

South River EMC Communicator

Pandemic Effects on Non-Profits

When COVID-19 brought the shutdown in March 2020, shelves were emptied, workers were displaced, schools were shuttered, and even if we did not realize it, non-profits also took a hit.

Many non-profits rely on fundraising and donations from local communities, but with income limited, shelves bare, and the inability to gather imposed, different solutions had to be found.

We recently spoke with the Beacon Rescue Mission in Dunn and the Salvation Army of Fayetteville, to see how each organization is coping with an issue they both handle, sheltering.

Beacon Rescue Mission

"Normally, we house around 40 individuals, families in the shelter, but when this started we had to shut it down," said Amos Love, director of Beacon Rescue Mission. "We realized everything we would have to do to make it (the shelter) fit protocols and there just wasn't the ability to continue."

Staying at the Beacon Rescue Mission would mean shared spaces at times, like the kitchen, and since that could not allow for distancing

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and time for cleaning, those people who would typically reside at the facility, are now being placed at hotels while they work to get back on their feet.

The money for hotels wasn't part of the budget, but it had to become part as the virus continued and that meant the organization had to step up a little differently.

When it comes to food, Beacon Rescue typically provides food in an onsite pantry for residents to use. Now, food is bundled and delivered for the residents to prepare in the kitchenettes of their rooms.

The rest of the pantry food was distributed among the organization's thrift stores. The thrift stores, which serve as income for the organization, are also accepting food donations for the pantries.

For Thanksgiving, the annual meal was unable to be served, but families cooked and donated from their personal meals by delivering plates to the hotel.

"By the end of the evening, the hotel had about 10 or 12 extra plates of food," said Love. "The community has come together as never before."

Salvation Army of Fayetteville

The Salvation Army of Fayetteville had a slightly different experience.

"We have had to reduce the number of residents we allow

in our shelter. We keep a room "offline" or unavailable for use, in case one of the residents does come down with COVID," said Alison Henion, community relations and development coordinator. "As the weather gets colder, we do have our 'white flag' nights—if the weather drops below 32 degrees, we open our shelter doors to the public."

But, with COVID-19, the Salvation Army has had to cut the number by half to be able to follow all social-distancing protocols.

Meals are served a little differently too.

"Our meals at the shelter are now on a to-go basis as folks are no longer permitted to eat in our dining room," said Henion. "All staff at our corps building, community center, shelter and family store are doing what we can to stay safe by wearing masks, washing hands, and more."

Meanwhile, the pandemic has added to the Salvation Army's budget by over 300 percent, with new expenses popping up.



Want To Help?

Each organization has made changes to meet the needs of the community while remaining safe. The need is still there, so you can help in the following ways:

The Beacon Rescue Mission

The Beacon Rescue Mission offers faith-based programs that address not just the physical needs of food, shelter, and clothing, but focus on the source of why a person becomes homeless.

Donate to Beacon Rescue Mission's food pantry at one of their thrift stores.

The Salvation Army of Fayetteville

1. Donating: Financial donations can be made to Alison Henion at 910.483.8119 and press 5, or sent to The Salvation Army, PO Box 110, Fayetteville, NC 28302. Non-monetary donations can go to the Family Store located at 433 Robeson St. Fayetteville, NC 28301

2. Kettles: Kettles will be unmanned due to COVID restrictions, but they will be in stores and you can donate to the virtual kettle at bit.ly/virtual-kettle.

3. Angel Tree: Adopt Angels from Cross Creek Mall, the Walmart on Ramsey Street, or the Walmart in Hope Mills.

Defining A Brighter Future For Our Members And The Community

As we begin this new year, South River EMC is pursuing efforts to build a brighter future for our members and the community we all share – a brighter future that continues our commitment to delivering reliable electricity at the lowest possible cost while also advancing responsible sustainability goals.

Along with the rest of North Carolina’s electric cooperative network, last July we announced our new Brighter Future vision, a long-term roadmap for providing sustainable, affordable energy; reliability and innovation; and continued local community support to enrich the people and communities we serve.

Our vision centers on achieving two voluntary sustainability goals: a 50 percent reduction in carbon emissions from 2005 levels by 2030, and net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

To reach these goals, we will continue to rely on emissions-free nuclear, an extremely reliable, safe and affordable source of electricity that currently fuels more than half our power, along with natural gas, which can be dispatched quickly when needed. We are bringing more renewable energy resources online while investing in new technology, such as battery storage, to make renewables like solar power more versatile and reliable.

Both our carbon reduction goals also rely on the advanced

coordination of resources across the electric grid, as well as innovative solutions and technologies to make the grid as flexible and efficient as possible. In addition, they encompass our efforts to electrify devices and processes as an alternative to fossil fuels and use electricity in new and exciting ways.

As a locally based cooperative, South River EMC remains committed to not only powering, but also empowering this community. That’s why our Brighter Future vision extends far beyond delivering reliable, affordable, sustainable electricity to include community support efforts like education initiatives and economic development activities that truly demonstrate



the cooperative difference. Our structure affords us unique opportunities to make local investments and engage with local people, businesses, and community leaders to work together to meet changing needs.

The brightest part of our future will always be our members, like you. We look forward to continuing to serve you and to building a brighter future, now and in the years to come.

Building a
BRIGHTER FUTURE

-  **Sustainable, Affordable Energy**
Pursue a goal of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 using new and existing resources to ensure electricity continues to be delivered at the lowest possible cost.
-  **Reliability & Innovation**
Leverage new technologies and innovation to deliver reliable electricity across resilient, co-op operated electric grids.
-  **Local Community Support**
Enrich the lives of our local members through continued education initiatives, economic development and community-focused activities.

Scholarship Opportunities Available

The South River EMC scholarship application closes January 28. It is an opportunity for three high school seniors to receive a \$1,000 scholarship. Information can be found at sremc.com/scholarships.

When there, you might read about the other scholarship opportunities the Cooperative has, such as our community college scholarships. Awarded for the fall, you apply through Samp-

son, Central Carolina, Johnston or Fayetteville Technical community colleges and you could receive a \$500 scholarship.



This scholarship is available to any member taking a full course load at the community college, including new or continuing-education students.

There are several other scholarships, however they are school specific or part of other programs we offer. Perfect for planning if you have younger children!

Five Ways to Stay Cozy

Baby, it's cold outside! When you're feeling chilly at home, there are several budget-friendly ways you can keep comfortable without turning up the thermostat.

1. Whether you're experiencing extremely cold winter temps or you simply "run cold," an electric blanket can deliver quick warmth. Electric blankets can include a variety of features, like timers and dual temperature settings (if someone else prefers less heat). This winter, consider an electric blanket instead of turning up the heat.

2. One of the easiest ways to stay cozy at home is to keep your feet warm. Our feet play a critical role in regulating body temperature,

so when your feet are warm, your body automatically feels warmer. Try a pair of comfortable wool socks or house slippers to stay toasty.

3. On winter days when the sun is shining, take advantage and harness natural warmth from sunlight. Open all curtains, drapes and blinds in your home to let the sunshine in—you'll be able to feel the difference.

4. Another way to make your home cozier is to use a humidifier. Cold air doesn't

hold water vapor like warm air, so by adding humidity inside your home, you can feel a little warmer. A favorable level of humidity inside your home can also help clear sinuses, soften skin and improve sleep.

5. Beyond adding visual appeal to your home, area rugs can also provide extra insulation and a warm surface for your feet on cold winter days. Use large area rugs in rooms where you spend the most time. You'll enjoy the new colors and textures of the rug,

and the additional warmth will help keep your home comfortable.

These are just a few ways you can stay cozy this winter without turning up the thermostat. Don't forget the hot chocolate!





Service Options For All Situations

Members like you have been looking for different ways to do business during the pandemic. Lucky for you, South River EMC has always tried to stay ahead in our offerings.

An example is the multiple ways to pay for members. Before the pandemic, members could walk in and pay with cash, check or credit card. And, while this has changed over the past few months, members have always been able to mail in their payment, use the phone system to pay with a credit card or e-check, pay online with a credit card or e-check, have their account drafted, or use a pay station.

Members are also able to use our drive-thru, as well as a kiosk.

We have also added to our selection of ways to communicate about your bill, request service or ask questions. You can always call our offices, send an email, request a video chat session, use live chat or visit one of our offices (an appointment might be required).

Many of the resources you need to conduct business are available to you on our web site, sremc.com.

Under the Service Options section you can review your bill and pay it online, complete an

application to start service, request an in-office appointment or a video chat, update information, stop service, or request repair of a streetlight or outdoor light.

For any of those services, which require additional information, it can be supplied via email or fax in most cases.

South River EMC is looking out for you and has also updated our web site to better meet your needs, by making a flawless transition between devices. Be it a desktop computer, tablet, or smart phone, you have the ability to access our website similarly across devices.

**SIGN
UP** FOR OUR
ELECTRONIC
NEWSLETTER



Send an email entitled "Electronic Newsletter Sign-Up" to connections@sremc.com.

Include your name, address, account number, and email address.

**You may receive a paper copy for a few months after your request, but it will discontinue.



What Improvements Can Do For You

Heating and cooling your home can be costly. As you have heard and read, it is the highest contributor to your electric costs each month.

There are many ways to reduce these costs. And many can help you save, but in different ways.

For example, you've heard talk of the Amish heater through the years, and how it will save money and keep your family and home warm.

An Amish heater is simply a space heater, which uses electricity to heat an area. It is not able to heat your entire home with only one system and the cost can add up trying to heat your home. Check out the space heating calculator on our rebates and efficiency page.

Also, you must be careful when using so that flammable items, such as clothes and curtains, do not get too close to the heater.

Meanwhile, you could make some different purchases and improvements, which could make you more comfortable and save money in the new year.

Begin by weather stripping and caulking to prevent air infiltration, or the loss of inside air, outside, or vice-versa. Also, insulation can be installed to prevent heat transfer, or the loss of heated inside air outside.

Making your home more comfortable allows you to adjust your thermostat, and by setting it lower in the winter, you could be saving. And with these improvements, you could be



warmer, and isn't that satisfying?

Better yet, you could be eligible for a rebate as well!

You could begin shopping for a new HVAC system. HVAC units tend to have a lifespan of at least 10 years, but the older they are, the more inefficient they become.

Heating and cooling systems need to be serviced annually to keep running as efficiently as possible. However, even that won't keep them running forever.

When you shop for an HVAC system, do not just go for the cheapest unit. Get estimates, and make sure you compare them to ensure you get the appropriate sized unit for the best cost. Also, consider the seasonal energy efficiency ratio, or SEER, rating.

The higher the rating, the more efficient the system. For ex-

ample, your unit might be a 13 SEER currently, and when you bought it, it was code. Now, the code SEER is 14, but purchasing a 17 SEER or greater, really helps you save.

The SEER rating measures cooling efficiency, which might not seem important now, but it contributes to the efficiency of the system overall. And you know, when you purchase any type of appliance, it comes with two costs; the purchase price and the cost of operation.

Why not purchase a higher efficiency system, which helps cut down on one of those costs?

South River EMC offers rebates for insulation and weatherization improvements, as well as the purchase of high efficiency electric HVAC systems.

For complete details, visit sremc.com/rebates-efficiency-tips or call 910.892.8071 x 2152 for high-efficiency HVAC systems.

Are You Looking For Ways To Save?

It's okay to admit it, everyone likes to save money and one such way could be something relatively easy-- how you heat and use hot water.

For example, with water heating being the second highest electric cost each month, and with what we need hot water for, might it make more sense to begin by purchasing a more efficient unit?

A standard water heater has a tank full of water that it heats at periodic intervals, ready whenever needed. But, that is inefficient, especially if you aren't home all day. So, consider a water heater timer.

Eventually, the water heater goes out, it does happen and is not a fun experience, do you replace it with what you already had, or do you try something new?

A heat pump water heater, or maybe even solar water heating could be options, and they could be options that save you energy and money.

Heat pump water heaters are two to three times more efficient than standard water heaters, using the surrounding warmth to heat water. They are a bit more expensive to purchase than your standard unit, but they make up for it in savings. Their lifespan isn't all that different from standard water heaters, but they do require location in places that remain in the 40–90 degrees Fahrenheit range year-round and provide at least 1,000 cubic feet of air space around the water heater.

Maybe your interest is in solar water heating? Solar water heating typically uses a roof-mounted system to use the sun's energy to heat your water. They also require a battery back-up for days when the sun does not shine. Although costs have come down, you really want to see if this type of unit is for you. If you want a return on investment you need a good solar resource and you would need to use a fair amount of warm water.

Replacing your water heater with a different type can help you save.

Another way to save, and perhaps unconventional to think of at this time of year, is that if you have a pool, purchase a more efficient pool pump.

Typically, pools come with a single speed pump, and when pumps

are replaced, they are done so with a single speed pump.

If you want to save though, you have to replace that pump with a more efficient unit, like a variable, or two-speed pool pump.

Either of these options allow you to set a more specific flow of energy and water to do the work your pool needs.

A two-speed, gives you two settings to select from, while a variable speed gives you even more. But both give you more control to set the water and energy use, which contribute to your electric and water costs.

It's sales time, keep an eye out for deals on a variable or two-speed pool pump.

South River EMC offers rebates on energy efficient water heaters and pool pumps, visit sremc.com or call 910.892.8071 x 2152.

Searching For Savings?

Switch to a money-saving heat pump or solar water heating alternative, and you could receive a rebate.

Visit sremc.com, or call 910.892.8071 x2152 to find out more.

South River Electric Membership Corporation
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Starting Small Can Bring Savings

Making small changes can help improve your costs each month, for example, purchasing Energy Star certified appliances.

Energy Star certified appliances undergo rigorous testing to show that they save energy.

And when you have an appliance like a refrigerator, which runs all the time, saving a little energy can add up.

Energy Star appliances are typically more expensive to purchase, but the cost savings is found in the energy savings they provide. And on top of that, learning to use appliances

more efficiently can help you save even more.

South River EMC even offers rebates on certain Energy Star certified appliances.

Can you save even more if you're considering moving?

That is yet another way to save, by purchasing or constructing a high efficiency residential option, or HERO, home.

HERO homes are approximately 30 percent more efficient than homes built to the NC building code.

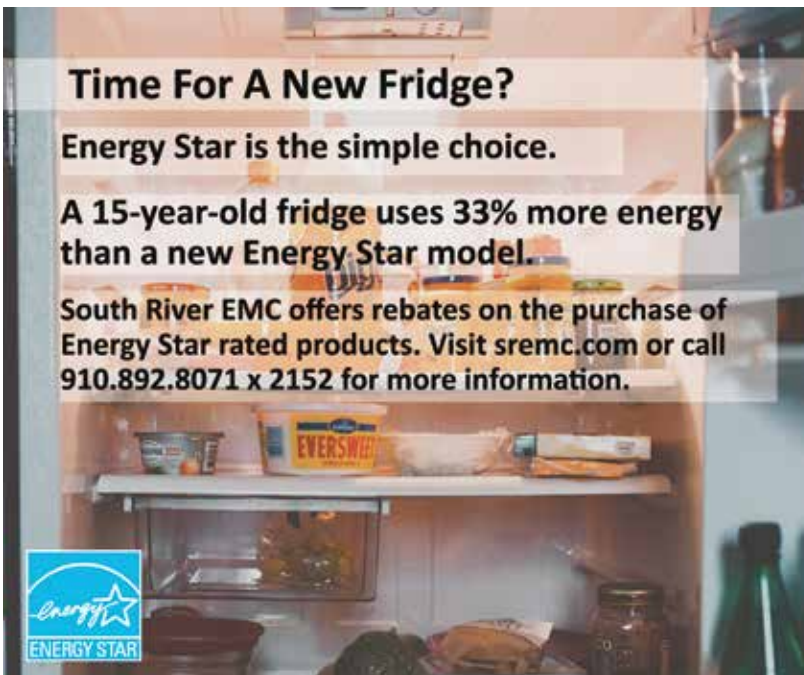
This is due to slightly better insulation, fenestration, air sealing, equipment, and lighting packages, which deliver these even greater savings.

Now, there are two ways to do this, and you have to choose one of these ways to have your home certified.

The prescriptive path is straightforward but inflexible, involving complying fully with a list of specific requirements for things like insulation, high-efficiency lighting, window U-factors, whole house tightness and duct leakage testing, among other things.

Then there is the performance path, which is more flexible. It requires an energy cost analysis as proof that the home you are building will have energy costs that are less than or equal to that same home built to the HERO Code's prescriptive requirements. Higher efficiency equipment will not help you, because the HERO Code is focused almost solely on improvements in the thermal enclosure.

This is for newly constructed homes. For complete details visit sremc.com/hero-program, or call 910.892.8071 x 2153.



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