



# South River EMC Communicator



## RECOGNIZING 100 YEARS

**E**very June, singers from multiple states gather to share their musical talents and compete against each other. This is the Annual Singing Convention, and 2020 marks the 100th anniversary.

The first recorded gathering was in June 1921 at a tobacco warehouse in Benson. It is said, that as early as 1917, a choir competition should take place to showcase local talent in the area.

"Prior to this date, church choirs in Benson and surrounding communities would gather at an appointed church, or even meet outside in large open areas for a day of gospel singing," said Rayvon Best, event manager. "Meetings usually occurred on the 5th Sunday in May or June and these early gatherings often became traditional annual events."

*continued on page B*

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE



|                   |            |
|-------------------|------------|
| Helping Neighbors | <b>C</b>   |
| For Consideration | <b>D</b>   |
| Smart Thermostat? | <b>E</b>   |
| Energy Smarts     | <b>F-H</b> |

## SING continued from page A

These yearly sings continued to be held and interest in having a singing contest continued to grow throughout the area. That came to ultimate fruition on May 29, 1921, when the first organized singing competition was held in Benson.

"This momentous event was organized by Simon P. Honeycutt, J.B. Raynor, T. C. Miller, J.V. Barefoot, and J. H. Rose. All are considered to be founders of the State Annual Singing Convention," said Best. "According to Mr. P. B. Wood, Jr., a past convention president, these five men saw a need to bring the community together each year to sing praises to God and to enjoy the fellowship that goes hand-in-hand wherever Christian people congregate."

During the first 10 years, groups were pretty local, from all over Johnston, Harnett, Sampson, and Cumberland counties. There were even a few groups travelling from Greensboro.

However, the singing convention and competition became so popular, that it now brings groups from all parts of North and South Carolina, Kentucky, Ohio, West Virginia, Virginia, Tennessee, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkan-



sas and Alabama to attend the convention.

There have been other changes since the convention's start, from a one-day to three-day convention, with a souvenir book and radio broadcast. A permanent covered stage was erected, and food vendors were welcomed. All this on top of the invitations extended to out-of-state groups to join the convention and compete in the contests, and for recognition and more.

The event would have been a little different for it's 100th anniversary this year.

"The Board of Directors decided to change the traditional schedule for 2020, omitting the singing contests for this year," he said. "In

honoring our first 100 years, the directors felt that the weekend should be one huge homecoming celebration featuring tremendous concerts by regional, state, and national recording artists."

However, with the coronavirus making the impact it has, the event will not take place this year. The singing convention committee is at work to make the 101st year an event to be remembered, returning June 25-27, 2021, to make the huge homecoming celebration a reality.

Updates and information will be available at [gospelsingingconvention.org](http://gospelsingingconvention.org), by checking their Facebook page, search State Annual Singing Convention-Benson Sing, or by calling 919.894.4389.

## We Know You've Got Smart Cookies At Home

Unfortunately, due to the changes in grading for the remainder of the year, we will not be hosting the Give Us An A program for a July drawing.

However, we will begin accepting report cards for our next drawing, which falls in February with the start of the next school year.

So keep those grades up, we look forward to sending you something special. And a special hooray for our parents and educators who continued to work and teach when and how they could.

# APPLICATIONS AT [NCBRIGHTIDEAS.COM](http://NCBRIGHTIDEAS.COM)

It's time to submit your Bright Ideas grant application online at [ncbrightideas.com](http://ncbrightideas.com).

The Bright Ideas grant program began in 1994, when it was found that teachers were spending at least \$500 of their own funds to purchase classroom materials.



And now, with curriculums changing, while budgets aren't,

the need for supplies must be met somehow and not out of the pockets of our educators.

Enter the Bright Ideas grant program, which offers grants for educators in public K-12 schools. These grants are for innovative, classroom-based, ideas and not professional development.

Since 1994, the electric cooperatives of North Carolina have awarded \$12.9 million to fund over 12,359 projects affecting almost 2.5 million students.

Grants can be written for any

amount up to \$2,500, for any subject. Each year, South River EMC awards at least \$50,000 in grants to teachers in parts of Harnett, Johnston, Sampson and Cumberland counties.

If you have an application in by August 15, you are eligible to enter a drawing to win a \$100 Visa gift card. The final application deadline is September 15.

South River EMC accepts applications online at [ncbrightideas.com](http://ncbrightideas.com). Interested in learning more? Visit [sremc.com](http://sremc.com) or e-mail [sremc@sremc.com](mailto:sremc@sremc.com).

## A Helping Hand

As we begin to look toward resuming our regular activities, this includes lifting the suspension of disconnection for non-payment.

We understand that many people have been out of work and they have accrued a large balance on electric accounts.

There are several ways that we can work to assist with these balances. We are ready to work with members on a payment plan up to six months. This will enable payment in installments, which is easier to manage.

There are also several agencies that are ready to assist with financial relief of bills. The Department of Social Services is prepared to assist with additional Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), which has received an additional \$900 million in emer-

gency contingency funding for COVID-19 relief.

Other agencies that are available are the community action agencies in each county. Action Pathways in Cumberland County and Lee-Harnett-Johnston Community Action each received a \$10,000 Operation Round Up grant to help members through this difficult time.

Also, South River EMC has a program designed to help members who are experiencing unusual circumstances. The Helping Hands program can provide up to \$150 on the electric account of a member who is experiencing unusually challenging circumstances that render them unable to pay their bill.

### Do You Want To Help?

If you would like to help fellow Cooperative members who are

continuing to struggle as a result of COVID-19 closures and layoffs, here are two options:



**Operation Round Up:** This program provides grants to non-profit organizations in the community. Donations are tax deductible and will go to agencies assisting members.

**Helping Hands:** This program helps members with a one-time payment toward electric bills. Donations are not tax deductible.

For questions regarding donations, email [connections@sremc.com](mailto:connections@sremc.com) (please put donations in the subject line) or call 910.230.2982.

## JOIN US AT OUR SOLAR WORKSHOP

**What:** A discussion on the benefits of solar, items for consideration, as well as realistic expectations. The Advise Guys will be on hand to answer questions.

**When:** June 11 at 6 p.m.

**Where:** 6491 Ramsey Street, Fayetteville

If you'd like more information, or to RSVP, call 910.892.8071 x 2152 or e-mail [adviseguys@sremc.com](mailto:adviseguys@sremc.com).

*\* subject to change.*

## Peace of Mind During Storm Season

South River EMC has partnered with Generac to provide a hassle-free, reliable standby power option.



### What You Get for Your Investment

- South River EMC members receive a seven-year warranty vs. the standard five-year warranty.
- Special co-op pricing.
- Automatic transfer switch.
- Turn-key installation.
- Access to financing through ElecTel Cooperative Federal Credit Union.

\* Most installations are 16kw or 22kw.

Interested in more information?

Contact the Advise Guys at 910.892.8071 or email: [AdviseGuys@sremc.com](mailto:AdviseGuys@sremc.com)

# CONSIDERING A SMART THERMOSTAT?

Heating and cooling costs account for around half of a user's electric costs every month according to the U.S. Department of Energy. So, when it comes to reducing energy use and cutting home energy costs, the most impact can be made by programming your thermostat. The right thermostat settings could yield energy savings of 8-15 percent, and new technology is making it easier to achieve those savings.

Smart thermostats are Wi-Fi enabled and may be controlled remotely through a tablet, smartphone or voice control. Some models use multiple sensors to monitor temperatures in parts of the home for more balanced heating or cooling, track user temperature preferences and use the data to optimize your heating and cooling schedule, and some are designed for complex multi-stage systems that will control heating, cooling, dehumidifier and ventilation systems.

If you're interested in controlling your thermostat with your voice, an app, or just letting it learn, consider a smart thermostat. To narrow your choices, factor in smart features, price and attributes that matter to you, and make sure the product supports your HVAC system.

The Nest 3rd Generation Learning Thermostat and Ecobee4 are the most popular and sophisticated devices in this category. Both devices are usually priced around \$250, but consumers can easily recoup their money in energy-cost savings.

There are many similarities between the two thermostats. Both can be adjusted via computer, tablet, smartphone, Google Assistant or Amazon Alexa device (the Ecobee4 even has a built-in Alexa-enabled speaker). And both thermostats can interact with other smart devices and utilize geofencing—using your phone's GPS to determine if you're home, then automatically adjusting the temperature. Nest's geofencing works with multiple phones, while Ecobee supports just one phone. Ecobee makes up for this with its more sophisticated sensors.

The Nest and Ecobee offer for purchase, remote sensors that allow the thermostat to take readings from any room throughout your home and adjust the temperature accordingly. The Ecobee's sensors go one step further with occupancy sensing, which notices if there is movement in the house.

While many of the features are similar, there are a few that are notably different and can help you determine which is right for you.

Nest, powered by a rechargeable battery, is a learning thermostat and learns your schedule automatically. When you begin using Nest, it makes a few assumptions and creates a baseline schedule. As you adjust temperature settings, Nest records it, and after a week, learns your schedule and the temperature settings you prefer. It continues to learn and respond to your adjustments, recording 10 days of energy use data that shows you a visual of the times your system turned

on and off during that span. Nest also sends a monthly email report that includes a summary of your energy use compared to previous months and other Nest users.

Ecobee must be hardwire installed, utilizing a touchscreen and analyzing HVAC data for 18 months. All temperature and motion data from the thermostat and sensors is recorded, and can be accessed online by the owner to help you monitor total energy use, how the weather influences your use, and how your home efficiency compares to other users in your area.

The two thermostats can connect with various energy devices in your home. Ecobee recognizes dehumidifiers and ventilators, and Nest recognizes heat pumps and auxiliary heat.

Looking for a smart thermostat with fewer bells and whistles? The Honeywell Lyric T5+ is one of the market's most popular, priced around \$135. While it can't sense your presence or learn your schedule, it does have the geofencing feature and can interact with other smart-home devices, such as turning on lights.

Whichever fits your lifestyle and preferences, a smart thermostat is a good investment that can help you save energy and money in a more convenient way than ever.

South River EMC offers you even more ways to save in offering the SmartStat program, for details visit [sremc.com](http://sremc.com) and click on the SmartStat link under Quick-links.



Picking the right water heater can affect your energy costs.

## Take Time To Improve Costs And Comfort

Insulating and weatherizing your home can improve comfort and costs.

South River EMC also offers rebates for these improvements. For details visit [sremc.com](http://sremc.com) or

call 910.892.8071 x 2222.

## Appliances To Help You Save

Sure, you keep your food cool in the refrigerator or freezer, and wash clothes in the washer and dryer. But how much are those appliances costing you?

do the same job as standard appliances. Remember, when you purchase an appliance, they have two costs. The cost to purchase and the cost to run.

will make up for it in savings.

Energy Star certified appliances use less energy and water to

An Energy Star appliance will cost more on the front end, but

South River EMC offers a rebate on Energy Star certified refrigerators, clothes washers, dryers, and dehumidifiers. For details visit [sremc.com](http://sremc.com) or call 910.892.8071 x 2152.

## Why Water Heating Is So Important

How you heat your water is important, with certain ways being more efficient than others.

can cost you very little to run.

For example, a slightly more expensive heat pump water heater is two to three times more efficient. Meanwhile a solar water heater carries a little more expense, but with the right solar resource, and electric back-up,

Finding the appropriate water heater for your family depends on a few items including budget and resource, family size, and location.

Consider these options, so that you are prepared when it comes time to select a new

water heater. South River EMC offers a \$150 rebate on solar water heating and a \$200 rebate on heat pump water heating. For details visit [sremc.com](http://sremc.com) or call 910.892.8071 x 2152.

## High Efficiency Can Help You Save

Heating and cooling your home can seriously add up, with temperature swings and people home more often, adjusting the thermostat.

With a high efficiency system and a thermostat with minimal

changes, you can save.

A high efficiency system uses less energy because of its seasonal energy efficiency ratio, rating. The SEER is a measurement of efficiency in a heating and cooling system.

If you are considering a new heating and cooling system, go with a high efficiency heat pump. South River EMC offers several rebates on these units. For details visit [sremc.com](http://sremc.com) or call 910.892.8071 x 2152.

## HERO Homes, With Two Choices To Save

A high efficiency residential option, or HERO, home is about 30 percent more efficient than homes built to code. This is done by one of two ways, part of the HERO code, be it the prescriptive or the performance path.

Both have their strong points, one is straightforward, while the other is flexible. Whichever path you choose, do your homework on requirements.

If you're in the market to build a

HERO certified home in South River EMC's service area, you could be eligible for a rebate. For details visit [sremc.com](http://sremc.com) or call 910.892.8071 x 2153.

## There's Plenty Of Time For The Pool

Break out the bathing suits and sunscreen, but take some time to consider the costs associated with your pool this summer.

It starts with the pool pump, so if you have one, what kind

is it? A single speed pump uses the most energy and water to perform tasks. By replacing one with a variable or two speed pool pump, you help save energy and money.

South River EMC offers a rebate on the purchase of these more efficient options. Having varying speeds allows you to match use to task. Read more about rebates at [sremc.com](http://sremc.com) or call 910.892.8071x 2152.



There's time this summer to enjoy the sun and learn about saving energy and money.

## TOP ENERGY ISSUES

It's not uncommon for energy issues to arise at your home and you don't even know until you receive a higher-than-expected bill. Two of the most common problems we see are issues with air source heat pumps and hot water leaks/water heater issues. During the winter months, heat pumps may have a harder time extracting heat from the outside air and will use supplemental heat strips to reach the thermostat setting. Heat strips are wire elements that are heated by electricity and are costly when they are activated. Heat strips may also come on if you move the thermostat up more than two degrees at a time. When HVAC equipment malfunctions, it can cause heat strips to activate and stay on, without you being aware of this situation. This will be more noticeable during the summer months because it will hurt cooling efficiency. If the heat strips are "stuck on", you will need to call a licensed HVAC professional to fix the issue. Low refrigerant in a system can also cause the heat strips to run more than they should during a normal heating cycle.

Hot water leaks and water heater issues are the second most common problems we see. When a hot water leak occurs, the hot water runs out of the lines and has to be replaced

with more hot water. An electric water heater has 4,500 watt elements that activate to keep the water heated. When there is a hot water leak, these elements are running constantly to heat the influx of fresh water being pumped into the tank to replace water being lost from the leak. This can be costly if a leak goes undetected for an extended period of time. Sometimes the leaks will occur at the water heater and other times in other places in the home where plumbing pipes and fixtures are located. When leaks occur, some can be fixed by the homeowner, while others require a plumber.

To make sure your HVAC system is operating as it should, we recommend that you have your system serviced at least once a year by a licensed HVAC technician. Additionally, you should change your air filters every 30 days. It is recommended to use the cheaper/thinner air filters to help with proper air flow and return. When you first cut on your system go outside to make sure the fan is running. If the fan is not running, it could be a sign of an issue. Electric water heater elements will come on periodically throughout the day to ensure there is hot water available in the tank. If you think it is running more than it should, you can listen to



Advise Guy Eric Gainey

it to see if it is cutting off as it should. You can also do a visual inspection of your lines to see if you have any leaks.

Another great tool for a homeowner to spot potential issues at their home is our website. You can view your daily usage by going on our website at [www.sremc.com](http://www.sremc.com) and creating an account. This is a great tool for members to save energy. Here, you can look at your daily usage with an overlay of the daily temperature highs and lows. This is a great demonstration of the impact weather has on energy use. You can manipulate things in the home to see what kind of effect it has on your energy usage. You can also sign up for daily energy-use notifications via text or e-mail. The website also offers tips on ways to save energy and money.

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