



**MOR-GRAN-SOU**  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Serving Morton, Grant and Sioux counties

**THIS ISSUE:**

- Fry bread and bingo!
- National Safe Digging Month
- Planting safety tips

**APRIL**  
**2025**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

# Celebrating National Lineworker Appreciation Day

As we approach National Lineworker Appreciation Day on April 14, we would like to highlight our lineworkers and the crucial work they do at Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative.

Our crews maintain and repair electrical infrastructure in all weather conditions for our members from Mandan to Fort Yates to Elgin. Their dedication and knowledge ensure our rural

communities have the power to live, work and thrive 24/7/365.

You have probably seen, or even know, a crew member or two from the Mor-Gran-Sou Electric team, but we would like to share a bit more about each of our lineworkers. If you see them working, feel free to wave and say hello.

## Get to know our dedicated lineworkers:

*“Being outdoors is what I enjoy and what interested me in becoming a lineworker.”*



**LANCE BROWN OTTER**, journeyman lineworker, 18 years

The job of a lineworker is keeping the power on and maintaining and building power lines.

**What do you appreciate about Mor-Gran-Sou Electric members?** Their patience during outages

**What are you doing when you are not working?** Spending time with friends and family

**If you had to eat the same meal every day, what would it be?** Beef

*“What I enjoy about being a lineworker is working outside and doing something different every day.”*



**WAYDE ECKROTH**, journeyman lineworker, 13 years

The job of a lineworker is to build and maintain power lines.

**What interested you in becoming a lineworker?** It's a good-paying career with an on-the-job apprenticeship program

**What do you appreciate about Mor-Gran-Sou Electric members?** I appreciate our members' patience during outage restoration.

**What are you doing when you are not working?** Spending time with my family and working on the family ranch

**If you had to eat the same meal every day, what would it be?** Steak and a baked potato

*“I like getting to travel around the system and provide something everyone depends on.”*



**BRETT FLECK**, journeyman lineworker, 7 years

The job of a lineworker is keeping the lights on.

**What interested you in becoming a lineworker?** The group of people you work with and the new members you meet every day

**What do you appreciate about Mor-Gran-Sou Electric members?** The willingness to help the co-op in different ways, including during storms and daily jobs

**What are you doing when you are not working?** Working

**If you had to eat the same meal every day, what would it be?** Steak

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*“As a lineworker, I enjoy the time I get to spend outdoors and the variety. Very few days are the same.”*



**CODY GRAETZ**, lead lineworker, 14 years

The job of a lineworker is keeping the lights on!

**What interested you in becoming a lineworker?** My stepdad was a lineworker, and he loved his job.

**What do you appreciate about Mor-Gran-Sou Electric members?** The willingness to help us and how often we are told how much they appreciate what we do

**What are you doing when you are not working?** Hunting, fishing and spending time with my family

**If you had to eat the same meal every day, what would it be?** Chinese food

*“Being able to provide an essential service to the public is what interested me in becoming a lineworker.”*



**JASON JAHNER**, area foreman, 18 years

The job of a lineworker is to perform maintenance on existing power lines and equipment, construct new power lines and take care of power outages.

**What do you enjoy about being a lineworker?** The variety of work that takes place

**What do you appreciate about Mor-Gran-Sou Electric members?** Their willingness to help us out when we need it

**What are you doing when you are not working?** Spending time with my children and family, attending sports activities and relaxing

**If you had to eat the same meal every day, what would it be?** Mexican food

*“Meeting our consumers is something I enjoy about being a lineworker.”*



**LAYTON KASPER**, journeyman lineworker, 3 years

The job of a lineworker is to be there for our consumers and keep the lights on.

**What interested you in becoming a lineworker?** Working outside

**What are you doing when you are not working?** Anything outdoors

**If you had to eat the same meal every day, what would it be?** Sushi

*“I like working outside with my hands on a daily basis. I also enjoy working with my co-workers, figuring out solutions to our problems and building a strong relationship with them.”*



**TROY KUBALL**, apprentice lineworker, 2 years

The job of a lineworker is challenging and tough, but very enjoyable.

**What interested you in becoming a lineworker?** My dad. He is a lineworker at Capital Electric Cooperative and has been with them for over 15 years and in this trade for even longer. He shares the same qualities as me, always wanting to be outside, no matter the circumstance, and wanting to help people out.

**What do you appreciate about Mor-Gran-Sou Electric members?** Those who I have met on line patrol and at the annual meeting have been friendly.

**What are you doing when you are not working?** Making improvements around the house so it's how the girlfriend and I want it. In the summer, I like playing softball, pickleball and walking the dog.

**If you had to eat the same meal every day, what would it be?** I enjoy chicken alfredo and garlic bread.

*“Not every day is the same, which I like about being a lineworker.”*



**CHANCE MAGILKE**, journeyman lineworker, 4 years

The job of a lineworker is to maintain our distribution and transmission system.

**What interested you in becoming a lineworker?** Working outdoors

**What are you doing when you are not working?** Seeing family or friends

**If you had to eat the same meal every day, what would it be?** Steak and cucumber salad

*“I like working outdoors and with my hands, which I get to do every day as a lineworker.”*



**CODY MAHER**, area foreman, 22 years

The job of a lineworker is to build and maintain power lines.

**What do you appreciate about Mor-Gran-Sou Electric members?**

Helping us when needed

**What are you doing when you are not working?** Going to my kids' activities

**If you had to eat the same meal every day, what would it be?** Pizza

*“I enjoy working with my co-workers and our members.”*



**KALE OHLHAUSER**, lead lineworker, 7 years

The job of a lineworker is to keep the power on.

**What interested you in becoming a lineworker?** Working outside

**What do you appreciate about Mor-Gran-Sou Electric members?**

Their willingness and flexibility to allow us to get our job done

**What are you doing when you are not working?** Spending time with my family

**If you had to eat the same meal every day, what would it be?** Steak

*“Being able to work outdoors and how spontaneous every workday can be is something I like about being a lineworker.”*



**C.J. PESICKA**, journeyman lineworker, 6 years

The job of a lineworker is arduous, but rewarding.

**What interested you in becoming a lineworker?** Being a lineworker looked like an advantageous career.

**What do you appreciate about Mor-Gran-Sou Electric members?**

How they show the willingness to help anyone and everyone

**What are you doing when you are not working?** Going on adventures with my family

**If you had to eat the same meal every day, what would it be?** Duck confit with roasted vegetables, mashed potatoes and a green salad

## CAREER TOUR AUGUST 5-6

LEARN ABOUT THE CAREERS THAT POWER US, FROM COAL MINES TO POWER PLANTS AND ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES.

## JOIN MOR-GRAN-SOU ELECTRIC FOR THE CAREER TOUR

EXPLORE NORTH DAKOTA'S ENERGY SECTOR WITH US.

Limited spots available. Learn more by scanning the QR code or visiting: [www.morgransou.com](http://www.morgransou.com).

Application deadline is April 25.





## MANAGER'S MESSAGE: The power behind your power



**Jason Bentz**

*Co-General Manager/CEO*

You've likely noticed Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative's crews out and about, working on power lines and other electrical equipment in our community. It's no secret a lineworker's job is tough, but it's essential and must often be done in challenging conditions. This month, as we celebrate Lineworker Appreciation Day April 14, I thought I would share some interesting facts

about electric lineworkers. I always take a moment to reflect on my early beginnings starting out as a lineworker. I worked as a lineworker at Mor-Gran-Sou Electric 23 years ago, it is an experience that continues to shape my perspective today.

The work can be heavy, in more ways than one. Did you know the equipment and tools a lineworker carries while climbing a utility pole can weigh up to 50 pounds? That's the same as carrying 6 gallons of water.

And lineworkers are required to climb poles ranging anywhere from 30 to 120 feet tall. If you have a fear of heights, this likely isn't the career path for you.

Lineworkers must be committed to their career, because it's not just a job. It's a lifestyle. The long hours and ever-present danger can truly take a toll. In fact, being a lineworker is listed among the top 10 most dangerous jobs in the United States.

Lineworkers often work non-traditional hours in difficult conditions outdoors. While the job does not require a college degree, it does require technical skills, years of training and hands-on learning. Did you know becoming a journeyman lineworker can take more than 7,000 hours of training or about four years? That's because working with high-voltage equipment requires specialized skills, experience and an ongoing mental toughness. Shortcuts are not an option, and there is no room for error in this line of work.

Despite the many challenges, Mor-Gran-Sou Electric's lineworkers are committed to powering our local community. During severe weather events that bring major power outages, lineworkers are among the first ones called. They must be ready to leave the comfort of their home and families unexpectedly, and they don't return until the job is done, often days later. That's why the lineworker's family is also dedicated to service. They understand the importance of the job to


the community.

Nationwide, there are approximately 120,000 electric lineworkers. Mor-Gran-Sou Electric has 11 lineworkers who are responsible for keeping power flowing 24/7/365. To do this, they maintain over 2,700 miles of power lines across three counties and more than 4,700 square miles.

In addition to the highly visible tasks lineworkers perform, their job today goes far beyond climbing utility poles to repair a wire. Today's lineworkers are information experts who can pinpoint power outages from miles away. Line crews now use laptops, tablets, drones and other technologies to map outages, survey damage and troubleshoot problems.

Being a lineworker may not seem like a glamorous job, but it is absolutely essential to the life of our community. Without the exceptional dedication and commitment of these hardworking men and women, we simply would not have the reliable electricity we need for everyday life.

While lineworkers are the most visible faces of our cooperative, it's essential to acknowledge the team of highly skilled professionals working tirelessly behind the scenes. From engineers providing invaluable expertise, to member service representatives fielding inquiries and IT experts safeguarding sensitive data, each member of our cooperative family plays a vital role in ensuring the reliability of our services.

So, the next time you see our lineworkers, please thank them for the work they do to keep power flowing, regardless of the time of day or weather conditions. After all, lineworkers are the power behind your power. 



*A look back, to when **Jason Bentz** began his career as a lineworker at Mor-Gran-Sou Electric.*

## MESSAGE FROM MEMBER SERVICES: Member appreciation events




**Julie Armijo**

Chief of Staff/Member  
Services Manager

We are excited to share we will be hosting member appreciation events this month! Join us for a fun-filled evening dedicated to celebrating the heart of our service area – our valued members. At our upcoming events, enjoy mouthwatering fry bread tacos and friendly competition with rounds of bingo.

There will also be the opportunity to visit with our dedicated directors, CEOs and staff. As we prepare for our Annual Meeting on June

12 in Mandan, we will also have further information regarding candidates and bylaws. As stewards of our cooperative principles, your active participation and support fuel our mission to provide reliable energy services, while fostering a strong sense of community within our cooperative.

We kindly ask you to RSVP by scanning the QR code with your smartphone, visit our website at [www.morgransou.com](http://www.morgransou.com) or call the office at 701-597-3301, 800-750-8212 or 701-663-0297. We look forward to seeing you at one of our events! 



**APRIL 7**  
**AJ AGARD CENTER,**  
**FORT YATES**  
5-7 P.M. (CT)  
BINGO AT 6 P.M. (CT)

**APRIL 9**  
**BRANDED BAR &**  
**GRILL, FLASHER**  
5-7 P.M. (CT)  
BINGO AT 6 P.M. (CT)

**APRIL 16**  
**LAKE TSCHIDA**  
**WELCOME CENTER,**  
**LAKE TSCHIDA**  
5-7 P.M. (MT)  
BINGO AT 6 P.M. (MT)

**SCAN**  
**ME** 

## POWERING THE FUTURE: Luck-of-the-Draw Scholarships



Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative believes in investing in the future of the students in our service area. At the Annual Meeting, Mor-Gran-Sou Electric will award two \$500 Luck-of-the-Draw Scholarships. All high school seniors who are dependents of members and have not previously been chosen for a cooperative scholarship are eligible.

We ask participants to RSVP and attend the Annual Meeting with a parent or guardian. Students can RSVP by scanning the QR code with your smartphone, visiting our website at [www.morgransou.com/scholarships](http://www.morgransou.com/scholarships) or by calling the office at 800-750-8212, 701-597-3301 or 701-663-0297. 



## MESSAGE FROM OPERATIONS: National Safe Digging Month



**Gary Fitterer**

*Manager of Operations*

April is recognized as National Safe Digging Month, and we remind members to call 811 before digging, no matter how big or small the project may be. Even small tasks like planting a tree or bush may cause damage to utility lines, which can disrupt service to an entire neighborhood and potentially result in fines and repair costs. Play it safe by dialing 811 to find out where utility lines are located on your property.

Be prepared to share the following information about the project property to North Dakota One Call:

- Name and contact information
- Proposed digging date and time

- Legal description
- County, city, street address
- Nearest intersecting street
- Name of the property owner
- Type of work planned as well as extent of work and depth

Within a few days, a locator will arrive to designate the approximate location of any underground lines, pipes and cables. These areas will be marked with flags or paint, so you'll know what's below. That is when the safe digging can begin.

Keep in mind, utilities are not required to mark any private lines, such as sprinkler systems and pool heaters as well as any electrical, propane or natural gas lines that are after the meter.

For more information about local services, visit [www.ndonecall.com](http://www.ndonecall.com). 



**Know what's below.  
Call before you dig.**

### Planting a tree? Installing a fence? Remember to contact North Dakota One Call first!

Numerous utility lines may be buried on your property, ranging from electric and telephone lines to water and sewer lines, but North Dakota One Call will help you locate these lines before your project begins.

Contact North Dakota One Call and utility line owners will locate and mark their lines. These locates do not include any lines you may have installed to your private facilities, such as detached garages, wells or yard lights.

### The 811 process:

#### 1. Notify

Notify the North Dakota One Call Center by calling 811 or making an online request at least 48 hours before work begins, excluding weekends and holidays.

#### 2. Wait

Wait the required amount of time for affected utility operators to respond to your request.

#### 3. Confirm

Confirm all affected utility operators have responded to your request and marked underground utilities.

#### 4. Respect

Respect the marks. The marks provided by the affected utilities are your guide for the duration of the project. The marks are valid for 21 calendar days. If you are unable to maintain the marks during your project, or the project will continue past your request's expiration date, call 811 to ask for a re-mark.

#### 5. Dig carefully

Dig carefully around the marks. No mechanical excavating can take place within 24 inches on either side of the marked location of the underground facility. If you plan on digging within that 4-foot-wide area, hand digging is allowed, but dig carefully and cautiously. ■

## SAFETY STARTS WITH ME: Planting safety tips

Agriculture is the backbone of rural communities across our service area. As we look toward spring, wheels begin to turn for spring planting.

Farming equipment has increased in size over the years, resulting in those operating the machinery needing to take extra precautions when moving equipment down the road or planting in fields with overhead lines nearby. Staying alert, focused and knowledgeable about potential hazards and safety procedures is crucial.


“Planting is a busy time for everyone in our rural communities,” says Wayde Eckroth, a journeyman lineworker. “It is important to always be aware of your surroundings, even if you are frequenting a familiar place.”

To help ensure a safe planting season, here are a few tips while in the farmyard, traveling on the road and working in the field.

- **Use spotters when operating large machinery near power lines.** Ensure the spotters do not touch the machinery while it is moving near power lines. An 18-foot clearance is recommended under power lines.
- **Be aware of the clearance of equipment extensions and materials you are hauling before moving or transporting.** Do not raise equipment, such as ladders, poles or rods, into power lines. Remember that nonmetallic materials, such as lumber, tree limbs, ropes and hay, can conduct electricity, especially when damp, dusty or dirty.
- **Never attempt to raise or move power lines to clear a path.** Doing so could result in electric shock or death. If you need power lines to be raised or moved to help with moving large machinery this season, give our office a call at 800-750-8212, 701-597-3301 or 701-663-0297, so we can safely assist you.



Remember, if your equipment comes into contact with an energized or downed power line, call 911 immediately. Stay inside the vehicle until the power line is de-energized. If there is smoke or fire, exit by jumping clear of the cab without touching the equipment and hop away to safety. We also urge you to contact the co-op for additional assistance.

We know spring is an exciting and busy time, but we hope you will take a few extra minutes to check that you and your surroundings are clear to ensure a safe planting season. On behalf of all of us at Mor-Gran-Sou Electric, we wish you all a safe and prosperous planting season. 





## MOR-GRAN-SOU ELECTRIC BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS Jan. 29

The board of directors meeting of Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative was held on Jan. 29 at the Mandan Service Center in Mandan. Chair Steve Tomac called the meeting to order at 9:57 a.m. A quorum was present. Also present were Mor-Gran-Sou Electric's co-General Managers/CEOs Travis Kupper and Jason Bentz, Chief Financial Officer Alex Craigmile, Manager of Operations Gary Fitterer, Chief of Staff/Member Services Manager Julie Armijo, Interim General Counsel Andrew Fergel and Executive Assistant Connie Hill. Auditor Lance Rambousek with Brady Martz joined a portion of the meeting as a guest.

**Consent agenda:** Amendments to the agenda were presented. The consent agenda was approved as amended.

**Strategic agenda:** Bentz and Kupper presented the co-general managers' report, which included updates on a meeting with a Western Area Power Administration representative, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's managers meeting and a Basin Electric Power Cooperative district meeting. The co-general managers also reviewed several bills being discussed during this

year's legislative session. Several reports including Basin Electric, West Dakota Utility Services and 3C Construction were available for review.

**Department reports:** Craigmile provided a financial report. Fitterer reviewed the operations report, which included an update on line patrol and line maintenance projects. Armijo provided a member services report on upcoming member meetings, annual meeting information and cooperative programs. Fergel provided a general counsel report on projects.

**Action items:** Action items were discussed and resolved.

**Discussion/general information:** The board discussed proposed bylaw amendments and other items.

**Executive session:** The board entered into various executive sessions during the duration of the board meeting.

The meeting concluded with the adjournment. Secretary-Treasurer Pam Geiger certified the accuracy of the minutes.

**Next meeting date:** The next meeting is at 9:30 a.m. CT April 23 in Mandan.

## JOIN US AT OUR 2025 ANNUAL MEETING

JUNE 12, MOR-GRAN-SOU ELECTRIC'S  
MANDAN SERVICE CENTER, MANDAN

Registration opens at 4 p.m. CT, the business meeting begins at 5 p.m. CT followed by dinner



MOR-GRAN-SOU  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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Email us: info@morgransou.com  
UNDERGROUND LINE LOCATES  
800-795-0555 OR 811

### OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

Chair.....Steve Tomac  
Vice Chair.....Chad Harrison  
Secretary-Treasurer..... Pam Geiger  
Directors.....Mark Doll, Rodney Froelich,  
Bob J. Leingang, Ryan Petrick,  
Kathy Tokach, Casey Wells

### MANAGEMENT

Co-GM/CEO .....Travis Kupper  
Co-GM/CEO ..... Jason Bentz

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