

South River EMC Communicator

December 2024

Refunds Distributed

This year, South River EMC refunded \$3,654,160 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:

- **7,734** members received refund checks.
 - **35,962** 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 25% of the amount allocated to members for 2023, as well as the remainder of the 2008 year; and 23% of the 2009 year.

The remaining 2023 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.



Reminder:

South River EMC offices will be closed Dec. 24 & 25 in celebration of Christmas, and Jan. 1 in celebration of the New Year.



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.

It's All About The Kids

Most educators grow up saying they knew they wanted to be teachers, and they had that one that made them love the thought of teaching.

For this teacher, it's always been about the kids.

"I have a business degree and never planned to be a teacher, but after having three children, I wanted to be in education for them," said Shannon Dawkins, media coordinator. "Once I started teaching, I knew this is where I belonged."

Currently the media coordinator at Stedman Primary, Dawkins has worked diligently in her career to ensure her students are getting what they need.

"Years ago, when I worked at Mac Williams Middle School, I had the pleasure of working with an experienced media coordinator and she introduced me to the love of writing grants," said Dawkins. "During the school year, I observe classrooms and students, listen to parent-teacher conversations, and meet with the administration team to determine what we need to im-

prove our learning within our school for students. My ideas are all student-centered."

Seeing what children need, she has written and received at least eight Operation Round Up grants and three Bright Ideas grants through the years from South River EMC.

"iPads, learning tools, electronic interactive globes, handheld microscopes, Hispanic books, reading tables, headphones, Osmos, Raz Kids, Playshifu, merge cubes, and outside classroom garden supplies," said Dawkins, of the items she has purchased with her grants.

Not only is it rewarding to her students, who receive the benefit from the grants, but for Dawkins as well, as she feels as if she has accomplished something huge.

"Due to the grants I have received the students have participated in various activities and experiences. Some include various STEM activities, planting and caring for a garden, exploring the world through geographic tools, educational apps on iPads, and resources for our ELL (English Language Learners) students," said Dawkins. "Due to these opportunities, the students have a true passion for learning and building their knowledge. Many of these resources and activities have opened the door for students who would not normally have the opportunity."

Not only has she applied for Operation Round Up and Bright Ideas grants, but also the Youth Stock Grant, Donors Choose, Arts Council, AFCEA,



NC Aquarium Ft. Fisher Grant and Walmart.

With so many applications, you have to wonder, does one stand out for Dawkins?

"Raz Kids and iPads. This application provides differentiated text for students to read. What made this grant so wonderful was the ability for each student to use Raz Kids at school and provide a learning tool at home."

Her grants have gone on to improve lessons for students year after year and continue to impact lessons and learners.

Dawkins also continues to apply for grants as ideas present themselves, because it's always a rush to not only receive funding, but put it into action.

And she has a message for teachers.

"These grants are crucial for schools with tight budgets. Write them with high hopes and know you are doing this for the school and students. Start off with a small grant to get the feel of it and each year after continue writing them. Don't give up if you don't receive the grant. Re-write it for the next go round."



Celebrating 375 Years Of Service In 2024



Left to right: Twanna Torian, 5 years; Debbie Shride, 25 years; Robin Jackson, 20 years; Nathaniel Lucas, 15 years



Troy Dailey, 30 years



Left to right: Ray Love, 25 years; Chelsea Smith, 5 years; Chris Spears, 10 years; Maribel Gonzalez, 20 years; Kacey Johnson, 20 years; Andy Garris, 20 years.

Not pictured: Kim Gonzales, 30 years

Left to right: Andy Howard, 35 years; Tim Tart, 10 years; Craig Jackson, 35 years; Mike Colletti, 10 years; Lance Beuckman, 5 years; Daniel Purvis, 10 years; Tucker Martin, 10 years; Jeff Carroll, 35 years



New Year, New Way To Pay?

South River EMC offers members many ways to pay their bill(s).

- ▶ You can pay in-person at an office.
- ▶ You can use the kiosk outside of our offices, great for after-hours payment.
- ▶ You can pay online.
- ▶ You can pay at other

locations using either Money Gram or Check Out.

- ▶ You can draft your payment.



- ▶ You can pay roughly the same amount each month with budget billing.
- ▶ We accept e-checks, cash, credit cards.

If you are looking for a new way to pay, visit us at sremc.com/payment-options, and figure out which option works best for you.

Bright Ideas Grants Awarded

Each year, South River EMC awards Bright Ideas grants to local schools and educators.

This year, we were able to award \$59,670 to the following schools:

Alderman Road Elementary
\$722

Anderson Creek Primary
\$2339

Coats-Erwin Middle \$500

Dixon Road Elementary
\$2500

Gallberry Farms Elementary
\$1947

Gray's Creek High \$1960

Harnett Central High \$2450

Harnett County Early College (x4) \$3495

Lakewood High (x3) \$4805

Long Hill Elementary \$990

Midway Elementary \$1014

Midway High (x2) \$2939

Northwest Harnett Elementary (x3) \$3702

Overhills Elementary \$2303

Overhills High (x2) \$3107

Overhills Middle \$880

Pine Forest High \$2487

Plain View Elementary
\$546

Polenta Elementary School (x2) \$3400

Raleigh Road Elementary
\$1349

Roseboro Elementary (x6)
\$6169

Roseboro-Salemburg Middle
\$1870

Sampson Middle \$1243

South Johnston High (x2)
\$5000

Triton High \$2043

For more information on Bright Ideas grants, and the full list of 2024-2025 recipients, please visit sremc.com/bright-ideas.

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



Bright Ideas
EDUCATION GRANTS

We Want Your A's!

South River EMC is reminding parents to send their children's report cards containing at least one A to us!

That's right, it's time for "Give Us An A."

"Give Us An A" recognizes students for 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 selects 15 students from those entered to receive a \$25 gift card.

This program is open to students who are members, or children of members, of South River EMC.

Report card drawing is set for Feb. 4.



South River EMC Maintains ACSI Score of 89



In Q3 (2024), South River EMC received an ACSI score of 89. 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 July 1 – Sept. 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.

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 July 1 – September 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.



Sure, Let's Talk Pool Pumps

It's not pool season, but it will be again before you know it. In the downtime, if you're thinking about ways to save energy, replacing an older pool pump might be key.

When pools are installed, they typically have a single-speed

pump, which uses one speed and one water amount, the highest, to perform all tasks. This is often unnecessary and can be costly.

Ring in a new year with savings and consider switching to a variable or two-speed pool

pump, by doing so, you're able to save energy and water, as well as being eligible for a rebate.

For details on the rebate on pool pumps visit sremc.com/pool-pumps.

Heat Pumps: The Efficient Option For The South

Heat pumps are the most common heating and cooling system in warmer climates like ours. That being the case, having an efficient heating and cooling system helps you to remain comfortable no matter the weather.

The efficiency of a system is based on the seasonal energy

efficiency ratio 2, or SEER2, rating, which measures the cooling efficiency of the system. The higher the SEER2 rating, the more efficient a system is for your home.

While energy use is dependent on several factors, like temperature settings, age, and efficiency,

they all play a part. Replacing a heat pump with a high-efficiency system is a huge help.

South River EMC offers a rebate on the installation of a high-efficiency heating and cooling system. For details on the rebate visit sremc.com/energy-star-heating-cooling.

If Window Replacement Is Necessary

Window replacements can improve comfort and view point.

Now, if your home is drafty, you should not assume windows are the cause. However, if you have made changes and updates and

find you still have some draftiness, window replacement might be the final key.

South River EMC offers a rebate on window replacements, but it is one replacement per

home for 20 years.

For details on the rebate offered by South River EMC, visit sremc.com/energy-star-windows.

HERO Homes Help Save

The high efficiency residential option, or HERO, home is a home built to save.

Either by the prescriptive or the performance path, both offer

ways to help you save as you purchase or build a home that is 30% more efficient than a home built to standard current building code.

Details on requirements and rebates offered on this efficient home option offered by South River EMC, visit sremc.com/hero-program.

The Importance Of Water Heater Choice

Having hot water is important.

There are several types of water heating systems, and you should look for the one that best fits you and your family.

Most homes have an electric storage water heater, which means water is heated throughout the day, even if no one is using it.

There is a heat pump water heater, 2-3 times more efficient than a storage water heater, moving heat rather than making it.

Then, there is the solar water heater, where using the sun, you heat your water for use. These systems can be highly efficient with the appropriate solar resource.

However, don't select a system just because it sounds good. Do your research and find a system that is both efficient and appropriate for you.

South River EMC offers rebates on efficient water heaters. For details visit sremc.com/energy-efficient-water-heating.

Weatherizing to Save And Benefit

South River EMC offers a rebate for members who take part in Community Action's weatherization package.

Having the right amount of insulation and sealing air leaks is important. After all, approximately 50% of your electric bill is attribut-

ed to heating and cooling your home. With leaks and insufficient insulation, you can expect those costs to be even higher.

In having the weatherization package completed by a Community Action program, 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.

For details visit sremc.com/weatherization.



Message from Advise Guy Eric Gainey



Energy-Saving Tips for the Holiday Season

The holiday season is a time of joy, family gatherings, and festive decorations. However, with all the activities, it can also lead to increased energy consumption. By taking a few mindful steps, you can reduce your energy use and keep your electric bill in check while enjoying the holiday spirit. Here are some practical ways to save energy during the holidays:

1. Upgrade to LED Christmas Lights

Decorating for the holidays is a beloved tradition, but traditional incandescent Christmas lights can be energy hogs. Consider switching to light-emitting diode (LED) Christmas lights, which are up to 90% more efficient than incandescent bulbs. Although the initial cost of LED lights may be higher, they last longer, use significantly less energy, and are safer to use since they remain cool to the touch. LED lights are made with durable epoxy lenses, reducing the risk of breakage, and are less likely to cause fires or burns. Don't forget to use timers for your lights, ensuring they aren't left on throughout the night.

2. Adjust Your Thermostat

During the winter months, the recommended thermostat setting is 68 degrees Fahrenheit. When hosting family gatherings, the additional body heat can help warm your home, allowing you to lower the thermostat further. Additionally, if you're cooking, the warmth from the oven can contribute to heating your home, reducing the workload on your HVAC system. If you have a fireplace, make sure the damper is closed when it's not in use to prevent warm air from escaping.

3. Cook Smarter

Holiday cooking can increase energy use, but there are ways to minimize the impact. If you're

planning a large holiday meal, consider hosting a potluck, which reduces the need to use your oven for extended periods. Try to cook multiple dishes at once to maximize the oven's energy efficiency, and avoid opening the oven door frequently, as that allows heat to escape, requiring the oven to work harder.

4. Plan for Travel

If you're traveling during the holiday season, make sure to adjust your thermostat before you leave. Set it to 50-55 degrees to save energy while keeping your home warm enough to prevent pipes from freezing. Unplug non-essential appliances and devices, and use timers for exterior lights to avoid leaving them on unnecessarily. This simple adjustment will help you save on energy costs while you're away.

5. Year-Round Energy Savings

The energy-saving tips mentioned here aren't just useful for the holidays. Making energy-conscious decisions, such as using LED bulbs, adjusting your thermostat, and being mindful of appliance use, can help you save on your electric bill all year long. Many smart thermostats allow you to set daily schedules, so consider using one to optimize your home's energy efficiency.

By implementing these energy-saving practices, you can enjoy the holiday season without worrying about high energy costs. For more tips on reducing your energy usage, visit our website at sremc.com or call us at 910.892.8071. Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



South River EMC
Communicator

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



Touchstone Energy[®] Cooperatives
The power of human connections[®]