

CHELCO NEWS

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For the fourth consecutive year, CHELCO wins a Spotlight on Excellence Award



VP of Member Services and External Affairs Emily Cowan (left) poses with Chelsea Blaiich and Tyler Wood of the Communications Department with their Spotlight Award.

The National Rural Electric Cooperatives Association (NRECA) recently announced the winners of its Spotlight on Excellence awards, and CHELCO was named as a Silver Award recipient in the category “Best Social Media Campaign.”

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

CHELCO’s winning campaign was centered around increasing engagement on social media by posting more organic content of our employees and fewer informational posts. CHELCO’s recognition marks the fourth consecutive year in which the co-op has received a Spotlight on Excellence Award, a feat that VP

of Member Services and External Affairs Emily Cowan is proud of.

“To be recognized for four consecutive years, in different categories each year, validates our team’s hard work and passion,” Cowan said. “This year’s win was particularly special, because we set out to engage with our members on social media in a genuine way, and we achieved that,” Cowan said. I could not be more proud.”

Four Years of Spotlight Awards

2021: Best Total Communication Campaign

2022: Best Photo

2023: Best Video

2024: Best Social Campaign



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Did you know...

CHELCO’s Operation Round Up program is funded entirely by members who have opted in to round their bill up to the next whole dollar amount. Local non-profit organizations that serve primarily Okaloosa and Walton counties are eligible to apply for one grant per year. Visit CHELCO.com/operation-round-up to learn more.



CEO Insights: Father's Day - A day to honor, cherish and remember

"Every father should remember, one day his son will follow his example, not his advice."

- Charles Kettering

I saw this quote recently and my own father came to mind. Sam Rhodes is the epitome of living his life not only through his words but also by example.

Now in my early 60s, I am blessed to still have my father, who's 91, and I cherish every moment we have shared and all the ones still to come.

Last year was difficult for our family. My mother, Marjorie, passed away in September at the age of 87 after living a life of kindness, guidance and love. Mom was an incredible woman, and we miss her dearly. She married my father when she was 18 years old, and together, they raised a family that I am proud to be a part of.

Losing my mother was hard on me and my three brothers. But even while grieving the loss of his life partner, my father remained steadfast, providing fatherly love and support to the whole family.



My parents raised a family of sharp-dressed young men! That's me, the younger one on the left, with my parents and brothers, circa 1968-ish.

My father embarked on the journey of fatherhood upon the birth of my oldest brother, Mark. After Mark came Tim, then myself and finally our youngest brother, Gregg. My mother, being in a house with four boys and my father, was thrilled when we got married and welcomed more ladies into the Rhodes family.

One thing about raising us boys is that our father instilled in us what it meant to be a man and to become husbands and fathers ourselves. I am thankful for all my father did and continues to do to impress upon me and my brothers how important it is to lead by example in our families and all aspects of our lives.

Becoming a father is the most life-changing event in a man's life - at least, it was for me. It doesn't matter how old you are when you first become a father, or how many nieces and nephews you may have; nothing



My parents were blessed with 68 years of marriage. Here they are with my brothers and me at their 65th anniversary.



My parents with their grandkids in 2000.



My parents, Marjorie and Sam Rhodes

can truly prepare you for becoming a father for the first time.

When my daughter, Samantha, was born, all the things my dad had taught me through his example now fell upon me to teach to her, and later to my son, Nick. Fatherhood (and now grandfatherhood) has been the greatest blessing of my life. I hope that as I continue to learn and grow as a father - which never stops, by the way - I may live up to the standard that my dad set for what it means to be a father.

As you read this, I'm sure you are thinking of your own father, or perhaps some other men who have helped shape you into who you are today. At CHELCO, our team is made up of countless fathers, uncles, big brothers and influential men who are role models in the lives of their children and many others. I'm proud of all the men at CHELCO for their commitment to their families and their careers, allowing them to provide and protect, just as their fathers did for them and my father did for our family.

I wrote all this to say that I have been blessed with the best father I could ever ask for, and I'm sure you have someone in your life just like that. Whether that person is your father, or just someone who has influenced you in some way, be sure to tell them how much they mean to you. Happy Father's Day!

Steve Rhodes,
Chief Executive Officer

Thunderstorms give CHELCO one last Hurricane Season warmup



It seems that it's becoming all too common lately: Lines of thunderstorms sweeping through our area, bringing with them dangerous winds, heavy rain and lightning. Recently, these storms have even produced several tornadoes, thankfully none as damaging as those that have ravaged Kansas and Nebraska in recent months.

Early on May 10, yet another line of thunderstorms swept across the Panhandle, leaving more than 10,000 members without power. By 5:15 a.m., just under 8,000 members were without power, the highest number affected at one time. The hardest hit areas were Baker and Holt, where evidence of multiple potential tornadoes was seen.

Due to the scale of the outages, our storm response protocol was activated, and nearly all employees turned their focus toward restoration efforts. By 11:30 a.m. on May 11, all affected members had been restored.

"Unsurprisingly, our line crews and all other involved departments and personnel at CHELCO performed

exceedingly well," said CEO Steve Rhodes. "We never enjoy going through major outage restoration, but it does provide a good refresher on our team's storm response roles."

Following the successful restoration of CHELCO's system, our crews extended their assistance to our neighboring co-op to the west, Escambia River Electric Cooperative and our friends at Talquin Electric Cooperative near Tallahassee. This collaborative effort demonstrates our commitment to supporting our community in times of need.

"Each event is a learning opportunity, and this restoration was no exception. Our team performed admirably, and I am confident in our preparedness for the upcoming hurricane season," reassured Matthew Avery, CHELCO SVP of Engineering and Operations, highlighting our readiness for future storms.

For tips on preparing for hurricane season, visit CHELCO.com/storm-center. To learn how CHELCO prepares for Hurricane Season, check out our "On the Grid" podcast episode on hurricane prep at CHELCO.com/podcast.

ACRE Supports Co-ops Nationwide

The Action Committee for Rural Electrification (ACRE) is a grassroots political action committee (PAC) that supports and advocates for co-ops nationwide. ACRE helps co-ops, like CHELCO, implement policies at the state and federal levels that benefit cooperatives and their members. Nearly 40,000 eligible members across 47 states back ACRE contributions to candidates.

Visit electric.coop/pac for more information and to learn how you can get involved to ensure that your co-op is fairly represented in the office.

Recipe of the Month



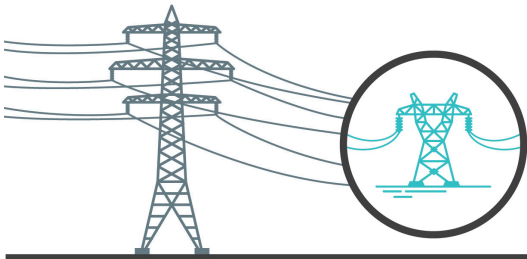
Honey Vinaigrette

Enjoy a very simple-to-make, delicious salad dressing. Learn this recipe and more at CHELCO.com/recipes.

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.

Steps to restoring power for major outages

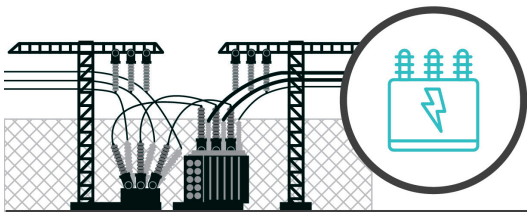
When a major outage occurs, our crews restore service to the greatest number of people in the shortest time possible – until everyone has power.



1. High-Voltage

Transmission Lines

These lines carry large amounts of electricity. They rarely fail 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.

3 WAYS TO SEAL IN COMFORT

In addition to increased comfort, weatherizing your home is an excellent way to save energy and lower your cooling and heating costs. Here are three ways you can seal in comfort and savings.



Take an Active Role in Your Safety

Make sure your family has a plan ahead of hurricane season. Visit [Ready.gov/hurricanes](https://www.ready.gov/hurricanes) and use FEMA's Guide for Alerts and Warnings to learn more about hurricane watches and warnings. Download the FEMA app to get more information about how to prepare.



On the Grid

Tune in to the latest edition of our podcast, *On the Grid*. In this episode, we spoke to three local non-profit organizations that have recently received grants from our member-funded Operation Round Up program. Visit [CHELCO.com/podcast](https://www.chelco.com/podcast) or search for "On the Grid" on Spotify, Apple Music and more.

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