



# South River EMC Communicator

## BIKES, BOOKS & SMILES

There's nothing like riding a bike. Even in this age of technology, bicycling tends to be the outdoor sport of choice for many children. That's why when the Mingo Masonic Lodge 206 was looking for a way to entice children to read, they decided to use bikes as a reward.

The Bikes for Books program has awarded 18 bikes and helmets to elementary-school-age children for reading comprehension since 2018.

The program works with the Accelerated Reader (AR) program at elementary schools in Sampson County. Each nine-week term, students have an AR point goal set by their teacher to reach. The students are tasked to read books and test their comprehension in order to acquire his or her points.

Upon reaching his or her point goal, the student receives the chance to have their name entered into the bike drawing. Each time the student reads and passes a test, their name is entered into the drawing; more books read means more chances of winning.

However, providing this kind of program takes money, and expanding it takes even more. So, the organization looked to Operation Round Up for assistance.

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MESSAGE FROM CEO CHRIS M. SPEARS

## DEFINING A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR CO-OP MEMBERS AND THE COMMUNITY

South River EMC is defining a future for our members and the community we all share – a brighter future that continues our commitment to delivering reliable electricity at the lowest possible cost while also advancing the pursuit of responsible sustainability goals.

While our members' interests form the bedrock of our planning, I do believe the benefits of our initiatives in the next decade and beyond will extend to the entire community, and it starts with our business model.

The member-owned electric cooperative business model works. As a not-for-profit business located in and governed by the community we serve, we put people and our community first.

The brighter future we are defining must strike a balance in providing electricity that is not only sustainable, but also reliable and affordable. I am proud that South River EMC, along with the network of North Carolina's electric cooperatives, have set a goal of achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 with an interim step of reducing emissions by 50 percent from 2005 levels by 2030.

We commit to these goals voluntarily and know that in order to achieve them while upholding our promise of delivering reliable elec-

tricity at the lowest possible cost, we must: continue to leverage our existing investments in carbon-free power sources like nuclear energy; work with our members through energy services to manage when and how electricity travels across the grid; incorporate new sources of energy, including solar; utilize low-cost natural gas to expand renewable energy growth; and support the advancement of new technologies that effectively capture carbon emissions.

As a local business, South River EMC is not only powering, but also empowering this community. We are in tune with – and responsive to – the needs of the community because we live here and know firsthand how access to essential services and opportunities for economic growth will strengthen the region.

Our Cooperative is engaged in many community enhancing projects such as:

- Zero-interest loans to help attract new industry, jobs and infrastructure.
- Operation Round Up grants, to provide a boost to community agencies and schools. South River EMC has funded over \$2.4 million in grants since 2007.
- Bright Ideas grants for local public-school educators. Since 1994, South River EMC has funded over \$1.1 million in classroom materials

and projects.

•Butler Farms Microgrid: This innovative project joins agriculture and energy to look at a model of energy delivery for the future. This project has won several awards for innovation and has been exalted as a "fantastic example of how to grow an initiative to benefit the larger community."

South River EMC will continue to support our local community and develop new ways to deliver reliable, affordable, sustainable power. Our success hinges on preserving the cooperative business model because it keeps us close to the needs of our community, is flexible and always puts people first.

Most importantly, we will never lose sight of the fact that the brightest parts of our future are the people and communities we serve.

## CONSIDERING DRIVING ELECTRIC?

National Drive Electric Week 2020 is Sept. 26-Oct. 4, and South River EMC is joining a nationwide celebration to highlight the many benefits of driving electric.

Electric vehicles have a lot to offer. They are fun to drive, with faster acceleration and a more responsive, zippy feel behind the wheel. Powering a car with electricity is cheaper than powering it with gas, so they cost less to run. Electric vehicles are also convenient. Most people charge their vehicles at home, which eliminates trips to the gas station, and they also tend to have fewer parts, which means less

maintenance and no oil changes. They also contribute to a brighter environmental and economic future by reducing greenhouse gas emissions while also decreasing our dependence on foreign oil and supporting local commerce and tourism.

South River EMC is taking steps to make it more convenient than ever to drive an electric vehicle. We are partnering with other electric co-operatives across North Carolina to build an electric vehicle charging network that allows EV drivers to easily travel throughout our state and visit co-op communities.



This network includes the Level 2 charging station installed at Raven Rock State Park near Lillington.

If you're considering driving electric, please contact us at 910.892.8071 for more information or visit [ncdriveelectric.com](http://ncdriveelectric.com) or [sremc.com](http://sremc.com)

## Preparedness is Key During Peak Hurricane Season

The Atlantic hurricane season is now in its peak, which occurs from mid-August to late October. As demonstrated by previous storms, any part of North Carolina can be impacted by a hurricane—not just the coast—so it's important that everyone makes hurricane safety and preparedness a priority.

South River EMC is prepared to respond in the event that severe weather impacts service to our members. We also encourage everyone to prepare by taking simple steps, including:

- Outline a communications and evacuation plan for your family before a hurricane or storm warning is issued to minimize confusion and fear. If you have pets or livestock, include them in your plan.

- Create an emergency kit that includes:

- o Important documents sealed in a watertight plastic bag

- o Cash

- o Three days worth of non-perishable food, water and medication

- o First-aid kit

- o Battery-powered radio

- o Flashlight

- o Extra batteries

- o Personal hygiene items

- o Extra clothes and blankets

- o Food and other supplies for pets

Sign up for local weather alerts and warnings.

- Follow South River EMC on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter to stay informed about weather, outages and other information.

- Bookmark our live online outage map to find real-time outage information. Our outage map can be found under Quick Links on our website.

- In the event of a power interruption, members should report outages by calling 910.892.8071 or 888.338.5530.

Say or press two to use our automated phone system. Say or press three to speak with a member service representative.

- Are you enrolled in outage texting? If not, text SREMCTEXT to 888.338.5530. Once you enroll, it can take up to 24 hours before your account is activated.

Once enrolled in outage texting, reporting an outage is as easy as sending #out to 888.338.5530. Text #status to receive an update.

Your safety is always a priority. Following any storm please remember to never go near downed power lines and don't cross flooded roadways.

For more information and safety tips, visit [sremc.com](http://sremc.com)



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The Lodge received a \$1,000 grant for the Bikes for Books program in 2019 and 2020. With these funds, they were able to purchase an additional 12 bikes and helmets.

“This was our second grant application attempt, and second time receiving a grant through Operation Round Up for the Bikes for Books Program,” said Patrick Blanchard, master of the Masonic Lodge. “Operation Round Up is a great way to fund programs that support our community.”

“We are very appreciative of South River EMC’s Operation Round Up fund for making Mingo Lodge’s Bikes for Books program possible,” said Blanchard. “A member of our fraternity had a child in kindergarten during the first year of our program and was familiar with the Accelerated Reader Program that their child was taking part in as a student, and since the ‘read a book, take a test’ framework was already in place, it seemed like a perfect fit,” he said.

Martin Jackson, past master of Mingo Lodge, expressed how the bike drawings have been a highlight at end-of-year assemblies for the last two years.

“Feeling the suspense just before the names are drawn and seeing the excitement on the faces of children, teachers, and parents,” said Jackson. “That is an indication that these bikes are sought-after prizes that encourage hard work and proficiency in reading and comprehension.”

The Masons have made a tremendous impact on their community with this program. In the first year,



there was a 30 percent increase in the number of books read by kindergartners at Clement Elementary.

“All three of our area elementary schools have reported positive impacts from the program,” said Blanchard. “Most importantly, the kids are excited to read because the possibility of winning the bike is a good motivator.”

Lodge members wholeheartedly support Bikes for Books, by assembling the bikes each year. It has allowed the Masons to become more engaged in their community and to encourage students to read with passion.

“Freemasonry is about the individual improving himself and, by extension, his community through faith and education,” said Blanchard, “Literacy is the foundational element that makes it possible for a person to do that, so this program is a perfect match for our fraternity.”

Bikes for Books was put on hold for 2020 with COVID-19 closing out the school year. However, the funding is being held for the 2021 school year, ready for when the

students go back to school. So everyone, get ready to read!

The Masonic Lodges of North Carolina are concerned with the welfare of widows and orphans and show their commitment by supporting the oldest children’s home in the state, Oxford Orphanage.

The Grand Lodge of North Carolina, the state’s governing masonry body, encouraged local lodges to become more engaged in their communities and schools. With that desire in mind, the Bikes for Books program was born.

## DUE BY SEPTEMBER 15!

There's still time! Don't miss out on your chance to apply for the Bright Ideas grant.

As COVID-19 has affected classrooms across the country, now more than ever innovative, bright ideas are needed to reach students. Bright Ideas is a grant program that can help you reach your classroom goals and enhance learning in your classroom.

Bright Ideas grants can be written

for any amount up to \$2,500 for innovative, classroom-based ideas in any K-12 subject.

Apply online at [ncbrightideas.com](http://ncbrightideas.com).

Since 1994, South River Electric Membership Corporation has funded \$1,047,683 in projects and programs for schools in Harnett, Sampson, Cumberland, and Johnston counties. Over the past few years, the Cooperative has awarded over \$60,000 every year

in grants.

All grants are reviewed by a third-party panel of judges. Applications are assigned a classification number, and all identifying information is removed to provide an unbiased process.

So, don't hesitate. We want to hear about your bright idea!



# Bright Ideas

## EDUCATION GRANTS

### Annual Meeting

# CANCELLED

South River EMC's 2020 annual meeting has been cancelled due to continued concerns over COVID-19.

Our **2021** Annual Meeting of Members has been scheduled for **April 15, 2021**.

We look forward to seeing you then!





Is your home prepared for hurricane season?

## Get Prepared For The Next Storm

As we approach the thick of hurricane season, protecting your home from precipitation and wind is integral to being prepared for the next storm.

Consider air and duct sealing, improving your insulation, weather stripping, and caulking. Better insulation can help keep your home cool, and caulking and air and duct

sealing can help prevent air and water leaks.

Insufficient insulation or leaks can pose many problems during hurricane season. Air can escape through the hidden leakage spots, and water can pour into your home through those same areas. And, if the power goes out amidst a storm, you're going to want to

keep the cool air inside your home.

Taking these measures can save energy and money and help prepare you for storm season.

South River EMC offers rebates to members who take these insulation and weatherization measures. For more information, visit [sremc.com](http://sremc.com) or call 910.892.8071 x 2222

## Need a HERO?

When it comes to building or buying a home, it makes sense to want to save money and energy. You may need a HERO.

HERO Homes, or High Efficiency Residential Option Homes, are built to a higher standard with better insulation, fenestration, air sealing, and equipment and lighting packages. These alterations can make a huge difference in the operation of your home. After all, HERO Homes are 30 percent more efficient.

The prescriptive and performance path are your two options when building a HERO Home.

The prescriptive path requires you follow a specific set of requirements to meet the HERO standards; whereby, the performance path is less rigid. The performance path requires an energy cost analysis provided by a HERS Rater and signed off by a Design Professional.

If you think you need a HERO, go to

[energycodes.gov](http://energycodes.gov) for more information.

HERO Home rebates are offered by South River EMC. To find out if you're eligible, visit [sremc.com](http://sremc.com) or call 910.892.8071 x 2153.



## Plan To Save Next Pool Season

As summer comes to an end, be sure to take the right steps to close your pool. Some of those steps include:

\*Taking all items out of your pool and storing them for the winter.

\*Balancing water chemistry. Your water should fall under these ranges: pH: 7.2 – 7.8, Alkalinity: 80 – 120 ppm, Calcium Hardness: 180 – 220 ppm

\*Preventing constant filter clog-

ging and cleaning. Be sure to clean and vacuum your pool.

As you close your pool for the season, consider planning for the next season. Maybe your energy bill is higher than you liked. Or, you're considering ways to save water next season.

Consider switching to a two-speed or variable-speed pump. You can save up to 75 percent or even 90 percent on energy costs.

Single-speed pumps constantly run at 3450 revolutions per minute (rpm); whereby, two-speed and variable-speed pumps operate between 600 rpm-3450 rpm.

Not only will you save on energy, South River EMC offers a pool-pump rebate for switching to a more efficient pump. Visit [sremc.com](http://sremc.com) or call 910.892.8071 x 2152 for more information.

## Purchase With Ease

Appliances are important features in your home. Purchasing these products is not a small feat, and it can sometimes be tough to decide what products are best for you and your home. However, The Energy Star Label can help you fly through the purchasing process with ease.

Energy Star rated products are

known for their energy efficiency, environmental friendliness, and cost-effectiveness. The Energy Star certification ensures your appliances have met energy-efficiency requirements set out by the Environmental Protection Agency.

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

standard models. These products are better for the environment and help you save money in the long run.

To find out if you're eligible for a South River EMC rebate on Energy Star appliances, visit [sremc.com](http://sremc.com) or call 910.892.8071 x 2152.



Consider a variable-speed pump for next pool season!

### Save Some Hot Water!

Most people don't like taking cold showers, and as your whole family goes to take showers after a hot day, you might imagine yourself saying, "Save some hot water!"

Heat pump water heaters, or HPWH, are an alternative to your traditional water heater that can help ensure you have a hot shower and save you money. HPWHs are an energy-efficient alternative

to your traditional water heater. These water heaters pull heat from surrounding areas and pour it into your heater; they do not generate heat directly. In comparison to your traditional water heater, these heaters use up to 63 percent less energy and are two to three times more efficient.

If you're looking for a reliable, adaptable, and pollution-free al-

ternative to your traditional water heater, solar water heating systems can help you reduce your monthly electric bills like HPWHs.

Along with these alternatives' money and energy saving characteristics, you may also be eligible for a South River EMC rebate. To find out if you're eligible, visit [sremc.com](http://sremc.com) or call 910.892.8071 x 2152.

### The Simple Choice For Saving Energy

Are you considering replacing your heating and cooling system?

There are many products on the market that are promoted as energy efficient or cost effective, and with so many options available, making a decision may seem daunting.

Energy Star is the simple choice for saving energy.

By replacing your heating and cooling equipment with an Energy Star rated product, you know you are getting a more efficient model. Energy Star qualified heat pumps possess a high seasonal efficiency rating (SEER) and heating seasonal performance factor (HSPF). These



models are 20 percent more efficient than models you may have in your home now.

The Energy Star efficiency program was started by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Department of Energy in 2011. When certain products meet Energy Star standards, they receive the Energy Star label, which indicates those products are more cost-effective, better performing, and more environmentally friendly for consumers.

If you purchase an Energy Star rated heat pump with an efficiency rating of 17 or higher, you may be eligible for a South River EMC rebate. Visit [sremc.com](http://sremc.com) or call 910.892.8071 x 2152 for more



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