



the South River EMC *communicator*

December 2017

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Families in need of affordable housing live everywhere: small towns, sprawling cities, and maybe even your community.

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Housing insecurity touches nearly half of adults at some point in their lives. The cause is largely due to housing costs being too high for a family's income.

D

That makes for impossible choices. Rent or healthcare? Food or transportation?

E

This should never have to be a decision to make, which is why organizations like Habitat for Humanity exist.

Habitat has operated in Harnett County since the 1990s, when it was helmed by executive director, Bill Cunningham.

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During this time, 18 homes were

G-H

built and the ReStore was opened in Dunn. However, by 2014 home construction had stopped. Cunningham, who had the safety credentials, was no longer able to make it on site.

Gene Lewis stepped in as interim director, helping to reorganize and guide the organization, as well as look for a new director.

The current executive director is Mike Blackmon, who has lived in the community most of his life and is retired from the City of Dunn Inspection Department.

"I was building houses in Belize, and I thought, Why not do this at home in Harnett County?" said Blackmon. "Affordable places to live are needed."

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MESSAGE FROM CEO Chris M. Spears

This year, we refunded nearly \$5.8 million to you, our members.

For most of the year, members have been receiving a Member Advantage Credit on their electric bills. This credit is equal to about a four percent rebate and will continue through December. Overall, the Cooperative has refunded nearly \$2.8 million through the Member Advantage Credits.

Additionally, the Cooperative refunded approximately \$3.95 million in the form of capital credits to over 58,000 current and former members. Capital credits are a special benefit of cooperative membership. As a not-for-profit cooperative, we don't technically earn profits. Instead, any money remaining at the end of the year, called margins, is returned to our members.

Capital credit allocations are made each year based on the previous year's margins. Total margins

Benefits Of Being A Member

are divided among the members based on the amount of electricity they purchased that year. This year, the Cooperative is returning 20 percent of the amount allocated to members for 2016 as well as partial allocations from 1998 and 1999. The remaining 2016 amount will be refunded in about 19 years, unless a member leaves South River EMC and chooses the early-retirement option.

Member refunds are just one of the many ways we are looking out for you. For more information about your Cooperative, please visit sremc.com.

Capital credits and Member Advantage Credits are not the only good news we have to share. In October, we distributed \$59,912 in Bright Ideas grants to local schools. The amount included a \$10,000 grant from Operation Round Up. This disbursement of funds to our local schools brings the grand

total of grants awarded to local schools by South River EMC to \$1.04 million! Of this amount, \$145,000 was provided through grants from Operation Round Up.

Coal Ash Remediation

If you have been reading the newsletter, you are aware that the electric utilities across the country are collectively paying the costs associated with coal ash regulations. In North Carolina, the utilities have both state and federal regulations by which to comply. Of course, the bulk of the regulatory responsibility falls on Duke Energy, but as a wholesale customer, the cooperatives must pay our fair share.

Remediation efforts began in 2017 and will continue through 2027. The bulk of the costs will be borne in 2018 and 2019. Rest assured, South River EMC has been taking steps to mitigate the impact of these increased expenses and hope to be able to absorb these costs without any additional costs being passed along to members.

We continue to strive toward operational efficiency and service excellence. As a not-for-profit electric cooperative, we are dedicated to providing the highest standards of service at the lowest possible cost.

Please continue to stay tuned for further developments. We will keep you informed here in the newsletter, but we also post information on our social media channels (Facebook and Twitter).



HABITAT continued from page A

Each year he raises funds to go to Belize himself to help build homes; this project is an offshoot from when his church traveled there to help build a facility for the local church.

Blackmon has embraced his new position with Habitat, rebuilding his board of directors, making sure there are committees to take care of certain aspects, and most importantly, building homes.

"We have two full-time employees with the organization," he said. "There are three part-timers and volunteers. In fact, volunteers work the ReStore store."

So, Blackmon has been at work to get everything in order. This included obtaining construction site safety equipment.

"I was at a required safety course for Habitat for Humanity, when I realized we had no safety equipment," he said. "I requested

funding through Operation Round Up to purchase scaffolding so volunteers have a safe area for elevated work."

Once funds were secured the scaffolding was purchased, along with casters and railings and is awaiting use on the current home build.

The first Habitat Home in almost four years is being built in Dunn and requires many different craftsmen and volunteers.

"We will need people with carpentry and masonry skills, licensed plumbers, electricians, HVAC technicians," said Blackmon. "People to hang drywall and paint, we can find something for anyone who wants to volunteer."

If you're interested in volunteering you can call 910-891-4500 or complete a volunteer form at hfh-nc-harnett.huterra.com/volunteer.

Blackmon is hopeful the home



will take about six months to complete.

Working alongside volunteers will be the family purchasing the home. Being selected to purchase this home, they must be willing to invest sweat equity.

The home is a hand up for a family that has struggled with housing security, not a hand out. With the family benefiting, investing in it, the finished product is all the greater.

Giving Your Kids the Gift of Reading – Free

Dolly Parton is known across the globe for her music, her theme park and her generosity. One of Dolly's pet projects is children's literacy. That's the reason she launched the Dolly Parton Imagination Library. The Imagination Library provides books to children monthly until their fifth birthday.

Reading to children during their preschool years, provides them with a boost toward a successful education. Dolly believes that every child should have access to quality, age-appropriate books no matter the family's financial situation.

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is free to all preschool age children with the assistance of a sponsoring agency in their county!

Each month a new, carefully selected book is mailed to the home of each child enrolled in the program.

How to sign up:

All you need to do is make sure there's a sponsoring agency in your county (list at right), register and wait eight to 10 weeks for the books to begin arriving.



Agencies by county:

- Sampson County Partnership for Children 910-592-9399
scpc.org click on programs

- Harnett County Partnership for Children 910-893-2344
harnettsmartstart.org

- United Way of Cumberland County 910-483-1179
unitedway-cc.org

- Bladen Smart Start 910-862-3335

*Johnston County doesn't currently have an affiliated agency.

For a complete list of agencies involved by state and county visit: usa.imaginationlibrary.com.

September Operation Round Up Funds

Are you a member participating in our Operation Round Up program? If so, you can see who you are helping each quarter on the Operation Round

Up page on our web site at sremc.com under the My Community tab.

In September, the Community Assistance Corporation, a non-profit organization comprised of South River EMC members, awarded \$55,747 in grants.

Grants went to the following organizations:

- Clement Volunteer Fire Department, \$3,208
- Habitat for Humanity of Harnett County Inc., \$5,000
- Plain View Elementary, \$7,779
- Stedman Primary School, \$4,220
- Sampson County Schools (Friends of Education grant program), \$9,000
- South River EMC (Bright Ideas grant program), \$10,000



The Power of Texting

If you are like most people, you have become dependent on your smartphone for information. Well, you can now make that handheld device work for you even more. South River EMC is offering outage texting.

In a recent survey, the majority of people indicated that they would like to receive a text when they have an outage, to receive updates and to be notified when power is restored. This is an opt-in service so it requires action on the part of the member if they choose to participate.

All you need to sign up is to text the word SREMCTEXT to 888-338-5530 and follow the prompts for a short registration process. You will need to have your South River EMC account number for this process. The cell phone number used for outage reporting must be one of the numbers on the electric account. The opt-in/registration process matches your mobile number with

your account service location. You can opt-in to receive outage information for up to four locations.

Interested members can also opt-in with the assistance of a member service representative in the office or over the phone.

Once enrolled, you will be able to use key words to report an

outage, check on the status of an outage and be notified once an outage has been restored.

A member who has opted-in to outage texting can opt-out at any time.

Data and messaging fees may apply depending on the terms of your cell service.



Director Earns Recognition

Dorcus Fisher recently received the Board Leadership Certificate (BLC) from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

The BLC is for directors who have already completed the Certified Cooperative Director (CCD) Certificate; the BLC is the next step in advancing the knowledge and experience directors need to govern their board effectively.



If You've Earned A's Send Them Our Way

South River EMC will hold a "Give Us An A" drawing on February 6.

The drawing is held for students achieving at least one A on their report card.

Each of the 15 students whose names are drawn will receive a \$25 gift card.

The program is open to students who are members, or children of members, of South River EMC. Just make a copy of the most recent report card with at least one A and send it to the Cooperative.

You must include the member's name, South River EMC account number and a daytime telephone

number, report cards will not be accepted without this information.

Report cards should be sent to:
South River EMC
"Give Us An A"
PO Box 931
Dunn, NC 28335
Or scanned and e-mailed to connections@sremc.com.

Last Call For Youth Tour

The application period for the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour closes December 1 at 5 p.m.

The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour is a unique opportunity offered each summer to three current high school sophomores or juniors.

Taking place June 9-15, 2018, this week-long trip to Washington, D.C., is offered by the electric cooperatives of North Carolina, including South River EMC.

The Youth Tour offers a taste of Washington, D.C., where around 40 North Carolina students will join over 1,500 students from across the country.

Students will visit monuments, museums, attend an all-states dance, take a boat ride down the Potomac, participate in youth day,

meet with members of Congress, and weather permitting may take in a game or show.

These interactions often introduce government procedure and kick start career thoughts.

Students learn about cooperatives by forming the Soda

Pop Co-op, which offers members discounted drinks and snacks. The cost of the trip is covered by your sponsoring electric cooperative.

South River EMC will select up to three students to attend this memory-making trip.

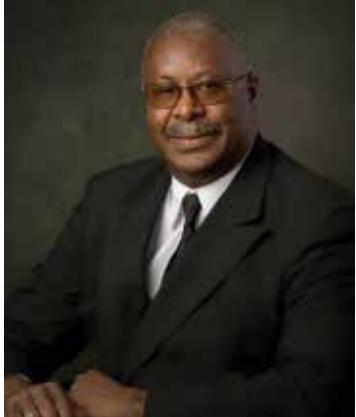
Ty Meyer, Anna Blount and Kayla Matthews represented South River EMC in D.C. in 2017.

Students who attend the Youth Tour as part of the South River EMC contingent will also receive a \$1,000 college scholarship. Payment will be mailed directly to the college/university once the student has notified the Cooperative as to their school choice.

For more information on the 2018 Youth Tour, or the scholarship, visit sremc.com or call 910-892-8071.



Celebrating 330 Years of Service In 2017



Director George Williams, 10 years



Andrea Wilson, 5 years, and Randy McLamb, 30 years



(Left to right): Earl Underwood, 25 years, and David Akers, 30 years. Not pictured: David Jackson, 15 years



Front (left to right): Pam Carter, 10 years; Barbara West Lee, 30 years; Angelina Cristinzio, 5 years.
Back row (left to right): Tony Costanzo, 5 years; Keith Gardner, 10 years; and Chuck Richardson, 5 years
Inset: Keith Starling, 20 years



Left to right: Darryl Kelsey, 15 years; Charles Ginn, 20 years; Timmy Williams, 25 years; David Larson, 25 years; Eric Simpson, 15 years; Donald Graves, 15 years; and Bradley Bullard, 15 years

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The Trouble With Appliances

Appliances can be trouble to replace. When you need to it's often in a hurry. You've got to find a new one, make sure you're ready to install it and then dispose of the old one.

Selection is when you have to be cautious. Yes, you paid a lower purchase cost, but that

appliance uses electricity, so you'll be paying for the energy it uses every day.

Energy Star-certified appliances must undergo rigorous testing to be certified. That means those blue star appliances are certified to use less energy, and in some cases, less

water. This saves you money.

South River EMC offers a \$10 rebate on Energy Star-certified refrigerators, clothes washers, clothes dryers and dehumidifiers.

For more information, visit sremc.com or call 910-892-8071 x 2152.

A Smart Thermostat Can Help You Be An Energy Saver

As a temperature-sensitive switch, a home's thermostat automatically turns the heating and cooling system on and off to maintain a set level in the home.

This is based on how you set the thermostat; set too high on a cold day and the system will run as long as necessary to maintain the temperature. This affects your bill.

Maybe you've decided to

work on saving energy, so you set the thermostat a little lower, and try not to adjust it. It might be hard to believe, but a smart thermostat can help.

Let's say you leave for work and it's cold out, so you want to set the thermostat to 65 degrees while you're gone. You forget. Have no fear! You can use your tablet or smart phone to adjust it if you have Wi-Fi. Set the temperature to be a little

warmer when you return and your smart thermostat can track how that worked.

Smart thermostats are easy to use, so if you have company, you can adjust it without missing a beat.

South River EMC also offers a \$20 rebate on the installation of a smart thermostat. For more information visit sremc.com or call 910-892-8071 x 2152.

Consider All Options When Replacing Your Water Heater

There are ways to heat your water you've probably never considered. But if your water heater is nearing replacement, you need to know your options.

There's a standard electric, a heat pump, a tankless and a solar water heater.

A standard electric water heater is an insulated tank that holds heated water and reheats it when needed. A cheaper unit but not the most cost effective.

You might be unfamiliar with a heat pump water heater, it uses energy to move heat rather than create it, making it

two to three times more efficient.

A tankless water heater sounds great, but for those who heat water with electricity, it's not the best buy to make. While it makes the water you need hot on demand, the energy used to do that causes a spike, which can be expensive. Depending on your electric service, you could have to install an upgrade to handle the load.

Solar water heating could be a real option if you use a lot of hot water and have enough solar resource. However, it's the most expensive to install, and

requires a backup system for days with limited sun.

Don't just go with the flow, look over what's available and what would best fit your needs before purchasing a water heater.

South River EMC offers a \$150 rebate on solar water heating and a \$200 rebate on heat pump water heating. For details visit sremc.com or call 910-892-8071 x 2152.

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Make Comfort A Priority Without Breaking The Bank

Looking to cut costs this holiday season? Everyone is with the cooking, the weather, decorations and guests, it can add up. However, something you shouldn't have to worry about is the comfort of your home.

Often times, you find yourself adjusting the thermostat, either up or down depending on the weather. However, you might notice that adjusting the thermostat doesn't seem to help certain areas of your home.

This could be due to insufficient insulation. Insulation offers resistance to heat, so if you're trying to keep heat in,

you have to make sure attic surfaces are covered to prevent heat from escaping. Where you feel cold spots in the winter and warmer spots in the summer, there might be little or no insulation. You can replace or replenish to fix those spots.

However, that might not be the only improvement you need to make. With people coming and going, your doors are seeing a lot of

wear and tear. As kids play they are undoubtedly ending up in areas you wondered how they found. Caulking and weather stripping a few of these places can improve comfort and discourage wanderers.

South River EMC offers rebates to members on insulation and weatherization improvements. For details visit sremc.com or call 910-892-8071 x 2222.



Is It Time To Repair Or Replace?

It's not easy to know whether you should repair or replace your home's heating and cooling system, especially if you're facing an emergency situation. While there's no hard-and-fast rule, there are some important considerations to keep in mind.

System age: Heat pumps last an average of 10 to 12 years, so if your equipment is within those ranges, expect more repairs in the near future.

Outdated technology: Technology changes all the time, and that's true for your heating and cooling system too. By replacing aging equipment, you'll be able to take advantage of smart new features and increased efficiencies that can save you money on your utility bills.

Repair costs: As a good rule of thumb, Consumer Reports recommends replacing a prod-

uct when repairs exceed 50% of the cost of a new one.

Tax credits and rebates: Purchasing high-efficiency systems can make you eligible for state and local tax credits. Be sure to check South River EMC's web site as well as dsireusa.org for state rebates and credits.

Environmental impact: Your heating and cooling system accounts for about 50 percent of your home's energy use. Upgrading to an Energy Star qualified unit ensures it meets or exceeds federal standards for energy efficiency.



Do you feel like you're constantly adjusting the thermostat to stay comfortable? Does your air conditioner make noises when it starts up? Does your air feel stuffy or damp? If any of these issues are getting in the way of your home comfort, it might be time to get a new system.

When selecting a system there are many types, whichever you select make sure it's a 17 SEER or greater. The seasonal energy efficiency ratio measures the cooling efficiency of a unit and the higher it is, the more efficient it cools.

South River EMC offers members rebates ranging from \$200-\$500 on high efficiency systems, for more information visit sremc.com or call 910-892-8071 x 2152.