

CHELCO NEWS

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SEPTEMBER 2021 | VOL. 26 NO. 9

CHELCO cybersecurity protects data, networks, grid



As technology on the electric grid continues to evolve, we must ensure that our cybersecurity is more than capable to protect against all threats.

Over the years, technology and the capabilities it has unlocked have grown tremendously. This rapid evolution has brought about many beneficial changes, but as with most things, there are the inevitable drawbacks.

At CHELCO, growth in technology is a good thing. We have seen our reliability numbers continually improve as the grid becomes smarter, and new technology allows us to reduce expenses and keep our employees and the public safe. However, cybercriminals have used new technology to target utilities and their customers for years.

Manager of Information Technology Bruce Neuner said that CHELCO is vigilant and always willing to adapt

to new technology to help protect both the network and electric grid.

“As an electric co-op, we provide a very important service,” Neuner said. “Many things in today’s world require electricity, and if we don’t protect ourselves, there are a lot of bad people out there trying to take advantage of that. Unfortunately, electric utilities are typically high targets for cybercriminals, and we have to make sure that all our services are protected.”

With more than 58,000 member accounts counting on us to protect their data, we have strong protection against outside threats. Neuner said CHELCO uses a multilayer approach to combat cybercrime, utilizing software to catch malicious emails

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A Touchstone Energy[®]
Cooperative 

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IMPORTANT

Update Contact Info

It's important that you keep your contact information up-to-date so we can get in touch with you for important announcements, during outages, capital credit checks, reminders and more. Visit the member portal on CHELCO.com to update yours today.



CEO Insights: Maintaining cybersecurity is a top priority

Protecting the nation’s power grid and providing a safe, reliable and affordable supply of electricity are top priorities for electric cooperatives. At CHELCO, it’s no different. With more than 58,000 accounts, we have lots of people counting on us to provide safe and reliable electricity at a reasonable rate and to protect their personal information, and it is our duty to ensure that our cybersecurity is top-notch.

Remaining adaptable to new technology

Most of us have seen abundant changes in technology throughout our lives. Growing up, the internet was still just an idea and the only phone we had was fastened to the wall. Unlike the cell phones of today that we change out every three to four years, the old phone in my folks house remained a fixture for decades. As the years have progressed and great minds have made significant innovations, technological advances have changed the world completely.

CHELCO has been around since 1940, and those who came before us paved the groundwork for what we have built today. Although they didn’t have nearly the technology we

have now, I’m proud to look back on our history and see that we were willing to adapt, always putting the member first.

Over the years, CHELCO has undergone a major evolution, with steady improvements to safety, cost and reliability thanks to technological and other innovations. These innovations, especially in recent years, have allowed us to ramp up our cybersecurity to protect not only the technology on our computers, but also the evolving technology on the electric grid itself.

Protecting the grid

Safety, reliability and affordability have steadily improved as technology has made power distribution safer and more efficient. With more technology on the grid itself, we have a responsibility to protect it, both physically and electronically. Ransomware and other malicious attacks have made their way into the cyber world over the past few years. Just a few months ago, we all heard the news that the Colonial Pipeline had been attacked with ransomware, leading to a panicked population buying extra fuel, which caused a brief gasoline shortage. While this lapse

in cybersecurity hurt countless people, we can all learn from the experience.

Similar to the pipeline, CHELCO’s electric grid provides a necessity for everyday life. Tens of thousands of people depend on us, so we have an advanced system in place to protect our power distribution. Our SCADA (supervisory control and data acquisition) system is protected by its own firewall and is isolated from the rest of our network. This provides an extra layer of redundancy beyond our already highly-protected system.

What the future holds

Our team is hard at work keeping our systems safe, secure and up-to-date. We continue to educate our employees on the importance of cybersecurity, and tips on how to avoid becoming the victim of a scam or malware. We also frequently educate our employees and members on common scams, especially those targeting utility customers or members. Safety is always our top priority, and cybersecurity plays a vital role in our mission to provide safe, reliable and affordable electricity.

Steve Rhodes,
Chief Executive Officer



Cybersecurity protects data, networks, grid (from p. 1)

and firewalls outlining the borders of our network to provide extra protection. Each individual machine also has antivirus software, and workstations are locked down and password protected when not in use.

Beyond the computer networks, CHELCO's electric grid is protected in a similar way. The CHELCO network is segregated from the SCADA (supervisory control and data acquisition) system, which is protected by its own firewalls that will only allow certain traffic through.

As for the future of CHELCO's cybersecurity, Neuner said that the biggest thing on the agenda is education and cyber awareness.

"What we're doing now is just the beginning of trying to educate

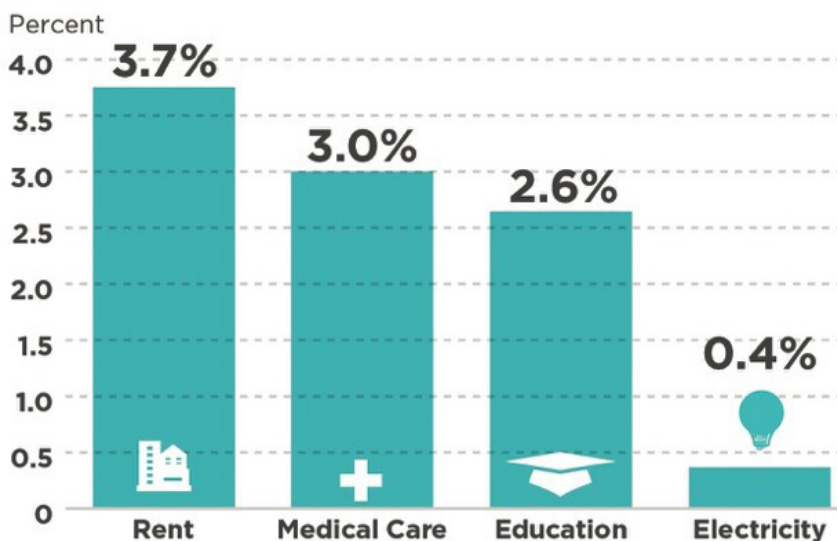
employees of what to do, what not to do and what to look for," Neuner said. "That's really where the security comes in. We can put all that technology in place, but it really becomes the awareness of the employee to see an email that doesn't look right. At the end of the day, if you accidentally click on something malicious, it becomes difficult to stop it."

At CHELCO, our entire team is dedicated to protecting our network, field equipment and our members' sensitive data. We take it seriously when something threatens our ability to provide you with the safe, reliable and affordable electricity you have come to expect, and we will continue to do whatever is necessary to protect our co-op.

Electricity remains a good value in 2021

The cost of powering your home rises slowly when compared to other common expenses. Looking at price increases over the last five years, it's easy to see electricity remains a good value!

Average Annual Price Increase 2014-2019



Report Nonworking Street Lights

CHELCO appreciates members' help in identifying non-working street lights. To report a non-working street light, call (850) 892-2111; email lighting@chelco.com; visit the CHELCO online member portal; or download the CHELCO Connect app. When reporting a street light outage, please include the street light number, which is on the pole, if possible.

Recipe of the Month



Pumpkin Bread

With fall in the air, what better time to start breaking out the cinnamon-based recipes? Pumpkin bread is a simple seasonal recipe that will remind you of Autumn leaves and cooler weather. And who knows, you might just like it so much that you make it year-round! Visit CHELCO.com/recipes to learn this delicious 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.

CHELCO responds to Tropical Storm Fred



L to R: Derek Tabor, Ricky Brassell, Tyler Matthews and Clint Fowler traveled east to assist Talquin Electric Cooperative with power restoration following Tropical Storm Fred.

Tropical Storm Fred made landfall Aug. 16 around Cape San Blas, and all CHelco members who were affected by the storm were restored by that night.

CHelco's crews, contractors and support staff worked into the evening, restoring power to nearly 1,500 total members who lost power due to the storm's damage. Most damage to our system was in the Red Bay area, where around 1,000 members lost power due to fallen trees.

"Tropical Storm Fred was gentler on us than anticipated, and that's OK," said Matthew Avery, CHelco SVP of Engineering and Operations. "We planned well and prepared for the worst, which is all very good practice for the more severe storms."

CHelco's members expressed their appreciation for the rapid response

on social media, sharing encouraging words for our crews working to restore power and the entire support staff working together to ensure a safe and efficient restoration.

Following the full restoration, CHelco sent four linemen to Quincy to assist Talquin Electric Cooperative in their storm response efforts.

"I'd like to thank our members for their encouragement and patience while we worked to restore power," said CEO Steve Rhodes. "While Tropical Storm Fred shifted east and we avoided the worst, it did provide an opportunity to work through our storm response plan, and I'm confident in our team as we continue on with the Atlantic Hurricane Season."

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:

The Poolkeepers LLC

110 S. County Hwy. 393, Santa Rosa Beach
(850) 865-2018
10% off all inflatable toys and pool cleaning accessories

Emerald Coast Dumpsters LLC

73 Eastern St., Freeport
(850) 393-4515
10% weeklong dumpster rental

Absolute Dance Center

1031 US Hwy. 90 W, DeFuniak Springs
(850) 951-2020
\$5 off base price per monthly tuition

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.

Bento - 9000117835

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