

# South River EMC Communicator

April 2023

## In The News

*The locals know it as the Grocery Barn, the gas station, grocery and grill sitting on the corner of Highway 13 in Sampson County.*

But Altman's Grocery Barn and Grill has a long history, with roots in Sampson, Cumberland and Harnett counties.

"I knew nothing different growing up. I put up stock, bagged, swept floors," said co-owner Ruthie Jackson. "My sister and I both, and she's four years younger. I'd have to say it helped define my work ethic."

The Grocery Barn was revitalized in 2001, adding to the grocery and gas station, a grill that has now served the community for over 20 years.

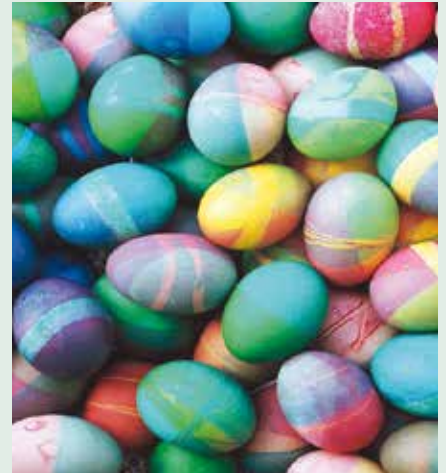
"Our business at this point is more grill, gas and then grocery," she said. "But people have said that our chicken salad is the best they've ever eaten."

Recently featured on WRAL's Tar Heel Traveler, Altman's Grocery Barn has undergone a few location and name changes.

In the early 1800s, the first Jacksons lived here, with the center point of the property being the intersection at Highway 13 and Wrench/Tew Road.

Their children opened the first general store on the property out of the front of their house.

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## Reminder:

South River EMC offices will be closed Friday, April 7, in observation of the Easter holiday.

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# THE 2023 ANNUAL MEETING

South River EMC's Annual Meeting of Members will take place Thursday, April 27, at 6 p.m.

It's time to get familiar with the process for our virtual meeting, before the date of the actual meeting. The login credentials are valid, but will not be active until about one-half hour prior to the meeting.

Doing a run through also makes sure you have the necessary information to participate in the annual meeting.

**Here are a few items to consider before participating this year:**

- ▶ Calling in advance of the meeting does not register you for credit.
- ▶ If hosting a viewing party, each member must individually login or call in to the meeting to be counted in order to receive the credit or be entered in the prize drawing.
- ▶ If you get disconnected, call back or login again.
- ▶ **Churches and businesses:** If you are representing an organization, you must be listed as an authorized individual on the count.

*Altman's Grocery Barn,  
continued from page A*

Ultimately, it ended up with Herman Jackson, a third-generation family member who moved the store to a stand-alone building across the road from the house.

Some of you might recognize the namesake of our substation located directly across the street from the store.

As a community gathering place, the store sold gas, oil, groceries, candy, soft drinks, dry goods and hardware. It wasn't unusual to find people hanging out at the store after dark as well.

Herman's daughter, Ruth, married Lewis Altman, whose family also had a few stores.

The Grocery Barn name came to be under the Altman's ownership.

"My parents ran the Grocery Barn at Sills Crossroads, it was red and shaped like a barn," said Ruthie Jackson.

The family ultimately decided to close up all of the other stores, and moved the Grocery Barn back to its current location on Hwy. 13.

In the following years, the Altman's two children, Ruthie and Laurie, worked in the store, before going on into their own careers.

However, the sisters decided that when it became too much for their mom, the women and their spouses would manage the Grocery Barn.

"You know, it never occurred to me that we would be back, I was perfectly happy to do what I was doing, but dad had died suddenly," said Ruthie Jackson, "It was too much for mom and it made sense to move to the store, as my mother-in-law was sick as well."

So, in 1995, Laurie and Don Jackson, and Ruthie and Bruce Jackson, bought the Grocery Barn.

In 2001, the original Grocery Barn was torn down and rebuilt.

"I had mixed emotions, we knew we needed to do something as the building frame was worn out and we wanted to add food service, so we decided to go ahead and build a new building with grill," she said. "We cried, there were a lot of memories, but we are very happy with the result and our service to the community."



*Sisters Laurie Jackson (left) and Ruthie Jackson*

Carrying the name Altman, as a homage to Ruthie and Laurie's roots, the business has continued to do well.

"We've increased our employee base from five to 20, and added the grill itself," said Jackson. "It's a nice feeling, being part of the community, and there are a lot of caring people."

Although, she didn't expect to end up back at the store, Jackson might tell you the road to starting a business is a long and drawn out process, but it's very much worth it in the end.

South River EMC is a part of this legacy as well, Bruce Jackson's father, Robert, worked at South River EMC, as does Ruthie and Bruce's one son, Aaron.

## District 8 Director Announcement

District 8 Director Clifton McNeill Jr. has resigned his position on the South River EMC Board of Directors after nine years of dedicated service to the membership.

We are currently seeking a qualified member from District 8 to complete the remainder of McNeill's term. District 8 encompasses Cumberland and Bladen counties, south of Highway 53.

Qualified member's principal home must be located within the district and receive electric service from South River EMC.

The ideal candidate must be

able to attend board meetings monthly as well as other meetings; be able to understand technical and financial information and maintain confidentiality; be willing to be an ambassador of the cooperative, to represent the members in public; be in good standing with the Cooperative; been a member for a minimum of 180 days.

For a full set of job requirements and information, please contact [HR@sremc.com](mailto:HR@sremc.com). All applications must be submitted by April 27.



*Clifton McNeill Jr.*



**CELEBRATE**  
**the Power Behind Your Power.**  
Lineworker Appreciation Day | April 18, 2023

# The Bright Ideas Grant Program Kicks Off April 1

*The kick off of the 2023-24 Bright Ideas grant application program is here!*

Everyday there are new ideas that can help a child learn better. These ideas are not often in the school budget and that's where a Bright Ideas grant can help.

The Bright Ideas program awards grants to teachers in certified, public K-12 schools, who have innovative, classroom-based ideas.

Project ideas can come from anywhere, in any subject and amount up to \$2,500.

Since 1994, educators state-wide have received \$15 million to fund over 14,200 projects affecting 3.5 million students.

Each year, South River EMC awards at least \$50,000 in grant funding to teachers in parts of



Harnett, Johnston, Sampson and Cumberland counties.

Applications for professional development will not be considered.

The application period opens April 1, so get ready. Educators with applications in by Aug. 15, are eligible to win a \$100 Visa gift card. The final application deadline is Sept. 15.

South River EMC accepts applications online at [ncbrightideas.com](http://ncbrightideas.com). If you're interested in learning more about this program, visit [sremc.com](http://sremc.com) or e-mail [connections@sremc.com](mailto:connections@sremc.com).

Begin applying April 1 at [ncbrightideas.com](http://ncbrightideas.com).

## Numerous Ways To Pay

*We realize payment isn't one size fits all, so we offer the following options:*

- ▶ Online bill pay
- ▶ South River EMC app
- ▶ Electronic draft
- ▶ E-check
- ▶ In person
- ▶ Payment kiosk
- ▶ Credit card
- ▶ By phone
- ▶ By mail
- ▶ MoneyGram
- ▶ Budget Billing
- ▶ Check Out by PayGo

Details on each can be found at [sremc.com/payment-options](http://sremc.com/payment-options).



# Play it Safe: Using Portable Generators

*Storm season is upon us, which means greater potential for power outages. If you're planning to use a portable generator in the event of an outage, South River EMC reminds you to play it safe.*

With proper use and maintenance, portable generators can provide great convenience during an outage. However, when generators are used incorrectly, they can be extremely hazardous.

In a 2022 report, the Consumer Product Safety Commission estimated 85 U.S. consumers die every year from carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning caused by gasoline-powered portable generators.

**Here are 10 do's and don'ts to keep in mind when using portable generators:**

1. **DO:** Install backup CO alarms.
2. **DO:** Keep children and pets away from portable generators at all times.
3. **DO:** Position generators at least 25 feet outside the home, away from doors, windows and vents that can allow CO to enter the home.
4. **DO:** Ensure your generator is properly grounded. Use a portable ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) to prevent electric shock injuries.
5. **DO:** Use three-pronged extension cords that are rated to handle the load of the generator. Inspect extension cords for cuts, frays or other damage before use.
6. **DON'T:** Operate a generator inside your home or an enclosed (or

partially-enclosed) space. Generators produce high levels of CO, which can be deadly.

7. **DON'T:** Open windows or doors while the generator is running.

8. **DON'T:** Rely on generators as a full-time source of power. They should only be used temporarily or in emergency situations to power essential equipment or appliances.

9. **DON'T:** Overload generators. They should only be used to power essential equipment. Make sure your generator can handle the load of the items you plan to power.

10. **DON'T:** Connect generators directly into household wiring unless you have an appropriate transfer switch installed. If a generator is connected to a home's wiring without a transfer switch, power can backfeed along power lines and electrocute utility lineworkers making repairs.

While generators provide convenience during power out-

ages, they can quickly become hazardous — even deadly — if improperly operated. Before you operate a portable generator, be sure to thoroughly read the owner's manual for important safety information and tips.

If you have questions about proper use of portable generators, we're here to help. Call the Advise Guys at 910.892.8071 or e-mail [adviseguys@sremc.com](mailto:adviseguys@sremc.com).

## Considering A Portable Generator?

Prepare for severe weather with a Generac generator

- \* A hassle-free, reliable standby power option.
- \* Choose from between a 16 kw or 22 kw installation.
- \* Receive a seven-year warranty vs. a five-year warranty as a South River EMC member.

For questions contact the Advise Guys at [adviseguys@sremc.com](mailto:adviseguys@sremc.com) or 910.892.8071.





## Weatherization Savings Potential

Weatherizing and insulating your home can not only improve cost, but also comfort. However, sometimes it just isn't in the budget, but that doesn't mean it's needed any less.

A weatherization package, be it on site-built or manufactured homes, must be performed by an

agency such as Community Action, and include air/duct sealing, improved insulation, HVAC tune up, programmable thermostat in a home with a heat pump or central AC could be eligible for a rebate.

This program is for homes owned by the member. For details visit [sremc.com/weatherization](https://sremc.com/weatherization).

## Savings For Your Pool

It might not be time to open the pool, but that doesn't mean you can't look for a pool pump deal.

If you have a pool with a pump, it's the second highest energy cost in your home, because you typically have a single-speed pool pump. That's a single speed for all tasks.

That adds up, so why not consider an upgrade? A variable or two-speed pool pump would allow you to tailor settings, and help save energy and money.

Being able to set a pump to task helps you use less water and energy on tasks where a large amount of energy and water isn't needed.

Another contributing factor to pool pump costs is how long you run the pump, by cutting the run time down, you could see savings.

Interested in purchasing a variable or two-speed pump? South River EMC offers a rebate. Details can be found at [sremc.com/pool-pumps](https://sremc.com/pool-pumps).

## HERO: A Home Built To Plan

High Efficiency Residential Option, or HERO, homes are the energy efficient option for homes.

Built to give you a tighter thermal envelope, and therefore savings and comfort, it would also make you eligible for a rebate.

Energy savings come from following a code that requires slightly better insulation, fenestration, air sealing, equipment, and lighting packages. There

are two ways to achieve these savings, via the prescriptive or the performance paths. Each carry their own set of specifications to show savings.

More information can be found on the HERO home program at [energycodes.gov](https://energycodes.gov). You can visit [sremc.com/hero-program](https://sremc.com/hero-program) for details on the program and rebate available through South River EMC.

## Preparing For The Heat Up

While we have had some warm temperatures this winter season, our hottest temperatures are still to come, which means your heating and cooling system needs to be in top shape.

However, that might also mean it's time to replace an older system that just can't keep up with

the demand anymore.

Heat pumps are measured by their cooling efficiency, or seasonal energy efficiency ratio, or SEER, rating. This rating tells how efficient a unit is at cooling, a major need during summer.

The rebates offered by South River EMC have recently

changed, so if you're looking at a new heating and cooling unit, you could be eligible for not only a rebate from South River EMC, but a federal rebate as well.

For details on rebates offered by South River EMC, visit [sremc.com/energy-star-heating-cooling](https://sremc.com/energy-star-heating-cooling).

## Water Heating Options To Consider

Finding the right water heater can be a job depending on what you want from the unit. If it's just hot water, replacing with a unit like you already have might be the right choice.

However, if you want to save energy and have hot water, considering options will help you find the best unit to give you those items.

A heat pump water heater, or HPWH, is an energy-efficient option for many homes. Pulling heat from the surrounding space,

they are two to three times more efficient in heating water over a standard electric water heater. A HPWH requires approximately 1,000 cubic feet of space, as well as being placed in an area that remains in the 40- to 90-degree range year-round, so keep that in mind.

Solar water heating is another energy-efficient option. These types of systems are typically placed on a roof, and their fuel is free. We recommend you have a back up water heater for days

of high use or clouds. Make sure you know local ordinances as well, some areas do not allow for the roof mounted system.

Both systems could save you, how much depends on your water use. However, if you are interested in either type of system, do some research and see if it will work for you.

South River EMC offers rebates on both heat pump water heaters, as well as solar water heaters, for details visit [sremc.com/energy-efficient-water-heating](https://sremc.com/energy-efficient-water-heating).



Message from Advise Guy Robert Talton



## The truth about plug-in energy-saving devices

Have you considered purchasing a plug-in energy-saving device? Recently, while performing an energy audit for a member, I noticed several of these devices plugged into outlets. I thought, does this really work? Can it help other members save energy? Do I need one in my home? The research began to help uncover the truth about these highly marketed energy-saving devices to learn if they work. With so many of these devices offered online, I immediately noticed a few high approval ratings and thought, could this be real or is it too good to be true?

The ads for these devices claim that you can plug it into the wall and magically reduce your electric bill. It claims to reduce dirty power or improve the power factor in the home and, in return, reduce energy use. The fact is, residential members and small businesses do not pay for power factor. Furthermore, power-factor correction does not affect real power (what you are billed for).



The devices are made with a small capacitor, electronic board and an LED, which does nothing to save energy. Actually, these devices could be better described as an expensive night light. Ads claim the more energy savers you plug in, the more you save. The devices use power, not save it. Companies use elaborate marketing schemes to make the devices look attractive. The names can change but the product

never does, nor do the energy savings.

I think the reason for some of the high approval ratings of these devices is because customers changed their habits, which resulted in savings. Some energy savings are due to lucky timing that coincides with reduced usage from milder outdoor temperatures. When the devices are plugged in, homeowners may sometimes start considering ways to save and become more conscious of their actions. While the device itself does not save, it's possible it could reinforce more efficient homeowner habits. There are many great ways to save in the residential setting that do not involve plug-in energy savers!


To save electricity, consider air sealing and insulation, having HVAC systems serviced and changing return air filters regularly. The best ways to save is to focus on air infiltration and space conditioning within the home. Other important factors are keeping appliances in good working order, using LEDs, and unplugging devices when not in use. For more energy saving advice, visit our website at [sremc.com/advise-guys](http://sremc.com/advise-guys), or call us at 910.892.8071.



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