



MOR-GRAN-SOU ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE INC.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

CURRENT

Serving Morton, Grant and Sioux counties

DECEMBER 2019

NEWS

May your homes – and hearts
– be filled with warmth this holiday season.



What's inside:

Merry Christmas, and have a safe, prosperous and happy New Year, from the board of directors, managers and staff at Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative.

- **ORU grant supports early readers and families**
- **Strong financials lead to end-of-year return**
- **Apply now! Youth Tour and scholarships available**
- **SmartHub app gets a refresh**
- **Meeting minutes, and more**



OPERATION ROUND UP

Supporting early readers and family time



STORY AND PHOTO BY CARMEN DEVNEY

Literacy opens the door to the future. According to savethechildren.org, a child's early years are critical in shaping their development and lifelong learning potential. If a family doesn't have access to books, or a child struggles to identify letters and form words, he or she may fall behind in school — and test poorly, lose confidence and self-esteem.

In the Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative service area, there are few libraries outside the school system. Visiting a library in a larger town may be an option for some families, but it presents a challenge in how to return checked-out books in a timely manner.

Carson-area residents Jen and Tyrel Zingg had heard about the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, and how it provides books to early readers. Jen

contacted Missouri Slope Areawide United Way in Bismarck to enroll one of their daughters, and learned she couldn't join because the program is regional and a local coordinator was needed.

Dolly Parton Imagination Library is a book-gifting program that mails free, high-quality books to children from birth until they begin school, regardless of family income. Established in 1995, the first books were distributed to children living in Tennessee, where Dolly grew up. With explosive success, it expanded quickly and now delivers books to children living in the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia and the Republic of Ireland.

"When my first daughter was born in 2008, someone told me about the program. We couldn't sign up because

we were from Grant County," Jen says. "It stayed in the back of my mind. I wished we had it; I wished someone would start it up. I became that someone."

Jen called United Way again, to see if she could lead a local chapter. She and Amanda Dahners, agent/home economics with Grant County Extension, volunteered to become local liaisons.

The Grant County Dolly Parton Imagination Library became official in 2016.

The cost of the program is \$25 per child, per year. United Way covers the administration and mailing fees, and local leaders fundraise to pay for the shipping of the books.

Jen and Amanda asked for and received donations from family members and area businesses including the Lions Club-Elgin; Schwan's Home Service, Inc.; American Legion; Dakota Community Bank & Trust-Hebron; First International Bank & Trust-Elgin; NDSU Grant County Extension; Grant County State Bank; Jacobson Memorial Hospital Care Center; Michelle Deichert; Kay and Steven Reiser; RA and KK Schock; and Gwen Zingg and Byron Zingg.

"All the money we raise in our area stays in our local account," Jen says.

When donations ran low, Jen reached out to Mor-Gran-Sou. As a member, she had learned about the Operation Round Up program by reading the local pages of the *North Dakota Living* magazine. She hoped the Grant County Dolly Parton Imagination Library might qualify for a grant.

Operation Round Up is a program in which Mor-Gran-Sou members can choose to round up their monthly utility bills to the next dollar and donate their pennies to the Mor-Gran-Sou Charitable Foundation, Inc. The Foundation Board, who are also Mor-Gran-Sou members, meet and disburse funds in the form of grants to non-profit corporations,



Jen Zingg reads to her daughter, **Chelsey**, in the library at Carson Public School. Jen and her husband, Tyrel, have daughters Jocelyn, Allison, Chelsey and Amber. While Chelsey attends Head Start, she can't check out books unless the Zingg family goes to Elgin or the Morton-Mandan Bookmobile stops in Flasher. Now a member of the Grant County Dolly Parton Imagination Library, Chelsey will receive one book every other month until she begins kindergarten.



organizations or agencies. All of the money raised by members stays in our local communities.

Jen was notified they received a grant in October. All the money was used to ship books. She recently expressed her appreciation for the grant, on behalf of area children and the local chapter.

"I was a special education teacher. I know how important it is to read to children," she says. "That parent-child

interaction is special and so important."

The Operation Round Up program is relatively new to Mor-Gran-Sou members, and it will take a larger portion of the membership to contribute and help the program thrive.

"It's amazing how all those pennies add up. They go a long way. This donation helps many area families receive books they wouldn't have access to otherwise," she says. "We are really

grateful to have received the money, and appreciate all the people who have opted into Operation Round Up."

To date, more than 100 million books have been delivered to children globally, thanks to the Dolly Parton Imagination Library. To learn more or to sign up a child, visit <https://imaginationlibrary.com/>. ■

Opt into Operation Round Up

Operation Round Up is a program in which Mor-Gran-Sou members can voluntarily choose to round up their monthly utility bills to the next dollar and donate their pennies to the Mor-Gran-Sou Charitable Foundation, Inc. The Foundation Board, who are also Mor-Gran-Sou members, meet and disburse funds in the form of grants to non-profit corporations, organizations or agencies. All of the money raised

by members stays in our local communities.

On average, participating members donate about \$6 a year. The most a member would ever contribute a month is 99 cents. The donation is tax-deductible, and members who participate will receive a summary on their last billing statement of the year.

All rounded-up funds flow directly into the Mor-Gran-Sou Charitable Foundation, Inc., and are

overseen by the board of directors. Mor-Gran-Sou personnel will administer the program as a service to the foundation.

If you have any questions, please call the office at 663-0297, 597-3301 or 800-750-8212.

If you haven't already signed up, please opt into the program and support your friends and neighbors in area communities. Please fill out the form below and return it to the co-op. ■

I wish to participate in Operation Round Up at Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative, Inc.

- Yes, I agree that Mor-Gran-Sou, through the Operation Round Up program, has my permission to round up my monthly electric bill to the nearest dollar. I understand I have the option to opt out with a 30-day written notice to the co-op.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Account #(s): _____

Email the form to jarmijo@morgransou.com; or mail to: Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative, Inc. / P.O. Box 297 / Flasher, ND 58535

Signature _____

Apply for a grant

Do you have a specific need and could use a boost? Operation Round Up grants may be awarded to any non-profit corporation, organization or agency for charitable causes and crucial needs such as food, shelter, clothing, health care, emergency services and education. All of the money raised by members stays in our local communities.

Any person or group in the Mor-Gran-Sou service area, or providing a service to the area, may apply to receive an

Operation Round Up grant. Funds are disbursed in the general service area of Mor-Gran-Sou solely for charitable, educational, scientific, health or safety purposes.

To request an application, contact Jackie Miller or Julie Armijo by calling Mor-Gran-Sou at 663-0297, 597-3301 or 800-750-8212, or email jlmler@morgransou.com or jarmijo@morgransou.com. If you have questions, you may also contact any of the board members directly. ■



BILL CREDITS

Strong financials lead to end-of-year return

The Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative board of directors and management staff have good news to share. Members, you will find a bill credit on your December billing statements.

Mor-Gran-Sou is a nonprofit business that exists only to provide goods and services to you, our member-owners; not to make a profit for a shareholder or investor. Cooperatives are operated to provide electric service to their members at the lowest cost possible. At the end of each year, Mor-Gran-Sou completes its financials and prepares a budget to plan for future cooperative needs.

As the board of directors and management staff plan for the future, they also reflect on the current financial strength of the cooperative. During the October board

meeting, Mor-Gran-Sou's directors noted the 2019 financials are stronger than forecasted, and at their discretion, saw an opportunity to initiate a bill credit to the membership, rather than retain it. Please look for your credit on the line item on your December electric statement entitled "MGS Bill Credit."

If you have questions, please contact us at 701-663-0297, 701-597-3301 or 1-800-750-8212, Monday through Friday, between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. CT.

We are pleased to share this good news with you. Thank you, members, for your support throughout the year. We wish you a very Merry Christmas, and a happy, safe and prosperous New Year. ■

JUNE 20 TO 26, 2020

HIGH SCHOOL SOPHOMORES & JUNIORS

Win the Trip of a Lifetime!

AN ALL-EXPENSE-PAID TRIP TO WASHINGTON, D.C.

- To enter the essay-writing contest, you must be a sophomore or junior in high school.
- You and your parents or guardian must be served by Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative.
- If you have a question, contact Julie Armijo at Mor-Gran-Sou at 701-597-3301, 701-663-0297 or 800-750-8212 during regular business hours.
- The deadline is Jan. 31, 2020. You can e-mail entries to Julie Armijo at jarmijo@morgransou.com or mail a hard copy to: Youth Tour Essay Contest, Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 297, Flasher, ND 58535-0297.

ESSAY QUESTION:

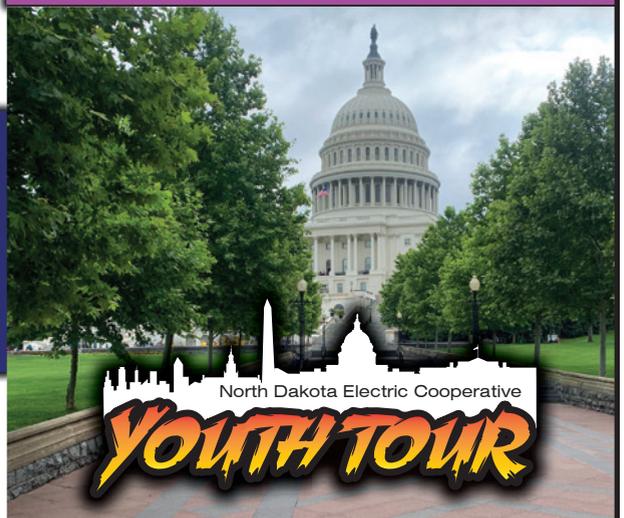
If chosen as a Youth Tour delegate, you will travel to Washington, D.C. to experience and learn about America's rich history. What moment in American history do you wish you had been a part of and what would you have contributed?

CHECK OUT THE ESSAY CONTEST GUIDELINES AT www.ndyouthtour.com

TOP 3 REASONS

TO ENTER THE ESSAY-WRITING CONTEST

1. All-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., compliments of Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative
2. A whole week to visit unforgettable historic monuments, museums and the U.S. Capitol
3. A learning experience you'll never forget





Mor-Gran-Sou's annual meeting scheduled for July 17, 2020

Are you looking for a way to serve the people of central southwestern North Dakota? Look no further, as Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative can help you fulfill that desire. Why not serve as a board director for the cooperative? The initial commitment is a three-year term, with provisions in the bylaws limiting a director to serving six consecutive three-year terms, after which time the director is not eligible for another six consecutive three-year terms until one year has elapsed.

At the annual meeting, the following three board positions will be elected:

- The Grant County position presently held by Casey Wells;
- The Mandan-Area position presently held by Robert Leingang; and
- The Sioux County position presently held by Lance Froelich.

Under the bylaws and due to the use of a mail-in ballot, no nominations are accepted from the floor at the annual meeting. Instead, the bylaws require the board of directors to appoint a Nominating Committee of five to nine members who geographically represent the cooperative. These members will provide a list of qualified and

willing candidates to the board for approval and inclusion on the ballot at the board of directors' meeting scheduled for March 25, 2020.

This date has been set so there is adequate time for each candidate's biographical information to be included with the notice of meeting sent to the members in June, along with the mail-in ballot for those who are unable to attend the annual meeting in person.

The Nominating Committee has been appointed by the board and will meet for the first time, set for Jan. 13, 2020. The members of the Nominating Committee include Bryce Allen, Mandan; Jennifer Bonogofsky, St. Anthony; Jackie Buckley, Mandan; Glenda Gross, Selfridge; Alan Malm, Flasher; Garek Murphy, Fort Yates; Rodney Nelson, Almont; Jim Neubauer, Mandan; and Shari Striegel, Carson.

For a person to be nominated, the member vying for a board seat must submit the completed declaration of candidacy form to Mor-Gran-Sou by 4 p.m. CT (3 p.m. MT) on Tuesday, March 10, 2020. The completed form must be mailed to Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative, Attn: Jackie Miller, P.O. Box 297, Flasher, ND, 58535-0297. If you or someone you know is interested in being

nominated, please contact one of the Nominating Committee members or Jackie at Mor-Gran-Sou by calling 800-750-8212, 701-663-0297 or 701-597-3301. You can also email Jackie at jlmler@morgransou.com.

The Nominating Committee members or Jackie can provide you or the potential candidate with the declaration of candidacy form. It is also located on Mor-Gran-Sou's website at www.morgransou.com; click Home/Your Power in Membership/Forms and Applications/Declaration of Candidacy Form. Candidate qualifications can also be found at www.morgransou.com; click Your Cooperative/Articles and Bylaws/Board of Directors/402 Director Qualification or on the declaration of candidacy form.

If you have questions about the process, give Jackie a call. All qualified and willing candidates who have completed and forwarded the written declaration of candidacy form to the Mor-Gran-Sou office by the March 10 deadline will be included in the list the Nominating Committee will provide to the board. ■

Bylaws and resolutions for the annual meeting

Under the bylaws, any bylaw amendments or resolutions must be presented to the members in writing in advance of the annual meeting scheduled for July 17, 2020. The board of directors has charged the Nominating Committee with reviewing and advising the board of any proposed bylaw amendments and resolutions. Therefore, any proposed bylaw amendments and resolutions should be submitted in writing no later than March 19, 2020, and/or they can be presented in-person at one of the following in-person meetings of the Nominating Committee:

- Jan. 13, 2020, in the Mor-Gran-Sou office board room in Flasher at 7 p.m. CT
- March 19, 2020, in the Mor-Gran-Sou office board room in Flasher at 7 p.m. CT

If you do wish to submit a bylaw amendment or resolution in writing, please forward it to Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative, Inc., Attn: Nominating Committee, P.O. Box 297, Flasher, ND, 58535-0297, before March 19. Thank you.



COOPERATIVE OFFERS STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative takes pride in assisting with the development of rural leadership through our scholarship program. We feel it's important to help finance our local students' educational journeys by offering scholarships to qualifying seniors. We are happy to continue our updated scholarship program of offering more scholarship opportunities to our graduating seniors. The applicants must be U.S. citizens and dependents of Mor-Gran-Sou members. All scholarships will be awarded during the 2019-2020 school year.

The co-op will award nine, \$500 scholarships to qualified applicants whose parent(s) or guardian(s) are members of the co-op. School representatives from Elgin-New Leipzig Public School, Flasher Public School, Glen Ullin Public School, Hebron Public School, Mandan Public School, New Salem-Almont Public School, Selfridge Public School, Standing Rock Community School, and Solen Public School will select one graduating senior to receive the funds. Interested in applying? Students should contact their school counselor for deadline information. The schools will then forward each recipient's name to Mor-Gran-Sou.

The co-op will also award one \$500 scholarship to a graduating senior from a school outside of our service area. Please contact our office if interested.

Mor-Gran-Sou continues to award a \$1,000 scholarship sponsored by Basin Electric Power Cooperative.

We award this scholarship to a student already enrolled or planning to enroll in a full-time graduate or undergraduate program. The student must attend an accredited, two-year or four-year college, university or vocational/technical school. Recipients will be chosen on a combination of SAT/ACT scores and overall grade point average; activities, achievements and honors; work experience; a personal statement of career goals; an essay question centered on local cooperatives and how they serve the area; and an appraisal from a high school or college counselor or adviser, instructor or a work supervisor who knows the student well. All post-secondary students who have parents that are members of Mor-Gran-Sou Electric are eligible to apply. Applications are available at area schools, in the Flasher or Mandan offices, or online at www.morgransou.com.

Mor-Gran-Sou is awarding one \$500 scholarship sponsored by 3C Construction.

Eligible applicants are high school seniors who are enrolled or planning to enroll in a certified vocational or technical school pursuing a career as a lineworker. The scholarship will be awarded during the 2019-2020 school year. Applications are available at area schools, in the Flasher and Mandan offices, or online at www.morgransou.com.

Mor-Gran-Sou is also awarding one \$500 scholarship sponsored by West Dakota Utility Services.

Eligible applicants are high school seniors who are enrolled or planning to enroll in a certified vocational or technical school pursuing a career as a mechanic. Applications are available at area schools, in the Flasher or Mandan offices, or online at www.morgransou.com.

Luck of the Draw scholarships

Mor-Gran-Sou will award two \$500 Luck of the Draw scholarships to be drawn at our annual meeting on July 17. All high school seniors, who are dependent of Mor-Gran-Sou members and are a graduate of the class of 2020, are eligible for this scholarship. Students must attend our annual meeting and be accompanied with at least one parent or guardian, and will be required to RSVP before the meeting.

**Applications are due no later than
4:30 p.m. CT (3:30 p.m., MT) on
Friday, Feb. 14, 2020.**

**Please deliver or mail all necessary
information to Mor-Gran-Sou
Electric Cooperative at P.O. Box 297,
Flasher, ND 58535-0297.**

**If you have questions or would like
further information, please call Julie or
Jackie at 701-597-3301, 701-663-0297
or 800-750-8212.**



New Look. New Experience. Same SmartHub.

SmartHub has been helping you, our members, connect with Mor-Gran-Sou since 2013. With a touch, swipe or tap, you can pay your utility bill, view and compare electrical usage, update account information including mobile phone number and email address, communicate with us from your mobile phone or tablet, and much more.

SmartHub has been a great tool for Mor-Gran-Sou members. As technology has progressed and smart devices and apps have become essential tools for everyday life, it was time for the mobile app to get a refresh. Work was completed by National Information Solutions Cooperative (NISC) this fall.

Last month, SmartHub users began to see an update to the app. The functionality and features remain the same, with enhanced navigation. The home screen offers a cleaner look, and features the most-used options like making a payment and viewing electrical usage.

“We really want SmartHub to be simple and intuitive,” says Amber Wesche, SmartHub product manager for NISC.

Members may also notice more consistency between the new SmartHub app and its web counterpart, providing a seamless and simple experience regardless of platform.

Keep an eye on your favorite app and get ready for a new SmartHub experience. ■



MOR-GRAN-SOU ANNOUNCES ANNUAL SAFETY POSTER CONTEST

Grab your art supplies and draw a poster that tells our readers how you play and work safely around electricity. This poster should display a clear, creative picture of this year's theme: "How do you stay safe at your home or farm when around electricity?" All posters should display the Touchstone Energy® Cooperative logo on their entries. No matter what you draw, have fun! We can't wait to hear from you. Cash prizes will be awarded in each division.

DIVISIONS:

- Preschool to kindergarten
- First grade to third grade
- Fourth grade to sixth grade

DEADLINE:

Posters must be received at the Flasher office no later than 4:30 p.m. CT (3:30 p.m., MT) on Thursday, Feb. 20, 2020.

RULES:

- Posters must be on white, 8.5- by 11-inch paper.
- Posters must depict the theme, "How do you stay safe at your home or farm when around electricity?" and display the Touchstone Energy Cooperative logo. Be creative!

- Print the child's name, address, age and parent's names on the back of the posters.
- Only dependents of current Mor-Gran-Sou members are eligible for this contest.

PRIZES:

Each division will be awarded three prizes (nine prizes total): three first-place prizes of \$15; three, second place prizes of \$10; and three third-place prizes of \$5.

WINNERS:

Winning poster will be featured in the Mor-Gran-Sou local pages of the *North Dakota Living* magazine.

MOR-GRAN-SOU ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

board meeting highlights



Meeting date: Oct. 30, 2019

- Approved the Sept. 25, 2019, Board meeting minutes
- Reviewed and accepted the financial report
- Approved a special equipment capitalization
- Approved capital credit refunds to estates and those age 80 and over
- Reviewed and accepted the director and attorney expense reports
- Heard update on Southwest Power Pool
- Reviewed update on WDUS Holdings, LLC
- Reviewed senior staff department reports
- Reviewed the Co-General Managers/CEOs update, and heard reports on meetings they attended
- Heard reports from various meetings and events the directors had attended
- Confirmed director attendance at upcoming meetings
- Appointed voting delegates and alternates for upcoming meetings
- Per Board Governance policy, set the maximum budget amount for 2020 refunds to estates and those age 80 and over
- Reviewed and accepted IRS Form 990
- Approved Innovative Energy Alliance Cooperative proposed Bylaw amendment regarding budget
- Approved Mor-Gran-Sou 2020 load forecast prepared by Basin Electric Power Cooperative
- Approved a 2019 capital credit general retirement
- Approved a 2019 bill credit; will show on December statements
- Assigned members to serve on the Nominating Committee
- Appointed a Board representative to assist the Nominating Committee
- Approved deadline dates for 2020 declaration of candidates
- Held Executive Session

Upcoming regular board meeting date:

Dec. 18 in the board room at the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives, Mandan

Members are welcome to attend the board meetings at any time. Please contact Mor-Gran-Sou at ctermes@morgransou.com, or call 1-800-750-8212 or 597-3301 to confirm the meeting date and location if you wish to attend.

To place an item on the agenda, please contact Board Chair Casey Wells or Co-General Manager/Chief Executive Officer Donald Franklund at 701-597-3301 at least one week in advance.

Members may obtain a copy of approved board minutes by completing and returning the "Request for Information or Data" form. You can find this form at www.morgransou.com, or contact the Flasher office to request a copy.

Holiday closings

Our entire organization wishes our member-owners a very Merry Christmas, and a safe and Happy New Year! In observance of the holidays in December and January, Mor-Gran-Sou will be closed:

Tuesday, Dec. 24, and
Wednesday, Dec. 25,
for Christmas

Wednesday, Jan. 1, 2020, for
New Year's Day

Members: Line crews will be available in case of an emergency or power outage.

THE HOLIDAYS ARE JUST AROUND THE CORNER

Gift certificates are available at Mor-Gran-Sou. Light up someone's holiday season!

How long is your Christmas list? If a certain someone on your list is a member of Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative and you need a bright idea on what to buy for Christmas ... why not wrap up a gift certificate he or she can use toward an electric bill?

Call Mor-Gran-Sou at 701-597-3301, 701-663-0297 or 800-750-8212 and ask for Julie or Jackie.

We can help you "lighten" up the holidays.

MOR-GRAN-SOU ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE INC.

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Toll-free: 800-750-8212 Fax: 701-597-3915
Email us: info@morgransou.com
UNDERGROUND LINE LOCATES
800-795-0555 OR 811

OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

Chair..... Casey Wells
Vice Chair..... Chad Harrison
Secretary-Treasurer Lance Froelich
Directors Mark Doll, Vernard Frederick,
Pam Geiger, Jay Larson,
Bob J. Leingang, Kathy Tokach

MANAGEMENT

Co-GM/CEO..... Donald A. Franklund
Co-GM/CEO..... Travis Kupper

www.morgransou.com

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative