



the South River EMC **Communicator**

January 2018

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**South River EMC
offices will be closed
January 1
in celebration of
the New Year.**

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Schools In Your Communities

Education is important, whether it's reading, math, history or science. Every student can learn something. Schools days also include activities such as playing a musical instrument, art, technology and exercise.

However, over the years, school budgets have taken a hit. And even before that, you'd find a teacher spending his or her own money to introduce ideas to their class. It's for reasons like this that educational grant programs, like Bright Ideas and Friends of Education, began.

"The purpose of Friends of Education is to promote the Sampson County School System by obtaining resources to further the quality of education offered to its students," said Susan Warren, public relations/student services coordinator. "The primary source of our funding is through our local United Way."

Friends, as it is called, has had several fundraisers, which generate small amounts of funding. The organization also seeks out additional community funding sources, such as Operation Round Up.

Friends received a \$9,000 Operation Round Up grant to go toward technology grants. Devices available for funding include iPads, HP Stream laptops and Kindle Fires. This classroom technology is often overlooked in traditional classroom budgeting.

"Friends has been around for 24 years; I have been with this program for 10 years and seen needs evolve," said Warren. "I think as trends change, our teachers do a great job in trying to incorporate innovative ideas into their classes."

And there have been changes in requests throughout the years, white boards, iPods, iPads and

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Space Heater Safety Tips

Space heaters are a great way to warm specific rooms in your home without having to crank up the thermostat, but using space heaters doesn't come without risk! Use the tips below to keep your home safe.

DO: Plug your space heater directly into the wall outlet.

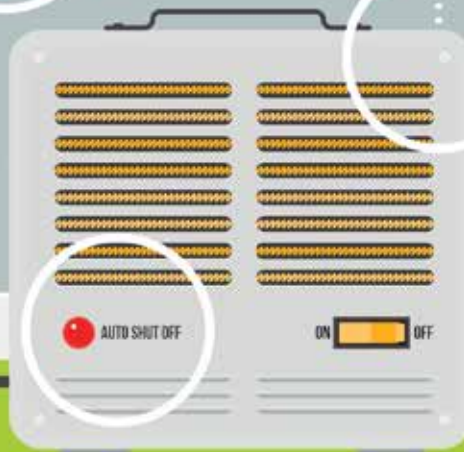


DO: Keep your space heater in low-moisture rooms.

DO: Keep your space heater at a safe distance (at least 3 feet) from kids, pets and flammable items.



DO: Buy a unit with an automatic shutoff in case the unit tips over, or you forget to shut it off.



DO: Always follow the directions and take a broken space heater to a qualified appliance service center.



DON'T: Leave your space heater unattended. Always unplug it before you leave the house or go to bed.



DON'T: Use an extension cord to plug in your space heater. It can cause the heater to overheat, and can be a tripping hazard.

DON'T: Place your space heater near curtains, clothing, furniture or bedding.



DON'T: Try to repair a broken space heater yourself.



DON'T: Put your space heater in your bathroom. The moisture can damage the unit, which could cause it to malfunction.



SCHOOLS continued from page A
tablets, innovative classroom seating, breakout boxes and maker-spaces are reaching popularity.

Where there was once around 40 grant applications submitted to Friends of Education annually, that request has gone up to as many as 80 grant requests. These requests are for any amount up to \$2,000, and are submitted in a word document via e-mail.

Since inception, the program has awarded over \$500,000 in grant funding.

During this time, South River EMC has been administering Bright Ideas to four counties, Sampson, Harnett, Johnston and Cumberland. In 2017, the Cooperative topped \$1 million in Bright Ideas grant funding.

The idea for Bright Ideas came to fruition when an employee of a cooperative witnessed teachers purchasing supplies with their own money.

"In 1993, North Carolina's electric cooperatives made a bold decision to help fill the gap between school budgets and classroom requests by providing education grants for innovative, creative learning experiences," said Catherine O'Dell, vice president of member services and public relations, South River EMC.

In 2017, the Bright Ideas program received \$10,000 from Operation Round Up, which allowed additional grants to be sponsored.

It varies, but the Cooperative usually receives over 100 applications a year. In recent years almost 300 grant applications have been submitted.

For the 2017-2018 school year, South River EMC's Bright Ideas grant program awarded \$59,912.07, to 22 schools, reaching 8,626 students.

Applicable teachers must work at a public K-12 school, grants can be for any curriculum area, but funding will not be awarded for professional development.

"Bright Ideas has become a recognized source of funding for teachers who are willing to go the extra mile to provide an exceptional educational experience for their students," said O'Dell. "The Bright Ideas Grant program has enriched the educational opportunities for students in nearly every public school in North Carolina from the mountains to the coast and all points in between."

Teachers who have South River EMC as their sponsoring cooperative, can submit as many grant applications as they want, there is no limit for teachers or schools on submissions.

However, Bright Ideas are **only** accepted online at ncbrightideas.com. Teachers are able to begin their grant applications and return to them later, they just must be sure to

save the application and remember their e-mail address and password.

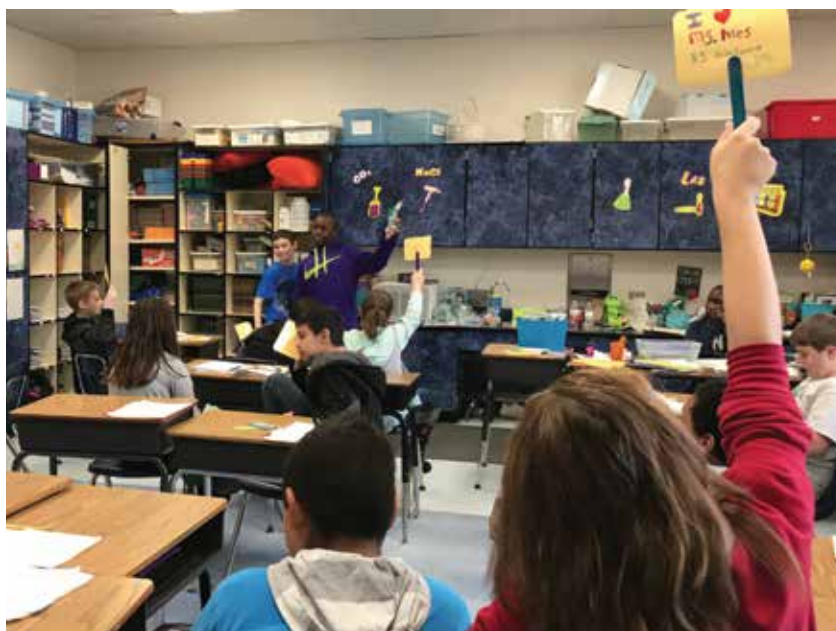
The Cooperative increased the grant ceiling to \$2,500 recently for 2017 to accommodate cost increases.

"As time passed and costs increased, we realized the need to increase the grant maximum from \$2000 to \$2500 in order to continue providing a real solution to teachers' classroom funding needs," she said.

As there were many requests for coding equipment, tablets or laptops, technology and science, a good number of teachers were surprised with grants this year.

Overall, North Carolina electric cooperatives' Bright Ideas grant program has funded over \$10.9 million in grants since 1994.

For information on Friends of Education, **only** for Sampson County Schools, please contact Susan Warren at susanw@sampson.k12.nc.us. Information on Bright Ideas can be found at sremc.com or ncbrightideas.com.



A 2016 Bright Ideas grant helped students learn the importance of budgeting practices and money management.

Give Us Your A's!

That's right, if you are a student or have a student with at least one A on his or her report card – read further.

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.

A

Coming Soon! Basketball Camp Applications

Do you have a child in the fifth, sixth, or seventh grade who enjoys basketball?

In the new year, South River EMC will be offering a unique opportunity to students with the Touchstone Energy Sports Camp Scholarships.

These scholarships give students the ability to attend basketball camps on two of the state's largest college campuses.

Students statewide are encouraged to apply for one of 50 all-expenses-paid scholarships to attend the Roy Williams Basketball Camp at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (June 16-20) and the Wolfpack Women's Basketball Academy at North Carolina State University in Raleigh (June 10-13).

The overnight camps are held in the summer, and campers work closely with coaches and players to develop fundamental skills, helping them perform

and excel both on and off the court.

Campers must:

- Be a rising sixth, seventh or

eighth grader. This means the student should currently be in fifth, sixth or seventh grade.

- Attend a school in the Cooperative service area.
- Have permission from a parent or guardian to attend. An information sheet must be signed.
- Provide their own transportation to and from camp.

Winners will attend the camps courtesy of South River EMC. The Cooperative funds one scholarship to each camp. Applications are scored on academics, extracurricular activities and an essay that must accompany the application.

The application period runs from January 2 to March 31.

Eligible students interested in the scholarship can contact Julie McLeod at 910-892-8071, ext. 2151, or download an application from sremc.com/content/basketball-camps.



2017 attendees (top): Anani Green and Wes Moore; (left): Tyler Brown and Roy Williams (right): Carson Neely and Roy Williams



PSV Scholarship Application Period Closes Soon

South River EMC's volunteer organization, the Power Source Volunteers, or PSV, are once again offering scholarship opportunities to high school



seniors living in the South River EMC area.

This year, the group is offering at least one \$1,000 scholarship and two \$500 scholarships. The scholarship will be paid directly to the college or university the student will be attending for the fall semester and is nonrenewable.

Required documents include a signed and sealed transcript, a copy of either ACT and/or SAT scores, as well as a recommendation from a teacher, school counselor or principal.

Applicants must live in a home served by South River EMC and be a senior in high school. December 2017 graduates and home-schooled students, please be sure your recommendations are from

a work supervisor or community college advisor.

Complete applications are due to the Cooperative by 5 p.m., January 19. If mailing an application it must be postmarked **BEFORE** January 19. Anything postmarked the date of the 19th or later will not be accepted.

All applicable students will be contacted to schedule an interview that will take place in February, weather permitting.

Applications are still available at sremc.com.

If you have any questions, please contact South River EMC at 910-892-8071 or sremc@sremc.com.

Veteran Chosen For Boots To Buckets

Corporal Tyler Kheen will attend the Electric Lineman Academy at Nash Community College on a scholarship through the South River EMC Boots to Buckets program.

Kheen is originally from Indiana and served in the Marine Corps from October 2013 to 2017 where he worked as an infantry mortarman.

Kheen will be attending the Electric Line Academy from January through May. As part of the program, students combine electrical theory with laboratory and practical applications in the course of study. Upon completion, he will master competencies such as those included in elements of electricity, overhead pole and electrical line construction, safety codes and applications, electric power system, transformer

and meter installations, and exploration of underground electrical distribution.

Upon successful completion of the program, he will receive a Third Class Lineman Certificate and poise him to enter the electric industry as an apprentice or third-class lineman.

In his application, Kheen stated, "I have always enjoyed working hard physical jobs. I believe working as a lineman is a great fit for me and I am ambitious." He went on to say that he is extremely grateful to South River EMC and our members for this opportunity to help him achieve his goal of becoming an electric lineman.

The Boots to Buckets program is intended to sponsor one military veteran to attend the Nash Community College Electric Lineman Academy annually. The

scholarship covers the cost of tuition, books, boots and safety glasses.

Kheen is a 2012 graduate of Hebron High School. His mother, Nancy, and two sisters still live in his hometown of Hebron, Indiana.



Outage Information At Your Fingertips

If you are smartphone-dependent for most of your information, have we got an option for you.

You can make that handheld device work even better for you, with South River EMC outage texting.

A recent survey indicated members would like to be notified when they have an outage, receive updates, and be notified when power is restored via text. This is an opt-in service and requires action on your part as the member if you choose to participate.

To sign up, 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.

The cell phone number used for outage reporting must be one of the numbers on the electric account, because the registration process matches your mobile number with your account service location.



You can opt-in to receive outage information for up to four locations.

You 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.

The Importance Of A SmartEnergy Profile

Sure, you read about the SmartEnergy Profile, but did you know you can get more personalized information from your monthly SmartEnergy Report?

If you have had service with us for at least 12 months and we have an e-mail on file, you should be receiving a SmartEnergy Report. Each month when you receive your SmartEnergy Report through e-mail, there is the option to complete your home profile. This enables you to provide greater detail that makes your monthly report more accurate.

How does it work?

Your profile compares energy use to the previous month, as well as the previous year. Perhaps an increase in your bill is due to lower temperatures, and a harder working heating system.

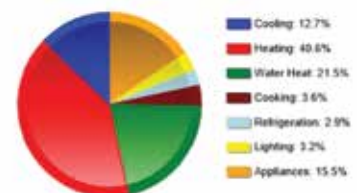
By completing a profile, you'll

receive more personally tailored information about how particular appliances in your home use energy. Maybe it isn't the temperatures after all, but rather that older secondary refrigerator. The SmartEnergy Report makes suggestions for energy savings such as eliminating or replacing an extra refrigerator.

By giving you the power, you can update your profile when changes are made to see estimated savings value, and not just that, but what rebates you might be eligible for from the Cooperative.

Completing your home energy profile can be helpful in many ways. If your electricity used and estimated energy consumption differ greatly, there is a section that states the difference could be caused by "other factors". These factors could be extra company

Annual Electric Cost



at the house, a burned out water heater element, a water leak, etc. That's why a SmartEnergy Profile is a must have for homeowners, you don't want to be surprised with the next bill, you want to be pleasantly surprised by your savings.

Watch your e-mail for your next report. If you want to add an e-mail to your account to begin receiving a report, please email sremc@sremc.com. You can complete your profile through the secure member portal under "Pay My Bill" on sremc.com.

TOGETHERWESAVE.COM

Do You Realize The Importance Of Your Thermostat?

January and February bring some of our coldest weather, and colder weather often leads to longer working heating units.

How hard and how long your system works deals largely with thermostat settings. The higher it's set on cooler days, the harder and longer it will work to meet that temperature. This occurs even when you aren't home. Maybe you forgot to program your thermostat, or you didn't think it made much

of a difference. It does.

With a smart thermostat you don't have to worry! You can make changes from your cell phone or tablet, as long as you have access to Wi-Fi. If you have guests over and it's a little too warm, you can slip over and make changes without missing a beat.

It's a new year, why not start it with a new thermostat? After all, South River EMC offers a \$20 rebate on the installation

of a smart thermostat. Be sure to familiarize yourself with the thermostat to gain the most from savings. For rebate details visit sremc.com or call 910-892-8071 x 2152.



Counteracting Cold Weather Costs

When it's cold outside, you want the month of May right? Warm, but not too warm. That means you adjust the thermostat, and that can become costly.

Heating and cooling systems work to keep homes at a comfortable temperature. The more efficient a system, the better it is able to keep up with your family's needs.

Having a system with a 17 or higher seasonal energy efficiency ratio, or SEER, rating means that the system uses energy to efficiently heat and cool



your home. With thermostat settings around 70 degrees or more this winter, it's not a bad idea to purchase an efficient system.

South River EMC offers rebates on high efficiency, 17 SEER or greater, heating and cooling systems. Rebates vary, so for complete information visit sremc.com or call 910-892-8071 x 2152.

It's All About The Star

If you're looking to conserve energy at home, say hello to Energy Star. This label applies to everything from refrigerators to air conditioners to help homeowners find energy-efficient appliances.

Most of the praise surrounding Energy Star is well deserved. After all, Energy Star appliances can reduce home appliance energy use and costs, from 10 to 50 percent. Specific savings will vary from home to home.

Purchasing an Energy Star washer and dryer means you can wash clothes with less water and energy.

The only drawback is the cost. They're a little more up front, but the long term energy saving benefits far outweigh the only downside.

What Energy Star appliances cost the average homeowner is a matter of perspective. You'll pay more up front by choosing a certified appliance, but look-

ing at long term energy savings, it's clear that your higher initial investment will pay for itself.

Consider the star when shopping for savings after purchase. South River EMC also offers a \$10 rebate for the installation of Energy Star certified clothes washers, clothes dryers, refrigerators and dehumidifiers. For details visit sremc.com or call 910-892-8071 x 2152.

Which Water Heater Is For You?

Who doesn't love a hot shower or bath? Warm water is used for a lot of things, so when it's no longer there, you're in high gear to get it fixed.

At that point it doesn't matter what type of system, you just want it replaced before someone needs hot water.

That's why it's good to have a plan for replacement, so you don't just go with the same old same, when you could save energy and money.

For example, a heat pump water heater. These units are more expensive than a standard unit, but because they use energy to move heat and not create it, they save energy. Also, they're eligible for a \$200 rebate from South River EMC.

However, there are requirements to consider. You'll need to place the unit in an area that remains in the 40-90 degree range year round, as well as having 1,000 cubic feet of space for the system.

Not for you? Maybe a solar water heater will meet your needs. Solar water heaters use the sun to heat your water, which requires a good solar resource that you'll need to check for before deciding on this system. Another item to consider is housing codes, in most cases a solar system sits on your roof, which might not be allowed where you live. Be sure to research this before a decision is made. Next up comes the payback, depend-

ing largely on how much hot water your family uses. Solar water heating sounds great, but if you're not using a lot of hot water, it might not be the most cost effective option. With a solar water heater you'll need to have a back-up system for cloudy days. The Cooperative offers a \$150 rebate on solar water heaters.

South River EMC encourages you to do your research when looking at water heaters, in order to find the best fit for you and your family. These are just options to consider for cutting back on electric costs. For complete information visit sremc.com or call 910-892-8071x 2152.

High Comfort, Low Cost

Comfort is high on most homeowners' lists when considering changes for their homes. But did you know with a few small changes you could save energy, money and make your home more comfortable, all while earning a rebate?

That's right, South River EMC offers rebates on improvements and/or changes to insulation and weatherization, which includes caulking and weather stripping.

For insulation you look at its thermal resistance or R-value -- the higher the value, the greater the insulating effectiveness. R-value depends on the type of insulation being used, its thickness and density. Installing more insulation in your home

increases the R-value and the resistance to heat flow. What many homeowners run into isn't necessarily the need for replacement insulation, rather it's the distribution of current insulation. Areas with little to no coverage will see cooler temperatures because there's nothing preventing heat transfer. By shifting insulation or adding it, you'll improve comfort, prevent heat loss and help costs.

Weather stripping and caulking prevent air infiltration. Air infiltration is the loss of inside air, outside, and vice versa. Many times this can be prevented by replacing damaged weather stripping on moving parts, like doors and windows. Caulking seals non-moving

areas where air could make an escape, for example around plumbing penetrations, or outlets. The Department of Energy has a listing of places to check for caulking, there's also a short list on sremc.com.

Making these improvements helps comfort. Helping improve comfort allows you to save money as you're typically not using the thermostat and heat pump to improve chills in your home. South River EMC offers several rebates to members interested in inspecting their home and making improvements. For full details on rebates, as well as requirements, visit sremc.com or call 910-892-8071 x 2222.