

# South River EMC Communicator

February 2026

## Your Impact in the Community

Each month, participating South River EMC members contribute to Operation Round Up.

The program, which began awarding grants in 2008, has helped 190 organizations and schools throughout the years to impact local communities.

Every quarter, the Community Assistance Corporation (CAC), a board composed of community members, accepts applications and make decisions in regard to awarding funds.

Hargrove Elementary has been one of the most prolific recipients, receiving over \$113,000 in funding through 15 grants.

Lauren Strickland, the media coordinator at Hargrove, has been the recipient of those grants. "The grant that stands out to me the most is my first one that funded library books; I believe it was for \$10,000," she said. "At the time, our media center was in desperate need of new books, and I really didn't know where to turn."

She has learned of Operation Round Up from the front office, and over the years, has written many grants that continue to impact her students everyday.

Another organization benefiting through the years, is Better Health of Cumberland County.

The non-profit organization works throughout the county to meet the unmet healthcare needs through education, referral and direct

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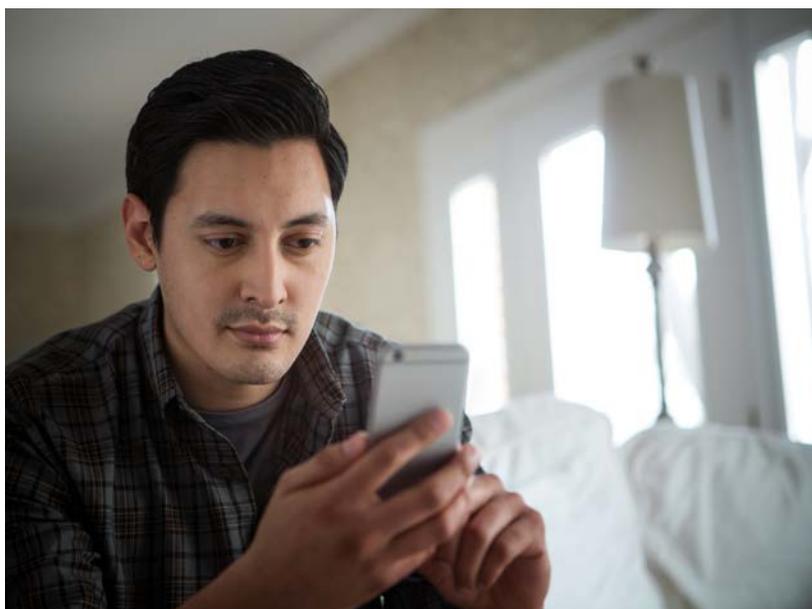


*Better Health's Executive Director, Christiana Adeyemi, and Tracey Sherrod*



South River EMC earns this award based on data modeled by the ACSI® in 2024. 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/](http://theacsi.org/) badges. ACSI and its logo are registered trademarks of the American Customer Satisfaction Index LLC.

# Planning for your 2026 Annual Meeting



South River EMC is preparing for the 2026 Annual Meeting of Members.

We will continue the digital/call-in format, with the meeting planned for Thursday, April 30, so mark your calendars.

Attendees will be eligible to receive a \$10 bill credit, as well as being entered to win a door prize bill credit.

Keep an eye on this newsletter for more information regarding our 2026 Annual Meeting of Members.

What better way to join the Annual Meeting than from your own home?

## Nominations Made by Committee

The committee on nominations announced the submission of incumbent directors at a meeting of the board of directors on Jan. 7:

**District 1: Kelly Harrington**

**District 2: Sue Flowers**

**District At-Large: George Williams**

Terms of office for directors are staggered so only three expire each year.

The ways in which directors may be elected:

1. By petition. Any 100 members of the Cooperative, acting together, may make nominations in writing, listing the nominees separately with respect to the particular term and the particular directorate district from which they are nominated, by March 5.

2. From nominations by a committee on nominations.



\*During each director election, when the number of nominees is the same as the number of directors to be elected from a particular district, the nominee will be declared elected automatically and no balloting will be required.

### **2026 Nominating Committee Members:**

District 1 - Glenda Taylor

District 2 - Raylon Wood

District 3 - Joseph Anders

District 4 - Johnnie Baggett

District 5 - Anthony "Tony" Warren

District 6 - Carol Hudson

District 7 - Warren Paul Jones

District 8 - Glenn Riddle

At Large - Robert Earl Butler Jr.

# Basketball Camp Opportunities Open



South River EMC is offering a chance for current fifth and sixth graders to apply for the All-Star Sports camps, which give boys and girls a unique experience to attend basketball camp on one of two of the state's largest college campuses.

Students statewide are encouraged to apply for one of 50 all-expenses-paid scholarships to attend the Carolina Basketball Camp at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the Wolfpack Women's Basketball Academy at North Carolina State University in Raleigh.

The Wolfpack Women's camp will be held June 14-17. The

Carolina Basketball Camp will be held June 27-30.

The overnight camps are held in the summer, and campers work closely with coaches and players to develop fundamental skills, helping them perform and excel both on and off the court.

Campers must:

- ▶ Be a rising sixth or seventh grader. This means the student should currently be in fifth or sixth grade.
- ▶ Attend a school in the Cooperative service area.
- ▶ Have permission from a parent or guardian to attend. An information sheet must be signed.

- ▶ Provide their own transportation to and from camp.

Winners will attend the camps courtesy of South River EMC. The Cooperative funds one scholarship to each camp.

Applications are scored on academics, extracurricular activities and an essay that must accompany the application.

The application period ends March 31.

Eligible students interested in the scholarship can contact the Cooperative at 910.892.8071 or visit [sremc.com/basketball-camps](https://www.sremc.com/basketball-camps).

## *ORU continued from page A*

assistance.

Better Health Executive Director Christiana Adeyemi is very complementary of the program.

"It enables us to serve dozens of uninsured clients in need of medical assistance," she said. "Our first grant was for emergency medical assistance to include prescription assistance, dental extraction and vision exams and glasses."

Better Health has received 11 Operation Round Up grants, totaling \$61,000.

"Facing growing needs and more difficulty finding available funding, our team continues to provide dedicated, compassionate service to our neighbors in need, which we could not do without your help," said Adeyemi. "We save public funds and preserve health when we can keep someone from having to go back to the hospital or urgent care because of medical complications or having a severe dental infection that goes unresolved."

Member's funding keeps people in communities healthier, just another positive community impact.

Another organization having an influence on the community through Operation Round Up is Transitions LifeCare, with \$75,000 in funding.

"We care for all patients who need our hospice and palliative care services, regardless of their ability to pay," said Christine Casey, vice president of philanthropy. "In 2011, we received our first grant of \$5,000 for our indigent care fund, which supports patients who either do not have insurance or are underinsured."

According to Casey, approximately 8% of patients fall into this category, and philanthropic support allows them to serve the population every year.

Since 2017, Operation Round Up has funded the Transitions Kids (TK) pediatric hospice and

palliative care program, which serves children with life-limiting illnesses with a goal to enhance their quality of life by reducing pain and suffering.

"Families are exhausted, emotionally, and financially, by the time they turn to Transitions Kids," said Casey.

"They are never asked to pay for services; all care is free thanks to generous community donors. South River EMC's ORU funding allows Transitions Kids to continue providing home-based pediatric medical care and family support for these children."

These are just a few of the organizations South River EMC members have impacted and will continue to impact through participation in Operation Round Up.

Since 2008, over \$3 million has been reinvested in communities through grants.

All thanks to members like you.

# Rates Changing Soon

At South River EMC, our goal is to provide safe, reliable electric service at the lowest possible cost. We know any change in your monthly bill matters, and we want to be transparent about what's ahead. Beginning with March bills, South River EMC will implement a rate adjustment.

For the past several years, we have shared the challenges the utility industry is facing nationwide. Unfortunately, those pressures have continued to grow. Some of the key factors driving increased costs across the industry include:

- Rapidly rising demand for electricity with growth of homes, businesses and AI
- Early retirement of generation plants, which reduces available supply
- Higher prices for materials, equipment, and infrastructure needed to reliably deliver power

While these challenges are outside our control, we remain committed to finding every savings opportunity possible. We are continually evaluating operations, reducing expenses where we can, and working to keep rates stable for as long as possible.

## Supporting You Through This Change

We want to empower you to manage your energy use and keep bills as low as possible. Small changes can make a meaningful difference. A good place to start is our Switch and Save program, which rewards



members for shifting energy use away from peak demand hours. By being strategic about when you use electricity, you can save money. Full details are available at [sremc.com/tou](https://sremc.com/tou).

Energy-efficiency choices can also help offset cost changes:

- Adjust your thermostat to the lowest comfortable temperature during colder months
- Limit or avoid space heaters, which use significant energy
- Open blinds or curtains during the day to bring in natural heat
- Reverse ceiling fans in winter to circulate warm air through living spaces

For additional energy-saving guidance and personalized tips, please visit [sremc.com/adviseguys](https://sremc.com/adviseguys).

We understand this change comes at a time when many families are watching their budgets closely. Please know that we do not take this step lightly.

Our commitment remains the same: to operate responsibly, advocate for our members, and continue providing reliable service that keeps our communities energized.

## New Rates effective March 2026 bills

<b>Residential Service</b>	
Grid Access	
Single-Phase	\$37.50
Energy	
Summer	13.09¢
Winter	12.09¢
<b>Residential TOD Service</b>	
Grid Access	
Single-Phase	\$41.25
Energy	
On- Peak	21.90¢
Off-Peak	8.76¢
Super Off-Peak	4.39¢
<b>Small General Service</b>	
Grid Access	
Single-Phase	\$45.00
Energy	
First 750 kwh	15.80¢
Next 1250 kwh	13.23¢
Next 2000 kwh	12.36¢
All other kwh	11.20¢
<b>Medium General Service (no change)</b>	
Grid Access	
Single-Phase	\$120.67
Three-Phase	\$209.58
Demand	\$6.80
Energy	\$5.43
<b>Large General Service</b>	
Grid Access	\$275
Demand (per kw)	\$10.56
Energy (per kwh)	4.78¢
Visit <a href="https://www.sremc.com/rates">sremc.com/rates</a> for more information.	



## Save on Efficient Hot Water Solutions

The Cooperative offers rebates to members who choose more energy-efficient water heating systems including:

- Heat pump water heaters:

These models use heat from the surrounding air to warm water, making them significantly more

efficient than traditional electric water heaters.

- Solar water heaters: These systems use the sun's energy to help heat water and reduce electricity demand.

These rebates help offset the costs of installing advanced wa-

ter heating technologies. In many cases, the increased efficiency of these systems can also lower monthly energy bills over time.

Learn more by scanning the QR code.

## Turn Up the Comfort (and Turn Down the Cost!)

Heating and cooling your home doesn't have to drain your wallet.

South River EMC is helping members stay comfortable year-round with our heating and cooling rebate, making energy-efficient upgrades more affordable and rewarding.

Heat pumps are the multi-taskers of the HVAC world. They keep you cool in the summer, warm in the winter, and do it all using less energy than traditional systems.

Even better? When you install a

qualifying heat pump, South River EMC may give you money back through a rebate. That's right—saving energy can actually pay off.

Whether you're upgrading to a modern air-source heat pump, a ductless mini-split, or another high-efficiency option, the rebate helps soften the upfront cost while you enjoy lower energy bills over time. It's a win for your home, your budget, and the environment.

Getting started is simple, learn

more about the rebate, shop, install and save.

Learn more about the rebates offered by scanning the barcode.



## Windows That Work Smarter

Old windows letting your energy dollars slip away?

South River EMC's window rebate benefits members who

upgrade to energy-efficient windows.

Better comfort. Lower energy bills. A rebate that makes the

upgrade even brighter.

Learn more by scanning the QR code and see how new windows can pay you back.

## Weatherize Your Home & Save

Weatherization helps seal your home to reduce energy loss, keeping you more comfortable while also helping lower your energy costs.

It focuses on keeping heated and cooled air inside your home through:

- Air and duct sealing

- Improved insulation
- HVAC system tune-ups or replacements
- Programmable thermostat installation

Upgrades like these reduce drafts, improve comfort, and help your HVAC system run more efficiently. The rebate is available to

members who have a weatherization package completed through Community Action.

Having this completed could help lower energy bills, give more consistent indoor comfort, and waste less energy

Learn more by scanning the QR code on the opposing page.

## Build Efficiently. Live Comfortably.

Planning to build a new home or recently purchased one?

South River EMC can help you save from the start with the High Efficiency Residential Option, or HERO, home rebate.

A HERO home is designed to be at least 30% more efficient than a standard built home.

### What Makes a Home a HERO?

HERO homes include enhanced energy-saving features such as: improved insulation and air sealing; high-performance windows; energy-efficient lighting and construction practices.

Members who build or purchase a new HERO-certified home are eligible for a rebate.

### Why Choose a HERO Home?

Lower energy costs; more consistent indoor comfort; reduced energy waste; added value to your home.

For details, requirements, and application information, scan the QR code.



## Message from Advise Guy Aaron Jackson



## Making the Most of Solar

We've all felt the temperature drop that began in late November and this decrease produced a noticeable increase in the runtime of our heating units.

The majority of those who live in the southeast heat their homes with heat pumps or electric furnaces, so most of us have seen an increase in our monthly electricity bill as well.

Because of the way these units operate, it typically costs us more per month to heat our homes than to cool them, so any measures we can take to decrease the runtime of our heating units during this season will produce noticeable benefits. Using solar heat is a no-cost way to reduce your heat unit's runtime by taking advantage of the sun's rays.

### Let the Winter Sun In

In the Southeastern US we are blessed with abundant sunshine all year long. The sun rises in the East, makes its trek across the southern sky, and sets in West. During fall and winter, the sun stays lower in the southern sky, allowing sunlight to penetrate deeper into homes.

Take advantage of these warming rays by opening south-facing blinds during the day to let sunlight warm the interior of the home. Windows that are east and west facing can provide warmth as well in the mornings and evenings.

Be sure to close these curtains and blinds at sunset to help trap the heat indoors.

### Storing Heat

We all understand that when the sun's rays shine on an object, the object becomes warm or even hot. This is called radiative heating and we can take advantage of this as a method to "store" heat within our homes.

When the sun's rays shine on tile floors, brick walls, or concrete slabs these materials absorb heat from the sun and release it slowly later. Take advantage of this radiative heating by allowing the sun to shine directly on surfaces unimpeded by things like thick rugs. Even uncovered wood floors can absorb heat from sunlight and help keep your space warmer longer.

### Supplement with the Sun

Radiative heating methods using heat from the sun's rays can help keep your home comfortable during the winter months and decrease the need for your heating system to run.

Supplementing the electric heating system with heat from the sun during the daylight hours should be combined with a lower thermostat setting.

During the daylight hours, drop the setting 1 or 2 degrees at most. This way you insure you get the maximum benefit of solar heating and cost savings.



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**Communicator**

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