

# South River EMC Communicator

April 2024

## When It All Adds Up

*Last year, South River EMC began discussing the changes we have seen in costs, lead time, and their impact on business.*

This includes the cost of transformers, power lines, poles, substations and more, all of which are pieces of a system that must be maintained to provide you with reliable and affordable electricity.

We have seen changes to everything in some regard, whether it be cost or availability and those changes have an impact on you, the member.

We will begin with transformers, devices that convert high-voltage electricity to a lower voltage so it can be used in homes and businesses safely. They can be pole mounted (overhead service) or pad (ground) mounted (underground service). Transformer costs have risen and fallen over the course of five years, and now at an approximate 52% increase for pad-mounted units and 79% increase for pole mounted units.

Breakers, which are used to open and close medium- and high-voltage electric distribution circuits, run about \$46,000 with a lead time of 5-8 months. They can be operated manually, when necessary, to perform maintenance or will automatically trip if an electrical fault/short-circuit occurs.

Regulators are pieces of equipment that regulate voltage at a substation to ensure consistent and adequate voltage levels are maintained across the electric system.

*continued on page B*



## Reminder:

Register for the annual meeting  
April 22 to April 25.



## What's Inside

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# FOUR REASONS TO VOTE IN COOPERATIVE DIRECTOR ELECTIONS

Electric co-ops are led by the members they serve, which means you have a say in who governs our co-op. Here are four reasons why you should participate in director elections.

- 1 As a member of the co-op, your input matters.
- 2 Directors represent you on important energy-related issues.
- 3 Directors' decisions can impact electricity rates and future projects.
- 4 With convenient voting options available, it only takes a minute.

## ADDS UP continued from page A

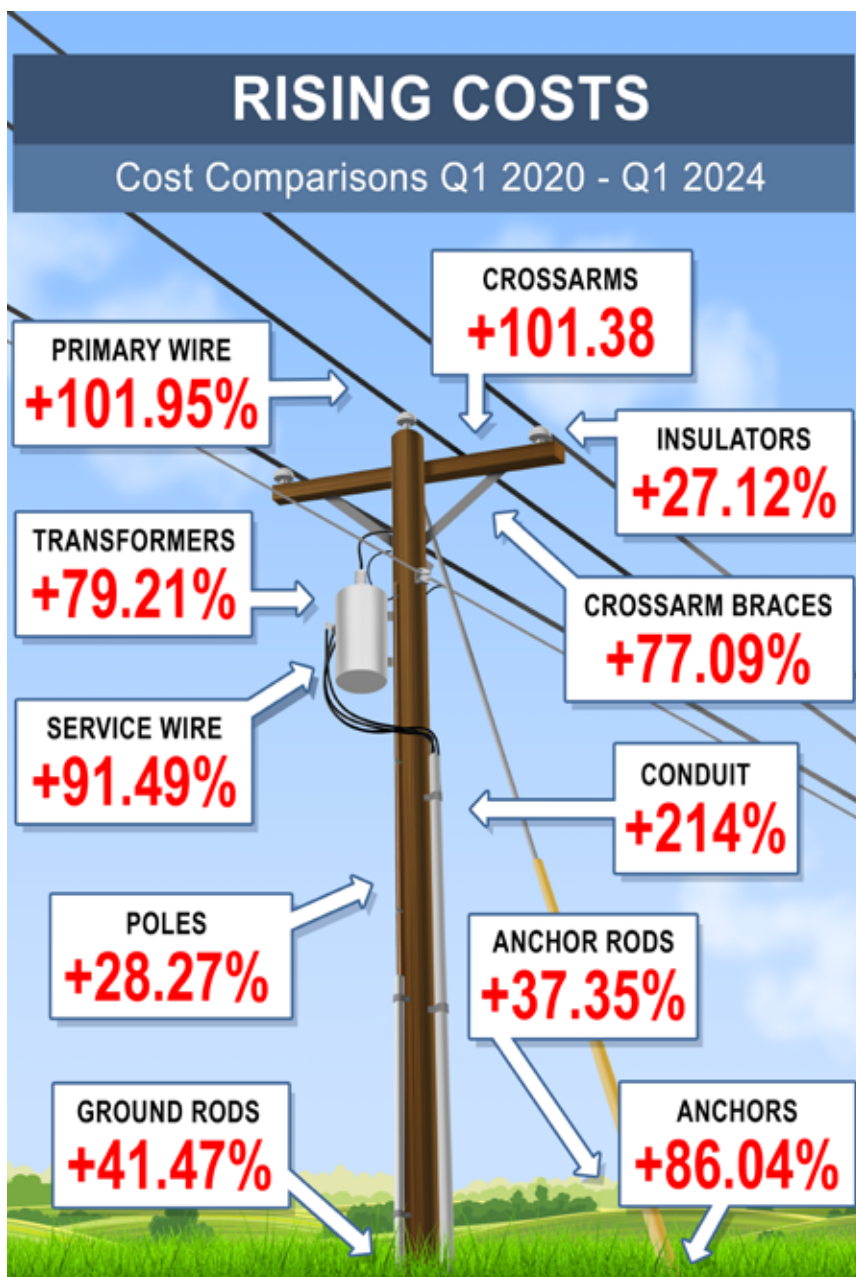
A small regulator is currently averaging a cost of \$29,000. A larger regulator is priced, on average, around \$42,500. Lead times for both are about 3-4 months. Regulators, which are used in groups of three in substations, now cost between \$87,000 and \$127,000 per group.

Reclosers, like breakers, operate when an electrical fault/short-circuit occurs on the electric system. They are often placed on circuits downline of a substation to isolate faulted areas and minimize the number of members affected. For explanation, electricity flows in a straight line; when a fault occurs, like a tree falling on the line, the recloser opens, preventing the path of electricity. Reclosers are around \$9,000 and carry a lead time of about 2-3 months.

While South River EMC has worked to retire and repurpose as much as possible, costs, particularly to those items as seen in the graphic, have impacted product use as well.

We continue to plan and work to provide you with the reliable electric service.

Planning ahead, just another part of looking out for members.



# Your 2024 Annual Meeting

South River EMC's Annual Meeting of Members will take place Thursday, April 25, at 6 p.m.

This year, you will need to register prior to the annual meeting and you can do so in one of two ways, by calling South River EMC or by completing the form at [sremc.com/annual-meeting-sign-up](https://sremc.com/annual-meeting-sign-up).

- ▶ Registration begins Monday, April 22, at 8 a.m. and ends Thursday, April 25, at 5 p.m.
- ▶ Those who register will receive a call from South River EMC at 6 p.m. AND will receive call-in/login details via email prior to the meeting.
- ▶ Your participation in the annual meeting means that you will receive a \$10 credit on your next electric bill. You must pre-register to receive the bill credit.
- ▶ Be sure the information you provide matches account information. Members must register prior to the meeting to receive a bill credit. If you are unsure of any of the required information, check your bill, review your account online or call our member service department at 910.892.8071.
- ▶ By voting, or attending the meeting, you will be entered in the prize drawing for the following week.
- ▶ Prizes will consist of \$11,500 in bill credits, featuring a grand prize of a \$3,000 credit.

## Not April Fools, Bright Ideas!

*Calling all educators in the public K-12 school system, the 2024-2025 Bright Ideas grant period opens April 1.*

Everyday there are new ideas that can help a child learn better and that's no joke!

However, these ideas and technologies 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 \$15.8 million to fund over 14,700 projects affecting 3.65 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 soon, so start considering ideas. Educators with applications submitted by Aug. 15, will be

entered in a drawing to win a \$100 Visa gift card. The final application deadline is Sept. 15.

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





## LINWORKER APPRECIATION DAY

We thank lineworkers for their courage and commitment to powering our community.

## Celebrating Lineworkers

Lineworkers are moms and dads, grandmas and grandpas.

Each day lineworkers work to ensure our members receive reliable electricity.

In the event of storms, they are out there restoring electric service as soon as safe and possible.

These men and women are also part of our families and communities everyday. We take this month to celebrate lineworker appreciation day, and the individuals who are out in the field no matter the weather.

Take a minute to thank the lineworkers who keep the lights on Thursday, April 18, with #thankalineworker on social media.

## Big Plans For Summer Break

*This summer, South River EMC is offering an opportunity to current high school freshmen, sophomores, or juniors.*

Join other students for Cooperative Leadership Camp in Laurel Hill.

The week-long camp offers high school students an opportunity to discover more about the cooperative business model, develop leadership and team-building skills, meet students from across the state and have fun.

The objectives are to educate, connect and promote the cooperative way of doing business and provide a fun learning experience for the students that are selected to attend. Workshops include:

- A Day in the Life of a Line Worker
  - Coastal's Reality Series
  - Farming & Sustainability: Cabot Co-op
  - Build Worker/Owner T-shirt Cooperative
  - The Food Co-op's Living Wage
- In addition to hands-on learning about the big world of cooperatives, students get a fun overnight camp experience, including swimming, lake activities, canoeing, hiking trails, archery, bonfires and more.

All meals are included, and lodging is in air-conditioned bunk houses. Bus transportation to and from

designated locations across the state is also available and included for attendees.

For more information or to apply, visit [sremc.com/cooperative-leadership-camp](https://sremc.com/cooperative-leadership-camp).

Students attending are eligible to apply for the \$1,000 Jim Graham college scholarship during their senior year of high school.



# Shaping Energy Future Through Innovation

*South River EMC is adaptable and has always leaned into change as we explore new ways to meet your energy needs.*

After all, innovation is key to ensuring a continuous, reliable and affordable power supply.

## Advanced Technologies

By using equipment like drones to inspect our local grid, sensors that provide real-time data on the condition of power lines, and satellite imagery to monitor vegetation growth, we can pinpoint potential problems before they occur and ultimately improve service.

Investing in smarter technologies also can enhance the monitoring and control of electricity flow so we can respond swiftly to changing needs. Smart meters remotely collect data on how electricity is being used, which helps in prioritizing and dispatching crews during an outage, thereby reducing

restoration time during weather-related incidents.

## Preparing for Increased Energy Use

Today, we depend on electricity more than ever before. From vehicles to farming equipment to home heating options, more products and appliances run on electricity.

Interest in electric vehicles (EVs) is growing. South River EMC is available to help our members make informed decisions about electric charging options and capacity requirements for the home.

Additionally, we are exploring innovative technologies like large-scale batteries and solar projects to help address the increasing demand for electricity.

## Innovative Efficiency Solutions

South River EMC is driven by a commitment to community and member satisfaction. As

members become more proactive in managing energy use, we provide new ways to help lower use and save money.

The Advise Guys perform energy audits and can help you take advantage of actionable energy-saving advice as well as efficiency services offered by the co-op. Rebates, varied payment options, and energy use monitoring are just a few examples of how we can help you take control of your energy use.

## Cooperation Among Cooperatives

You may not realize it, but South River EMC is part of a larger network of 900 electric co-ops nationwide. While we are locally-owned by our members, we also have the advantage of working with co-ops across the country to share ideas and leverage innovations our colleagues might have tried first. As cooperatives, we're collaborators not competitors—a unique aspect of our business model, and we're stronger because of it.

Our energy future will look different than it has in the past, but South River EMC is prepared to adapt. Our mission to you remains the same, to provide reliable power at a cost local families and businesses can afford.

**Easier than ever to manage your account.**

Just search for and download **South River EMC** from your Apple or Google App Store.

The App lets you access account info, pay your bills, report an outage, and much more!

South River Electric Membership Corporation  
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## Replacing Windows To Improve Comfort

Windows, doors and skylights can gain and lose heat several different ways, which impact comfort and cost.

If windows are a source of discomfort for your family, replacement might be the solution.

South River EMC offers a re-

bate on window replacement.

For details on the rebate offered, visit [sremc.com/energy-star-windows](https://sremc.com/energy-star-windows).

## Preparing To Save This Summer

As we get closer to warmer weather and pool openings, it might be time to consider upgrading your pool pump.

A pump is essentially the heart of a pool's circulation system. It pulls water from the pool through the skimmer and main drain, pushes it through the filter, and

returns it to the pool through the main returns.

By choosing a pump with more than one speed, you can tailor water and energy use to task needs and that means savings all around. Some tasks do not require the high water and energy use of a single-speed

pump, and you could be saving with a pump that has options.

Replacing a single-speed pump with a variable or two-speed pump could make you eligible for a rebate as well. For details on the rebate, visit [sremc.com/pool-pumps](https://sremc.com/pool-pumps).

## Weatherization Work Eligible For Rebate

Whether it's a warm or cold day, having a weatherized home is important in respect to comfort and cost.

By weatherizing moving parts, like doors and windows, and caulking non-moving parts, like plumbing penetrations, window-sills and more, you can improve comfort and cost. However,

sometimes costly work is needed.

Community Action offers a weatherization package for single family or manufactured low-income homes with no cost to you.

The package 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.

By having work completed by Community Action, you could be eligible for a rebate. In order to qualify for the rebate the entire package must be completed.

For details, visit [sremc.com/weatherization](https://sremc.com/weatherization).

## A HERO Home Saves

A High Efficiency Residential Option, or HERO, home is eligible for rebates.

HERO homes, when researched, cover several topics of housing, but the one discussed and rebated here, is a home built

30% more efficient than a home built to current North Carolina building code.

This is done in one of two ways. Straightforward and inflexible with specific requirements, or with more flexibility

and document requirements. The HERO code is focused solely on improvements to the thermal enclosure.

For details on the rebates offered, visit [sremc.com/hero-program](https://sremc.com/hero-program).

## If HVAC Replacement Is Necessary

Depending on the age and efficiency of your heating and cooling system, replacing it might help you save.

If you are in the market to replace your system, efficiency is a good item to consider. The

seasonal energy efficiency ratio 2, or SEER2, measures the cooling efficiency of a unit.

The higher the SEER2 rating, the more efficient the system is at its job. With a high efficiency unit and energy-efficient practices you

could see some savings.

By installing a higher SEER2 rated system, you could be eligible for a rebate. For details on rebates offered visit [sremc.com/energy-star-heating-cooling](https://sremc.com/energy-star-heating-cooling).

## Preparing For Water Heater Replacement

Having hot water is expected, so when you turn the tap on and the water doesn't warm up, it's a problem.

It's best to have replacement ideas before this happens.

A heat pump water heater pulls heat from the space surrounding it and is 2-3 times more efficient,

although more costly than a standard electric water heater.

Meanwhile, a solar water heater uses the sun to heat water. These systems are particularly effective if you use a lot of hot water and have a good solar resource.

Research water heaters, so

when the cold water hits you're ready.

For water heating rebates, visit [sremc.com/energy-efficient-water-heating](https://sremc.com/energy-efficient-water-heating).



## Message from Advise Guy Robert Talton



After my last article: **Unveiling the Reality of Plug-in Energy Saving Devices**, a member asked about the StopWatt, so we were inclined to do some research and here is what we found.

One series of online scams that seemingly never ends is the false claim that Tesla CEO Elon Musk was involved in the creation of an inexpensive "electricity-saving" device that's about the size of a plug-in night light. U.S. Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm was also misleadingly mentioned as purportedly having endorsed the products too.

StopWatt is one of many names of a cheap and constantly rebranded "electricity-saving box" product that scammers have misleadingly associated with Musk, Granholm, Tesla (the company), and even Nikola Tesla himself. Pro Power Saver was one of the other rebranded product names.

According to images of such products, the only words that appeared on the physical devices were, "Intelligent Energy Saver. Electricity-Saving Box. The Result Is the Best." That last bit about "the result is the best" appeared to be poorly translated English. Furthermore, these devices, so called energy savers, are typically cheaply made in foreign lands and

could present a fire hazard to the owners.

Names like StopWatt and Pro Power Saver don't appear on the products since the rebranding from "electricity-saving box" was apparently only a marketing tactic and had no bearing on the creation of the device.

Scams for these "electricity-saving boxes" usually begin with an online ad displayed on a website or in an email newsletter that claims the compact, inexpensive device can save homeowners 90% off their utility bill. Those ads then lead to a scam article that falsely claims Musk created StopWatt.

Continuing with the scam article, it goes on to tell a sad story of a woman named "Dorothy Smith," purportedly a Tesla employee, who died of heat stroke in her home. According to the story, her death inspired Musk to create StopWatt.

For Musk, this was more than just an invention to fight back against the greedy electric companies. The false claim is that when tragedy struck the Tesla factory, Musk knew he had to act. Dorothy Smith was a 64-year-old Tesla employee who died of heat stroke after falling behind on her electric bills and her service was shut off in the middle of a record-break-

ing heat wave. Her youngest daughter came to check up on her

after many unanswered phone calls and tragically found Dorothy lifeless on the couch with her husband.

None of this is true. Articles that claim Musk and Tesla created StopWatt are both fiction and scams. Further, there's no record of a Tesla employee named "Dorothy Smith" having died of heat stroke.

When looking for ways to save energy, avoid scams and consider proven measures such as air sealing and insulation. Regular maintenance of HVAC systems, coupled with the routine replacement of return air filters, proves to be instrumental. Prioritizing air infiltration and space conditioning within the home remains one of the most effective approaches. Additionally, maintaining appliances in optimal working condition, utilizing LED lighting, and powering off devices when not in use are fundamental practices that contribute significantly to energy conservation.



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