



South River EMC Communicator

STUDENTS TAKE TO THE SKY

It's a bird, it's a plane, it's a drone! And it seems they're everywhere, from the electric company, to emergency services, and in schools as well.

Mike Lubawski, a teacher at Harnett Central High School, wrote a Bright Ideas grant to receive drones for the school's drone technology department.



Lubawski with two of the drones.

"Two years ago, the US Army recruiting center offered a high school STEM program and sent out applications across the state for high schools to apply for their inaugural drone competition," said Lubawski. "Sara Williamson, the career development coordinator for our school, asked me to sponsor a team if we were selected to participate."

This opportunity allowed students to build a drone, see drones the Army uses, and speak with drone operators. A great way to see STEM principles in action.

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"After the competition, Justin Wilkinson, our county's career and technical education director, and Larry Clark, career and technical education instructional coordinator, approached me with the idea of starting a drone program in Harnett County," said Lubawski.

"Trying to launch this new program, with a majority of students participating in remote learning, has been a challenge."

The program had a minimum equipment standard and the county was able to provide 10, which would have worked great for face-to-face instruction. However, in order to reduce cross contamination, a Bright Ideas grant was written for more drones.

They received the grant and will have 20 drones in their classroom.

"The program is one semester long, and we are looking into adding a level-two class in the future," said Lubawski. "The level-two course will incorporate mapping of real estate, commercial buildings, property, and agriculture. We will also discuss how drones can be used to aid emergency management services."

That being said, how are the approximately 16-17 students keeping engaged?

"It has been a challenge! I really try to encourage the students to stay focused on the goal of becoming a licensed drone pilot while in high school," he said. "Students taking this program have the opportunity to become federally certified drone operators."

The Federal Aviation Administration, or FAA, requires a certification test, which permits an individual to operate a drone for financial gain, apart from recreational users.



Lubawski works with his face-to-face students.



From student to certified drone pilot, Matthew Rogers.

The state also requires you to possess state certification, in order to commercially operate a drone in the state.

"I wanted to be able to provide a drone for each student enrolled in the program," he said. "As things are now, the only students who are flying drones at least once a week are those who are coming to school for face-to-face learning."

The addition of the 10 drones will allow a drone to be assigned to each student.

So, what happens to ensure that everyone with a drone keeps it in tip-top shape?

The drones will be signed out to students, just like their textbooks and chromebooks. And, like chromebooks and textbooks, they are responsible for the cost to repair or replace the drone, should anything happen. These devices are about the cost of a chromebook.

While it is not a requirement for students learning remotely to carry a drone home, it is encouraged so that these students will have practice flying, as well as relating to content terminology.

"Students will be required to submit videoed flight assignments weekly," he said.

A win-win, allowing students to be engaged, as well as providing accountability during a different time of learning.

Interested in this program? Contact Mike Lubawski at mlubawski@harnett.k12.nc.us or Harnett County CTE director, Justin Wilkinson at jwilkinson@harnett.k12.nc.us

South River EMC's Annual Meeting Of Members

CHANGE OF DATE

Mark Your Calendars To Join Us

October 14

We will be in-person and live-streamed with the ability to dial-in.

The board of directors election date is April 15.

See sremc.com/annual-meeting for full details.

** Please note: this is due to change dependent on COVID-19.*

HELPING YOU TACKLE THOSE BALANCES

Important Update Regarding COVID Balances

Last year was different for all of us, and left many trying to make ends meet.

Following a moratorium on the disconnection of electric service from mid-March until July, South River EMC had to make a decision on how we would help members like you pay your bills.

Any member who had balances that accrued during that period of time had a special "COVID" account created into which the past-due balances were transferred.

Each member was given six months to pay the COVID account balance. However, due to on-going coronavirus issues, South River EMC has chosen to extend the payment of the COVID balances with some changes.

Beginning with your February bill, a quarter of the balance of your COVID account was transferred to your primary account. This will continue through May. Therefore, you will have a quarter of the balance on each of your February, March, April and May bills.

This provides those with COVID account balances additional time to get it paid. However, the transferred balance is ineligible for payment arrangements or extensions of time.

You can pay the COVID balance in full at any time.

If you believe that this process won't work for your situation, we can look at converting your account to SmartPay, our prepaid solution.

Please call 910.892.8071 if you have any questions or concerns.



CALLING FOR YOUR REPORT CARDS

Get those report cards ready! South River EMC's "Give Us An A" program is back!

A "Give Us An A" drawing, will be held in July.

The drawing is held for students achieving at least one A on their report card.

Typically, we draw 15 names at a time and those students receive a \$25 gift card. However, this time, we will be drawing 30 names of students with A's on their report cards.

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 also include the member's name, South River EMC account number and a



daytime telephone number. Report cards will not be accepted without this information.

Send report cards to:

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

Or scan and e-mail to connections@sremc.com.

Report cards are due by close of business, July 7.

**Please note: only one report card per student will be entered into the drawing.*

If you experience an outage, with Generac...

It's as easy as **1 - 2 - 3 ...**

- 1** Power goes out.
- 2** Generator detects outage.
- 3** Transfer switch activates the generator, powering your home.

Purchase Options Include:

- 16 kw for gas heating
- 22kw for electric heating

For more information, contact the Advise Guys at 910.892.8071 or at adviseguys@sremc.com.

SIMMONS RECEIVES GOLD CERTIFICATION



District 3 Director:
J.W. Simmons.

South River EMC District 3 Director J.W. Simmons received his Director Gold Certificate.

The Director Gold Certificate recognizes directors who have earned Credential Cooperative Director Certificates and Board Leadership Certificates. It shows Simmons's commitment to advancing his knowledge

throughout his board tenure.

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.

ELECTRIFYING KITCHEN APPLIANCES

To Save Time And Energy

Whether your oven and stove top are powered by gas or electricity, it's no secret that they consume more energy than smaller countertop appliances, like slow cookers and toaster ovens. In addition to efficiency, smaller kitchen appliances can provide faster cooking times and less hassle with cleanup.

If you're looking for convenient cooking methods with the added bonus of energy efficiency, here are three electrifying appliances for your kitchen:

1. Air fryers are becoming increasingly popular, and consumers have a lot of good things to say about these handy little appliances. This fryer uses convection to circulate hot air and cook the food – this means little to no oil is required, resulting in healthier meals than those from traditional fryers. Air fryers are fairly small, so they won't take up much of your counter space, and with everything cooked in the fryer,

cleanup will be a breeze. Air fryers are available in a variety of sizes, and prices range from \$40 to \$200+.

2. Electric griddles have certainly been around for a while, and they offer several benefits for any home chef (beyond bacon and eggs). Griddles are convenient because you can cook everything at once – like a "one-pan" meal, and the possibilities are endless. From fajitas to sandwiches to French toast, griddles can help satisfy any taste buds. They consume small amounts of energy and provide quick cooking times,

so your energy bill will thank you. Prices and sizes for griddles vary, but you can typically find one for about \$30 at your local retail stores.

3. Pizza brings people together, so why not consider a **pizza maker** for your kitchen? These compact, countertop machines are an inexpensive alternative to a costly brick oven, and they use less energy than your traditional oven. Choose your own fresh ingredients to whip up a faster, healthier pizza at home. Plus, most pizza makers are multifunctional and can be used to cook flatbreads, frittatas, quesadillas and more. You can purchase a pizza maker for about \$30 to \$150+ online or at your local retailer.



photo credit Hamilton Beach

These are just a few electrifying appliance options for your kitchen. Remember, when you're cooking a smaller meal, countertop appliances can save time and energy. To learn about additional ways to save energy at home, visit sremc.com/rebates-efficiency-tips.

Look Before You Leap

Heating and cooling is the highest contributor to your electric costs each month, no matter the time of year.

And you cannot change that fact, because a heat pump, or two, heats all the space of your home. However, you can alter the effects on your bill.

It all starts with the heat pump, the age, size, and efficiency.

Did you know that a heat pump that is either too large or too small for a home, performs inefficiently and ends up costing you more? When purchasing, you must compare quotes from installers to ensure you are receiving an appropriately sized unit, or two, for your home.

Next, when requesting quotes, ask for different efficiency options. Remember, the best cost here isn't always the cheapest. Efficiency is measured by the seasonal energy efficiency ratio, or SEER rating. The higher the rating, the more efficient the unit is for heating, and typically the more expensive the unit.

Although more expensive to purchase, a high efficiency system will typically save you money over its lifespan, due to their higher SEER rating.

Then, of course, it comes down to how you use your heating and cooling system.

When your heat pump runs constantly, even the most efficient unit, it uses electricity.

And that electric use adds up.

Even the most efficient units age, and the older they get, the less efficient they become.'

So, when your electric HVAC system reaches around eight years, look at what the market has to offer.

Find an appropriate sized unit, find an efficient 17 SEER or greater unit and consider what type of system you might want.

An air source heat pump, a geothermal heat pump, or a ductless mini-split heat pump, which will it be when the time comes?

Let a high efficiency unit help you save. Visit sremc.com or call 910.892.8071 x 2152.

HERO Homes
Built To A Higher Standard

Compared to standard homes, HERO Homes have better:

- Insulation
- Fenestration
- Air Sealing
- Equipment and Lighting Packages

Visit sremc.com or call 910.892.8071 x 2153 for more information. You could be eligible for a HERO Home rebate.

For more information, visit sremc.com
or call 910.892.8071 x 2152.

You could be eligible for a pool pump rebate!



Eligibility:

- You must receive electric service from South River EMC in the home where the pool pump is installed.
- The unit must be purchased and installed within 90 days prior to application.
- The pool pump must be Energy Star Certified and a two-speed or variable-speed.

**This rebate is subject to change without notice.
**All rebates are subject to approval.*

How Are You Going To Heat Your Water?

Water heating, we rarely think about it, until the water heater goes out, or someone uses all the hot water.

Even then, you replace a standard water heater, with a standard water heater. You don't consider alternate options, and it's understandable, you want warm water again as soon as possible.

Take time now and consider another option, a different water heater could help you save on energy costs. And there are several types of water heaters to look into for energy savings.

The solar water heater requires sunlight to power it. However, they also require an electric back-ups for not-so-sunny days.

They are roof mounted, which

might or might not fit local codes. And you should have a study performed to see if you have the appropriate solar resource to make a solar water heater worthwhile.

There's the on-demand water heater, not found to be as efficient for electric water heating.

The inefficiency comes in that the system does not keep constant heat on the water, but takes a lot of energy to heat up the water when needed.

However, gas water heating would do well with one of these type of systems.

So if you're in the market for a more affordable electric water heating option, consider a heat pump water heater.

A heat pump water heater takes the surrounding heat and uses it to warm water.

They require installation in locations that remain in the 40- to 90-degree range year-round and have at least 1,000 cu. ft. of space around the water heater.

Cool exhaust air is exhausted to the room or outdoors, so these units should be installed in a space with excess heat. Heat pump water heaters will not operate efficiently in a cold space so any type of air-source heat pump system works more efficiently in a warm climate.

South River EMC offers rebates for more efficient water heating. For details visit sremc.com or call 910.892.8071 x 2152.

Save On Those Appliance Costs

Your home is filled with appliances, and in the past year, you've either used them more or less than ever before. Whatever the case, when you do use them, they cost you.

By selecting Energy Star certified appliances, you are committing to saving energy and money. Those appliances that carry the Energy Star undergo rigorous testing in order to earn it. The best part, if they're Energy Star certified, they also use less water, depending on the appliance.

Energy Star-certified clothes

washers deliver superior efficiency and performance by incorporating advanced features using 25 percent less energy and 33 percent less water, while Energy Star-certified clothes dryers use 20 percent less energy than standard models. That's major laundry savings.

With an Energy Star-certified refrigerator you can maximize your energy and dollar savings without sacrificing the features you want, and although savings aren't huge, this an appliance that runs constantly, so savings add up.

The best dehumidifiers help reduce excess moisture, eliminate bacteria in the air and protect your home from mold and mildew. Choosing an Energy Star dehumidifier can deliver savings on energy bills, by using more efficient refrigeration coils, compressors, and fans. In fact, the annual energy saved by one of these models could power an Energy Star-certified refrigerator for nearly two months.

For information on the appliance rebate offered by South River EMC, visit sremc.com or call 910.892.8071 x 2152.

Checks And Balances For Heating And Cooling

Sealing air leaks around your home and adding insulation can help improve your home's comfort and efficiency and provide up to a 10 percent savings on your annual energy costs.

Simple fixes include installing weather stripping on doors and caulking around windows, while bigger jobs might include sealing leaks and adding insulation in your attic.

First, choose and prioritize your air sealing and insulation projects by selecting your problem.

It might be your attic if you have drafty rooms; there are

uneven temperatures between rooms; you're experiencing high heating or cooling bills; or if ice dams on roof in the winter.

Check insulation levels in your attic and check for air leaks

It could be your basement or crawlspace if you experience a cold floor in the winter; uneven temperatures between rooms; elevated heating or cooling bills; or even pests (insects, rodents).

Check the insulation level in your basement/crawlspace, as well as checking for air leaks

Your ducts could need some help if you have higher heating

or cooling bills; uneven temperatures between rooms; or if there is dust or smells from attic or crawlspace.

Check ductwork for cracks, kinks, loose air supply boots or missing insulation.

Doors, windows or walls could be a problem if you have drafty rooms; or pests (insects).

Check insulation levels in your walls; and check for air leaks.

Making improvements also makes you eligible for a rebate. For complete details, visit sremc.com or call 910.892.8071 x 2222.

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