



South River EMC Communicator

TEACHING MINDFULNESS

By definition, mindfulness is a mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations. It is often used as a therapeutic technique.



Mindfulness is something many of us need to practice at least once a day, but we don't have the time. That's why Amy Dalrymple has made it part of her students' curriculum, and she's doing it with a Bright Ideas grant.

A teacher at Western Harnett Middle School for 17 years, Dalrymple wrote her grant as students returned to school in 2021.

"When we started back to school this year I noticed kids were just

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Cooperative Installs Battery Storage

Your cooperative is committed to continuing exploration into alternate sources of energy and energy storage in order to provide the greatest reliability for our members. We have begun the installation of cutting-edge battery energy storage technology at the Collier Substation in Fayetteville. The battery project will be integrated at an existing electric substation, adding local energy resources that will enhance system resilience and reliability for co-op consumers-members.

The batteries are being engineered and constructed by North Carolina-based FlexGen, the second largest energy storage technology company in the nation and a leader in designing energy-storage solutions that further the ongoing evolution in the energy industry.

Nancy Pegler, FlexGen CEO stated that North Carolina's electric co-ops continue to demonstrate leadership "on delivering a more intelligent and reliable grid".

The battery in Fayetteville is one of 10 substation batteries being deployed in rural locations this year by North Carolina's Electric Cooperatives, including South River EMC. Collectively, the batteries will provide 40 megawatts of power, and will be charged when demand for electricity is low and discharged during moments of peak demand for power. This not only enhances electric reliability but is expected to provide cost savings over the lifetime of the batteries. Because cooperatives are not-for-profit, at-cost energy providers, members will benefit from those savings.

Installation of the battery energy-storage system will begin early this year, with activation anticipated in the summer. The installation will create temporary construction

jobs and help enhance area resources for future investment.

This project complements a growing collection of distributed energy resources including the Cooperative's microgrid at Butler Farms in Lillington and an upcoming solar plus battery project that is being constructed at the Halls Substation in Sampson County (see below).

In addition to substation batteries, South River EMC and the network of cooperatives in North Carolina have worked together for years to lead innovative energy strategies, including community solar, microgrids, demand-response programs and solar plus storage initiatives.

We will continue to lead the integration, management and optimization of resources and technologies that benefit our community and local members, now and in the decades to come.



MESSAGE FROM CEO
CHRIS M. SPEARS





SURGE PROTECTION

Keep your electronic equipment safe.

A power surge is typically caused by lightning, changes in electrical loads, faulty wiring or damaged power lines.

Install power strips with surge protection to protect sensitive equipment.

- Easy to use (just plug them in)
- Protect electronics plugged into the device
- Must be replaced over time or after a major surge event

MINDFULNESS continued

unable to be still. Anxiety was high and some kids admitted to feelings of depression," she said. "I wanted to do something that would allow us to socially distance as well as allowing students a moment to work on themselves. Not every kid is athletic or likes to run. I wanted to share with them something that has so many benefits for the mind and body that everyone can do."

That something turned out to be yoga, and it allows students to be active without fear of failure, as well as allowing them to focus on self-care.

"Our goal is to incorporate yoga into our Healthful Living classes. Yoga has many benefits; our students will gain strength and flexibility along with learning mindfulness, and meditation skills," she wrote in her grant application. "Yoga is wonderful for stress relief, and during the past 18 months, our students have experienced social-

emotional stress due to isolation and the impacts of COVID-19."

Indeed, the impacts are seen everywhere, but they are more pronounced in students who seem to have regressed in social situations.

"They have spent time at home and for some students the majority of that time was spent alone," she said. "They struggled with being back on a schedule and having responsibilities that they are being held accountable for completing."

Enter mindfulness, and with her Bright Ideas grant, she purchased 70 yoga mats with plans to teach students about focusing on new beginnings, respect (for themselves and others), gratitude, giving, responsibility, love, rejuvenation, trust, and self-care. Each month is to have a theme on which students can focus.

"When I started thinking about this grant and about what I wanted to do with it, I wanted to plan around these intentions,"

Dalrymple said. "The themes are not necessarily about the poses or physical side of yoga, but about the emotional and mental side."

The school has a teacher on staff who is also a certified yoga instructor, and Dalrymple plans to work with her to write guided meditations.

"In yoga, it's common to set some intentions at the start of your practice. By setting your intentions you are setting goals for yourself," Dalrymple said, "We teach goal setting in our health curriculum so students are familiar with the importance of this and the steps in how to go about achieving their goals."

Now, the start has been slow, but the next few months will help students become more focused.

"We are working on introducing yoga to the boys in a manner that they will be more receptive to participating and putting forth their best effort," said Dalrymple.

CO-OP LAUNCHES HOME SOLAR TOOLKIT

South River EMC has an informational toolkit designed to simplify complex questions about solar power as a home energy resource.

The toolkit was launched in response to increasing member interest in home solar and is a part of South River EMC's Brighter Future vision, which includes a commitment to net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

An increasing number of members are showing interest in home solar technologies, and we want to ensure we provide information that helps them make informed decisions. The

South River EMC Advise Guys are also available to provide assistance and information.

The toolkit is available at sremc.com/residential-solar, or under the My Energy Future tab.



Members who review the home solar toolkit will find answers to common questions like:

- What factors should I consider?
- How could adding solar impact my electric bill?

- What happens on a rainy day or at night?

Members are encouraged to learn more and connect with our energy experts at AdviseGuys@sremc.com.



Team up to lower energy costs.

Just like traffic, demand on the electric grid has peak times. That's why we're enlisting Watt Watchers: members who help to offset energy demand peaks by making small changes to their energy use. We'll alert you to an anticipated peak with a text or email alert.

By adjusting your thermostat a couple of degrees, or delaying showering or doing laundry for a couple of hours, you can contribute to big savings on wholesale power. As a member of an electric cooperative, these savings are passed on to you.

WINTER PEAK TIMES
6 - 9 AM



Enroll today at www.SREMC.com/WattWatchers

LAST CALL FOR BASKETBALL CAMP

This summer, current fifth, and sixth graders can attend the Touchstone Energy Basketball camps offered at NC State and UNC-Chapel Hill offered by South River EMC.

Students statewide are encouraged to apply for one of 50 all-expenses-paid scholarships to attend the Carolina Basketball Camp at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (June 18-22) and the Wolfpack Women's Basketball Academy at North Carolina State University in Raleigh (June 19-22).

The overnight camps are held

in the summer, and campers work closely with coaches and players to develop fundamental skills, helping them perform and excel both on and off the court.

Campers must:

- Be a rising sixth or seventh grader. This means the student should currently be in fifth or sixth grade.
- Attend a school in the Cooperative service area.
- Have permission from a parent or guardian to attend.
- Provide their own transportation to and from camp.

Winners will attend camps courtesy of South River EMC. The Cooperative funds one scholarship to each camp.

Applications are scored on academics, extracurricular activities and an essay that must accompany the application. The application period ends March 31.

Eligible students interested in the scholarship can visit sremc.com/basketball-camps or ncelectriccooperatives.com/sports-camps to complete an application. Applications must be completed online.

A NEW PAYMENT OPTION FOR MEMBERS

South River EMC is offering members another way to pay their bill.

That option is Check Out and it is offered at over 50,000 retailers across the country, including Dollar General, CVS, Speedway, 7 Eleven, and Family Dollar.

Check Out is a new, convenient, cash-based way to pay that allows you to pay your bill in more places than ever before.

So how does it work? With Check Out, you have a barcode that represents your account, and it is needed to make a payment.

The barcode is proprietary to the Check Out application. It contains information to identify the single member account you are paying as well as identifying

South River EMC as the utility to receive payment. If you have multiple accounts you will need a different barcode for each account.

The cashier will scan your barcode, but you will need to tell them how much you want to pay. The payment will post automatically to your account.

Visit <https://southriveremc.sedccheckout.com> to get your barcode, and locate your closest store options. While some retailers will only accept a printed/physical barcode, others may also accept digital barcodes.



Purchasing Efficiently

South River EMC offers members several rebates for making energy saving purchases.

The Energy Star appliance rebate is offered on purchases of

an Energy Star certified refrigerator, clothes washer, clothes dryer, or dehumidifier. While Energy Star appliances do typically carry a higher purchase

cost, it is more than made up for in their savings. Using them efficiently helps as well. For details visit sremc.com/energy-star-appliances.

For When The Weather Warms

It's not pool season, but it never hurts to hunt up a deal. Pool pumps come in three options, single-speed, two-speed, or variable speed. The most affordable is the single-speed and if you have a pool with a pump, this is probably what you have.

A single-speed pump uses that single speed to do all tasks, and that speed is usually it's highest, which uses the most water.

A variable, or two-speed pump, gives you options to tailor water and power use to activities your

pool performs. This can cut back on energy and water use. While it may not be the season, it never hurts to begin researching options. South River EMC also offers a rebate, learn more at sremc.com/pool-pumps.

Water Heating For Less

Being the second highest contributor to your electric costs each month, there are a few things you can do to save money with your water heater, beside replacing it.

Turn down the thermostat, the recommended setting is 120 degrees. You could wrap it, this helps the water remain warm.

Or, you could replace it.

A heat pump water heater uses two to three times less energy, and still provides you with the warm water you desire. There's also solar water heating, but it typically requires a roof-mounted system with an electric back-up.

So, if you're in the market for savings, and it's getting close to time to replace your current water heater, research the options before going with the same-old-same. You could get a water heater with a better fit for your home and eligible for a rebate. For complete details visit sremc.com/energy-efficient-water-heating.



Are You In Need Of A HERO?

High Efficiency Residential Options, or HERO, homes are 30 percent more efficient than homes built to code. This is due to the HERO requirements of slightly better insulation, fenestration, air sealing, equipment, and lighting packages.

There are two ways to do it,

the prescriptive path and the performance path.

HERO homes are eligible rebates, so if you are in the market to build a home, a HERO home option might be good to consider. For details visit sremc.com/hero-program.



Insulation & Weatherization May Help

South River EMC offers rebates on insulation upgrades, as well as weather stripping and caulking practices. With heating and cooling being the highest use of energy each month, something can be done to help.



It may be time for a new heating and cooling unit, but it may just be time for some improvements. Comfort is often affected by the amount of insulation and air infiltration in your home. For example, when you feel a cold spot, it may be due to insufficient insulation, which means there might not be enough, or it may not be thick enough. Insulation works to prevent heat transfer, or the entrance of cold air into the warm home.

Meanwhile, weather stripping

and caulking prevents air infiltration or the loss of heated air outside with the entrance of cold air inside. You can expect to find it around doors and windows, plumbing penetrations, around baseboard molding. If your home is drafty, this might be why.

By doing some handiwork, you could improve your comfort and that might impact your energy costs. For details, visit sremc.com/insulation-weatherization.

Heating And Cooling For Less?

The age, use and efficiency of your heating and cooling system play a large part in your energy costs.

The older a system, the more inefficient it becomes, even if it was Energy Star certified, and



even if it was well maintained. Technology becomes more efficient. Your system, does not though. So when repairs add up, it might be time to shop.

Look at the seasonal energy efficiency ratio, or SEER, rating, the higher the SEER rating, the higher the efficiency in processing heat.

Your thermostat settings play into your heating and cooling system as well, the higher the thermostat is set in the winter, the longer your system will run. This isn't efficient for your system, or your bill. Set your

thermostat at 68 degrees in the winter. A little cool for you? If you must adjust your thermostat, try not to go above 70 degrees, you will see a rise in your electric use the higher you go in cooler temperatures.

South River EMC offers rebates on heating and cooling systems, for details on types and efficiency of systems, visit sremc.com/energy-star-heating-cooling.

All About Heat Strips

Heat strips may be a term you have heard somebody use when talking about a heat pump and/or when the outside temperatures begin to fall. Electric heat strips, emergency heat strips and auxiliary heat strips are supplemental heat sources located inside the air handler of your HVAC system. If you have a split-system, it's located in your attic or under your home. If you have a packaged unit, it's outside.

An easy way to describe a heat pump is an air conditioner that can run in reverse. When in heat mode, it moves heat from outside to inside your home. As expected, when outside temperatures get extremely cold, there is less heat to extract out of the cold air and the heat pump may need help meeting the thermostat setting.

When this happens, your system will call for the heat strip(s) to come on. Depending on the type of system and size will determine the heat strip kilowatt (kW) amount and stages involved.

Think of these strips as wired elements you may find in an electric oven. These heat strips are a big part of why energy bills are higher in the winter months versus the summer. Unless you have an app or stare at the thermostat, a lot of times you will not know when they are running. The majority of the time, they will stage when it is coldest outside.

Even if you set your thermostat at the recommended setting of 68 degrees, the heat strips will still come on at times. When it is running in regular heat mode, but has not changed the thermostat setting over a period of time, the heat strips will come on. Days that do not get out of the 30s or lower are guaranteed days for heat strips to run. A 20-plus-degree difference between the outside and inside of your home is significant for a heat pump to keep up.

Heat pump thermostats will give you the option to turn on the heat strips manually and you need to avoid that if possible. It may show in your thermostat as emergency heat or auxiliary heat. The only time you want to turn on the heat strips manually is if the first stage of heating is broken.

When you manually engage emergency heat, it will bypass the outside condenser and work like an electric furnace. Run it in that mode and call an HVAC company to repair.

The first stage is the heat pump stage where it pumps heat in from the outside to inside. Be mindful if you move the thermostat up more than 2-3 degrees, it will automatically stage in these strips. That is why we say set it and forget it. The heat strips also come on in defrost mode. When



Advise Guy Eric Gainey

running in heat mode, the condenser will get colder because it's transferring the heat around it into the home. Ice can begin to form on the condenser outside and once the outside condenser reaches a certain temperature, it should go into defrost mode.

At this point, it moves the hot refrigerant to the condenser to melt the ice. The heat strips come on so it does not offset the work it's put in pumping heat into your home and so you don't feel the cold air coming in the home.

Remember, even if you don't touch the thermostat, the weather conditions outside will determine how much and how long the heat strips run. For more information on ways to save, please visit sremc.com or call us at 910.892.8071.

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