



South River EMC Communicator

IDEAS BURN BRIGHT

The Bright Ideas program offers grants for up to \$2,500 to teachers in K-12 public schools.

This year, South River EMC awarded 39 grants for a total of \$70,121 among four counties. While receiving a grant can be exciting for teachers during a normal year, this year it was even more special.

With schools closing before the conclusion of the 2019-2020 school year, and reopening either partially or completely virtual for 2020-2021, educators tried to find ways to continue engaging students.

Bryan Brown is just such a teacher at STAR Academy, in Harnett County and was a recipient for his grant, "Chemistry In Action."

"I have been teaching over 10 years, beginning in Jamaica at Buff Bay High," said Brown. "I have been at STAR since August 2019."



Bryan Brown (left) with STAR Academy principal, Jaysen Leech.

continued on page D

INSIDE THIS ISSUE



2021—Here At Last	B
Directors Receive Certification	C
Nominations Made	E
Energy Smarts	F-G

2021 — Here at Last

I want to wish all of you a blessed New Year. I also want to take a moment to update you on your local electric cooperative.

Everyone agrees that 2020 was a difficult year and a year like no other due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I suspect most of us did not anticipate what has followed since the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic last March. Many were hopeful that we would be much farther ahead by this time. Unfortunately, we still have troubled waters ahead, at least for a while longer. Coronavirus cases are at peak levels and so are hospitalizations. As South River EMC has been making its way through this storm, our focus has been on you, our member owners.

Some of the responses to the pandemic and its impact on our member owners include the following: The Cooperative stopped making service disconnects for nonpayment of electric bills even before being mandated to do so. Once the moratorium on disconnects expired, South River EMC allowed even more time before resuming non-pay disconnects. We supported Governor Cooper in allowing members six months to catch up on COVID-19 balances that became past due during the moratorium on disconnects. We put some projects on hold and made other adjustments to better manage

the financial impact on the Cooperative. Capital credits were retired early in an effort to assist members who would benefit from receiving their retirement earlier in the year. Furthermore, we took steps to protect our employees so that they could keep the lights on and be available to serve you. Looking ahead to 2021, we developed a budget that is slightly below the 2020 budget and the construction work plan for 2021 is about \$2 million less than in 2020. These initiatives will keep rates stable and should help to avoid a rate increase for the eighth year in a row.

You may be interested in how well the Cooperative is performing. To begin with, I will cover member satisfaction as of the third quarter of 2020. Overall satisfaction is 8.94 on a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being the highest. The areas of highest performance are restoring electric service when the power goes out at 9.15, providing reliable service at 9.13 and having competent and knowledgeable employees at 9.07. The areas of lowest performance are having a goal to provide the lowest possible costs at 8.25, helping you learn to manage your energy use at 8.36 and providing a good value for the money you spend at 8.42. I would add that the scores for lowest performance are not what I would consider bad scores, they just happen to be the lowest. Another benchmark used to



gauge member satisfaction is the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI). South River EMC's ACSI score for the third quarter of 2020 was an 87. As a comparison, the ACSI for the top municipal system in the country was 73 and the top investor owned utility was 76. Therefore, your locally owned and controlled electric cooperative is outperforming the best municipal systems and investor-owned utilities in the country by a wide margin. These are very good scores and I commend our outstanding team of employees for the excellent service that they provide to you.

We know that reliability is extremely important and we have improved in that area as well. The Cooperative utilizes the System Average Interruption Duration Index (SAIDI) to measure performance pertaining to reliability. Excluding major storms such as hurricanes, South River EMC has achieved a 38.25 percent reduction in the average SAIDI for the last five years, which is significant. The need for overtime has also come down.

Concerning our commitment to community, in 2020, through member participation in the

continued on page C

DIRECTORS RECEIVE CERTIFICATION

South River EMC District 3 Director **J.W. Simmons** received his Board Leadership Certificate.

The Board Leadership Certificate (BLC) is the second part of the director education program, and consists of a series of courses focusing in greater depth on specific industry and governance issues. These include issues such as risk management, power supply, parliamentary procedure, technology and policy development.

District 7 Director, **C. Wayne Collier Jr.**, received his Director Gold Certificate.

The Director Gold Certificate recognizes directors who have earned their Credential Cooperative



District 3 Director
J.W. Simmons



District 7 Director
C. Wayne Collier Jr.

Director Certificate and their Board Leadership Certificate. It shows Collier's commitment to advancing his knowledge throughout his tenure on the board.

The purpose of director-level education is to help cooperative directors, at every stage of their service, understand their roles and responsibilities, stay up-to-date on the key issues and trends in the industry and prepare them to meet the challenges facing electric cooperatives.

continued from page B

Operation Round Up program, \$190,638 was made available to 28 not for profit organizations. The Bright Ideas grant program provided 39 grants to local schools and educators, which totaled \$70,121. Additionally \$50,000 from the Helping Hands fund was also made available to local community action agencies to assist members with their electric bills.

As we look ahead to 2021, it could very well be spring, or possibly summer, before most Americans have an opportunity to take advantage of the COVID-19 vaccine. Recent reports indicate that it could be the end of the summer before herd immunity is established. Until then, our ability to operate closer to normal will most likely be limited. In November, due to

serious increases in those testing positive for COVID-19 and increased hospitalizations along with guidance from the NC Department of Health and Human Services, South River EMC began taking appointments only, once again, in our lobbies. Nonetheless, the drive-through windows remain open. Actually, today, you can take care of pretty much all of your business online or by telephone. We even began offering virtual appointments last year and implemented a chat function as well. When it is safe to do so, we will open the lobbies with no restrictions.

2021 will have its own challenges and opportunities. Nonetheless, I believe we will prevail if we keep the faith, remain hopeful and continue to work

together. Thankfully, vaccines have been developed in record time and are being distributed. An appropriate Bible verse I would like to share is from Romans 12:12 - "Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer." I join many of you in praying that all will remain safe, healthy and well as we make our way through the COVID-19 storm.

As I conclude, I want to express my appreciation for the opportunity to serve as your CEO. Please know that I am here to serve you. Therefore, I want to invite your comments and suggestions. You can email me at CEO@sremc.com. You are also welcome to call me at the office at 910-892-8071.

OPERATION ROUND UP

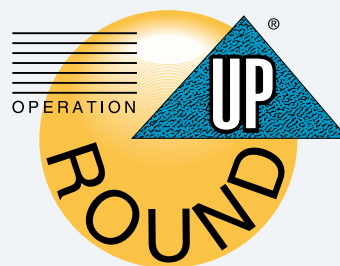
Funded Quarterly

It is once again time for educational institutions and nonprofit organizations to apply for funding through the Operation Round Up grant program.

As a member of South River EMC, you may contribute each month to this program through your electric bill. By rounding up your bill to the next dollar, it goes into a fund controlled by the Community Assistance

Corporation, or CAC, which is comprised of members like you.

Quarterly, nonprofit organizations and schools are encouraged to apply for grants which impact our communities. From new equipment in schools, to needs of fire departments and community organizations, the roughly \$6 a year you donate through this program, touches many lives.



Applications are due by February 12. If you don't make it this time, the next funding deadline will be in May.

You can see who is getting funded at sremc.com and read some of their stories in *The Communicator*.

IDEAS BURN BRIGHT

continued from page A

Brown was only seven months into the year when schools closed, and a transition was made to online instruction, which for many subjects can be difficult.

"Teaching is never without its challenges even in the best of situations," he said. "However, with virtual teaching, the challenges at times intensify especially when using new technologies for the first time, whether on the student's or teacher's side. Also, it is observed that students are less attentive and engaged during virtual lessons as opposed to physical lessons."

The STAR Academy has a smaller student body, as it is the alternative school in the county, and is in constant flux.

But, what it offers those students who attend is a more specialized instruction. After all, research shows that when

students get involved, they learn and retain significantly more.

"I am cognizant of the fact that the experiments will have a greater impact on each student," said Brown.

Brown faces challenges from COVID-19 with instruction occurring remotely.

"The coronavirus has significantly affected teaching and learning in a plethora of ways. For one, most students went online, taking away their physical practical involvement especially in laboratory exercises," said Brown. "Also, there are times when the system became overloaded, which affects connectivity. Students are more motivated to learn in the physical classroom opposed to online learning."

That's not the only problem though, STAR Academy does not have a laboratory for its

science classes. With some creative thinking though, the room has safe storage for laboratory apparatuses, equipment and solutions, as well as a table to facilitate laboratory procedure.

Bryan has been lucky, with participation overall being above average; however, he feels the science kits will ignite greater participation of students, helping them to excel.

This is the first Bright Ideas grant that STAR Academy has received.

When told this, Bryan replied, "I am really thrilled for STAR, for making history in being a well-deserved recipient of a Bright Idea's grant in 2020-2021. I am also ecstatic for the students and myself who are going to be directly impacted. I can state that this grant will allow teaching in the science department to be more conducive to learning."

THE POWER ON SCHOLARSHIP

The Power On scholarship provides a sponsorship for one qualified applicant to attend the 16-week Lineman's Academy at Nash Community College.

South River EMC will sponsor a recipient to attend the Electric Line Academy for one session annually. Sponsorship covers the cost of tuition, books, boots and safety glasses.

The Electric Line Construction Technology curriculum prepares participants to work as

electric linemen. Students will combine electrical theory with laboratory and practical applications in the course of study.

Upon successful completion, individuals will receive an Associate of Applied Science degree and a third class (apprentice) lineman certificate, as well as possessing the necessary skills for employment in the electric utility field.

Being awarded this sponsorship and successful completion of the program is not a guarantee



of employment with South River EMC, however it would certainly place the graduate in a much more valuable position to secure a position as an electric line worker.

Details to follow.

NOMINATIONS MADE BY COMMITTEE

The committee on nominations announced the submission of incumbent directors at a meeting of the board of directors on January 5:

District 3: J.W. Simmons

District 5: Dorcas Fisher

District 7: C. Wayne Collier, Jr.

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

The ways 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, not less than 40 business days prior to the meeting.

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.*

2021 Nominating Committee Members:

District 1 - Glenda Taylor

District 2 - Raylon Wood

District 3 - Joseph Anders

District 4 - Johnnie Baggett

District 6 - Carol Hudson

District 7 - Warren Paul Jones

District 8 - Walter Clark

At Large - Robert Earl Butler Jr.



HERO Homes, Comfort From The Ground Up

A high efficiency residential option, or HERO, home is 30 percent more efficient than a home built to code.

HERO homes require slightly better insulation, fenestration, air sealing, equipment, and lighting packages.

If you're looking for ways to save, consider purchasing or building a HERO-certified home. There are two ways to receive certification:

The Prescriptive Path, which is straightforward but inflexible, involves complying fully with a list of specific requirements.

The Performance Path, on the other hand, is more flexible, requiring an energy cost analysis as proof that the home you are building will have energy costs less than or equal to that same home built to prescriptive requirements.

Overall, the HERO Code is focused almost solely on improvements in the thermal enclosure, which benefit you year-round.

For more information on the HERO Code, visit energy.gov. For more information on the HERO home rebates offered by the Cooperative, visit sremc.com/hero-program.

Keep Warm With A Few Improvements

Insulating and weatherizing your home is noticeable, but you never realize how much until you do the work.

For example, you sit around your home and think you are comfortable, but then, there's a chill, or you might feel your home is just cooler.

What is your thermostat set on?

You could be losing that warm air outside whether through heat transfer or air infiltration.

If you want to be comfortable for a reasonably

affordable price, insulate and weatherize your home.

Making improvements like this can help improve comfort and costs, so if you have cooler spots in your home, or you find yourself adjusting your thermostat to resist cold, you can pick up the supplies today.

Check out the rebates South River EMC offers to see if any of your improvements could earn you money back. For details call 910.892.8071 x 2222 or visit sremc.com/insulation-weatherization

Heat Your Water More Efficiently

Are you looking for a more efficient way to heat your water each day? With electric water heating being the second largest contributor to your electric bill each month, looking for ways to save are understandable. In this case, spending a little more on the front end, can help you save.

You need to start with an efficient water heater.

Perhaps a solar water heater? They use the sun to warm the water. And while they can save energy, you need to do some research before purchasing one.

Solar water heaters tend to be roof mounted, so you'll need to check local codes and association rules. Also, you'll need to speak to several solar installers, you want a unit sized for your home, not just the biggest unit. Checking your solar resource is a must. Solar systems, although less expensive than before, are still not cheap.

To make sure it is cost efficient, you have to have



a good solar resource, and use a fair amount of warm water. This helps you to recoup your system costs faster.

Solar systems also require an electric back up, for those not-so-sunny days.

However, if you've got the solar contractor, no building code restrictions, and use a good amount of hot water, solar water heating might be for you.

For details on the rebate offered at South River EMC, call 910.892.8071 x 2152 or visit sremc.com/energy-efficient-water-heating.



South River Electric
Membership Corporation

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Improving Comfort & Efficiency In Your Home

sremc.com | 910.892.8071

Energy Star products can help improve the efficiency of your home, while also keeping your energy bill low.

These products use 10-50 percent less energy and water than standard models.

South River EMC offers rebates on certain Energy Star rated products.

Appliances



Heat Pump
Water Heating



Heating and
Cooling



Pool Pumps



Air Seal For Greater Efficiency

The cold weather has arrived and we've all been using our heating systems to keep warm. The warm air produced by these heating systems can bring to light air sealing issues in our homes that diminish comfort and increase electricity costs.

Air leaks into and out of our homes constantly; this is called air infiltration. While some air exchange between the inside and outside is a positive thing because it brings fresh air into the home, it's a good idea to keep it to a minimum in order to promote energy efficiency and comfort. The best way to limit air infiltration is by air sealing key areas.

Air Infiltration Basics

In order for air to leak into or out of your home's living space, two things are required: a hole and a driving force. The hole can be a gap around

an entry door, an unsealed plumbing penetration, or an un-caulked window. A driving force can be anything that moves air like a range fan, a heating and air conditioning system, or even wind. Plus, air moves within our homes naturally by the stack effect.

The stack effect works like this: When air is heated by HVAC equipment, a gas fire place, the sun, or any heat source, it becomes more buoyant and rises. The void left by the heated air rising is filled by cooler air being pulled into the home by the currents created by the warm, rising air. This is an endless cycle called the stack effect and is analogous to a chimney or smoke stack exhausting warm air and smoke. The constant heat loss associated with the stack effect can increase your energy bill and decrease indoor comfort. Air sealing can minimize the negative effects caused by infiltration.

Tips for Finding and Sealing Leaks

The objective is to seal the big leaks first. Apply caulk around windows where gaps exist between the frame and wall. Insure all exterior doors close tightly and apply weather strip-



Advise Guy Aaron Jackson

ping around door frames if light is visible between the frame and the door when it's closed.

In the attic, use fire resistant recessed light covers to seal around can lighting. Also, make sure your attic access door or scuttle hole seals tightly and is insulated. Plumbing penetrations are a problem area as well. Gaps around these pipes make it possible for air to be pulled from the crawlspace into the living space. Make sure any penetrations are sealed with expanding foam. The objective is to keep what's in the crawlspace, in the crawl space.

By employing air sealing strategies like these, you put yourself in the best position to save money and remain comfortable during the winter season.



South River EMC Communicator



Follow Us! [southriveremc](#) A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

PO Box 931
Dunn, NC 28335
910.892.8071
800.338.5530
www.sremc.com