I recommend visiting [Ready.gov](https://Ready.gov), which offers practical guidance on building emergency kits, planning evacuations, and tailoring your preparations to your unique needs. They even provide a fillable hurricane plan you can email to yourself for safekeeping.

For tracking storms and staying up to date with official information, [NOAA.gov](https://NOAA.gov) and the National Hurricane Center are both reliable resources. You can also sign up for alerts from the Walton and Okaloosa counties' Emergency Operations Centers for more local updates.

### **Looking Ahead**

While we all hope this hurricane season passes us by, I hope this column has helped you feel more confident and prepared. And I hope it reassures you that CHELCO is ready to respond if the need arises.

While we remain prepared for the potential that comes with hurricane season, I hope you and your family get plenty of opportunities to enjoy the good things that summer has to offer.

**Steve Rhodes**

Chief Executive Officer

# Hurricane Season Resources

## National Resources

### National Hurricane Center

[www.nhc.noaa.gov](http://www.nhc.noaa.gov)

Forecasts, maps, advisories, preparedness tips

### Federal Emergency Management Agency

[www.ready.gov/hurricanes](http://www.ready.gov/hurricanes)

Checklists, evacuation tips, emergency kit tips

### American Red Cross

[www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)

Emergency shelter finder, first aid info

### National Weather Service

[www.weather.gov](http://www.weather.gov)

Local weather updates, warnings by region

## Statewide Resources

### Florida Division of Emergency Management

[www.floridadisaster.org](http://www.floridadisaster.org)

Shelter lists, evacuation zones, recovery resources

### Florida 511

[www.fl511.com](http://www.fl511.com)

Real-time traffic and road closure updates

## Local Resources

### Walton County Emergency Management

[mywaltonfl.gov/1063/Emergency-Management](http://mywaltonfl.gov/1063/Emergency-Management)

Evacuation routes, shelter info, emergency alerts

### Okaloosa County Emergency Management

[myokaloosa.com/emergency-management](http://myokaloosa.com/emergency-management)

Evacuation routes, shelter info, emergency alerts

## The Steps to Restoring Power

When a major outage occurs, our crews restore service to the greatest number of people in the shortest time possible – until everyone has power.



- 1. High-Voltage Transmission Lines**  
These lines carry large amounts of electricity. They rarely fall but must be repaired first.



- 2. Distribution Substations**  
Crews inspect substations, which can serve hundreds or thousands of people.



- 3. Main Distribution Lines**  
Main lines serve essential facilities like hospitals and larger communities.



- 4. Individual Homes and Businesses**  
After main line repairs are complete, we repair lines that serve individual homes and businesses.

## CHELCO meets with U.S. House Representatives in Washington



**Rep. Patronis speaks with co-op leaders**

In an effort to build relationships between co-ops and our legislators, CHELCO District 2 Trustee Terry Pilcher and Vice President of Member Services and External Affairs Emily Cowan, along with leaders from other co-ops, recently met with US House Representatives Jimmy Patronis (FL 1) and Neal Dunn (FL 2), who each serve a portion of CHELCO's service territory.

In their meetings, CHELCO and other co-ops



**Rep. Dunn meets with Florida co-ops**

discussed the importance of favorable legislation that helps co-ops provide reliable and affordable energy to their members. In addition to the meetings held with Patronis and Dunn, the Florida Electric Cooperatives Association (FECA) coordinated meetings with all of Florida's electric co-ops and their respective Representatives.

To learn more about how co-ops are represented in government affairs, visit [electric.coop/pac](http://electric.coop/pac).

*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.*

# CHELCO wins two Spotlight on Excellence Awards for 2024



*CHELCO Communications Team Tyler Wood, Nathan Hobbs and Chelsea Blach serve ice cream from the CHELCO Chiller at CHELCO's All-Employee Meeting.*

The National Rural Electric Cooperatives Association (NRECA) recently announced the winners of its 2024 Spotlight on Excellence Awards, and for the fifth year in a row, CHELCO was among the winners. In fact, this year, the co-op brings in two Silver awards: one in the category of “Best Annual Report” and the other in the “Best Wild Card” category.

Spotlight on Excellence is the NRECA's national awards program that recognizes the exceptional work produced by electric cooperative communication and marketing professionals across the country.

CHELCO's winning submissions highlight two standout campaigns worthy of recognition among cooperatives. The “Best Annual Report” category recognizes an exceptional Annual Report to members in both design and content. The “Best Wild Card” category is for items that don't necessarily fit into any of the other

established categories. CHELCO's “Best Wild Card” recognition was awarded for our “CHELCO Chiller” ice cream cart, which debuted in 2024 and has been used at employee appreciation events and large group meetings.



*The award-winning Annual Report can be found at CHELCO.com by scanning the QR code above.*

“It is truly an honor for CHELCO to receive a Spotlight on Excellence Award for the fifth consecutive year,” said Emily Cowan, Vice President of Member Services and External Affairs. “To win two awards in one year is a tremendous honor, and I'm very proud of our team for making it happen.”

## Five Years of Excellence

- 2020:** Best Communication Campaign
- 2021:** Best Photo
- 2022:** Best Video
- 2023:** Best Social Media Campaign
- 2024:** Best Annual Report, Wild Card

## NEW HOURS OF OPERATION COMING SOON

Starting the week of Aug. 25, 2025, CHELCO will implement new hours of operation. **Offices will be closed every other Friday, beginning Friday, Aug. 29, 2025.**

Stay tuned for more information on the new schedule change by following us on social media platforms, @MyCHELCO, on our website at CHELCO.com, or by reading the monthly newsletter.

## \$25 Bill Credit Winner



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

**Araujo - 9000194397**

## Stay Informed

Find @myCHELCO on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube & X (formerly Twitter)  
Visit [www.CHELCO.com](http://www.CHELCO.com) for more information.