

South River EMC Communicator

July 2026

Shift Timing, Shift Savings

As we settle into the heat of July, our homes naturally use more electricity. Air conditioners run longer, refrigerators work harder and daily routines—from cooking to laundry—often overlap during the warmest parts of the day. That's also when the demand for electricity across our community is at its highest.

At South River EMC, our top priority is delivering safe, reliable and affordable power whenever you need it. But during peak energy hours— 2-6 p.m.—there's added pressure on the grid as homes and businesses require larger amounts of electricity, all at the same time. On the hottest days, the strain can be significant and impact service.

The good news is that small changes at home can make a meaningful difference.

Think of our electric grid like a highway system. During rush hour, traffic is heavy, congestion builds and everything slows down. But when drivers adjust their schedules, even slightly, it helps ease the bottleneck. The same principle applies to energy use.

By shifting some of your high-energy activities to off-peak hours—like doing laundry later in the evening, running the dishwasher before bed or cooking meals earlier in the day—you're helping spread out demand, which reduces pressure on the grid during peak hours. South River EMC offers a time of use rate, which consists of an

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Reminder:

South River EMC offices will be closed Friday, July 3, in celebration of Independence Day.



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

Give Us An A Drawing Soon!

School is out and it's time to grab your child's most recent report card with at least one "A" on it.

That's right, it's time to send in those report cards for the "Give Us An A" drawing, to be held July 2.

The drawing is for students achieving at least one A on their report card. Each of the 15 students whose names are drawn will receive a \$25 gift card.

The program is open to students who are members, or children of members, of South

River EMC. Just make a copy of the most recent report card with at least one A, and send it to the Cooperative.

You must include the member's name, mailing address, South River EMC account number and daytime telephone number, report cards will not be accepted without this information.

Report cards should be sent to: South River EMC

"Give Us An A"
PO Box 931
Dunn, NC 28335

Or scanned and e-mailed to connections@sremc.com. Report cards are due by close of business, July 1.



Light Up The Classroom With Bright Ideas

South River EMC continues to play an important role in supporting local education through the Bright Ideas grant program.

Bright Ideas grants help teachers across North Carolina bring creative classroom ideas to life.

Designed for certified K-12 public school teachers, Bright Ideas grants provide funding for innovative, classroom-based projects that enhance student learning and engagement.

This gives educators the opportunity to implement projects that may not otherwise receive funding through traditional school budgets.

Grants can support a wide variety of classroom

needs, including STEM activities, science experiments, reading and literacy programs, art and music projects, technology integration, career exploration, and more.

Bright Ideas grants are not for professional development.

South River EMC awards grants of up to \$2,500 per project and distributes at least \$50,000 in funding each year to teachers in parts of Harnett, Johnston,

Sampson and Cumberland counties.

Since the statewide program began in 1994, North Carolina's electric cooperatives have collectively awarded millions of dollars to support innovative educational projects benefiting students across the state.

Applications for the Bright Ideas grants should be submitted online through

ncbrightideas.com.

Teachers who submit applications by the early bird deadline of Aug. 15 are eligible for additional prize incentives, while the final application deadline is Sept. 15.

If you have questions, please email connections@sremc.com.



on-peak, an off-peak and a super off-peak rate.

The rate offers very attractive energy costs to incentivize use of electricity during off-peak times. Conversely, energy used during on-peak times is more. This pricing structure encourages the most efficient use of the electric system while reducing overall costs to both the member and the Cooperative.

Here are a few simple steps you can take to lower energy use during peak hours.

Smart technology can be a valuable partner in saving energy. A programmable or smart thermostat can automatically adjust your home's temperature when demand is highest, helping you stay comfortable while using energy more efficiently. Even a small adjustment of a few degrees during peak hours can make a difference.

In the kitchen, **simple swaps**

can help, too. Using a slow cooker, air fryer or outdoor grill instead of the oven keeps your home more comfortable and reduces the need additional cooling during the warmer parts of the day. And when it comes to laundry, air-drying clothes or spacing out loads can cut down on both energy use and indoor heat.

Don't overlook the power of **ceiling fans**, either. They can help you feel several degrees cooler, allowing you to raise your thermostat setting without sacrificing comfort while in the room.

These actions may seem small on their own, but together, they add up. When many members make mindful choices about when and how they use electricity, it helps reduce peak demand, eases strain on the grid and supports more stable energy costs for our local communities.

That's the cooperative difference. As a member,



you're not just a customer—you're part of a community working together to power our future. Every effort you make contributes to a stronger, more resilient system.

This summer, we encourage you to take a closer look at your daily routines. A few simple shifts can go a long way in keeping your home comfortable, your energy use efficient and our grid running smoothly—no matter how high the temperatures climb.

If you want to help where you can, consider becoming a Watt Watcher. You can learn more at sremc.com/watt-watchers.

Same Energy. Different Impact.

The demand for electricity is typically highest in the late afternoon during peak energy hours. You can help lower demand by shifting when energy-intensive activities happen.



Shift appliance use to off-peak hours.

- Run the dishwasher before you go to bed.
- Use the oven earlier or later (during off-peak hours.)
- Space out use of major appliances.



Use a programmable or smart thermostat.

- Automatically adjust the temp setting during peak hours.
- Schedule home cooling cycles for efficiency.



Opt for low-energy alternatives during peak hours.

- Use small appliances like slow cookers or air fryers—or fire up the grill—instead of the oven.
- Air-dry clothes instead of using the dryer.
- Use ceiling fans for additional cooling.

Refund Allocated

South River EMC is a not-for-profit utility, and as such, we give money back! We don't have stockholders. We aren't a sole proprietorship.

What we are is a Cooperative, which means that we are owned by each person who has an electric account with our company.

That's you, you're part of something special—you're a member.

So, at the end of each year, after all bills are paid, any remaining amount, called margins, is allocated to be refunded to members as capital credits. Once we completed our audit for 2025, the allocation of the margins was made.

Our end-of-year margins totaled \$4,291,928.35 or 0.0359185422% of revenues.

What does this mean to you? If

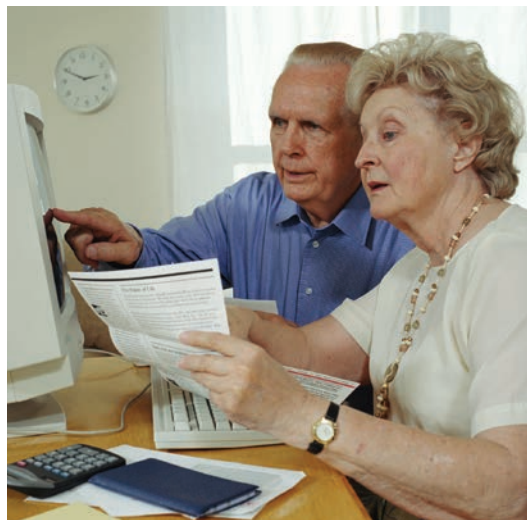
your electric bills in 2025 totaled \$1,000, then you would be earmarked to receive a refund of \$35.91. The refund will be returned as \$8.98 in November and the remaining \$26.93 in 19 years.

The amount that is retained for 19 years is used as operating capital by the Cooperative. Capital credits are typically retired in November.

Members whose refund is less than \$100 will receive a bill credit. Members whose refund is \$100 or greater will receive a check. If you think you, or a family member, might have an unclaimed capital credit refund, visit

sremc.com/capital-credits and see if your name appears on the list. If so, download the claim form and submit it to our office.

You can trust that we are always looking out for you, whether it's in our daily work or refunding your money. We are all in this together.



Summer In Full Swing



Download the South River EMC app to access your account on the go!

Why Vegetation Management Matters

There's something timeless about trees. They remind us of where we've been, and they stretch toward what's ahead. We take pride in the natural beauty that surrounds us—the shade on a summer afternoon, the colors that mark the changing seasons, the quiet strength of something that grows slowly but endures.

At the same time, we share another responsibility—one that's just as essential to our daily lives. The responsibility to keep the power on for homes and businesses, to make sure that when you flip a switch, the energy you depend on is there.

That's why South River EMC works every day to strike a careful balance between preserving the beauty and delivering the reliable electricity you expect.

One of the most important ways we do that is through regular tree trimming.

It may not be obvious, but keeping lines clear of overgrown vegetation plays a major role in preventing power outages. We've all seen what can happen when severe weather rolls in—strong winds, heavy ice or sudden storms can bring down branches and, with them, power lines and poles. In fact, nearly half of all power outages can be traced back to trees and vegetation coming into contact with electrical infrastructure.

That's why you may notice crews from South River EMC or our contractors working on trees throughout the year. Our crews are highly trained and certified, following the latest industry standards to ensure the job is done safely and effectively. The work

might seem routine, but it's a proactive step that helps prevent problems before they start.

It's not just good practice—it's required. Electric utilities across the country are obligated to manage vegetation near power lines. Scheduled trimming helps remove dead or weakened limbs and keeps fast-growing trees from becoming hazards. It's about staying one step ahead.

We're also using new tools and technologies to do this work smarter. Through drone inspections, for example, we can monitor power lines and surrounding vegetation more efficiently, reducing costs while improving accuracy. These small but powerful tools allow us to identify potential risks early and respond quickly. The Cooperative currently uses satellite imagery to mitigate right-of-way issues before they become a problem.

Beyond reliability and efficiency, there's another reason this matters: safety.

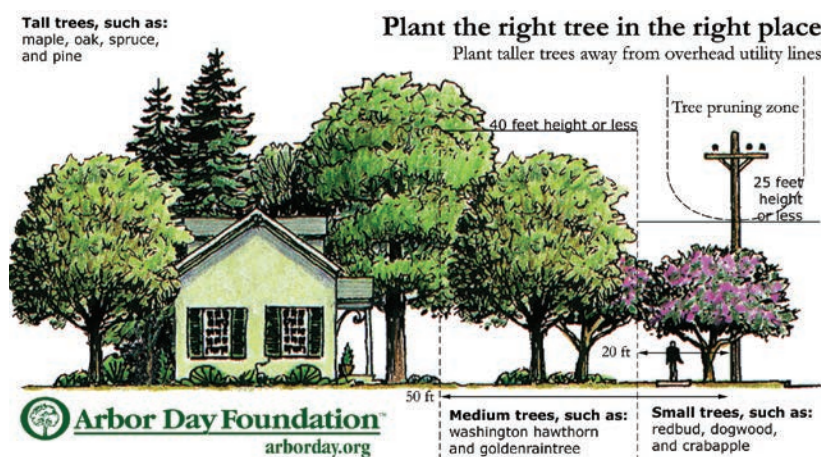
Electricity is a powerful force, and when trees grow too close to power lines, that can become dangerous. Branches that touch lines—or even come close—can carry electrical current. Children

climbing trees in their own yards may not realize the risk. And during storms, fallen trees can create hazardous conditions.

There's also a financial reality we can't ignore. Preventative maintenance is far more cost-effective than repairing widespread damage after an outage. Overgrown vegetation can lead to more frequent disruptions and higher costs for everyone. A strategic vegetation management program helps keep those costs down for you.

You can help, too. When planting trees, consider their mature height and distance from nearby power lines. Trees that grow up to 40 feet should be planted at least 25 feet away from overhead lines. Larger trees—those that exceed 40 feet—should be planted at least 50 feet away. If you're landscaping near pad-mounted transformers, keep shrubs at least 10 feet from the front and 4 feet from the sides to allow safe access.

If you have underground lines, don't forget to call 811 before digging. It's a simple step that can prevent serious accidents. At the end of the day, we all want the same thing: a community that's safe, resilient and beautiful.





Window Replacements Could Improve Comfort

Replacing old windows can make a noticeable difference in your home's comfort and efficiency — and South River EMC offers a rebate to help offset the cost of upgrading windows.

Energy-efficient windows help reduce unwanted heat gain during the summer and heat loss during the winter, allowing your heating and cooling system to

operate more efficiently.

According to Energy Star, replacing older single-pane windows with Energy Star certified models can lower household energy bills by up to 13 percent nationwide.

In addition to lowering monthly energy costs, new windows can help reduce outside noise, improve indoor temperature consistency, and protect furniture and

flooring from UV damage.

Homeowners should look for Energy Star certified products that meet regional efficiency standards and ensure windows are professionally installed for maximum performance.

Members can learn more about the rebate by scanning the QR code.

HERO Homes Help Save

Building a new home is one of the biggest investments a family can make, and you can make that investment more efficient by building a HERO-certified home.

HERO, which stands for High Efficiency Residential Option, is the construction of homes that are at least 30% more efficient than standard North Carolina building code.

HERO-certified homes are designed with energy savings and

comfort in mind.

They include improved insulation, tighter air sealing, high-performance windows, efficient lighting, and upgraded heating and cooling systems.

Together, these features help maintain more consistent indoor temperatures, and can lower monthly electric costs.

South River EMC offers rebates for qualifying HERO certified homes. Hero certification can be

achieved in one of two ways.

For rebate information, scan the QR code.



Cut Costs With Your Pool Pump

If you own a swimming pool, a pump could be one of the largest energy users in your home.

South River EMC offers a rebate to help members upgrade to a more energy-efficient pump system.

The rebate is for qualifying variable and two-speed pumps. These energy-efficient pumps use less electricity than traditional single-speed pumps, helping

members lower their monthly electric costs while improving overall pool performance.

Variable-speed pool pumps are especially efficient because they can operate at different speeds based on the pool's needs. Instead of running at full power all the time, they can slow down during normal filtration cycles, which significantly reduces energy consumption. Many

pool owners also notice quieter operation and improved filtration performance after upgrading.

Upgrading to a variable- or two-speed pool pump can reduce energy use and may pay for itself over time through lower operating costs.

To learn more about the pool pump rebate, eligibility requirements, and available applications, scan the QR code.

Water Heating Savings Available For New Units

Looking to reduce your energy costs and improve efficiency at home?

The Cooperative offers rebates on energy-efficient water heating options, like solar and heat pump water heaters. These systems can help lower monthly electric bills while providing reliable hot water for your household.

Heat pump water heaters work by transferring heat from the surrounding air into the water,

rather than generating it directly. Because of this, they can use 60–70% less electricity than standard electric water heaters and are two to three times more efficient.

Solar water heaters, which use energy from the sun to heat water, can significantly reduce water heating costs over time and may last 20–30 years with proper maintenance. But you'll want to make sure you have good solar

resource.

Choosing the right water heater depends on your home, available space, and hot water needs.

Planning ahead can help you choose the best option and take full advantage of available rebates.

For rebate details, eligibility requirements, and applications, scan the QR code.



Don't Let Heating And Cooling Costs Add Up

Upgrading your home's heating and cooling system can improve comfort, lower energy use, and reduce monthly electric bills — and South River EMC offers rebates to help members make the switch to high-efficiency equipment. Heating and cooling systems account for a significant portion of a home's energy consumption, making efficiency an important factor when replacing older units.

Modern HVAC systems are rated using the Seasonal Ener-

gy Efficiency Ratio 2, or SEER2, which measures cooling efficiency under updated testing standards.

Higher SEER2 ratings indicate greater efficiency, which can translate into lower operating costs and improved performance. New high-efficiency systems also provide more consistent temperatures, improved humidity control, and quieter operation compared to older units.

Many older HVAC systems lose efficiency as they age, especially

units more than 10 to 15 years old. Replacing outdated equipment with high-efficiency models can help homeowners save energy while improving overall home comfort. Proper installation and regular maintenance are also key to maximizing efficiency and extending the life of the system.

Review rebate requirements before purchasing new equipment.

Information about eligible systems, rebate amounts, and application details can be found by scanning the QR code.

Weatherizing Can Help Save

Improving your home's comfort and energy efficiency can make a noticeable difference in monthly electric bills.

South River EMC offers a weatherization rebate designed to help eligible members make those upgrades more affordable.

The program encourages improvements that reduce air leaks, improve insulation, and help heating and cooling systems operate more efficiently.

Weatherization focuses on keeping conditioned air inside your home where it belongs. Small gaps around doors, windows, ductwork, and attics can allow heated or cooled air to escape, causing

HVAC systems to work harder and increasing energy costs.

Through weatherization improvements such as air and duct sealing, added insulation, and system tune-ups, homeowners can create a more comfortable indoor environment while lowering energy usage.

South River EMC's weatherization rebate is available for low-income single-family and manufactured homes that use an air-source heat pump or electric furnace with central air conditioning.

To qualify, the home must participate in a weatherization program completed by Community Action. Eligible improvements may

include air and duct sealing, upgraded insulation, programmable thermostats, and HVAC tune-ups or replacement work.

In addition to improving comfort, weatherization can help reduce strain on heating and cooling equipment by preventing energy loss.

Homes that are properly sealed and insulated often maintain more consistent indoor temperatures, helping systems run more efficiently during both hot summers and cold winters.

For more information scan the QR code.



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