

South River EMC Communicator

May 2024

Scholarships Awarded

South River EMC is assisting three students in their pursuit of higher education this fall.

A committee reviewed applications and selected three students living in the South River EMC service area to receive a \$1,000 scholarship. Those students were:



Jose Perez-Hernandez

Jose Perez-Hernandez, son of Hermelo Alberto Perez-Garcia and Carlota Hernandez Patricio of Dunn, will graduate from Johnston County Early College, with plans to attend NC State for a degree in chemical engineering.

Payton Gunter, daughter of Jill and Van Gunter III of Fayetteville, will graduate from Cape Fear High, with plans to attend

UNC-Chapel Hill for a degree in nursing.

Molly McLamb, daughter of Derek and



Molly McLamb

Misty McLamb, of Roseboro, will graduate from Midway High with plans to attend Sampson Community College to ultimately obtain a degree in medical sonography.

Factors considered in the selection process include: character, moral standards, citizenship, past and present academic performance, letters of recommendation, statements of career goals and qualifications; and extracurricular activities.

This scholarship opportunity showcases many wonderful attributes in our students. Congratulations!



Payton Gunter



Reminder:

South River EMC offices will be closed May 27 in observance of Memorial Day.

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Boat & Marina Safety For A Safe Summer

Warmer temperatures are imminent.

With that being the case, boats can be a great source of fun and leisure. But boaters, swimmers, and marina staff must be aware of dangers in and around the water.

Electrical hazards and carbon monoxide (CO) bring unique risks to the boating world. Learn to protect people and pets from these dangers.



Electrical Safety

- ▶ Never allow swimming near the boat, marina, or launching ramp. Residual current could flow into the water from the boat or the marina's wiring. This can put anyone at risk of electrical shock drownings (ESD).
- ▶ Be sure your boat is well maintained. Have it inspected each year. Ask a qualified marine electrician to do this job.
- ▶ Ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) and equipment leakage circuit interrupters (ELCIs) should be installed and tested monthly. Run tests to find out if electrical current is leaking from the boat.

- ▶ Only use cords intended for marine use. Never use household cords near water.
- ▶ Know where your main breakers are on both the boat and the shore power source. This will help you respond quickly in an emergency.

Carbon Monoxide Safety

- ▶ Poorly tuned engines produce more CO. Keep your engine properly maintained. Follow manufacturer's instructions for service.

- ▶ Proper ventilation for engine and generator exhaust vents must be clear and pipes should be inspected for leaks.
- ▶ Get into fresh air right away and get help if you feel symptoms of CO poisoning. These include headache, fatigue, confusion, dizziness, nausea, or seizures. The symptoms can be similar to seasickness. Assume it is CO exposure until you are sure the boat is safe.
- ▶ Do not swim near the boat's exhaust vents. CO accumulates there.
- ▶ Install CO alarms inside your boat. Test CO alarms before each trip.
- ▶ Choose a CO alarm that is approved by a qualified testing laboratory.
- ▶ If the CO alarm sounds, move to a fresh air location right away.

Know The Risks

Electrical shock drownings can occur when marina electrical systems leak electrical current into the water. Boats can also serve as the source of an electrical leakage. Leakage can cause a shock that can injure, disable, or kill a person.

Carbon monoxide is a gas you cannot see, taste, or smell. It is often called the "invisible killer." CO is created when fuels such as gasoline, diesel, or propane do not burn fully. CO is also produced when wood or charcoal is burned.

Sources of CO on your boat may include engines, gas generators, and cooking ranges. Space and water heaters can also be sources of the gas. CO can collect anywhere in or around a boat. The gas is harmful to both people and to pets.

Give Us The A's Before July 3

South River EMC is looking for local scholars!

That's right, it's time to submit those report cards.

The report card, if containing at least one A, could make the student eligible for the "Give Us An A" program.

"Give Us An A" recognizes students receiving at least one A on their most recent report card.

Make a copy of the report card and send it to:

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

Or email it to: connections@sremc.com



Report cards 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 selects 15 students from those entered to receive a \$25 gift card. This 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. Report cards should be submitted by 5 p.m. July 3.

Bright Ideas Making A Difference

No one wants to think about funding as we near the end of the school year.

However, it might be a thought when moving into your new classroom in August.

Perhaps you would like to add robotics to your curriculum, or maybe some of your current resources are desperately in need of replacement. Whatever the case, Bright ideas grants are available!

Ideas and new technologies are not often in the school budget and that's where a Bright Ideas grant can help.

The Bright Ideas program awards grants to teachers in certified, public K-12 schools, who have innovative, classroom-based ideas. Project ideas can come from anywhere, in any subject and amount up to \$2,500.

Each year, South River EMC awards at least \$50,000 in grant

funding to teachers in parts of Harnett, Johnston, Sampson and Cumberland counties.

Since 1994, educators state-wide have received \$15.8 million to fund over 14,700 projects affecting 3.65 million students.

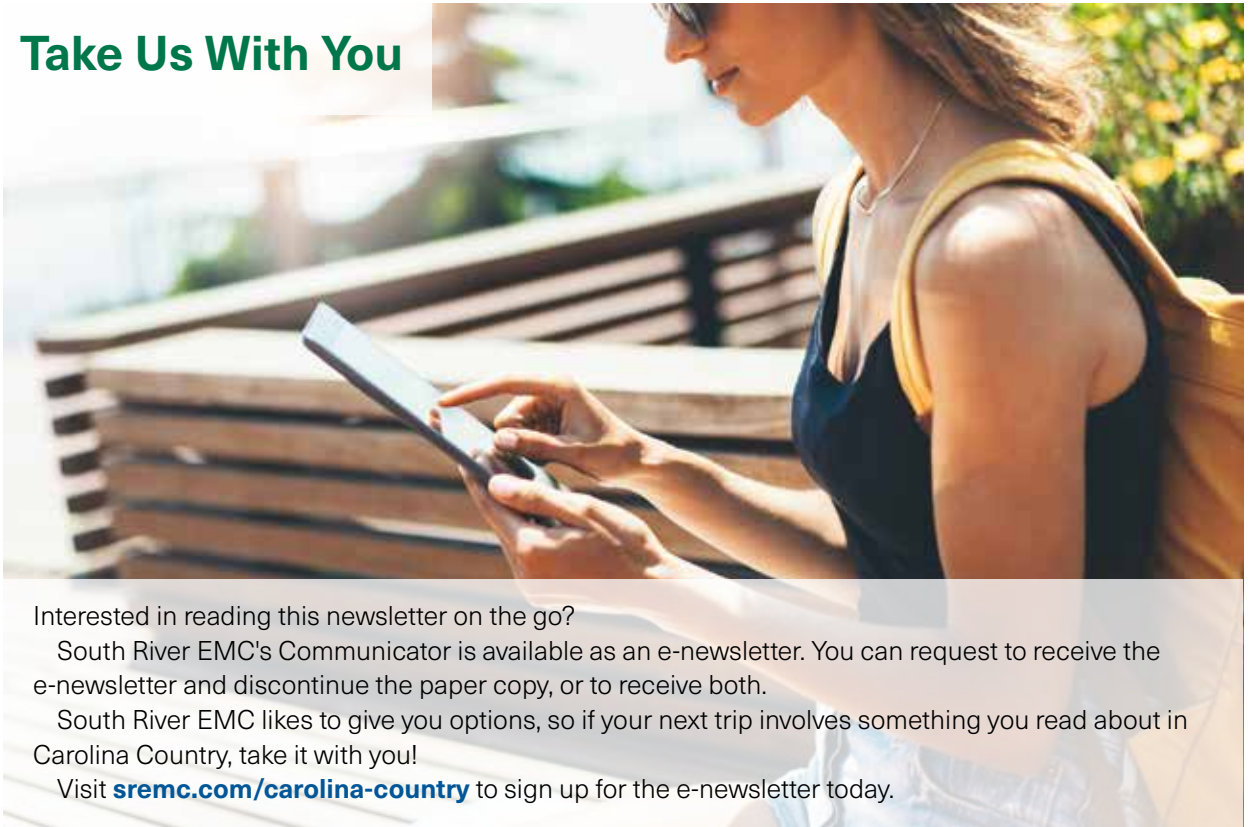
Applications for professional development will not be considered.

It's never too early to consider options. Previous applicants might take this chance to explore the revamped Bright Ideas web site. Educators with applications in by Aug. 15, will be entered in a drawing to win a \$100 Visa gift card. The final application deadline is Sept. 15.

South River EMC accepts applications online at ncbrightideas.com. If you're interested in learning more about the program, visit sremc.com/bright-ideas or e-mail connections@sremc.com.



Take Us With You



Interested in reading this newsletter on the go?

South River EMC's Communicator is available as an e-newsletter. You can request to receive the e-newsletter and discontinue the paper copy, or to receive both.

South River EMC likes to give you options, so if your next trip involves something you read about in Carolina Country, take it with you!

Visit sremc.com/carolina-country to sign up for the e-newsletter today.

Upgrade The Pump, Cut Down Run Time

May is electric safety month, but we're also on the verge of pool openings.

With pool pumps adding to our costs during the summer months, it might be a good time to consider your options to save.

Did you know that pool pumps often run much longer than necessary? As long as the water circulates while chemicals are added, they should remain mixed. That means it's not necessary to recirculate the water every day to remove debris, most of which can be removed using a skimmer or vacuum.

A new variable or two-speed pump can be set to use more energy only when needed, for tasks

like cleaning, and less when doing other low-flow tasks like filtration.

Reduce your filtration time to 6 hours per day. If the water doesn't appear clean, increase the time in half-hour increments until it does. In one study, most people who reduced pumping to less than 3 hours per day were still happy with the water's quality. This

might not be true for all homes, but it is worth seeing if you can save even a little energy.

You can install a timer to control the pump's cycling. If debris is a problem, use a timer that can activate the pump for short periods each day. Running the pump continuously for, say, 3 hours leaves the other 21 hours a day for the pool to collect debris. Several short cycles will keep the pool cleaner all day.

If you decide to replace your single speed pump, most common for pools with pumps, South River EMC offers a rebate if you do so with a variable or two-speed pump. For details on the rebate visit sremc.com/pool-pumps.



Impacting Communities With Members Support

Members continue to be stewards of their community by participating in Operation Round Up.

South River EMC recently awarded \$49,764 in grants through Operation Round Up.

The following non-profit organizations and schools received funding:

- ▶ Dunn Emergency Services: \$5,000
- ▶ Erwin Churches Helping Others (ECHO): \$5,000
- ▶ Friends Fighting Cancer, Inc.: \$5,000
- ▶ Five N Two Food Pantry: \$5,000
- ▶ Clement Volunteer Fire Department: \$5,730

- ▶ Westarea Volunteer Fire Department: \$4,505
- ▶ Mingo Masonic Lodge: \$1,100
- ▶ Hargrove Elementary: \$9,925
- ▶ Buies Creek Elementary: \$8,504

Operation Round Up is a voluntary program that enables members of South River EMC to round up their electric bill to the next whole dollar.



For example, if a bill is \$193.24, the bill rounds up to \$194 and the extra 76¢ is deposited into the Community Assistance Corporation fund.

This change, added to others' contributions, can make for big changes in the community.

South River EMC accepts and reviews applications on a quarterly basis. The next deadline for applications is May 23 by 5 p.m.

Applications can be found online at sremc.com/operation-round. Please note, handwritten applications are not accepted, and an online application is required.



Don't get left in the dark, report it!

By text: As long as you're enrolled, simply text #out to 888.338.5530, and follow the prompts.

By app: If you've got the South River EMC app, login and report your outage.

By phone: Use our automated phone system, 910.892.8071 or 800.338.5530.



Weatherization Work Can Pay Off

The weatherization assistance program is designed to help low-income residents save energy and reduce expenses through the installation of energy conservation materials and the adoption of efficient practices in their homes.

Community Action administers this program, and they offer a weatherization package, which includes air/duct sealing, improved insulation, an HVAC tune-up or replacement, and a programmable thermostat in a home with a heat pump or an

electric furnace/ central AC.

These improvements can impact comfort and cost and don't have to cost you. South River EMC offers a rebate for getting the work done, for details visit sremc.com/weatherization.

Selecting The Best Water Heater For You

When selecting a new water heater for your home, choose one that provides enough warm water for your family efficiently.

Most people replace their current water heater with a newer electric storage water heater. While standard, they are not the most efficient.

Alternate options include solar and heat pump water heaters, or HPWHs. Both can be more efficient options, so learn a little bit more about each before deciding.

HPWHs work like a refrigerator in reverse. Pulling heat from the surrounding area and using it

to heat water makes the system two to three times more efficient. They have location and temperature requirements, with a slightly higher price tag, but that can be made up for in savings.

Proper installation and maintenance of an HPWH system can optimize its efficiency. It's best to have a qualified plumbing and heating contractor, or geothermal heat pump system installer/ designer, install it.

A solar water heater uses a free resource, the sun, to heat water. Proper installation of such a system depends on several factors includ-

ing: solar resource, building codes, and safety issues; it's best to have a qualified solar thermal systems contractor install your unit.

Proper maintenance of this system will keep it running smoothly. Regular maintenance on simple systems can be as infrequent as every 3–5 years, preferably by a solar contractor.

Consider these options before your water heater needs replacing. South River EMC offers rebates on HPWHs and solar water heaters, for details visit sremc.com/energy-efficient-water-heating.

Save Energy With A HERO Home

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

And there are two ways to ensure a reduction in costs:

Option one is the prescriptive path, a straightforward but inflexible list of specific requirements for things like insulation,

high-efficiency lighting, window U-factors, whole house tightness and duct leakage testing, among other things.

Option two is the performance path, a more flexible list with requirements for 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. This option does not allow for HVAC or water heating tradeoffs to be compliant.

South River EMC offers rebates on the HERO home, for builders and buyers. For information on these rebates, visit sremc.com/hero-program.

Service Your HVAC System, Replace When Necessary

As we move more toward a time when heat pumps shine, make sure yours is cooling as it should.

It is recommended to have your unit serviced twice a year. By having it serviced you are more likely to keep ahead of problems.

If you are in the market to replace your heating and cooling system, South River EMC offers a rebate if you replace with a high efficiency unit. Efficiency is measured by the seasonal energy

efficiency ratio 2, or SEER2, rating. SEER2 measures the cooling efficiency of a system. The higher the SEER2 rating, the more efficient a system is at cooling your home.

For additional savings, you'll want to make sure your thermostat is set higher in the summer, that weatherstripping and caulking is intact and working to prevent air infiltration, and that your blinds are closed during the day to prevent solar gain.

An efficient system could save you energy and money, as well as making you eligible for a rebate.

For details on the rebates offered on high efficiency heat pumps visit sremc.com/energy-star-heating-cooling.



When Is Window Replacement Necessary?

Windows play a big part in home energy performance and comfort levels. If your windows are damaged or just old, there is a high chance that they won't function properly. When that happens, it is time to replace them or at the very least have them checked out by a professional.

Windows don't suddenly become less efficient; it happens slowly over time. So, how do you know when they need to be replaced?

Windows Are Visibly Damaged. The most obvious sign you need to replace your windows. When a window is damaged or cracked, it's more likely to break completely, which leaves your home open to more serious damage like water seepage, mold and pests.

Windows Are Drafty. Drafts are a problem for a few reasons beyond inconvenience. It means the air you're paying to cool is seeping out and the hot, humid air outside is making its way in. A room with drafty windows will feel less comfortable than the rest of your home. Because of that, your heating and cooling system has to work harder to keep your home at the temperature you set.

Electric Bills Are Higher With No Other Explanation. A number of items can cause electric costs to change, but if you've noticed that your electric bills have

slowly crept up, your windows might be to blame. As previously mentioned, drafts allow temperature-controlled air inside your house to escape, which forces your heating and cooling system to work harder to try to keep your home at the set temperature. This raises your electric bill and the increased workload can shorten the life of your unit.

Condensation Forms On The Inside of Windows. Condensation on the inside of your window usually means your windows are leaking air and/or your home is humid. If you notice condensation between the panes of your double or triple-pane windows, it's a sign that the air-tight seal has failed and the insulating gas has escaped. Whether it's inside or between the panes, seeing condensation anywhere except the outside of your window is a definite sign they should be replaced.

Carpet & Furniture Around Windows Are Faded. If furniture, carpet, rugs or decor exposed to the sunlight coming through your windows has faded, your windows probably don't have the UV protection offered by modern windows with low-emissivity (low-E) glass. Low-E glass keeps UV rays and solar heat from passing through. This prevents fading, and helps to keep your home cooler.

Windows Have a Harder Time Opening and Closing. Every window can have a hard time opening and closing throughout its lifespan. However, if you have cleaned and attempted to fix this multiple times throughout the years and the windows only get worse, it may be time to look for replacement. A stuck window is frustrating and could lead to it remaining stuck in an open position, exposing your home to the elements.

Allergies are Worse than Usual. Notice you've been sniffing or have watery eyes more than usual? Depending on the time of year, allergens may be making their way into your home through ineffectively sealed windows. Even the best of window seals degrades over time, but if it's been more than 15 years since your windows were installed, it's time to replace seals so you don't need so many tissues.

If any of these items are what you are experiencing from your windows, it's time to replace them. South River EMC offers a rebate of up to \$200 on the replacement of windows, for details visit sremc.com/energy-star-windows.



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The power of human connections.®