

South River EMC Communicator

December 2023

Wishing You A Merry Christmas

*From CEO Chris Spears, the Board of Directors
and employees of South River EMC.*



Reminder:

South River EMC offices will be closed Dec. 25 and Dec. 26 in celebration of Christmas, as well as Jan. 1, in recognition of the New Year.

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The Early Bird Gets The Worm

South River EMC's Bright Ideas Grant program awarded \$59,980 for the 2023-2024 school year.

While the application period opened in April and closed in September, the bulk of grants came in upon the return to school.

This year, South River EMC received 153 applications and was able to fund 31 projects.

Each year, teachers who submit applications before the early bird deadline in August, have the chance to win \$100 Visa gift card.

Hannah Dandoy is one of those teachers who applies early, and though she doesn't do it for the gift card alone, she has been an early bird recipient twice.

"I am deeply honored, humbled and extremely grateful to have had the funding and support that I have from Bright Ideas over the years," Dandoy said. "Being recognized as an 'early bird' with my grant proposals has also been a blessing. To say I was surprised to have won not once, but twice, as an early bird is putting it lightly!"



Hannah Dandoy, 2021

She has taken those early bird winnings and used them to purchase additional items off of her classroom wishlists.

"I do apply early quite often, because it allows me the luxury of time to draft out and plan my grants on my own time," she said. "During the school year, the regular obligations of being a teacher can often take priority over grant writing. When I write grants I like to be able to research, plan and draft out my thoughts in a manner that doesn't feel rushed."

So far, it has worked out, and not only has Dandy received several Bright Ideas grants, but other grants as well.

Congratulations to Ms. Dandoy and all our Bright Ideas grant recipients. The listing of schools receiving Bright Ideas grants for 2023-2024 are as follows:

Midway Elementary	\$2,500
Benson Elementary	\$2,339
Stedman Primary	\$250
Johnston County Career and Technical Academy	\$2,500
Plain View Elementary	\$625
Harnett Central Middle	\$2,260
Midway High (x2)	\$4990
Polenta Elementary (x2)	\$5,000
Hobpton Elementary (x4)	\$6,816
Dunn Elementary	\$1,192
West Johnston High	\$2,342



Principal Matarese and Dandoy, 2023

Lakewood High (x4)	\$8,809
Northwest Harnett Elementary	\$2,486
Hobpton High	\$1,968
Armstrong Elementary (x2)	\$2,534
Triton High (x2)	\$3,390
Gray's Creek High	\$1,490
Long Hill Elementary	\$1,005
Johnston County Early College Academy	\$2,500
Western Harnett High	\$2,500
Harnett County Early College	\$2,484

For more information on Bright Ideas grants, and the full list of 2023-2024 recipients, please visit sremc.com/bright-ideas.

Recipients can also be seen on South River EMC's social media pages.

Scores Are Showing

South River EMC has recently completed its quarterly member-wide customer satisfaction survey.

Member's responses were sent to the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI®), a company that measures customer satisfaction across multiple industries throughout the entire United States.

It is a national indicator of the quality of goods and services as experienced by consumers of those goods or services. Who better to rate those items than those who have experienced them?

The Cooperative has been assessing itself in this manner for years and we are very excited about what recent surveys have shown.

For 2023, South River EMC received an ACSI score of "90" in Quarter 1, and "89" in Quarters 2 and 3, out of a maximum score of "100".

South River EMC's score is higher than all publicly measured investor-owned utility, cooperative utility scores, municipal utility scores, and places South River EMC 17-18 points higher than the average investor-owned utility score of 72, as well as 18-19 points higher than the municipal utilities score of 71 per the industry ratings in the 2023 ACSI Utility Sector Report.

We thank you for your participation in the surveying as it tells us not only what we are doing right, but areas in which we need to improve. South River EMC is



always looking out for you.

For more information, please visit theacsi.org.

[1] Results based on data provided by South River EMC, collected between Jan. 1 and Sept. 30, 2023. ACSI did not regulate the survey administration or sample size. ACSI is a registered trademark of the American Customer Satisfaction Index LLC. ACSI and its logo are registered trademarks of the American Customer Satisfaction Index LLC.



Costs are rising everywhere and your Cooperative isn't immune.

- Line and bucket trucks: up 20-25%**
Lead time of 24 months.
- Pole-top transformers: up 30%**
Lead time of 20 weeks.
- Pad-mount transformers: up 30%**
Lead time of 40-52 weeks, depending if single or three phase.
- Wire: up 30%**
Cost expected to double in 2023.
- Cabinets: up 30%**
Lead time up to 50 plus weeks.

District Five Director Announcement

District 5 Director Dorcas Fisher has resigned her position from the South River EMC Board of Directors.

The district is up for election in 2024. This district encompasses South River EMC service area south of Maxwell Rd., west of Carroll Store Rd. and Dunn Rd., west of Highway 242 and Highway 411 to Highway 701, northeast of Old Fayetteville Rd. and Turnbull Rd. to the Sampson-Cumberland county line and north to Maxwell Rd.

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; and have been a member for a minimum of 180 days. Directors are also required to acquire governance and industry training.

A full list of the South River EMC nominating committee, director qualifications and the nominating process can be found



at sremc.com/annual-meeting or by contacting HR@sremc.com. All applications must be submitted by Dec. 29.

Over \$4 Million In Refunds Distributed

This year, South River EMC refunded \$4,240,491.90 to current and past members.

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 the members who purchased energy from the Cooperative during that year.

Following is a breakdown of the numbers:

- 8,432 members received

refund checks.

- 35,191 current members had their refund applied to their electric account.
- The remaining refunds for inactive members have been applied to outstanding balances or have been moved to a "hold" status because we do not have a valid current address or the amount is less than \$50.

This year, the Cooperative is returning 20% of the amount allocated to members for 2022, as well as the remainder of the 2007 year; and 34% of the 2008 year.

The remaining 2022 amount will be refunded in 19 years, unless a member leaves South River EMC and chooses the early retirement option. That's all part of being a member.



Celebrating 250 Years Of Service



*Kelly Harrington,
District 1
25 years*



*Sue Flowers,
District 2
10 years*



Back: Bobby Sherman, 5 years; Seth Lambert, 5 years; Derek Avery, 15 years; Robert Talton, 20 years. **Front:** Austin Hardison, 5 years.



*Dr. E. Sue
Godwin Baker,
District 6
10 years*



Back: Tyler Kearns, 5 years; Bill Fultz, 10 years; Marty Williams, 10 years; Amy Stanley, 5 years. **Front:** Wayne Adams, 10 years; Heather Cannady, 5 years; Lisa Bass, 30 years.



*J.W. Simmons,
District 3
5 years*



Left: Tom Carter, 20 years
Right: Andrew Radford, 10 years



Not pictured: Julie McLeod, 15 years; Catherine O'Dell, 30 years.

	<p>Trade your mailbox for your inbox. With an email notification each month, you'll find bill-paying is easier, neater, less stressful, and you'll save money! Enroll today at www.SREMC.com/ebilling.</p>
	<p>Phone it in! It's convenient, fast, secure and you can access it 24/7. Enroll now through your online account. Call (800) 338-5530 or (910) 892-8071, and select option 3 to pay your bill.</p>
	<p>Going green never felt so easy. Now you can pay your bills online via a credit card or echeck. It's secure, convenient and saves you time. Just sign into your account at www.SREMC.com to make a payment.</p>

South River EMC offers members different ways to pay, and these are just a few. For more options visit sremc.com/payment-options.



See Clearly With New Windows

Windows provide your home with light, warmth and beauty. They make you feel less confined and protect you from the elements.

For every fingerprint and smear you clean off, windows are there, but are they as efficient as they could be? Like anything else, windows age, getting condensation in them, and becoming drafty.

Windows aren't the cheapest item to buy, but having good

windows helps prevent heat loss and heat gain impacting temperatures and comfort. Particularly noticeable in winter and summer, replacement can be a process.

Begin by measuring the current window, then shop for a replacement of the same size that you feel would fit your space well. Once ordered and received, you'll remove the old window, and install the new window and it must

be sealed properly.

If you're in the market to replace a window or windows, consider the rebate from South River EMC, which can be seen at sremc.com/energy-star-windows.

There is also a federal rebate offered, visit energystar.gov and search "federal tax credits".

Is This The Season For New HVAC?

'Tis the season for a lot. Food, festivities, lights?

For most of these activities you want to be comfortable, and if you have an older heating and cooling system, it might be time to replace it.

Heating and cooling systems become less efficient as they age, which means to keep up with demand, they might be more costly to run. If you're finding your system can't keep up with demand,

or use is greater than usual, it's time for an upgrade.

Before that time comes, you should have an idea of what you're looking for and efficiency should be part of that equation. Get quotes and make comparisons. Heat pumps, are an efficient option, using electricity to transfer heat from a cool space to a warm space.

South River EMC offers rebates on air source and geothermal

heat pump systems. The key item to consider is seasonal energy efficiency ratio 2, or SEER2, rating, which measures their cooling efficiency. The higher the rating, the more efficient the system.

The Cooperative rebates on systems of 16 SEER2 or greater.

For details on our rebate, visit sremc.com/energy-star-heating-cooling. For details on federal rebates, visit energystar.gov and search "federal tax credits".

Weatherization Costs Add Up, But Earn Rebate

Take this time of cooler weather to make a few improvements. With heating and cooling making up about 50% of your electric costs, even the smallest change can save.

Not all improvements are in the budget, but that shouldn't stop you from having a comfortable home this season.

If you are interested in making some improvements, but can't afford them, Community Action might be able to help. This might also make you eligible for a rebate from South River EMC.

In order to qualify for the rebate the entire weatherization package must be completed by Community Action, which 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.

If your home is in need of some improvement this season, and Community Action helps, visit sremc.com/weatherization for details on the rebate offered.

Considering Your Water Heating Options

Water heating accounts for about 18% of your home's energy use and is typically the second-largest energy expense in a home.

Purchasing a new water heater is something you should consider carefully. There are different types of system and manufacturers to look over.

A standard electric water heater heats water continuously throughout the day and that adds up.

An on-demand electric water heater uses a large amount of

energy any time it has to heat water because it does it all at one time, which also adds up.

A heat pump water heater uses surrounding heat, to warm the water and this makes it 2-3 times more efficient than a standard water heater.

Solar water heating is another option, but it does have some requirements to consider.

Before you need a new water heater, do the research, find which type of unit would work

best for you and be aware of the rebates offered, not just by South River EMC, but by the federal government as well.

South River EMC offers rebates on solar and heat pump water heaters and that information can be found at sremc.com/energy-efficient-water-heating.

For information on federal rebates, visit energystar.gov and search "federal tax credits."



Message from Advise Guy Eric Gainey



Be Merry, Be Blessed, Be Mindful

The holidays are a time to gather with family and friends, to be merry and thankful for the everyday blessings that are bestowed upon us. While we prepare for the season, let us be mindful of potential energy savings. Here are a few ways you can save.

The recommended thermostat setting during the winter months is 68 degrees when in heat mode and the fan should always be set to auto. Having a house full of family and friends during the holidays can warm up a home pretty quick.

You may also find yourself cooking more during this time of the year. The added heat from more bodies and cooking allows you to decrease the thermostat even more. This decreased setting will lessen the run time on your HVAC system.

If you have a fireplace with a damper, make sure the damper is closed when you are not using the fireplace. By closing it, you are preventing the warm air in your home from escaping out of the chimney.

If you do a lot of cooking, try cooking as many dishes as possible at one time. Hosting a potluck meal is a great way to cut back on

oven use. It can also give you more time to relax and enjoy the season.

Putting up Christmas lights and decorations are tradition for many families. If you need to purchase lights, consider light emitting diode (LED) Christmas lights. LEDs can be up to 90% more efficient than incandescent bulbs. On top of saving energy and money, they are also safer. LED bulbs are not as hot as incandescent bulbs and reduce the risk of combustion along with burnt fingers. The cooler bulbs make it safer to use on your Christmas tree, wreaths and garlands as well. They are also made with epoxy lenses that give it more resistance to breakage. Just like the LED bulbs in your home, they will last longer than incandescent, halogen and CFL bulbs.

When you have your Christmas tree lights on, turn off lamps and other lights you may have on. Even though LEDs are more efficient and safer, you do not want to keep them on all the time. Make sure timers are installed or you unplug lights to ensure they do not stay on around the clock.

If you travel during the holiday season, remember to adjust your thermostat. Check your local

forecast for weather in your area while you are gone. The HVAC system will run whether you are there or not. It will always try to maintain the setting you have it on. So adjusting the thermostat accordingly with the weather is imperative to saving, particularly when traveling.

Many smart thermostats today allow you to set daily schedules and other comfort settings for your home. This habit should be practiced yearly and not just during the holidays. Think about this when you are going on vacation, business trips or long weekend trips out of town. Make sure you also have the timers for your home's exterior lighting so they are using energy the entire time you are gone.

Implement the steps mentioned to help you save energy while allowing you to increase your holiday budget. For more information on ways to save, you can visit our website at sremc.com or call our office at 910.892.8071.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



South River EMC
Communicator

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