

South River EMC Communicator

June 2023

Helping Students And Families

It started years ago when Teresa Barnes' children were discussing their school day with mom.

"They would tell me stories about their day," said Barnes. "And they would talk about kids who didn't have the clothes or shoes they needed and how they wanted to help."

So the former educator, who spent over 15 years in different capacities with Harnett County Schools, went for her master's degree in social work to help families in low-income situations keep kids in school and to prevent bullying.

She formed a non-profit organization, The Fun Clothes Inc., which provides students in need with appropriate clothing and shoes.

"In Harnett County, 15.8 percent of the population is below the poverty level," said Barnes. "This program will impact families and students by giving them confidence during challenging times, that there are plenty of good people who will help."

Based out of Bunnlevel, the non-profit organization operates by word of mouth, as well as social media. Recently, the organization received an Operation Round Up grant.

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Teresa Barnes accepting her Operation Round Up grant.

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"I learned about Operation Round Up during a workshop," she said. "I was reaching out to businesses and big companies and learned about the program from Catherine O'Dell."

Encouraged to apply, Barnes requested a \$5,000 grant to help with organizational set-up.

"As a newer non-profit, I was so excited that someone believed in my dream and vision for Harnett County," said Barnes. "There are so many people in the area willing to help."

This grant will ensure that students who have fallen on hard times can go to school without being bullied because of their clothing.

Clothing collected must be new or gently used. It is sorted, to ensure all items are suitable for school.

"The process we have in place keeps everyone protected. We work closely with the social workers at the schools," said Barnes. "They will complete the application process with the parents as to color preferences, sizes, etc. Once we receive it, we match clothes with personalities."

Supplying a week's worth of clothing, it is given to the social worker who reaches out to the parents to ensure they receive the clothing for their student(s).

While Fun Clothes, Inc. only works with students currently in



Barnes, along with two volunteers, at work sorting clothes.

need, Barnes hopes to be able to help families one day.

Clothing deemed to be unsuitable for school is held out and given to people in need of dress clothes for job interviews.

Fun Clothes Inc. is always open to volunteers, and people can volunteer through their website, thefunclothes.org.

You can also contact them on their Facebook or Instagram page if you want to donate new or gently used clothing.

Barnes isn't just waiting for donations, she's looking for new ways to connect.

"The Harnett County community, Erwin, Dunn, Buies Creek, Bunnlevel and surrounding areas have been so helpful," said Barnes. "Former residents have heard about the

organization and reached out, too."

Barnes has built a relationship with local churches and wants to grow that to encourage more donations.

She's always looking and brainstorming ways to get involved with other organizations to help as many students and families as possible.

"We've had a lot of support from local businesses as well," Barnes said.

While interaction between Fun Clothes Inc. and its recipients is typically anonymous and handled through social workers, they do receive reports that students who receive clothing through the program are attending school and showing more confidence.



All Things Being Equal

You might have noticed a line item on your bill. **The Equalizer** allows South River EMC to collect extra revenue whenever the cost of electricity increases.

Likewise, **The Equalizer** enables us to issue a credit to you when less revenue is needed.

This leveling of costs is designed to reduce the impact on you rather than a rate adjustment.

Preparing to Serve You Better

Providing reliable power to you is and will always be top priority for South River EMC.

Power reliability seems to be making news more than ever.

As the energy industry continues to transition and more segments of the economy are becoming electrified, such as vehicles, machinery and even lawn equipment, additional pressures are being placed on our nation's electric grid.

With summer storm season upon us, we thought it would be a good time to tell you about a few measures we've taken to ensure you continue receiving the reliable power you depend on.

Let us be the first to say we love trees and the charm they add to our communities, and we know you do too. While trees provide shade and add beauty to our area, you might be surprised to learn that overgrown vegetation accounts for about half of all power outages.

That's why we strive to keep the co-op's power lines clear in right-of-way (ROW) areas. A ROW is the land a co-op uses to construct, maintain, replace or repair underground and overhead power lines.

The ROW enables South River EMC to provide clearance from

trees and other obstructions that could hinder distribution power lines, like ours. The overall goal of our vegetation management strategy is to provide reliable power to you while maintaining the beauty of our area.

Modernizing Vegetation Management

Generally speaking, healthy trees don't fall on power lines, and clear lines don't cause problems. Proactive trimming and pruning keep lines clear to improve power reliability.

However, traditional vegetation management is costly and time consuming. It entails on-the-ground, labor-intensive efforts involving dozens of workers assessing vegetation and overseeing the quality and completion of contractor work. Although this approach has worked for decades, advances and improvements in technology have allowed us to reduce our costs and improve efficiency.

Drones are able to capture images of power lines and vegetation so we can accurately monitor the health of trees and pinpoint problems along the lines. Drone data is incorporated into our routine maintenance and inspections.

While ensuring our lines stay clear of any impediments, we take very seriously our goal of being good environmental stewards, so we have a strategically planned Integrated Vegetation Program.

This approach, which is evaluated for safety and environmental

impact, includes mechanical equipment as well as the spraying of chemical herbicides that have been tested and approved by the EPA. Spraying of ROW is done in accordance with prescribed regulations.

We have also implemented AI technology to stay ahead of right-of-way trimming, so that we can work more efficiently for the membership.

Planned Outages Improve Reliability

Although it may seem counterintuitive, we also maintain power reliability through planned, controlled outages.

By carefully cutting power to one part of our local area for a few hours, South River EMC can perform system repairs and upgrades, which ultimately improve electric service. Planned outages can also be used to balance energy demand, but only in rare circumstances.

Rest assured, we will always try to notify you in advance of a planned outage, so make sure we have your contact information on file to receive the latest communication.

Vegetation management is an essential tool in ensuring power reliability and minimizing the risk of outages. As advancements become more accessible and costs drop, we anticipate using additional technologies to ensure a consistent energy supply while managing the environment.

Lastly, we encourage you to follow South River EMC on social media so you can learn about the latest co-op updates.



Are You A Teacher With A Bright Idea?

As summer nears, may your ideas be bright!

Whether you're a teacher in your first year, or your 10th, there are always new ideas or even replacement needs, and often times, a budget that doesn't allow for them.

A Bright Ideas grant could be just the item to 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 any amount up to \$2,500.

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

Harnett, Johnston, Sampson and Cumberland counties.

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

Applications for professional development will not be considered.

Educators with applications in by August 15 are eligible to win a

\$100 Visa gift card. The final application deadline is September 15.

South River EMC accepts applications online at ncbrightideas.com.

If you want to learn more about Bright Ideas, visit sremc.com or e-mail connections@sremc.com.



Give Us Your A's!

As schools wrap up another year, it's time to submit those report cards.

The report card, if containing at least one A, could make the student eligible for the "Give Us An A" program.

"Give Us An A" recognizes stu-

dents receiving at least one A on their most recent report card.

Make a copy of the report card and send it to:

South River EMC
Give Us An A
PO Box 931
Dunn, NC 28335

Or email it to: connections@sremc.com

Report cards must include the member's name, address, South River EMC account number and daytime telephone number. Report cards will not be accepted without this information.

The drawing is held for students achieving at least one A on their most recent report card, and 15 names will be drawn to receive a \$25 gift card. This program is open to students who are members, or children of members, of South River EMC.

Don't miss an opportunity to celebrate good grades. Report cards should be submitted by 5 p.m. July 6.



Energy-Saving Projects for the Weekend Warrior

If you're considering home improvement upgrades that save energy and money, we've got a few ideas for you — all of which can be completed in a day or less!

Here are three energy-saving projects that you can easily tackle whether you're a weekend warrior pro or a DIY dabbler.

Get smart about home cooling and heating.

Cooling and heating your home typically accounts for over half of energy costs. Smart thermostats can help keep cooling and heating costs in check, with Energy Star-certified models saving about 8 percent on annual energy costs.

Now that smart thermostats are a little more affordable, this simple upgrade makes for a fun, efficient weekend project. Smart thermostats offer a variety of bells and whistles, but the average model will allow you to set custom temperature schedules, adjust the settings from anywhere (using a phone or tablet), and over time, can learn cooling and heating preferences.

Your new smart thermostat will come with step-by-step instructions, but this project typically involves shutting off your HVAC at the breaker panel, disconnecting/removing the old thermostat, installing the new smart thermostat and connecting it to your home Wi-Fi.

Go green and boost your greenery with a rain barrel.

If you've got a green thumb, you already know that rainwater is the best water for plants. Rainwater is free of minerals, salts and treatment chemicals found in tap water or groundwater. It also contains helpful macro-nutrients to foster healthy plant growth.

Installing a rain barrel is an easy way to harvest large amounts of rainwater and reduce home water use, a win-win. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, one rain barrel can save a homeowner 1,300 gallons of water annually.

Most residential rain barrels range in size from 50 to 90 gallons, so the size you purchase will depend on your watering needs.

The simplest way to install a

rain barrel is positioning a plastic or wooden barrel directly under your gutter downspout. Basic piping may be required, but this is an easy way to harvest rainwater, and the barrel won't take up much space. Consider a cover for the top of your rain barrel to keep insects and small debris out of harvested water.

Create fresh savings with a DIY clothesline.

If you have enough outdoor space available, installing a clothesline is a great way to save energy. Not only will you save on dryer costs, you can also save on cooling costs during summer with unwanted heat from the clothes dryer not being added to your home (making your air conditioner work harder). Additionally, air drying is much gentler on fabrics and will keep clothes and linens looking fresh longer.

Create your own clothesline with T-posts, wire and hook-and-eye turnbuckles. Depending on your soil, you may need a small amount of Quikrete to set the posts. Another option is installing the line between two trees. A typical load of laundry requires about 35 feet of line, keep this in mind as you determine the best location.

If an outdoor clothesline isn't an option, no sweat! You can easily create an indoor drying rack that folds to save space. Home improvement websites like [thespruce.com](https://www.thespruce.com) and [hgtv.com](https://www.hgtv.com) offer step-by-step tutorials for a variety of indoor clothes racks.

These are just a few ideas to help you save energy and money.

Check out [sremc.com](https://www.sremc.com), for additional energy-saving ideas and tips.





Efficient Pumps For Pools

Looking to cut costs this summer? If you have a pool with a pump, consider an upgrade. Most pools are installed with a single-speed pump, one speed for all tasks, which also uses a large

amount of water and energy.

By upgrading a single-speed pool pump to a variable, or two-speed pump, you can tailor use to task and hopefully save a little energy and money.

If a pump upgrade is in the cards, South River EMC offers a rebate on variable and two-speed pool pumps. For details, visit sremc.com/pool-pumps.

Keeping It Cool For Less

Heating and cooling your home adds up each year.

Cooling efficiency is measured by the seasonal energy efficiency ratio 2, or SEER2, rating.

This rating shows that a unit is even more efficient than before. How efficient is shown in the number of the SEER2 rating.

Baseline is currently 14.3 SEER in the Southeast.

To save more, you will want to purchase a 16 SEER2 or greater heating and cooling system. Of course, do your research before settling on a unit, be it heat pump or central cooling system.

Don't be afraid to speak with

installers and get quotes, to compare and research costs.

South River EMC offers rebates on heating and cooling systems of 16 SEER2 and greater. For complete details or to apply, visit sremc.com/energy-star-heating-cooling.

Heat Water For Less

While you probably aren't thinking of a hot shower, you do need warm water for different tasks in your home.

When your water heater needs replaced, you might select a readily available unit, but there may be a more cost-effective option.

Water heater options include: storage tank water heaters, tankless water heaters, solar water heaters and heat pump water heaters.

Solar water heating is an especially cost-effective option if you have a good solar resource.

Heat pump water heaters move heat rather than generate it, so they are two to three times more efficient in heating water.

Rebates are offered on both types of systems, for details visit sremc.com/energy-efficient-water-heating.

Keeping It Cool By Weatherizing

With temperatures heating up, keeping cool is a must. Doing so by weatherizing your home is a good way to improve not just comfort, but perhaps cost as well.

Weatherization costs can add up depending on what is needed, and people interested in weath-

erization work through programs like Community Action, might be eligible for a rebate.

To be eligible for the rebate, Community Action must have performed the weatherization package. The single family or manufactured low-income

home program includes air/duct sealing, improved insulation, an HVAC tune-up or replacement, and a programmable thermostat in a home with a heat pump or an electric furnace/ central AC.

For details, visit sremc.com/weatherization.

The Importance Of Windows

Heat is transferred to and from objects, like your home, through three processes: conduction, radiation, and convection.

Conduction is heat traveling through solid material. On hot days, heat is conducted into your home through the roof, walls, and windows. Heat-reflecting roofs, insulation, and energy efficient windows can help to reduce heat conduction.

Radiation is heat traveling in the form of visible and non-visible light. Sunlight is an obvious source of heat for homes. In

addition, low-wavelength, non-visible infrared radiation can carry heat directly from warm objects to cooler objects. This is why you can feel the heat of a hot burner element on a stovetop, even from across the room. Older windows will allow infrared radiation coming from warm objects outside to radiate into your home; shades can help to block this radiation. Newer windows have low-e coatings that block infrared radiation.

Convection is another means for the heat to reach you. Hot air naturally rises, carrying heat

away from walls and causing it to circulate throughout your home. As the hot air circulates past your skin (and you breathe it in), it warms you.

Windows play a part heat transfer, so replacement might lead to savings and improved comfort.

If you decide to replace windows, South River EMC offers a rebate on Energy Star window replacement. Details can be found at sremc.com/energy-star-windows.



Message from Advise Guy Aaron Jackson



Summer is here and, as expected, most households are using more electricity than they were a couple of months ago. As the Advise Guys have discussed previously, there are a variety of problems that can occur with household appliances and equipment that can cause an increase in electricity use. When you see your bill rise though, how can you determine whether the increase you're seeing is normal or due to a problem in the home? As your trusted energy advisor, South River EMC has a few resources available to help you.

Your Monthly Statement

The information included on your monthly billing statement is one way to determine if your electricity use is normal. On the back of your statement, take a look at the graph marked "Energy Usage History". This section of the bill lays out the past 13 months billing history in bar graph form. The table underneath offers a comparison between the current month, previous month, and same billing period last year. Using this data, you can make a fairly accu-

rate determination on whether your bill is normal for the season or not. Around 50 percent of the monthly energy use in a home can be attributed to the heating and/or air-conditioning system, which makes energy use fairly predictable seasonally. For this reason, it's best to compare the current months energy use to the same month last year, since weather patterns are normally similar.



SmartView

Since temperatures from day to day can vary wildly, detailed daily energy use data is valuable when determining if your energy use is normal or elevated due to a problem. Through our website sremc.com, members can view their daily energy use and temperature information using a tool called SmartView. The blue and gray bars represent daily energy use to-

tals, and the red and blue lines represent the high and low temperatures for the day. Using the SmartView bar graph, look for days when the temperature was relatively low, followed by days when the temperature increased significantly (or vice versa). You should see a drastic difference in electricity use, showing much lower usage on cool days verses higher usage on warmer days. If the differences in usage between cool days and hot days isn't drastic, that could indicate an issue with equipment or behavior that may be producing higher usage.

The Advise Guys

As always, if you have concerns with your electricity use after reviewing the information available on your statement and on our website, the Advise Guys are here to help. Just reach out to us at 910.892.8071 or adviseguys@sremc.com and we'll be glad to review your account.



PO Box 931
 Dunn, NC 28335
 910.892.8071
 800.338.5530
sremc.com

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