

South River EMC Communicator

October 2024

Is There A Better Rate For You?

Ways to save as temperatures begin to turn

We recently spoke with some members participating in our time-of-use, or TOU, program to see what benefits they are seeing from changes they have made.

But first, what is time-of-use?

During certain times of the day there is greater demand for electricity. Times like cold mornings when everyone is turning up their heat and hot afternoons when people return home and want their air conditioner to work extra hard while they prepare dinner. These “peak” times are when the Cooperative pays the most for the electricity it generates and purchases.

Energy supplies are plentiful overnight when demand is the lowest, so this is the best time to use energy, the less energy used “on-peak”, the lower the costs are to the Cooperative and this benefits members through rates.

The rate offers very attractive energy costs to incentivize use of electricity during off-peak times. Conversely, energy used during on-peak times costs more.

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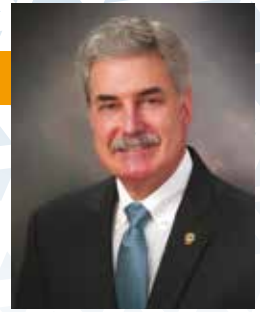


Reminder:

Watch for trick-or-treaters this month.



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. ACSI and its logo are registered trademarks of the American Customer Satisfaction Index LLC.



Committed To Our Community

October is National Co-op Month and South River EMC is joining cooperatives across the U.S. to celebrate. Cooperatives come in all shapes and sizes, but they each have a common goal: to provide goods or services for the members of the co-op.

Electric co-ops, including South River EMC, exist to serve their members. It is our goal to provide safe, affordable, reliable and sustainable energy to our local communities. Because we are led by you, the members-owners that we serve, we continue to evolve to exceed your needs and expectations. Each year, you have an opportunity to vote for the members who will represent your interests on the cooperative board of directors. Your local electric cooperative also returns excess margins to you each year. In 2023 a total of \$4.24 million was returned to our membership in the form of Capital Credit retirements.

This October, as we celebrate Co-op Month, we're focusing on the ways "Co-ops Grow" for their members.

Co-ops Grow Communities: Co-ops help communities grow by promoting economic empowerment, fostering community engagement and supporting the unique needs of co-op members. "Concern for Community" is one of our core principles—and being community-focused is essential to everything we do. How is South River EMC growing our community? Through your participation in the Operation Round Up program since 2007, we have funded over \$3.1 million in community grants to local emergency services, non-profit organizations and schools. Additionally, we have provided over \$1.4 million in educator grants through the Bright Ideas Grant program to provide enhanced classroom experiences. Not only are we strengthening our community, we are also working closely with local economic development professionals to entice new businesses to locate in our area to bring better job opportunities.

Co-ops Grow Together: Co-ops are all about cooperation, not competition. That's why electric co-ops work together to share lessons learned, successful strategies and better ways to serve our members more efficiently. We're better when we grow together! A great example of this is that several cooperatives across the state, in partnership with our power supplier, North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation (NCEMC),

are hosting micro grid and pilot programs and substation battery programs. In addition to improving upon reliability, the lessons learned through these projects will benefit cooperative members statewide. South River EMC along with NCEMC are fortunate to have partnered with Butler Farms in Lillington on a microgrid project. Furthermore, a 2.5-megawatt (mw) battery at our Collier Substation has been installed and a 10 mw battery is being installed at our Butler Substation.

Co-ops Grow Tomorrow's Leaders: Electric co-ops serve as fertile ground for growing tomorrow's leaders through a variety of youth-engagement programs. Whether through school demonstrations, community events or the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour program, we're committed to providing opportunities for local youth to learn and thrive in our community and beyond. South River EMC sponsors three local students to attend the weeklong Youth Tour annually and offers a \$1,000 scholarship to each of these ambassadors. Additionally, we offer scholarships to students headed to universities, community colleges and the line worker academy.

Co-ops Grow for You: Your satisfaction is why we were formed many years ago in order to fulfill a uniquely local purpose. Consequently, we prioritize your satisfaction above all else, as highlighted in our Mission Statement. South River EMC uses the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) to gauge member satisfaction. I'm pleased to report that in Q2 of 2024, we achieved an ACSI score of 89, which far exceeds the top-rated investor-owned utility (IOU) along with municipal and cooperative utility national averages. I commend our exceptional team of employees for providing excellent service to you. Strong member satisfaction performance is a result of our efforts to grow and evolve for you, our member-owner.

We've come a long way since we were formed in 1940 but our commitment to you is as strong as ever.

As I conclude, I want to reaffirm that I am here to serve you. It is my privilege and honor to serve as your CEO. Therefore, if I can assist you, please do not hesitate to contact me. My email address is ceo@sremc.com and my direct line phone number is 910.230.2990.

Congratulations!

A South River EMC Scholarship has been awarded to Morgan Naylor, daughter of James and Stephanie Naylor of Godwin. Having graduated from Midway High School, Naylor is attending UNC-Wilmington to study marketing.



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"I decided to sign up for the time-of-use rate (or "Switch and Save"), because initially, I realized I was at work during the summer 2-6 p.m. time slot when conservation was necessary," said member Keith Messner. "But even if I am at home, I have found that I can pre-chill or pre-heat the house prior to the peak times so that the house is comfortable and still save money."

This is a sentiment that another participant in the program shared.

"This program has been wonderful," said Barbara Stroud of Clinton. "I don't have central air conditioning, but I pre-cool my home and am fine for those hours until the unit can begin cooling again."

During the summer, members on the TOU rate are asked to shift energy use from 2-6 p.m. and in winter, from 6-9 a.m.

"I am seeing an approximately 40% savings and that includes charging an electric car," said Messner.

Meanwhile, Stroud finds the plan works best for her because she doesn't cook a lot, so she's been blessed with a lower electric bill each month, made even lower by using less energy during the peak times.

"I really haven't had to change my habits," she said. "And if my family is visiting on the weekend, the rate doesn't impact us then either."

Messner has all his thermostats set to pre-chill or heat about two hours before peak-use time, and during peak time, his heating and cooling units shut off. He also charges his electric vehicle during the super-off-peak time, which is when energy costs are at their lowest.

The time-of-use rate is very beneficial to people with school-aged children and people who work outside the home.

Both members who participate in the program would

recommend it, so to learn more about the TOU rate, visit [sremc.com/TOU](https://www.sremc.com/TOU).

If you elect to move to the TOU rate, you are under no obligation to stay on it if it does not work for you.

Currently, the TOU rate is not in effect for holidays and weekends. If you're thinking the rate might be for you and your home, contact South River EMC at 910.892.8071, or visit [sremc.com/TOU](https://www.sremc.com/TOU).



ELECTION DAY IS RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER

Are you ready? Swipe to become a co-op voter in five steps!

ONE WAY

CO-OPS VOTE

STEP #1
Register to Vote
 Check your state's registration deadline, some allow on Election Day while others require that you register in advance.

STEP #2
Learn voter details for your state.
 Get information about voting deadlines, absentee voting and polling places.

STEP #3
Get Educated!
 Do your research and learn about issues critical to keeping your electricity affordable and reliable.

STEP #4
Know the candidates and policymakers
 Find out how they support affordable, reliable electricity in your community

STEP #5
Share your story!
 Talk to your family and friends about your co-op, tell them why you're a Co-op Voter and ask them to join you at the polls.

LEARN MORE AT
VOTE.COOP/5STEPS

Cybersecurity Tips for a Safer Digital World

Did you know the average household with internet access owns about 17 connected devices?

That figure covers a wide range of electronics, including smart phones, streaming devices, home assistants and more. Given our increasing reliance on internet-connected technologies, the likelihood of new cyber threats is ever-present.

South River EMC is committed to ensuring our local system is safe and secure. We routinely monitor and manage cyber risks, and work together with other co-ops to share the latest advancements in cybersecurity that make us stronger.

Working together to stay safe online, we lower the risk of cyber threats to our systems, accounts and sensitive data.

October is National Cybersecurity Month, and while cyber security should be practiced year-round, we'd like to share a few tips to bolster your safety.

- **Beware of phishing attempts.** Phishing occurs when criminals use phony emails, direct messages or other digital communications encouraging you to click a bad link or download a malicious attachment. If you receive a suspicious email or message that includes urgent language, offers too good to be true, generic greetings, poor grammar or an unusual sender address, it could be phishing. If you spot one, block the sender. (If you receive a suspicious work email, report it to the appropriate IT contact.)

- **Create strong, unique passwords.** Remember that length trumps complexity. Strong

passwords contain at least 12 characters and include a mix of letters, numbers and symbols. Create unique passwords for each account you have and use phrases you can easily remember.

- **Enable multi-factor authentication when possible.** Multi-factor authentication, or 2-factor authentication, adds an extra layer of security to your accounts. These extra security steps can include facial recognition, fingerprint access, or one-time codes sent to your email or phone.

- **Update software regularly.** Software and internet-connected devices, including personal computers, smartphones and tablets, should always be current on updates to reduce the risk of infection from ransomware and malware. When possible, configure devices to automatically update or notify you when an update is available.

Visit staysafeonline.org to learn about additional cybersecurity tips.





This Veterans Day, each South River EMC office will be adorned with a field of hundreds of flags to salute the contributions of those who have served in defense of this great nation. Flags will be on display from Nov. 8-15.

If you want to recognize a special veteran, sponsorship opportunities are available until Oct. 29. Money raised will be donated to a local veteran organizations. Please visit sremcfields.com to sponsor a flag or donate.



Window Replacement Could Improve Comfort

Let's say you've got a high efficiency heating and cooling system, your home has been weatherized and insulated and you're now considering replacing windows to save

energy, money and improve comfort.

It's an undertaking, but at times windows are one of the items that could need replaced in your home. After all, 30% of a home's

heating energy can be lost through windows.

South River EMC offers a rebate for window replacement, for details visit [sremc.com/energy-star-windows](https://www.sremc.com/energy-star-windows).

Weatherization Work Could Yield Rebate

As temperatures cool down, you might begin noticing more and more.

That's because of air infiltration, or the loss of inside air out and vice versa. A little is to be expected, but too much makes for an uncomfortable home and chang-

es to your thermostat.

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

The weatherization package in-

cludes: 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 on the rebate visit [sremc.com/weatherization](https://www.sremc.com/weatherization).

High Efficiency Residential Option Savings

There are houses being built everyday and by electing to build a high efficiency residential option or HERO, home, you could be saving money.

HERO homes are 30% more efficient than homes built to code, and there isn't just one way to

make them efficient.

The prescriptive path is straightforward but inflexible, involving full compliance with a list of specific requirements.

The performance path is more flexible, requiring an energy cost analysis as proof that the home

will have energy costs less than or equal to the same home built to the HERO code's prescriptive requirements.

For information on HERO homes, or the rebate offered by South River EMC, visit [sremc.com/hero-program](https://www.sremc.com/hero-program).

Don't Be Left In The Cold

If you haven't had your heating and cooling unit serviced recently, this might be the time, after all, you don't want to be sitting around one chilly Saturday trying to find someone to come out and fix your heat pump, or even worse, replace it.

If replacement is in the cards, be prepared, know what you want. Make sure your system

is the appropriate size for your home to keep up with heating and cooling needs. Then, there's the seasonal energy efficiency ratio 2, or SEER2, which measures the cooling efficiency of the system. The higher the SEER rating, the more efficient the system.

The average lifespan of a heating and cooling system is about 10 years, so it never hurts to be

prepared. Are you replacing an air source, a central air system or thinking of installing a geothermal?

South River EMC offers rebates on high efficiency systems, meaning 16 SEER2 or greater. For details on the rebates offered visit sremc.com/energy-star-heating-cooling.

Warm Water Necessity

Warm water is important for many tasks, so if something happens to your water heater, you need to be prepared for a replacement.

Will you replace with an electric storage water heater? Or will you upgrade to a heat pump or solar water heater? Both systems have

their advantages dependent on your needs.

Do yourself a favor and look at the options available before replacement is necessary. Another option might be more efficient, as well as being a better fit for your home and family.

Don't let a cool shower ruin

your day, be prepared and know what options can help you save and earn you a rebate as well.

For details on the rebate offered at South River EMC visit sremc.com/energy-efficient-water-heating.



Message from Advise Guy Robert Talton



Protecting Your Home During Storms

We all enjoy the comfort of being in a cozy, well-lit home, especially when the weather outside is harsh. However, power outages can lead to spoiled food and even health risks if medical equipment fails. Having a generator can be a life-saver, keeping your home running until the power is restored. While we work hard to provide reliable service, we can't guarantee uninterrupted service.

Generators: There are three types of residential generators: portable, inverter, and standby. When choosing the right generator for your home, it's important to understand the pros and cons of each option and the wattage you'll need. Make a list of essential appliances and devices you'd want to keep running during a power outage and add up the wattage. Consulting with an electrician or a generator company can also help you estimate your needs.

• **Portable Generators:** These are the most affordable option. Portable generators are smaller and usually power a few key appliances. Additionally, you should use an appropriately sized extension cord (14 gauge or higher) to prevent fire or electrocution. Keep in mind that

carbon monoxide detectors and fresh air are a must when operating portable generators.

• **Inverter Generators:** These are popular for their fuel efficiency, quiet operation, and clean power output. Inverter generators adjust their engine speed based on the amount of electricity needed, making them more efficient than standard portable models. Inverters are gasoline-powered and are ideal for those looking for a balance of portability and efficiency.

• **Standby Generators:** These are permanently installed outside your home and automatically switch on when the power goes out. They are larger and can power your entire home, often running on propane or natural gas. Standby generators are the safest to operate, but they are also the most expensive, with units costing around \$20,000 for 20,000 watts. Installation should be done by a professional, as it requires wiring to the home's electrical panel.

Regardless of the type of generator you choose, regular maintenance is essential. Generators should be tested monthly to ensure they're working properly.

Surge Protection: Power out-

ages aren't the only threat to home appliances and electronics—voltage surges can also cause significant damage. A surge, which is a sudden increase in voltage, can destroy delicate electronic circuits found in everything from refrigerators to computers. Surges can be caused by various events, including lightning strikes, accidents involving power lines, or even large appliances turning on and off inside your home.

To protect devices from surges, it's recommended to use surge suppressors. Surge suppressors divert excess electricity away from sensitive devices, protecting them from damage. For the best protection, a two-stage approach is ideal:

South River EMC offers both whole-house protection and individual plug-in suppressors through the Strike Guard program. This equipment can prevent voltage surges from damaging large appliances or slowly wearing down microprocessors in computers and other electronics.

For more information on this information please visit [sremc.com](https://www.sremc.com) or email us at AdviseGuys@sremc.com.



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Communicator

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 Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives
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