



South River EMC Communicator

2022 SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

South River EMC offers students several scholarships in support of their pursuit of higher education.



The South River EMC scholarship application period is open through January 28. This is an opportunity for high school seniors to receive one of three \$1,000 scholarships to a school of their choice. Information can be found at sremc.com/scholarships.

Also on the scholarship page is information on our community college scholarships. A \$500 scholarship is awarded annually at each of the following schools: Sampson, Central Carolina, Johnston or Fayetteville Technical Community College.

The scholarships are available to any member or their child taking a full course load at the community college, including new or continuing education students.

There are several other scholarships, including one for NC State, while the others are part of programs we offer. Perfect for planning if you have younger children!

Visit sremc.com/scholarships for information on all scholarships available from South River EMC.

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WE WANT TO SEE YOUR A's!

Are you a student, or the parent of a student, with at least one A on his or her report card? Then it's time for the "Give Us An A" program!

Grab a copy of your child's most recent report card containing at least one "A" and submit it to:

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

Or email it to: connections@sremc.com.

You must include the member's name, address, South River EMC account number and daytime telephone number. Report cards will not be accepted without this information.



The drawing is held for students achieving at least one A on their report card, and 15 names will be drawn to receive a \$25 gift card.

The program is open to students who are members, or children of members, of South River EMC.

Don't miss an opportunity to celebrate good grades, send that report card to us by February 8.

2021 ANNUAL MEETING RECAP

South River EMC hosted its first virtual Annual Meeting on October 14.

The event was well attended, with around 800 members registering.

The meeting began at 6 p.m. with board president, Dr. E.Sue Godwin Baker, introducing vice president, Kelly Harrington.

Harrington offered the invocation before returning to Baker for the welcoming of members.

Baker introduced the board, spoke of training, employees and their practices to keep business smooth during the pandemic, as well as services available to members.

George Williams, board treasurer, went over financial highlights of 2020, discussing how excess revenues would be returned to members in the form of capital credits. He concluded with the

announcement that South River EMC received a clean audit report for fiscal year 2020.

Attorney Bo Jones was then called upon to present minutes from the previous meeting, as well as election results. Members participated by passing a motion to dispense of the reading of the minutes. They then listened as current board



CFO Andrew Hardy and Member Service Rep Maria Ramos.

members James W. Simmons (District 3), Dorcas Autry Fisher (District 5) and C. Wayne Collier (District 7) retained their seats, as they were uncontested.

South River EMC CEO Chris Spears then stepped up to give his report on the state of the Cooperative.

Prize Winners

South River EMC's Annual Meeting had prize winners!

Members who registered for the meeting were eligible to receive a \$10 credit, as well as entered into a drawing for additional bill credits.

The drawing was held Friday, October 22, and 40 names were drawn, totaling \$4,000 in credits.

A list of all those who received a credit is available at [sremc.com/annual-meeting](https://www.sremc.com/annual-meeting).

CELEBRATING 300 YEARS OF SERVICE



Adam McLamb, 20 years



Chris Kreh, 20 years



Jackie Bass, 5 years; Djuanna Tessein, 10 years



(Front:) Jennifer Tart, 10 years; Ashley Warren, 5 years
(Back:) Vanessa Horne, 25 years; Denise Sutton, 25 years; Silvia Harrier, 5 years



Jennifer Hairr, 35 years



(Left to Right:) Darwin Denning, 30 years; Rollin Sessoms, 10 years; Keith Conway, 15 years; Craig Uleck, 30 years; Andrew Smith, 30 years; Carson Walker, 10 years; Tommy Lee, 10 years

SCHOOLS RECEIVE FUNDING

South River EMC awarded \$59,348.35 in Bright Ideas grants recently.

The Bright Ideas program offers grants to public school educators in grades K-12.

The program arose from a study that found teachers at the time used more than \$500 of their own money to provide materials for their classrooms.

With STEM and STEAM initiatives these costs have gone up even more. In many cases, this means that students are doing either without materials, or with a limited supply.

That's where Bright Ideas comes in, offering grants up to \$2,500 to help provide innovative,

classroom-based learning initiatives.

Past grants have purchased books, math manipulatives, coding equipment, 3D printers and musical instruments; the list is endless.

This year, the decision-making process awarded 34 grants to 30 teachers at 20 schools across four counties.

Bright Ideas grants ranged from \$428.95 to \$2,500 and were for a variety of objects.

South River EMC's Bright Ideas program is open to over 80



Teacher Juanita Cox and her students at Western Harnett Middle School.

public schools in Cumberland, Sampson Johnston and Harnett counties.

We look forward to sharing these Bright Ideas with you and showcasing some of our talented teachers in 2022.

Congratulations to our recipients!

WHY IS IT SMART?

You've undoubtedly heard phrases mentioned such as a smart home, you've got your smartphone, smart watches, televisions, thermostats and more.

New smart products continue to hit the market and they are more connected than ever before.

For example, if your family goes out of town and you forget to alter your thermostat to away settings, you can do so with a smart thermostat and a Wi-Fi connection.

You probably have a smart phone, and your kids and grandkids as well. Put them to work researching, because there are a lot of smart devices.

Those appliances include vacuums, air purifiers, cameras, display systems, lights, door locks, home security, light bulbs, plugs, speakers, microwaves, refrigerators, ovens, coffee makers, mops, beds, air conditioners, baby monitors, shower heads, tooth brushes, bathroom scales, mirrors, garage door openers, and outdoor devices, like sprinklers.

While some of these devices can save you energy and money, not all will have a large impact on your bill, but rather, they will make certain tasks easier for you.

So, why are they smart? Because of their connectivity. Using your Wi-Fi connection,



and in many cases an app that pairs your phone with the device, or with devices that pair with Alexa or Google Assistant, you could prompt about 10 events to happen when you arrive home. For example, your lights could come on and your coffee could begin to brew.

Check back with the newsletter in 2022 to see what the Advise Guys have to say on some smart devices, and see how they can save you energy and money.

HOLIDAY DÉCOR TIPS FOR AN ENERGY-WISE HOME

Whether you've already decked your halls or you're just getting started, there's still time to incorporate energy savings into your holiday décor planning.

If you haven't strung your twinkle lights, be sure to use LED light strands. LEDs consume far less energy than incandescent lights and they can last 40 holiday seasons. They're also safer because they're made with epoxy lenses, not glass, making them more resistant to breaking — and they're cool to the touch, so no burnt fingers!

If you missed Santa's memo about energy-saving LEDs and your holiday lights are already up, you can still save on lighting costs. All you need is a programmable light timer. Most models cost between \$10 to \$25 and can be purchased through online retailers like Amazon or at stores like Lowe's or Walmart. With a light timer, you can easily program when you want your holiday lights turned on and off, which will save you time, money and en-



ergy. If you're using a timer for exterior lighting, make sure it's weatherproof and intended for outdoor use.

If Clark Griswold's décor style is a bit much for your taste, consider a more natural approach. Many Christmas tree farms, and even retailers like Lowe's and Home Depot, give away greenery clippings from recently trimmed trees. With a little twine, extra ornaments and sparkly ribbon, you can create

beautiful garlands and wreaths to hang over your front door or windows.

To add extra twinkle at night, you can install solar-powered spotlights to illuminate your new (essentially free!) greenery. Solar spotlights can vary in price, but you should be able to purchase a quality set of four for about \$30 — and because they run on natural energy from the sun, there's no additional cost to your energy bill.



Regardless of how you decorate your home for the holidays, there are plenty of ways to save energy throughout the season. Visit South River EMC's website, sremc.com, for additional energy-saving tips.

Sip On Savings

**Energy Star
rated products
will help you
save this
holiday season.**

**Better performing.
More cost-effective.
More eco-friendly.**

Find out more information at
sremc.com, or call 910.892.8071.
South River EMC offers rebates on
certain Energy Star products.

Insulation, Weatherization, And You

Heating and cooling your home, particularly in the harsher weather environments, like winter and summer, can be expensive.

There are reasons, thermostat settings, the comings and goings of family and friends, the age of your heating and cooling system, and your insulation and weatherization practices.

Setting your thermostat higher in the winter and lower in the summer causes your system to cycle on and off more as well as running longer. Set your thermostat and forget it — we recommend 68 degrees in winter and 78 degrees in summer.

The older your HVAC system gets, the more it costs to run, even that efficient unit you bought 15 years ago. Beside, the lifespan of a heating and

cooling system is around 10 years, though we often hold onto these systems as long as they run, efficiently or not.

But, the crowning and least costly improvement when it comes to heating and cooling is insulating and weatherizing your home. Insulation prevents heat transfer, or the loss of heat from inside your home to the outside. If you feel cool spots in your home, a cause could be insufficient insulation. Insulation settles, and when it does, there can be bare spots that allow for heat transfer. By making sure the area is covered and refreshing it as needed, you can improve comfort, which could also improve cost.

Another option is weatherization, a practice which prevents air infiltration, or the loss of inside air outside, or vice versa.

This can happen in any number of places, plumbing penetrations, around doors and windows, and more. However, by weatherstripping and caulking, you prevent that heat you're paying each day or month, from leaving. Another comfort and cost improvement.

South River EMC offers rebates on heat pumps, as well as insulation and weatherization improvements.

If you're looking for a gift for someone special, give them the gift of savings, it might save you as well.

For more information and details on these rebates, visit [sremc.com/rebates-efficiency-tips](https://www.sremc.com/rebates-efficiency-tips) or call 910-892-8071 x 2123 (heat pumps) or x2222 (insulation and weatherization).

Water heating accounts for the second largest portion of your electric bill.

Consider your energy-efficient water heating alternatives.

- Heat Pump Water Heating (HPWH)
- Solar Water Heating

By making the switch, you could be eligible for a rebate.

Find out more information about eligibility requirements and how you can save by visiting [sremc.com/energy-efficient-water-heating](https://www.sremc.com/energy-efficient-water-heating) or calling 910.892.8071 x 2153.

'Tis the season to be jolly and the season to save energy. The holidays are a time to gather with family and friends, to be merry and to be thankful for our everyday blessings that are bestowed upon us. With so much going on during this time of the year, it's also a time that we may neglect our energy-saving habits. There are steps you can take this year to help save energy and money.

Mind your thermostat

The recommended thermostat setting during the winter months is 68 degrees when in heat mode and the fan should always be set to auto. Having a house full of family and friends during the holidays can warm up a home pretty quickly.

You may also find yourself cooking more during this time of the year. The added heat from more bodies and cooking allows you to decrease the thermostat even more. This decreased setting will lessen the run time on your HVAC system. If you have a fireplace with a damper, make sure the damper is closed when you are not using the fireplace. By closing it, you are preventing the warm air in your home from escaping out of the chimney.

If you do a lot of cooking, try cooking as many dishes as possible at one time. Hosting a potluck meal is a great way to cut back on oven use. It can also give you more time to relax and enjoy the season.

Energy-efficient lighting

For me, the holidays are not complete without some type of Christmas decorations. Putting up Christmas lights and decorations become a tradition for many families.

If you purchase lights, consider light emitting diode (LED) Christmas lights. LEDs can be up to 90 percent more efficient than incandescent bulbs. On top of saving energy and money, they are also safer. LED bulbs are not as hot as incandescent bulbs and reduce the risk of combustion along with burnt fingers. The cooler bulbs are safer to use on your Christmas tree, wreaths and garlands as well. They are made with epoxy lenses that give it more resistance against breakage. Just like the LED bulbs in your home, they will last longer than incandescent, halogen and CFL bulbs.

When you have your Christmas tree lights on, turn off lamps and other lights. Even though LEDs are more efficient and safer, you do not want to keep them on all the time. Make sure timers are installed and/or you unplug lights to ensure they do not stay on around the clock.

Adjustments for time away

If you travel instead of hosting during the holidays, it's important to adjust your thermostat accordingly. Remember, your HVAC system will operate to satisfy the thermostat set point you leave it at or run based off



Advise Guy Eric Gainey

of a programmable schedule.

If you are going to be gone a few days, adjust the thermostat down to a 50-55 degree setting. You want to leave a little heat in case the weather is extremely cold to prevent pipes from freezing and bursting. This practice is something you should do any time you are leaving for a few days during the winter months and not just during the holidays.

Also unplug devices or small appliances that won't be used and make sure your timers are set for any lighting or decorations you wish to have on for periods of a time.

For tools and more information on ways to save, you can visit our website at sremc.com or call the Advise Guys at 910-892-8071. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

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