

# South River EMC Communicator

September 2024

## Local Diaper Banks Step Up

*A 2023 National Diaper Bank Network, or NDBN, study of North Carolina found that the state had a total of 345,005 children under the age of three.*

And what do most of those children wear? Diapers.

The study also found that one in two of the families surveyed were forced to make tough decisions in regard to diaper purchases.

On average, a child uses between 2,000 and 2,200 diapers a year and like most items at the store, costs have increased.

"We began a diaper bank because we started seeing families struggling with the cost of providing adequate diapering to their children," said Tara Fish, executive director of the Harnett County Partnership for Children. "When I dug deeper into the concept, I realized that there was not a single government assistance program that was helping these families."

A diaper bank is a nonprofit organization formed for the sole purpose of providing diapers to people who do not have access to diapers. Across our area, many local non-profits are helping to meet the need of parents of young children.

"There are more than a dozen organizations that host a diaper bank, many are in concert with a food bank," said Sharon Moyer, Community Engagement Administrator at Cumberland County Partnership for Children. "However, the Diaper Bank of NC provides two community-based distribution points. One is Catholic Charities and the

*continued on page B*



### Reminder:

South River EMC offices will be closed Monday, Sept. 2, in observance of Labor Day.



South River EMC earns this award based on data modeled by the ACSI® in 2023. Award criteria are determined by the ACSI based on customers rating their satisfaction with South River EMC in a survey independent of the syndicated ACSI Energy Utility Study. For more about the ACSI, visit [theacsi.org/badges](https://theacsi.org/badges). ACSI and its logo are registered trademarks of the American Customer Satisfaction Index LLC.

other is the Armed Forces YMCA, housed on Ft. Liberty, we just didn't have the room for distribution here."

"We saw a huge need as parents were requesting support in this manner," said Donna Jackson, executive director of the Sampson County Partnership for Children. "We work with low income parents and they are struggling to pay for infant needs. They would inquire about diapers for help."

The Sampson County Partnership for Children received an Operation Round Up grant to help stock their bank.

"The Operation Round Up grant had a huge impact in supporting

our diaper bank," said Jackson. "The funds were helpful and did keep the program running. We order diapers online from Wal-Mart and distribute them on Monday and Wednesdays from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m."

Using word-of-mouth and signage has helped both organizations to share the need and the location of their diaper banks. Meanwhile, the North Carolina Diaper Bank's web site shares information on Cumberland County diaper banks.

"When we started with the Diaper Bank of NC, we saw a large amount of families stating they were making choices between buying diapers or paying a bill. In

addition, more than 60% of active duty service members reported having difficulty paying for diapers," said Moyer. "This made Cumberland County the ideal place for the Diaper Bank of NC to start their Truckload of Hope."

All organizations are accepting donations.

"As we have grown and supported families throughout the last 5 years, we have seen the need increase from families all over the county," said Fish.

If you're interested in learning more or donating, visit [harnettsmartstart.org](http://harnettsmartstart.org), [scpfc.org](http://scpfc.org) or [ncdiaperbank.org](http://ncdiaperbank.org).

## Power On Scholarship Recipient Selected

South River EMC has selected Rudy Perez and James Wilks as recipients of the 2024 Power On Scholarship.

Perez, a resident of Godwin, and Wilks, a resident of Dunn, were each selected to receive a scholarship to attend the 16-week Electric Line Construction Technology Academy at Nash Community College.



Rudy Perez



James Wilks

"Line workers are the backbone of our industry," said Catherine O'Dell, vice president of member services and public relations. "To ensure that our industry remains robust, reliable and responsive for the benefit of all consumers, we are making an investment in the future by providing scholarships to support future line workers."

Applicants were reviewed and points assigned based on

how closely the applicant met requirements. Points were given for the following areas: completed application, education, narrative and interview.

The scholarship is offered by South River EMC and covers the cost of tuition, books, boots and safety glasses. The purpose is to provide interested individuals with the ability to gain the experience and training necessary for a successful career as an electric line worker.

Upon successful completion of the program, individuals receive the Associate of Applied Science degree and will possess the necessary skills for employment in the dynamic electric utility field.

As recipients, Perez and Wilks will begin the Electric Line Construction Technology Academy Aug. 15.

Information on the Power On Scholarship can be found at [sremc.com/power](http://sremc.com/power).

# Bright Ideas Application Period Closing

*Teachers, this is your last chance to apply before the 2024 Bright Ideas application period closes.*

The early bird deadline closed Aug. 15, and many teachers have already submitted their bright ideas for chances at a gift card, but there is still time for applications.

Bright Ideas is an educational grant program that funds projects up to \$2,500 to educators in public, K-12 schools, with innovative, classroom-based ideas.

Since 1994, North Carolina's electric cooperatives have awarded \$15.8 million in grants

to benefit 3.65 million students, and that number continues to grow.

The Cooperative awards over \$50,000 per year to local educators.

South River EMC awards grants to educators in four counties and



have introduced many new and varied learning methods.

There are books, math manipulatives, reading programs, escape boxes, robots and so much more.

There's still time to apply, and grants can be for any amount up to \$2,500. There is no limit to how many times a teacher can apply.

If you'd like details on the program, visit [sremc.com/bright-ideas](https://sremc.com/bright-ideas). If you're interested in applying, visit [ncbrightideas.com](https://ncbrightideas.com).

South River EMC only accepts applications online through Sept. 15, so visit [ncbrightideas.com](https://ncbrightideas.com) today!

## Honor A Veteran, Sponsor A Flag



Fields of Honor will be on display this November and you can honor or celebrate a veteran with your sponsorship. Funds will go to a local veteran organization. Learn more at [sremcfields.com](https://sremcfields.com).

# Let's Talk About The Youth Tour *Words From The Tourists*

Electric cooperatives have been sending students to Washington, D.C., since the 1960s. The program allowed high school students to get a look at politics and see some sites.

Since that time, thousands of students across the country have attended the Rural Electric Youth Tour, now the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. These students meet others from across the country, see monuments, visit museums and meet with Congressional members, and their aides, to learn about how the government works.

There are, of course, social aspects as well to include youth day, a boat ride down the Potomac River and an all-states dance. This year, we were excited to send high school juniors, Mallory Edwards (ME) and Brady West (BW), on this weeklong trip and we asked for some feedback.

What better way to learn about what makes the trip for students? We have compiled those answers for prospective students interested in learning more.

## **What appealed to you about the Youth Tour?**

**BW:** The people, not only did we have people from all across North Carolina, but people from all across the country. It was a fun and interesting experience to meet all the different types of people.

**ME:** I was so excited to have an opportunity to visit the famous monuments honoring influential Americans while also touring places, such as the Capitol, that have served such an important



*Brady West and Mallory Edwards*

function in our nation's history.

I was also highly interested in the opportunity to meet some of our legislators and get a glimpse of what working in an elected official's office entails. Additionally, other fun opportunities such as a cruise down the Potomac River made the Youth Tour even more appealing.

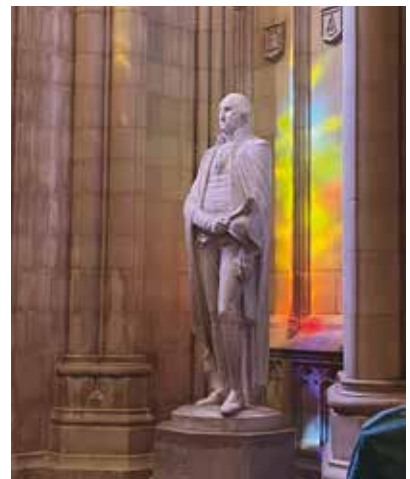
A full list of activities can be found on our web site at [sremc.com/electric-cooperative-youth-tour](http://sremc.com/electric-cooperative-youth-tour).

## **Did one experience stand out over others on this trip?**

**ME:** While every Youth Tour experience was memorable, touring the Capitol was one of my favorite experiences in Washington, D.C. The rotunda was amazing, while the paintings depicting our nation's history and the statues of great Americans displayed there, were truly incredible.

**BW:** The best experience was either the final ball or the boat cruise! The final ball had everyone from all youth tour groups there and it was like one big party with everyone you knew and didn't know! There were many kind people I met, especially from Texas and it was just excellent experience provided! The boat cruise had a similar effect, but on the water! Overall, both were wonderful!

Schedules are made by states, so there may be times you interact with students from South Carolina, or Texas, and another time you might see someone from Iowa. Most often you will be with fellow North Carolinians.



## **What would you tell students interested in the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour?**

**BW:** I would have to tell them it's like touring everywhere you wanted to in DC, with free time, and with a bunch of cool people you never met before!

*continued on page E*

*TOUR continued from page D*

**ME:** This trip is an opportunity to make lifelong memories and gain a deeper appreciation for our nation, its history, and our electric cooperatives. Through this trip, students are able to visit all the highlights of D.C. while building friendships with their fellow youth tourists.

**Was there anything you didn't do, but wish you could have?**

**ME:** While meeting the staffers of our senators was good, it would have been great to have met the senators as well.

Nevertheless, I gained so many great experiences. I just wish we had more time in D.C.

**BW:** There was nothing that I

wanted to do that I didn't get to do, so that was good.

**What experience impacted you most?**

**BW:** It is a great experience in terms of both people, experience and learning about yourself in the world around you!

**ME:** There are so many appealing parts of the Youth Tour that

would be great to incorporate in an article about the trip. It is a great mix of fun and educational opportunities as well as relationship building.

The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour is an opportunity for current sophomores and juniors to travel for a week to Washington, D.C. and visit the sites, meet and make friends with students across the country, for details visit [sremc.com/electric-cooperative-youth-tour](https://sremc.com/electric-cooperative-youth-tour).



## South River EMC ACSI Score: 89

In Q2 (2024), South River EMC received an ACSI score of 89 on a 100-point scale. South River EMC's score is higher when compared to publicly measured cooperative utility scores reported in the syndicated 2024 ACSI Energy Utility Study and places South River EMC 15 points higher than the average investor-owned utility score of 74, 14 points higher than the average municipal utility score of 75.

**MANDATORY DISCLAIMER:**

*Compared to publicly measured energy utilities in the ACSI® survey of customers rating their own energy utility.*

*Results based on data provided by South River EMC, collected between Apr. 1 – June 30, 2024. ACSI did not regulate the survey administration or sample size. ACSI and its logo are registered trademarks of the American Customer Satisfaction Index LLC. For more about the ACSI, visit [theacsi.org](https://theacsi.org).*



Compared to publicly measured energy utilities in the ACSI® survey of customers rating their own energy utility. Results based on data provided by South River EMC, collected between April 1–June 30, 2024. ACSI did not regulate the survey administration or sample size. ACSI and its logo are registered trademarks of the American Customer Satisfaction Index LLC. For more about the ACSI, visit [www.theacsi.org](https://www.theacsi.org).



## Are Heating And Cooling Changes Needed?

As summer comes to an end and cooler weather starts to be considered, it's time to get your HVAC unit serviced and it might even be time to replace it.

Heating and cooling systems are the biggest contributor to electric costs each month. You can make changes to your routines and settings, but sometimes a replacement is just what is needed.

When it comes to selecting a new heating and cooling system, look at the seasonal energy efficiency ratio, or SEER, rating. The SEER measures the cooling efficiency of a system and the higher the

SEER rating, the more efficient a system is at cooling. Of course, you'll also need to consider size and perhaps even manufacturer, but by keeping efficiency in the front, you can focus on saving.

South River EMC offers rebates on air source heat pumps, central AC and geothermal heat pumps. If you're in the market for a new heating and cooling system, consider replacing it with a high efficiency system.

For details visit [sremc.com/energy-star-heating-cooling](https://sremc.com/energy-star-heating-cooling).

## Last Call For Pool Pump Savings

Swim season is coming to a close and that means the pool will be closing down. It doesn't mean there isn't an opportunity to look for savings though. As we leave the summer season, and move toward cooler temperatures, sales will be on to get rid of those summer staples and a deal on a pool pump might be the best thing to look for when shopping.

Pools typically come with a single-speed pump, one speed for all pump tasks. They tend to use more energy and water than necessary to perform tasks.

Replacing that type of pump with a variable or a two-speed pump allows you to tailor water and energy use to the tasks your pump is performing. This ultimately helps you to save energy and water by matching use to task.

If you decide to install a variable or two-speed pool pump, it might be eligible for a rebate. For details on the rebate offered by South River EMC, visit [sremc.com/pool-pumps](https://sremc.com/pool-pumps).

## The High Efficiency Home Option

The high efficiency residential option, or HERO, home is a home-built 30 percent more efficient than standard building code.

This is due to requirements for slightly better insulation, fenestration, air sealing, equipment, and lighting packages. The certification can be achieved in one of two ways, either the performance or the prescriptive path.

The performance path is flexible, requiring an energy cost analysis (provided to you by your HERS Rater and signed-off by a Design Professional) as proof that the home you are building will have

energy costs that are less than or equal to that same home built to the HERO Code's prescriptive requirements.

Meanwhile, the prescriptive path is straightforward but inflexible: it involves complying fully with a list of specific requirements for things like insulation, high-efficiency lighting, window U-factors, whole house tightness and duct leakage testing, among other things.

By choosing either of these options, you could be eligible for a rebate for South River EMC, for details on the rebate visit [sremc.com/hero-program](https://sremc.com/hero-program).

## Weatherization Helps Cut Costs

Heating and cooling costs, woah!

As we have had countless days of heat, hopefully your home has been able to stay cool. If that has grown more costly, would a little work make it better?

Air infiltration, or the loss of cooled inside air to the outside, is one cause of being uncomfortable in your home. But being proactive and caulking and weatherstripping can help. However, certain aspects of repair and upgrade can be costly.

Low-income households can take advantage of

the weatherization package for single family or manufactured homes which include 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.

In having work completed by a Community Action program, you could be eligible for a rebate from the Cooperative. To qualify for the rebate, the entire package must be completed.

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



## Being Prepared For Replacement Helps

Do you have an idea of what type of water heater you want when the time comes?

A standard electric storage water heater has an estimated lifespan of 10-15 years and when it goes out, you'll want to get it replaced as soon as possible.

Now, you could replace it with another electric storage water heater but first think about how much it costs you. A storage water heater brings water into it and then periodically heats it to your set temperature, a recommended 120 degrees, and it does that all day long. This periodic heating of water in the tank, particularly when no one is home, is not the most efficient option.

You could replace your system with a heat pump water heater, or HPWH, which pulls heat from the surrounding space and deposits it into your tank.



By using the existing heat around the unit, it is 2-3 times more efficient than a standard electric water heater. While a little more costly than a standard electric water heater, an HPWH, can help you save.

You might consider a solar water heater, which is typically roof-mounted. These units are more efficient because they use a free resource to heat your water. How efficient depends largely on solar availability and water use. When considering a solar water heater you want to explore options, including installers, types of systems and local codes. Make sure it's the best option for you.

If you're installing or thinking of installing one of the previously mentioned units, check out the information on the rebates South River EMC offers at [sremc.com/energy-efficient-water-heating](https://www.sremc.com/energy-efficient-water-heating).

## Looking To Replace Windows?

Traditional window materials used in houses across the United States, old single glass pane and later double-pane clear glass, can do a poor job of keeping out the cold and excessive heat.

If you are experiencing discomfort, be it too hot in the summer or too cold in the winter, your windows could be part of the problem.

Replacing windows is a significant investment, but the payback in terms of improved thermal comfort, reduced energy usage, and money saved over time makes replacement a smart choice.

Upgrading to Energy Star-qualified models can save you as much as 7-15% on energy costs, depending on the type of window being replaced. But before you embark on window replacement be sure your home has been weatherized, that your heat pump is running well and that window replacement is necessary.

South River EMC offers a rebate on window replacement, but members are only eligible for one rebate every 20 years. To learn more, read about the rebate at [sremc.com/energy-star-windows](https://www.sremc.com/energy-star-windows).



South River EMC  
**Communicator**

PO Box 931  
Dunn, NC 28335  
910.892.8071  
800.338.5530  
[sremc.com](https://www.sremc.com)



 Touchstone Energy<sup>®</sup> Cooperatives  
The power of human connections<sup>®</sup>