



MOR-GRAN-SOU
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Serving Morton, Grant and Sioux counties

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FEBRUARY
2024

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Picture Your Reason

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative employees prioritize safety for their loved ones, co-workers, community and selves.





PICTURE YOUR REASON

A touchpoint between loved ones and on-the-job safety

BY SAMANTHA VANGSNESS

A creative new safety initiative at Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative embodies the spirit and gratitude of family, while including important safety reminders. The project was designed to strengthen the sense of community, promote safety and create lasting memories for all employees.

“Picture Your Reason” invited Mor-Gran-Sou Electric employees to involve their loved ones in a meaningful way. Lineworkers were welcomed to take their glove/sleeve bags home and invite their family or friends to draw on their bags, with the goal of reminding lineworkers to always wear their protective gear. Office personnel were also encouraged to join the camaraderie by encouraging their loved ones to complete a poster.

“Safety isn’t a task, it’s a mindset, a way of life. Safety is a team effort from everyone at the cooperative, whether in the field, office or warehouse,” says Craig Turner, with the Innovative Energy Alliance (IEA) Cooperative. The IEA is a professional service cooperative owned by four electric distribution cooperatives in North Dakota, including Mor-Gran-Sou Electric.

The project showcased the strong bond between employees and their families, fostering a sense of community and sharing responsibility of safety.

“Family is my number one reason for being safe on the job. At the end of the day, my main goal is to be able to go home to my family, because my family needs me just as much as I need them,” says Cody Graetz, a journeyman lineworker at Mor-Gran-Sou Electric.

Graetz’s glove and sleeve bags are embellished with unique marks from his daughter, Cora, and son, Linden. This is a project the family shared and they were excited to hear they were making their mark on equipment Graetz uses every day. This gave them even more of a sense of accomplishment in the final product.

“Every time I grab my gloves and sleeves, I have a reminder right there on the bags of all the reasons to take my time and do the job safely and right. From the unicorn that Cora drew, the hunting rifle that Linden drew, the family picture they both worked on or even the fact their hands were coloring on the bags, no matter what it is, it’s the small things like this that are all the reasons for me to be safe,” Graetz says.

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric has implemented a safety




committee to ensure everyone’s work environment is safe. The committee prioritizes safety through events like safety drills and comfortable work setups to keep everyone well-protected.

“I am excited to display the posters to remind me to stay safe at work and at home. My grandchildren are precious gifts and I want to enjoy spending time playing with them,” says Julie Armijo, member services manager at Mor-Gran-Sou Electric.

Armijo proudly showcases a poster crafted by her granddaughter and grandson in her office, featuring their distinct drawings as a constant reminder of her connection with them. Reflecting on the significance of safety, Armijo emphasizes its importance, driven by the tragic loss of a co-worker in a work-related accident during her previous career. She expresses a deep commitment to preventing such incidents, reflecting on the strong impact it had on her.

“My cooperative co-workers are family,” Armijo says. “We spend more time together than we spend with our families at times. No task is too important to cut corners. We want to get everyone home safely every day.”

Safety has been and will always be the number one priority for electric cooperatives, whether your office is in a building or the field. Mor-Gran-Sou Electric is excited to be an instrumental part of the new safety initiative, “Picture Your Reason,” and looks forward to the continuation of the program and helping employees work safely for their loved ones, co-workers, community and selves. 

MANAGER'S MESSAGE:

Beginner's guide to the electric grid



Jason Bentz

Electricity plays an essential role in everyday life. It powers our homes, farms, hospitals and schools. We depend on it to keep us warm in the winter and cool in the summer, charge our phones and binge watch our favorite TV shows. If the power goes out, even briefly, our lives can be disrupted.

The system delivering your electricity is often

described as the most complex machine in the world, and it's known as the electric grid. We would like to take this opportunity to give our members a "beginner's guide" to the electric grid.

What makes it so complex?

We all use different amounts of electricity throughout the day, so the supply and demand for electricity is constantly changing. For example, we typically use more electricity in the mornings, when we're starting our day, and in the evenings, when we're cooking dinner and using appliances. Severe weather and other factors also impact how much electricity we need.

The challenge for electric providers is to plan for, produce and purchase enough electricity, so it's available exactly when we need it. Too much or too little electricity in one place can cause problems. To make sure the whole system stays balanced, the electric grid must adjust in real time to changes and unforeseen events.

At its core, the electric grid is a network of power lines, transformers, substations and other infrastructure spanning the entire country. But it's not just a singular system. It's divided into three major interconnected grids: the Eastern Interconnection, the Western Interconnection and the Electric Reliability Council of Texas. These grids operate independently, but are linked to allow electricity to be transferred between regions when backup support is required.

Within the three regions, seven balancing authorities, known as independent system operators (ISOs) or regional transmission organizations (RTOs), monitor the grid, signaling to power plants when more electricity is needed to maintain a balanced electrical flow. ISOs and RTOs are like traffic controllers for electricity.

The journey begins at power plants

Power plants are like factories making electricity by using various energy sources, like coal, natural gas, solar, wind and nuclear energy. Across the United States, more than 11,000 power plants deliver electricity to the grid.


Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative receives power from our generation and transmission (G&T) cooperative, Basin Electric Power Cooperative (Basin Electric) and Western Area Power Administration (WAPA). We work closely with Basin Electric and WAPA to provide electricity at the lowest cost possible. Being part of a G&T benefits members like you by placing ownership and control in the hands of your cooperative, prioritizing affordability and reliability, supporting local economic development and fostering a sense of community.

To get the electricity from power plants to you, we need a transportation system. High-voltage transmission lines act as the highways of electricity, transporting power over long distances. These lines are supported by massive towers and travel through vast landscapes, connecting power plants to electric substations.

Substations are like pitstops along the highway, where the voltage of electricity is adjusted. They play a crucial role in managing power flow and ensuring electricity is safe for use in homes and businesses.

Once the electricity is reduced to the proper voltage, it travels through distribution power lines, like the ones you typically see on the side of the road. Distribution lines carry electricity from substations to homes, schools and businesses. Distribution transformers, which look like metal buckets on the tops of power poles or large green boxes on the ground, further reduce the voltage to levels suitable for household appliances and electronic devices.

After traveling through transformers, electricity reaches you to power everyday life.

We're proud to be your local, trusted electric service provider. From the time it's created to the time it's used, electricity travels great distances to be available at the flip of a switch. That's what makes the electric grid our nation's most complex machine – and one of our nation's greatest achievements. 





POWERFUL DECISION-MAKERS:

The Pivotal Role of Directors at Mor-Gran-Sou Electric



Geiger

As stewards of rural electrification, electric cooperative directors play a pivotal role in ensuring reliable service in the heart of rural America. Directors of Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative embody a profound dedication to reliability and affordability, weaving a tapestry that harmonizes the needs of the present with the promise of a

resilient and empowered future for the members they represent.

Some were encouraged to serve by previous directors and others felt compelled to serve. However a director came into the position on the Mor-Gran-Sou Electric board, one factor is consistent: Each feels a responsibility to serve the members to the best of his or her abilities.

“I grew up on a dairy farm served by Capital Electric Cooperative and the importance of having reliable and affordable electricity was evident from a young age. I grew up in a family of service and felt I may be able to help in some part to the well-being of Mor-Gran-Sou Electric,” says Pam Geiger, a Mor-Gran-Sou Electric director, representing the Mandan Area.

Informed decision-making for effective governance

Being on a board means educating yourself to make the best decisions on behalf of the membership and to be a valuable part of discussions. Although not everyone on the board may always agree, everyone has the opportunity to make their best argument during discussion and in the end support the decision of the board.

“I view this position as a privilege to be entrusted to represent Mor-Gran-Sou Electric members,” Geiger says. “Along with that comes the responsibility to make as thoughtful of decisions as I can that reflect the members I represent.”

One of the seven principles of electric cooperatives is education, training and information. Directors have the opportunity to complete

educational courses through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. Through these courses, directors gain knowledge to better serve members.

“I have been able to obtain training that relates to the electric industry through courses at the local and national level. Our board encourages each director to earn a Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) designation during their term and personally it continues to help me be a better, more informed director,” Geiger says.

Commitment to the cooperative

The Mor-Gran-Sou Electric board meets once a month for a board meeting, with the hours dedicated to the board varying based on the time of year and the level of involvement a person chooses.

“The board encourages involvement outside of the monthly meetings, but also understands the time constraints of each individual board member. Reflecting on things, I think the monthly time commitment can be around eight to 20 hours per month, depending on the time of year,” Geiger says.

“We are immensely grateful to our dedicated board members for their commitment to our cooperative,” says Jason Bentz, co-general manager/CEO of Mor-Gran-Sou Electric. “Board members must devote sufficient time and effort and pay attention to their role in the cooperative. Their ongoing support and leadership help ensure the collective needs of our members are heard and championed, guiding our cooperative toward a prosperous future.”

As a director, cultivating enduring connections with associates from electric cooperatives across all channels is a valuable addition.

“The friendships and networking opportunities that have come from being on this board have helped me grow personally and professionally beyond my expectations,” Geiger says.

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric now accepting director nominations

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric is preparing for its 2024 annual meeting and director nominations are being accepted for At-Large, Morton County and Sioux County positions. A director commitment is a three-year term. As a director, your responsibilities

would include participation at monthly board meetings and representing members on behalf of the cooperative.

Being on a board is a commitment, from the meetings to continuing education, but Geiger says it is an opportunity worth the time and effort.

“Everyone has something to contribute, and boards need diversity, so don’t hesitate to serve,” she says.

SAFETY STARTS WITH ME:

Stay away from downed power lines


North Dakota winds can be mighty and coupled with winter storms, they can damage Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative’s infrastructure, including power lines. Mor-Gran-Sou Electric is continuously working through snow or shine to ensure safe, reliable electricity for our members, but sometimes environmental factors cause a bump in the road.

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric wants to remind members to stay clear of downed power lines:

“Downed power lines can look relatively harmless, but don’t be fooled. They likely carry an electric current strong enough to cause serious injury or possibly death,” says Cody Maher, an area foreman at Mor-Gran-Sou Electric.


Maher shares some safety tips to serve as reminders around downed lines:

- If you see a downed power line, move away from the line and anything touching it. The proper way to move away from the line is to shuffle with small steps, always keeping your feet together and on the ground.
- If you see someone who is in direct or indirect contact with the downed line, do not touch the person. You could become the next victim. Call 911 instead.
- Do not attempt to move a downed power line or anything in contact with the line by using another object such as a broom or stick. Even normally nonconductive materials like wood or cloth, if slightly wet, can conduct electricity and electrocute you.
- Be careful not to put your feet near water where a downed power line is located.
- Do not drive over downed lines. If you are in a vehicle in contact with a downed line, stay in the vehicle. Honk your horn for help and tell others to stay away from your vehicle. If you must leave your vehicle because it’s on fire, jump out of the vehicle with both feet together and avoid making contact with the energized vehicle and

If you see yourself or know of someone who would be a qualified candidate to represent At-Large or in Morton County or Sioux County, reach out to a current director, the Nominating Committee or call the Mor-Gran-Sou Electric office. Help ensure longevity at Mor-Gran-Sou Electric and be part of the longstanding betterment of your rural community. 



the ground at the same time. This way you avoid being the path of electricity from the vehicle to the earth.

Help us help you. For Mor-Gran-Sou Electric to ensure safe, reliable electricity, our team needs to be able to assess and plan power restoration without any added obstacles. We work to make sure electric infrastructure is secure to mitigate these incidents, but in the case of downed power lines remember these tips. 



NEW DATE! NEW LOCATION!

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Annual Meeting June 13

Mandan office
2719 34th St NW, Mandan



Mor-Gran-Sou Electric board of director nominations

In preparation for our annual meeting, Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative currently has board of director nominations open, as well as bylaw amendments and resolution proposals being accepted. A Mor-Gran-Sou Electric director term is a three-year commitment. Directors are limited to serving six consecutive three-year terms. A director then is not eligible for another six consecutive three-year terms until one year has elapsed.

The following board positions will be elected at the upcoming annual meeting:

- The At-Large director position presently held by Steve Tomac
- The Morton County director position presently held by Kathy Tokach
- The Sioux County director position presently held by Chad Harrison


Floor nominations are not accepted at the annual meeting, according to the bylaws.

Instead, the Nominating Committee will provide a list of qualified and willing candidates to the board for approval and inclusion on the ballot at the board meeting scheduled for Feb. 28.

For a person to be nominated, the member running for a board seat must submit the completed declaration of candidacy form to Mor-Gran-Sou Electric by 4 p.m. CT on Thursday, Feb. 15. The Nominating Committee will meet for the final time at 7 p.m. CT Feb. 20 at the Flasher office.

Bylaw amendments and resolution proposals

Any proposed bylaw amendments and resolutions need to be presented to the members in writing before the annual meeting on June 13. Please submit any proposed bylaw amendments and resolutions in writing or present them in person by the Feb. 20 deadline to the Nominating Committee to be considered at the annual meeting.

If you or someone you know is interested in being nominated for a board position or submitting a bylaw amendment or resolution, please refer to the information at right for deadlines and further information. 

Deadlines

Feb. 15 – Declaration of candidacy deadline. Forms must be submitted by 4 p.m. CT to the Flasher or Mandan office.

Feb. 20 – Final Nominating Committee meeting, 7 p.m. CT, Flasher

June 13 – Mor-Gran-Sou Electric annual meeting, Mandan

Contact information:

For board nominations, contact the Nominating Committee or Julie Armijo at Mor-Gran-Sou Electric. Completed board declaration forms, bylaws and resolutions can be mailed to: Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 297, Flasher, ND 58535-0297 or P.O. Box 1090, Mandan, ND 58554-7090. Forms can also be emailed to Julie at jarmijo@morgransou.com. For additional information or questions, call Julie at 800-750-8212, 701-663-0297 or 701-597-3301.

Remembering Eugene Carroll and Laverne Seehafer

As we look forward to 2024, it's fitting to take time to look back on 2023 and pay tribute to those we lost who were part of the Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative family. It was with great sadness we learned Eugene Carroll and Laverne Seehafer, past Mor-Gran-Sou Electric employees, passed away in 2023.



Eugene Carroll

Eugene Carroll was born Jan. 29, 1937, in Fergus Falls, Minn., and passed away July 12, 2023. Eugene was an avid outdoorsman and conservationist. With a watchful eye on the wildlife, he enjoyed hunting

and time outdoors. He was always hard at work at his home and on his land, where he kept a watchful eye on the deer, pheasants and ducks that found his fields and wetlands home.

During his time at Mor-Gran-Sou Electric, Eugene wore a few hats. He started his career at Mor-Gran-Sou Electric as a meter technician in 1960. Ten years later, in 1970, he was named the electric technician. While working at the cooperative, he was able to interact with members around various parts of Mor-Gran-Sou Electric's service area. Eugene retired in February 1998 as a senior meter technician.

John Rath, retired meter technician, remembers Eugene as a dedicated employee.

"He was always watching the electrical equipment to make sure it was working correctly," Rath says.




Laverne Seehafer

Laverne was born Aug. 2, 1953, in Richardton and passed away May 30, 2023. She and her family made their home in Flasher, where they operated Meyer's Cafe/Bowling Alley.

She was an EMT and mayor of Flasher for several years. She also worked at Mor-Gran-Sou Electric for many years, until retiring in May 2017. Laverne had a kind, giving heart and loved to make goodies to give away, like scotcheroos, caramel corn and delicious caramel rolls. She liked to pay it forward to strangers at the grocery store or drive-thru.

Laverne began her career at Mor-Gran-Sou Electric as a general office clerk in June 1980. Over her years at the cooperative, Laverne had the opportunity to interact with many members in the Flasher office and assist those in her community.

"I had the privilege of working beside Laverne for the last five years of her career with Mor-Gran-Sou Electric," says Julie Armijo, member services manager. "She enjoyed her work and lived life large. Laverne kept me on my toes, as I was the new kid on the block. She always had a smile, even when life was tough. I miss her stories of her time at the cooperative before I joined the team."

To their family and friends, please know how much we appreciated their shared time and talents as they served the members of Mor-Gran-Sou Electric. The board of directors and staff express our heartfelt condolences; they will be deeply missed. 



MOR-GRAN-SOU ELECTRIC ANNOUNCES ANNUAL POSTER CONTEST

Kids, we need your help!

Grab your art supplies and draw a poster that tells our readers how you play and work safely around electricity. All posters should display the Touchstone Energy® Cooperative logo. No matter what you draw, have fun! We can't wait to hear from you. Cash prizes will be awarded in each division. For more information visit, www.morgransou.com. The deadline is Feb. 29.

Stop by the KYFR Agri-International and visit the Touchstone Energy Cooperative booth to visit with us!

When: Feb. 13-14

Where: Bismarck Events Center



MOR-GRAN-SOU
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

MOR-GRAN-SOU ELECTRIC BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Nov. 15, 2023

The November meeting of the board of directors of Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative was held Nov. 15, 2023, at the Mandan Service Center in Mandan. Chair Steve Tomac called the meeting to order at 12:29 p.m. Samantha Fischer, administrative assistant, was designated as the recording secretary. A quorum was present. Also, present were Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Co-General Managers/CEOs Travis Kupper and Jason Bentz, Chief Financial Officer Alex Craigmile, Interim General Counsel Andrew Fergel, Operations Manager Gary Fitterer and Member Services Manager Julie Armijo. The meeting commenced with the Pledge of Allegiance and invocation led by Director Pam Geiger.

Consent agenda: There were no proposed additions made to the consent agenda. The consent agenda was approved as presented.


Strategic/action: Bentz and Kupper presented the co-general managers' report, which included updates from the Western Area Power Administration, Rural Utilities Service, Converge Strategies funding, a North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives storm debriefing meeting and a standing committee meeting. A Basin Electric Power Cooperative CEO

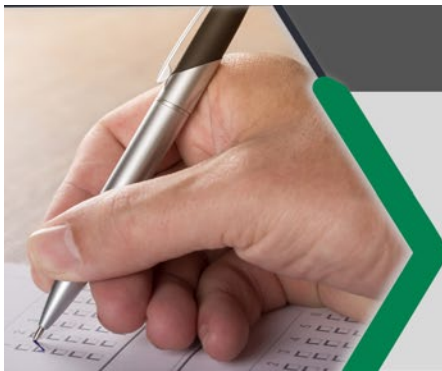
report were also provided for the board to review.

Action items: Craigmile reviewed the proposed 2024 budget with the board. The board appointed voting delegates for the Innovative Energy Alliance annual meeting and directors for expiring terms in the Innovative Energy Alliance/Maintenance Solutions Cooperative board. Geiger reported on the Western Dakota Utilities Services meeting.

Department reports: Fitterer provided a report with details on work by the line crews, which includes service upgrades, installing trip savers and any jobs that need to be completed before winter. Armijo presented a report about the Nominating Committee, bylaw compliance dates and member appreciation event dates for 2024. The board reviewed Chief Information Officer Charlie Dunbar's report. Fergel provided a general counsel report.

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

Next meeting date: The next meeting date was set for Dec. 20, 2023, at the Mandan Service Center. 



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU.

Your voice, your impact! Participate in our member satisfaction survey and play a vital role in shaping the future of our services. Scan the QR code below with your phone for more information and to complete the survey.



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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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