



South River EMC Communicator

MID-TERM IMPORTANCE



Whether you can believe it or not, it's mid-term season, and as a resident of North Carolina, there are a few dates you should be aware of during the season.

But first, what and when is the mid-term election season?

Midterm elections are the general elections held near the mid-point of a president's four-year term of office. It is the time in which we vote for the two chambers of Congress, the Senate and the House. In fact, for 2022, ballots will include one U.S. Senate seat; 14 U.S. House seats; several state offices (General Assembly, Supreme Court, and Court of Appeals); local judges and prosecutors; and county offices like sheriff and county commissioners.

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THIS MONTH, WE CELEBRATE YOU

Cooperatives have shown great resiliency throughout economic good times and bad, continuing to meet members' needs even as profit-driven businesses fail to deliver. October is National Co-op Month so I want to focus on our trusted, community-focused approach to member service. As I always like to say, "It's all about the member." That is not a hollow sentiment, but a driving force behind our relationship with you.

This is why we see Co-op Month as such a special time. We not only celebrate our business, but we celebrate you. Because without you, our members, our co-op wouldn't exist.

Our core business purpose is to serve as your electricity provider, but the larger mission of South River EMC is to help make our corner of the world a better place. "Concern for community" is one of seven guiding principles that all co-ops share.

Similar to how our power lines run through our communities, our concern for community flows through all of our deci-

sions—because being a co-op means being a responsible partner and a good neighbor.

Across the country locally owned and controlled cooperatives are a strong foundation to our economy. Locally, through member contributions, we have provided over \$2.7 million in grants to local non-profit and emergency services organizations and educational institutions through

Operation Round Up. Additionally, we have distributed \$1.24 million to classrooms across our area in the form of Bright Ideas grants. Our employees are actively involved in civic organizations, chambers of commerce, non-profit boards of directors, churches and sports teams. Because we are a part of the community, we feel extra driven to provide exceptional service with every transaction.

The word "cooperative" is a derivative of "cooperation," meaning people working together toward a common goal—mutually benefiting one another and the larger community. That's the essence of the cooperative spirit. Our employees and member-elected board members are invested in the community in which they live and serve.

Above all, as a co-op we put our members' priorities first. As your trusted energy partner, we know that saving energy and money is important to you.



MESSAGE FROM CEO CHRIS M. SPEARS

That's why we have numerous programs in place to help you manage your energy use.

We want to empower you to manage energy use at home. If you haven't already, I encourage you to sign up for daily energy alerts from sremc.com. I also hope you find value in the "mid-cycle alerts" and "energy-use profiles" that are sent monthly via email. These tools help you be aware of how much energy you use, how you use it and tips for saving energy and money. Of course, we are always here to help, whether you need to discuss your bill, make a payment, or want information about residential solar, we are here for you. You can call us at 910.892.8071, email sremc@sremc.com or visit our website at sremc.com for information about how we are working to serve you.

I consider it a privilege to serve as your CEO, if I can assist in some way, please contact me at CEO@sremc.com or call at 919.230.2990.



Your To-Do List Is Long

Check off paying your electric bill.

South River EMC offers numerous ways to pay. You can pay your bill remotely, at the office, on-the-go, or without thinking about it at all.

That's right, in-person or the kiosk at either office, online, with e-checks or credit cards, using a pay station, MoneyGram, or CheckOut by PayGo, then there is signing up for draft.

You want options? We've got that for you, see what's available at sremc.com/payment-options



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That's quite a few decision makers. This year, mid-term elections will take place November 8.

Why are we telling you now?

Because in order to vote, you must be registered to vote. In North Carolina, the last day to register to vote is October 14. After that time, you can register to vote, but it can only be during one-stop early voting, which runs from October 20-November 5 at 3 p.m.

Now, what do the mid-terms mean to you?

If you think the presidential election is important, you're looking at the true weight behind it. Not just that, but some of your local movers and shakers.

Established by Article I of the Constitution, the Legislative

Branch consists of the House of Representatives and the Senate, which together form Congress. The Constitution grants Congress the sole authority to enact legislation and declare war, the right to confirm or reject many Presidential appointments, as well as allowing substantial investigative powers.

As you have the power to elect these representatives, it is best to research them and look for what they are interested in supporting, not what their opponent says they support.

Looking at how a candidate previously voted is helpful, but not necessarily the whole story either. Oftentimes a vote they are beat up over not supporting is part of a package that if they supported would not have been the best for their constituents.

If you're seeing ads, many times you see the negativity. Pointing

fingers isn't a new aspect during the polling season, but again, you must look deeper. The person who is making sure you know the negative aspects, what are their stances on those topics?

Then, there is the act of voting. Polls open at 6:30 a.m. and are open until 7:30 p.m. If voting on election day, you must go to your assigned polling place. If you don't know your assigned polling place, visit <https://vt.ncsbe.gov/RegLkup/>. Upon entering identifying information, you will find where to vote, as well as be able to view a sample ballot if one is available.

As an American citizen it is your right to vote. Take some time to make sure you're registered and ready to vote. After all, if you're going to discuss how things are going in the country, you should play your part in it.



SALUTING HEROES ON FIELDS OF HONOR

From November 5 to November 13, 500 American flags will fly over each South River EMC office, sponsored in the names of current, former or deceased members of the military.

Each 3-foot x 5-foot flag will carry a tag bearing the name of one honored veteran. There is still time to support, visit sremcfields.com.

All proceeds will go to local veterans' organizations.

FREQUENTLY ASKED SOLAR QUESTIONS

If you're considering solar power, we're here to help. Many of our members are interested in pursuing home solar installations, and as your local energy partner, we want to work with you to navigate the process. If you are considering home solar, please contact our Advise Guys so we can provide information and installation requirements while making sure the grid stays safe and reliable for all co-op members.

Q. What's the first step I should take?

We encourage you to thoroughly review the information on our residential solar page (sremc.com/residential-solar), as well as logging into your online account, to gain a deeper understanding of your energy use.

We can provide you with rate information and interconnection requirements so that you can have an informed discussion with solar installers. Solar installers need to know facts and details specific to our co-op, to provide you with an accurate financial overview.

Unfortunately, we've seen instances in our community where members have been misled and misinformed because of inaccurate information.

Q. Ground-mounted or rooftop solar?

■ **Ground mounted:** can place the array in an optimal location; easy to clean panels and make repairs.

■ **Rooftop:** most common; doesn't require expansive property and eliminates tampering risk; typically, less expensive than ground arrays; utilizes unused space.

Q. If I add home solar, will I save on my electric bill?

Some solar companies claim that you'll never have to pay an electric bill again, and we caution this is simply not true. Your home requires electricity even if the sun is shining, which means you'll continue to draw electricity from the grid and be billed monthly based on your energy use and any grid access charges.

Members with home solar are still connected to the grid. Being a not-for-profit cooperative energy provider, standard charges that all members pay to ensure the reliability and safety of the electric grid will stay on your bill, no matter how much energy your home produces. Otherwise, grid costs would unintentionally be shifted to members for whom home solar is out of reach.

Q. Can I make money by selling back electricity?

This is a common question often clouded by misinformation. The best thing you can do is contact the Advise Guys who will help you determine if solar is the right fit for meeting your financial goals.

We offer net metering. Our meter measures the amount of energy that you send to the grid as well as the amount of

energy used from the grid. We bill you for the "net" amount monthly. If you produce more than you use, it will be reflected as a credit on your account. We do not allow cashing out of bill credits so it is important that the solar array isn't oversized.

Q. Can I calculate potential savings?

Yes! The U.S. Department of Energy, or DOE, has a great tool for providing energy production estimates on home solar installations at pwatts.nrel.gov.

Q. Does South River EMC support home solar?

Yes, we support energy solutions that are a fit for our members, uphold the safety and reliability of our grid and improve the diversity of our resources while ensuring costs are not shifted to members without home solar.

One of the limitations of solar energy is that it must be used as soon as it is produced unless it is coupled with a battery-storage system.

Q. Are there incentives for home solar?

Yes, there's a federal solar tax credit that allows you to deduct 26 percent of the cost of installing solar from your federal taxes. There is no cap on its value, and the average savings is approximately \$9,000, according to the Department of Energy.

If you would like to discuss solar with one of our Advise Guys, email adviseguys@sremc.com.

Do some water heater research so you're prepared



The End Of Pool Season

If you have yet to close your pool, it might be time. With cooler weather approaching and leaves falling, pool deals are less and less likely.

That includes deals on pool pumps. As a large energy user,

selecting a more efficient unit can keep your pool clean, while using less energy.

A single-speed pool pump uses the highest water and energy setting for every job. Energy-efficient alternatives

include variable or two-speed pumps.

South River EMC offers rebates on variable or two-speed pumps. For details, visit sremc.com/pool-pumps or call 910.892.8071 x 2153.

HERO Homes Yield Rebates

A High Efficiency Residential Option, or HERO, home is 30 percent more efficient than a home built to code.

This home, which can be built in two different ways, has better

insulation, fenestration, air sealing, equipment and lighting packages.

Contractors and members are eligible for HERO home rebates, if built in the South River EMC

service area.

For details on the building code, visit energycodes.gov. Details on the rebate can be found at sremc.com/hero-program or by calling 910.892.8071 x 2153.

What Is Your Best Water-Heating Option?

When selecting a new water heater for your home choose a system that provides enough hot water for your family and is also efficient.

Conventional storage water heaters offer a storage tank of water that it constantly heats.

Tankless water heaters heat water directly without a storage tank. They are typically more efficient when powered by gas.

Heat pump water heaters move heat from one place to another instead of generating it directly, resulting in higher efficiency.

Solar water heaters use the sun's heat to provide hot water.

South River EMC currently offers rebates on solar and heat pump water heating. For details on rebates, visit sremc.com/energy-efficient-water-heating or call 910.892.8071 x 2153.

Energy Star: 75 Categories And Counting

The Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Energy have designated 75 categories of products eligible to be Energy Star certified.

Some of those categories include appliances like washers, dryers, and air conditioners. Computer monitors and televisions also get graded, as do

ceiling fans and a number of other products.

There are a number of ways these products can save you money, one such way is through efficiency. Energy-efficient products save money over their lifespan because they lower energy costs compared to standard alternatives.

The impact of an Energy Star product will vary depending on your overall usage.

South River EMC offers rebates on Energy Star certified refrigerators, washers and dryers, and dehumidifiers. For details, visit sremc.com/energy-star-appliances or call 910.892.8071 x 2153.

Working To Control Heating And Cooling Costs

With heating and cooling being the largest part of an electric bill each month, we are always looking for ways to save.

A heat pump with a higher seasonal energy efficiency ratio, or SEER rating is one way. The higher the SEER, the more efficient the system is at cooling.

Another way to improve comfort and cut down on cost, is making sure the heat or air you're paying for is reaching

and staying with you.

Insulation prevents heat transfer, which is when heat moves from a warm to cool place. In the winter, this means losing heat from inside to the cold outside.

Weatherization, meanwhile, is done to prevent air infiltration, or the loss of inside air outside and vice versa. Weather stripping and caulking stop air infiltration.

South River EMC offers rebates on both new and efficient heat pumps, 17 SEER or greater, as well as insulation and weatherization upgrades and replacements.

For details on heat pump rebates, visit sremc.com/energy-star-heating-cooling. For details on the insulation and weatherization rebate, visit sremc.com/insulation-weatherization or call 910.892.8071 x 2222.



Opening The Door To Savings

Smart technology is no longer a thing of the future, it is here. This technology makes your home more responsive to your every need. With this new technology onset, we see the smart garage door opener. These devices come in many different styles, but there are two main types.

The two main types of garage door openers are the add-on and the package types. The add-on type attaches to your existing garage door opener and connects to your WiFi network. The package type is a new system that gives you an entirely compatible smart garage door system all in one. We will cover the pros and cons of each.

First, the add-on type works with your existing motorized garage door opener system. The main type of add-on is the smart garage door controller. This controller attaches to the existing garage door opener with two-sided tape. There are a few wires that need to be connected to the garage door opener to allow operation. Also, it's important to note that proper operation will rely on a strong WiFi signal. These systems offer a number of different options like scheduling, remote access, voice control,

and typically can be used with a remote app on your phone.

The second type of smart garage door opener is a package unit. This is a new garage door opener motor with smart technology built in already. All that needs to be done is to connect it to WiFi and download the app on your phone and you are ready to go. This type of system is best if the garage door opener needs to be upgraded or replaced but it will be more expensive.

Both systems can satisfy your needs and have similar outcomes. Both offer the benefits of controlling your garage door on-site or remotely. You'll never need to turn around and drive back home to see if the garage door is down. Also, they both add a layer of security as it offers a way to monitor the status of your garage door from virtually anywhere and open and close it if needed. Your smart opener can even alert you if your garage door opens or closes when you are away.

Some of the top picks for on-line purchase in add-on type openers include Chamberlain, Garadget, and Genie. Reviews on these three units have been mostly positive and they pro-



Advise Guy Robert Talton

vide the quickest and most affordable options. These options are typically under \$100.

The package units are available in these same name brands as the add-on types and typically offer a 1.25HP motor with LED lighting and cameras. Package units are much more complicated to install since the belt or chain-drive system for the garage door must be installed. Also, these type of systems may require a professional installer. The package units are typically in the \$300-\$500 range, not including installation.

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