

South River EMC Communicator

September 2026

Rescuing Lives, Restoring Hope

Sadly, it is something we don't always recognize how or when it happens.

"In 2019, I worked at the Wayne Pregnancy Center," said Beverly Weeks, CEO of Cry Freedom Missions. "Woman would come in for pregnancy tests, and they wouldn't have ID, or they'd be wearing the same clothes, sometimes abusing drugs."

What really raised her suspicions was when one woman was asked questions, she would look to the man next to her for confirmation before answering. Another indicator was a different client who had been dropped off at a hotel known for drug activity.

Experiences such as these led to the formation of Cry Freedom Missions.

"The name Cry Freedom, came from a young woman, Carol Lancaster, who made jewelry and was using it as a fundraiser," Weeks said. "She kindly offered to teach the women I was getting together, how to make jewelry."

Once Lancaster had met her fundraising goal, Weeks approached her about using the Cry Freedom name, which would soon become the name and battle cry of her mission.

Outreach started with the Cry Freedom Mission (CFM) team going into jails, local hotels and areas where individuals are living on the streets to meet people where they are.

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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.

CFM continued from page A

They look for those at risk of or currently being trafficked, build relationships, offer support, provide basic needs and connect them to treatment, housing and other stabilizing resources.

Whether someone is incarcerated, housed temporarily or experiencing homelessness, CFM aims to bring hope, safety and a pathway forward to those who need it most.

The non-profit organization has a safe house located in Greenville for emergency and long-term care, as well as a transitional living home called Magnolia in Goldsboro.

"We work with the police, social workers, Homeland Security and many other law enforcement agencies across the state to identify women being trafficked," she said. "In fact, few people end

up trafficked by forced coercion or fraud, almost 90% of people being trafficked are trafficked by someone they know."

The organization puts together black backpacks, which can be left at places where people who may be trafficked gather. The bags are filled with information and toiletries and this helps to bring those in need of help, into contact with CFM.

"We teach churches, schools, law enforcement, social workers and healthcare workers what to look for," said Weeks. "In many cases, human trafficking is misidentified as something else."

By building these connections with local agencies, CFM, is helping more women and children get the true help they need.

The \$5,000 Operation Round Up grant they received is going to

build relationships.

"We are so appreciative to members who donate to Operation Round Up," said Weeks. "With these funds we are sowing seeds and we are so grateful to members."

If you would like additional information scan the QR code or call 919.988.9262.

The National Human Trafficking Hotline, 888.373.7888, connects victims and survivors of trafficking.



Summers With South River EMC

Each summer, South River EMC has programs for members' children.

The All-Star Sports Camp, which offers a scholarship to the Wolfpack Women's Camp at N.C. State and the Carolina Basketball Academy at UNC-Chapel Hill. These week-long camps teach children about not just basketball, but the importance of teamwork.



The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour is offered to rising high school juniors and sends students for a week-long trip to Washington, D.C.

Students visit museums, monuments and Capitol Hill.

This year, we sponsored three students and we look forward to sending more next year!

If you are or have a current fourth or fifth grader, keep an eye on this newsletter and on our web site by scanning the QR code:



The Youth Tour, as previously stated, is for high school sophomores and juniors and information on that can be found here and by scanning this QR code.





Flags Will *Fly* Again



South River EMC's
Fields of Honor will be
Nov. 6-16.

Honor or memorialize
special veterans or
active duty military.



Visit sremcfields.com
to sponsor.



Deadline:
October 28.

Change To Time-of-Use Rate

South River EMC is updating the time-of-use rate beginning with your November bill.

Our updated rate continues to reward members who shift their energy use to lower-cost, off-peak hours. While the rate is changing to reflect today's energy costs, members who adjust when they use electricity can still save compared to the standard residential rate.

Important Times To Remember

Winter (Oct. 16- Apr. 15)

On-peak: 6- 9 a.m.

Summer (Apr. 16- Oct. 15.)

On-peak: 2- 6 p.m.

Monday- Friday, excluding major holidays

Super off-peak 10 p.m.- 5 a.m. daily

All other hours are off peak

Grid Access Charge: No Change

Current rate:

All on-peak energy 21.90 ¢

All off peak energy 8.76 ¢

All super off-peak energy 4.39 ¢

Updated rate:

All on-peak energy 30 ¢

All off-peak energy 10.341 ¢

All super off-peak energy 7.889 ¢

YOU MAY NOTICE A NAME CHANGE ON YOUR BILL



We've updated the name of our **Renewable/ Energy Efficiency Charge** to **Clean Energy Standard**, in order to align with the goal of a cleaner energy future.



Same commitment. This change reflects our ongoing commitment to reliable service and a cleaner tomorrow.



Same service. The service you count on remains the same.



Same community. We're proud to power the communities we call home.



A Little Cost. A Lot of Life.



For about \$150 a month, electricity powers hundreds of tasks that keep your home comfortable, connected and running smoothly—from brewing your morning coffee to keeping your family cool, safe and entertained.

- **720** hours of refrigeration
- **20+** loads of clean clothes
- **15+** home-cooked meals
- **90+** hours of lighting
- **Numerous** devices charged
- **Hundreds** of hours of cooling/heating
- **Countless** connections to work, school and entertainment

30 days of comfort

Last Call For Bright Ideas!

Teachers! Time is running out on your chance to apply for a Bright Ideas grant for the 2026–2027 school year. If you've got a creative classroom idea, now's the time to bring it to life—with funding of **up to \$2,500!**



What is Bright Ideas?

A grant program supporting creative, hands-on projects in public K–12 schools.

North Carolina's electric cooperatives have invested nearly \$17 million in education since 1994—benefiting nearly 4 million students statewide.

Every year, South River EMC awards over **\$50,000** in grants to local teachers across four counties!



What kind of projects get funded?

The sky's the limit!

Past projects have included:

- Creative reading programs
- Interactive escape room kits
- Coding robots
- High-tech science equipment

If it helps students learn in a fun and engaging way, it's worth submitting!



What You Need to Know:



Deadline to apply:
September 15



Grant amount:
Up to \$2,500



How to apply:
Online only at
ncbrightideas.com



No limit on how many
times you can apply



Don't Miss Out!

Want more info?
Visit **sremc.com/brightideas**
for all the details.

**Get those ideas ready
and apply before Sept. 15.**

Your next classroom
breakthrough could be
just one **Bright Ideas**
grant away!



Build Smarter With A HERO Home Rebate

Building a new home is the perfect opportunity to invest in energy efficiency from the very beginning.

South River EMC's High Efficiency Residential Option (HERO) home rebate benefits members who build or purchase a qualifying HERO-certified home.

Designed to be at least 30% more efficient than a home built

to standard code, these homes feature enhanced insulation, improved air sealing, high-performance windows, energy-efficient lighting and construction practices that reduce energy waste while improving comfort.

A HERO home can help lower monthly energy bills, provide more consistent indoor temperatures, and increase the value of your home.

Whether you're building a custom home, purchasing a newly constructed HERO-certified home, or you're building a qualifying homes served by South River EMC, rebates may be available.

To learn more about qualification requirements, rebates, and the application process, scan the QR code.

Invest In Efficiency, Shower In Savings

Water heating is the second-largest expense in most homes, accounting for a significant portion of monthly electric costs.

If your current water heater is older or less efficient, now is a great time to consider an upgrade such as with a solar or heat pump water heater.

These advanced water heating systems can provide reliable hot water while using significantly less energy than traditional elec-

tric water heaters.

Heat pump water heaters work by transferring heat from surrounding air into the water rather than generating it directly. Because of this, they can use up to 70% less electricity than a standard electric water heater.

Solar water heaters use energy from the sun to heat water, making them an excellent choice for homes with good solar exposure and high water demands.

Whether you're replacing or planning ahead, South River EMC's rebate can make upgrading more affordable.

To learn more, scan the QR code.



Reminder of EnergySaverNC Rebates

Energy Saver North Carolina helps homeowners and renters across all 100 counties improve comfort, lower utility bills and

access federally funded rebates through Homeowners Managing Energy Savings and Home Electrification and Appliance Rebates

for energy efficiency and electrification upgrades.

Visit energysavernc.org.

Making Your Home Comfortable

A comfortable, energy-efficient home shouldn't be out of reach for anyone.

That's why South River EMC offers a Weatherization Rebate designed to help qualifying members improve their home's energy efficiency while reducing monthly electric bills.

For income-qualified members, this rebate works in partnership with local Community Action agencies, which provide professional home energy assessments and complete eligible weatherization improvements. These organizations identify areas where energy is being lost and perform upgrades that can

make a significant difference in both comfort and efficiency.

Weatherization measures may include adding attic or floor insulation, sealing air leaks around doors and windows, repairing or replacing ductwork, and other energy-saving improvements. These upgrades help keep warm air inside during the winter and cool air inside during the summer, reducing the workload on heating and cooling systems while lowering energy consumption.

By partnering with Community Action agencies, South River EMC helps ensure that eligible low-income households receive quality improvements at little or

no cost, making homes safer, healthier, and more affordable to maintain.

South River EMC's weatherization rebate supports these efforts by encouraging energy efficiency and helping members stretch their household budgets.

Weatherizing today can provide lasting comfort, lower energy bills, and improved home performance for years to come.

If you think you may qualify or would like to learn more about the weatherization rebate and income eligibility requirements, scan the QR code.



Improve Comfort and Efficiency With Windows

Your home's windows play an important role in keeping your family comfortable and your energy costs under control.

Older or inefficient windows can allow heated and cooled air to escape, making your HVAC system work harder throughout the year.

Upgrading to Energy Star certified windows is a smart investment that can improve comfort, increase energy efficiency, and reduce monthly energy costs.

Energy Star certified windows are designed with advanced glass coatings, multiple panes, insulating gas fills and improved frame

materials that help reduce heat transfer. During the summer, these windows help keep unwanted heat outside, while in the winter they help retain the warmth inside your home. The result is a more comfortable indoor environment with less strain on your heating and cooling system.

Replacing older windows can also help reduce drafts, minimize outside noise and protect furniture and flooring from harmful UV rays. When combined with other energy efficiency improvements, such as proper insulation and weatherization, new windows can make a noticeable difference in

your home's overall performance and energy use.

If you're planning a home improvement project, be sure to check South River EMC's rebate requirements before purchasing your new windows. Members who install qualifying Energy Star certified windows may be eligible for a rebate.

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

Investing in energy-efficient windows today can help you enjoy greater comfort and energy savings for years to come.

5 Reasons to Take Advantage Of A Heating & Cooling Rebate

Heating and cooling account for the greatest portion of your electric use, making your HVAC system one of the best places to save energy and money.

If you're thinking about replacing an older unit, a rebate can help make that more affordable.

1. Lower Monthly Energy Costs

A high-efficiency heating and cooling system uses less electricity while keeping your home comfortable year-round. The more efficient your system, the more you'll save over its lifetime.

2. Earn Money Back with a Rebate

When you install a qualifying high-efficiency heating and

cooling system, you may be eligible for a rebate. Rebates help offset the upfront cost of upgrading to energy-efficient equipment.

3. Enjoy Better Comfort

Today's high-efficiency heat and cooling systems provide more consistent temperatures, improved humidity control, quieter operation, and dependable comfort through every season.

4. Choose an Efficient System

When selecting a new system, pay attention to the SEER2 (Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio 2) rating. Higher SEER2 ratings indicate greater cooling efficiency, helping reduce energy use and operating costs.

A 16 SEER2 or greater can be eligible for rebate.

5. Maximize Your Savings

Rebates may be combined with available federal energy-efficiency tax credits, allowing you to save even more on qualifying equipment.

If your current unit is nearing the end of its life or requires frequent repairs, now may be the perfect time to upgrade.

Scan the QR code to learn more about the rebate and its requirements.

**There have been changes made to this rebate.*



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