



**MOR-GRAN-SOU**  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Serving Morton, Grant and Sioux counties

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**NOVEMBER**  
2023

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



## FLASHER SCIENCE RESEARCH: Cultivating future leaders through science fair success

BY SAMANTHA VANGSNESS

The activities in which students participate aren't just a present-day engagement; they also play a crucial role in shaping the skills that will influence students' futures. A part of Flasher Public School's science curriculum is Flasher Science Research.

Through the science class, students conduct labs and follow through on research of their project. What sets the program apart is the opportunity for students to showcase their research projects at regional and state competitions, with the hopes of the projects going to an international stage, a feat several Flasher students have accomplished.

Flasher Science Research was introduced to students nearly seven years ago, and it has seen various successes, from regional and state student awards and even appearances at the international level.

"It was a bumpy start in the beginning, but the course has really gained traction from the students, parents and the community over the last couple of years," says Tana Schafer, science teacher at

Flasher Public School. "This was something I enjoyed during school, and I wanted to bring it to the Flasher community for an additional opportunity for students."

For sixth- through 10th-grade students, the science research portion is included in the students' science curriculum. For juniors and seniors, the course is available as an extracurricular option. Students embark on a journey of exploration by selecting topics that intrigue them, then they research their chosen subjects and ultimately transform their interests into research projects to be presented at a competitive level.

Work for research projects often takes several months, so students begin to narrow down their projects at the beginning of September. Competitions start in February with local science fairs, regional fairs in March and state competition in April. The International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF) is held annually in May. Of 1,600 students and 75 countries, three Flasher Public School students



qualified for the 2023 ISEF:

- **Jada Bonogofsky** – “Antimicrobial Resistance of a Biofilm Forming Pathogen Probed with Antipyretic Pharmaceuticals and Antibiotics,” researching antimicrobial resistance of a biofilm-forming pathogen probed with antimicrobial and antipyretic pharmaceuticals.
- **Victoria Richter** – “Think Ink,” researching different mordants and thickening agents for homemade ink for fountain pens.
- **James Gessey** – “Is It Worse than Nicotine?” researching effects of vape oil, nicotine and CBD on planarian behavior, withdrawal and addiction.

The science fairs are the reason for the inaugural part of Flasher Science Research, which has seen the growth of not only the club, but the students as well. Success of the students took off in 2018 with a handful of awards won at the state and regional level. Last year, students won 42 individual awards at regionals, with 26 advancing to state and three going to ISEF.

Schafer’s passion is helping the students find what they enjoy.

“When beginning a project, I ask them to think about what they like to do or what they do at home, and they sometimes don’t realize anything can be connected to science,” she says.

Schafer has seen the growth of other skills during the students’ course in science research, such as public speaking, presentation and communication.

Bonogofsky, a past Flasher Science Research member, reiterated Schafer’s point.

“Part of the science fair competitions is not just going and showing off your research, but being able to describe your study to judges and others as well as answering questions,” she says.

Bonogofsky was a part of science research since the sixth grade and was one of the three students who advanced to ISEF. Research from her projects has already become useful in post-high school and she is using her research knowledge in her college biology course. She has discovered her true passion, which helped her define her undergraduate major in nursing.

Bonogofsky is currently a freshman at the University of Jamestown, pursuing a degree in nursing. She credits Flasher Science Research for helping her obtain various skills and relationships she plans to utilize throughout her life. One skill Bonogofsky cultivated from the experience is determination.

“When I started my ISEF project, I never thought it would take 10 months to complete,” she says.

She says these skills as well as others will help in her future endeavors throughout college and life. Many hours go into projects for Flasher Science Research, but invaluable skills are made during those hours and trips and its impact can last a lifetime. Schafer hopes through these hours and experiences, her students can say, “Science fair is the reason why...”

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric prides itself in supporting its service area. Operations Round Up, a program were members can round-up their bills to the next dollar and the difference gets placed in a fund to donate back, is just one way Mor-Gran-Sou Electric gives back. In 2023 Mor-Gran-Sou Electric was able to give Operation Round Up funds to Flasher Science Research to help them make upgrades to their lab equipment.

The next Operation Round Up deadline is January 12, 2024. More information on the program can be found at [morgransou.com](http://morgransou.com). 



*Flasher students participating in a competition.*

## MANAGER'S MESSAGE: Playing it safe online



**Travis Kupper**

In today's world, most of us don't leave the front door unlocked. We protect our homes, loved ones and valuables from intruders with locks, alarms and other security measures. Cybersecurity is no different. It's the practice of protecting other valuables, such as your identity, banking, health records and other sensitive information,

from digital attacks and theft.

In addition to pumpkin spice lattes and crisper air, fall is the time of year we often see a rise in phishing scams. While taking necessary steps to protect our personal information is a year-round practice, Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative uses this time to share helpful cybersecurity reminders across our team of employees.

Given our increased reliance on internet-connected devices and gadgets, I'd like to share a few cybersecurity tips and let you know how Mor-Gran-Sou Electric is working to boost our own cybersecurity efforts.

According to the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency, an agency of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, which is responsible for strengthening cybersecurity and infrastructure protection, these are the four best ways to keep you and your family safe online.

1. **Turn on multi-factor authentication or two-step verification on your accounts.** The additional layer of protection makes it much harder for criminals to access your information. Even if hackers obtain your password, they may be unable to access your accounts if multistep verification is enabled.
2. **Update your software.** This is one of the easiest ways to protect your personal data. When downloading a software update, make sure it's coming straight from the company that created it. Beware of fake popups that request urgent downloads. Better yet, turn on automatic updates.
3. **Think before you click.** Most successful cyberattacks start with a phishing email. Don't

take the bait when cyber criminals go phishing. Avoid emails (or texts) that look too good to be true, oddly urgent, poorly crafted or include unusual requests.


4. **Use strong passwords.** Use long, unique and complex words or phrases. Consider using a password manager to save time. It works across all devices, protects your identity and notifies you of potential phishing websites.

### For the young people in your household

Just as you would talk with your children about safety in the physical world, discuss ways to stay safe online. Help them understand the public nature of the internet. Young people need to know what is shared online stays online and is difficult (if not impossible) to take back. Just as you would guard your money or valuables, children need to learn to guard their personal information, especially on social networks. As a parent or guardian, help your children learn about and use the privacy and security settings on social networks and gaming sites.

### Keeping electric grid and your data secure

We're doing our share on the cyber front. Part of offering excellent service is keeping that service secure and reliable. For Mor-Gran-Sou Electric, reliability means repairing wear-and-tear, upgrading our equipment to withstand storms and severe weather, and using technology and best practices to keep our system secure from cybersecurity issues. We also work together with co-ops across the country to develop new technologies and infrastructure, learn from each other and keep the grid's network secure.

While we can't stop a storm or predict every disruption, as a co-op, we do everything we can to keep the lights on and our members protected. Because if we all do our part, our interconnected world will be safer and more secure for everyone. 





## NEED HELP WITH YOUR HEATING COSTS?

### LIHEAP can help

As the fall weather arrives, Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative members will be faced with colder temperatures in the coming months. For some, anticipation of the winter months causes stress and anxiety, as they wonder how to make ends meet. Thankfully, there are programs to help members make ends meet.

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, also known as LIHEAP, can help low-income and eligible individuals when it comes to heating and insulation costs. Through the N.D. Department of Human Services, human service zone offices and Community Options, individuals can be helped with a variety of services when it comes to heating assistance.

#### Services offered

LIHEAP offers a variety of service assistance. Not only can the program help curve the costs of your heating and cooling bill, but it can also help households with weatherization to make homes more energy efficient.

“For example, if someone lives in a 100-year-old home with outdated windows, LIHEAP can help cover some of the costs for new windows as well as insulation and furnace repairs. These upgrades make the home more energy efficient and reduce their heating costs,” says Shannon Rolandson, outreach officer at Community Options.

The assistance program may also help with the costs of furnace and chimney cleaning, emergency assistance and energy cost-reduction devices.

It is important to remember this program is not only for homeowners, Rolandson says.

“This program not only helps low-income homeowners with energy costs, but renters as well,” she says.

#### Apply for LIHEAP


LIHEAP eligible members can apply from Oct. 1 through May 31.

“Some individuals can be referred to the program, but anyone is welcomed,” Rolandson says.

Upon applying for LIHEAP, an outreach coordinator will go into your home and assist you in gathering necessary documentation for the service. From there, an application and supporting documents are sent to the state for review. Results may take up to 45 days to review and process.

“This year, the team has been very busy with outreach activities across the state to share information about Community Options programs with our clients and our partnering agencies,” Rolandson says. “We started scheduling appointments to help those who are on a fixed income with their LIHEAP applications in September. Our goal is to share the most information to the most people about the economic assistance programs available.”

Last year, Community Options processed a total of 607 household applications, and 385 were approved for LIHEAP. If you, or someone you know, would like to apply, visit your local human service office for more information.

Applications will be accepted from Oct. 1 through May 31 and can be found online at [www.applyforhelp.nd.gov](http://www.applyforhelp.nd.gov) or by request at the local human service zone office at 866-614-6005 or 701-328-1000 or Community Options office at 800-823-2417. 



## SAFETY STARTS WITH ME: Generator safety

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative works year-round to keep your electricity flowing and accessible, but sometimes weather conditions hinder lineworkers' response times. The safety of our members and our employees is a top priority at Mor-Gran-Sou Electric, especially during dangerous times. When storms hit our area, Mor-Gran-Sou Electric rushes to your aid as soon as weather conditions allow our lineworkers to travel and make repairs safely.

Our line crews take necessary precautions before they work on downed power lines.

"First, they verify a circuit has been de-energized, and that proper switches are opened and tagged to isolate the circuit from the system. We place ground chains on the circuit – on both sides of workers – to make sure the line cannot be energized while work's being done," says Layton Kasper, an apprentice lineworker at Mor-Gran-Sou Electric.

### Safety Starts with ME (and YOU)

Even though lineworkers are taking all the safety precautions, they still need help from you to make sure they are safe when generators are in use.


"Mor-Gran-Sou Electric is proud of our outstanding safety record, but sometimes, no matter how many steps we take to keep everyone safe, the very people we are there to help unknowingly put our lives in danger," Kasper says. "Portable generators, widely used when power lines are down, can prove fatal to lineworkers and your neighbors when used improperly."

And Mor-Gran-Sou Electric employees are not the only ones in danger when a portable generator is used improperly. Generator owners themselves may be at risk of electrocution, fire injury, property damage or carbon monoxide poisoning if they do not follow the necessary safety rules.

Portable generators can be very helpful to consumers during outages. But we urge you to follow these safety guidelines when using one:

- **Never connect a generator directly to your home's wiring unless your home has been wired for generator use.** This can cause backfeeding along power lines and electrocute anyone coming in contact with them, including lineworkers making repairs. Have a licensed electrician install the equipment necessary to safely connect emergency generators to your home.
- **Always plug appliances directly into**



- **generators.** Connecting the generator to your home's circuits or wiring must be done by a qualified, licensed electrician who will install a transfer switch to prevent backfeeding.
  - **Use heavy-duty, outdoor-rated extension cords.** Make sure extension cords are free of cuts or tears and the plug has three prongs. Overloaded cords can cause fires or equipment damage.
  - **Ensure your generator is properly grounded.**
  - **Never overload a generator.** A portable generator should only be used when necessary to power essential equipment or appliances.
  - **Turn off all equipment powered by the generator before shutting it down.**
  - **Keep the generator dry.** Operate it on a dry surface under an open structure.
  - **Always have a fully charged fire extinguisher nearby.**
  - **Never fuel a generator while it is operating.**
  - **Read and adhere to the manufacturer's instructions for safe operation.** Never cut corners when it comes to safety.
- "Help us to protect the well-being and safety of your family during outages, and safeguard those who come to your aid during emergency situations. When we work together for safety and the good of our communities, we all benefit," Kasper says. 



# HELP SHAPE THE FUTURE OF Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative

Are you looking for a way to serve the people of western North Dakota? Look no further, as Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative can help you fulfill that desire with director positions as well as bylaw and resolutions now being accepted for the annual meeting scheduled for June 13, 2024.

## Board of director elections

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

No nominations are accepted from the floor at the annual meeting, according to the bylaws. Instead, the board of directors appoints a Nominating Committee of five to nine members to 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 Feb. 28, 2024.

## Nominating Committee


The Nominating Committee has been appointed by the board. The members of the Nominating Committee include Jennifer Bonogofsky, St. Anthony; Jackie Buckley, Mandan; Rosie Erhardt, Mandan; Glenda Gross, Selfridge; Garek Murphy, Fort Yates; Jim Neubauer, Mandan; Toby Olin, New Salem; Donald D. Roth, New Leipzig; and Yvonne Seidler, New Leipzig. The Nominating Committee will meet for the first time at 7 p.m. CT Dec. 11 and another meeting has been scheduled for 7 p.m. CT Feb. 20, 2024.

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, 2024. All qualified and willing candidates who have completed and forwarded the declaration of candidacy form will be included in the list the

Nominating Committee will provide to the board.

## Bylaws and resolutions for the annual meeting

To change any bylaws or propose resolutions, you must provide them in writing before the annual meeting on June 13, 2024. The Nominating Committee will review these proposals and inform the board. Please submit your changes in writing by Feb. 15, 2024, or present them in person at a Nominating Committee meeting.

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

## Deadlines

**Dec. 11, 2023** – Initial Nominating Committee Meeting, 7 p.m. CT, Flasher

**Feb. 15, 2024** – Declaration of candidacy deadline, submitted by 4 p.m. CT to the Flasher or Mandan office

**Feb. 20, 2024** – Final Nominating Committee Meeting, 7 p.m. CT, Flasher

**June 13, 2024** – Mor-Gran-Sou Electric annual meeting, Mandan

## Contact info

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](mailto:jarmijo@morgransou.com).

For additional information or questions, call Julie at 800-750-8212, 701-663-0297 or 701-597-3301.

## National Apprenticeship Week


Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative is celebrating National Apprenticeship Week Nov. 13 to 19 in partnership with the U.S. Department of Labor. Apprenticeships provide demand-driven education, allowing apprentices to earn while they learn – helping to close the gap between the skills job creators seek and jobs seekers need.

National Apprenticeship Week provides an opportunity to spotlight how apprenticeships can help employees grow in knowledge and skill to succeed in today's workplace. In exchange, these employees have the opportunity to learn from veteran employees and mentors and earn wages and benefits that sustain families. Those family members work, go to school, purchase goods from area businesses, volunteer in our communities, and ultimately sustain our smaller towns and improve our quality of life.

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric is proud to highlight apprentice lineworkers Layton Kasper, Troy Kuball

**Layton Kasper,**  
apprentice line worker.



and Chance Magilke. We thank all the apprentices who are helping electric cooperatives provide safe, reliable and affordable electric service. 

# APPLY FOR A TRIP OF A LIFETIME

## WHAT IS YOUTH TOUR?

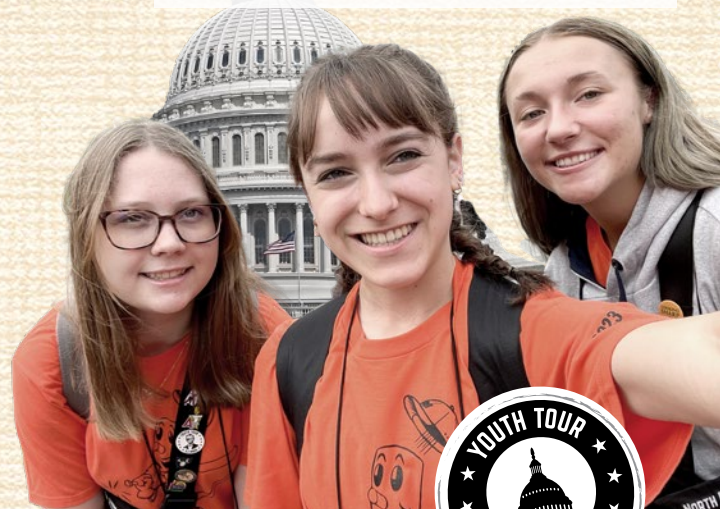
- An all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., paid for by Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative.
- A week of visiting historic monuments, touring world class museums, learning about electric cooperatives and meeting elected officials.
- Developing lifelong friendships with delegates from across the country!

## HOW TO APPLY

- To enter the essay-writing contest, you must be a sophomore or junior in high school, and you and your parents or guardian must be served by Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative.
- Email entries to Julie Armijo at [jarmijo@morgransou.com](mailto:jarmijo@morgransou.com) or mail a hard copy to: Youth Tour Essay Contest, P.O. Box 297, Flasher, ND, 58535-0297.
- Questions? Call Julie at 701-597-3301, 800-750-8212 or 701-663-0297 during regular business hours.
- **The deadline is Jan. 19, 2024.**

## ESSAY QUESTION

If chosen as a Youth Tour delegate, you will be traveling 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?



**JUNE 15 TO 21, 2024**  
AN ALL-EXPENSE-PAID TRIP TO WASHINGTON, D.C.

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[NDYOUTHTOUR.COM](http://NDYOUTHTOUR.COM)



# MOR-GRAN-SOU ELECTRIC BOARD MEETING MINUTES HIGHLIGHTS: August 23, 2023

The August meeting of the board of directors of Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative was held Aug. 23 at the Mandan Service Center in Mandan. Chair Steve Tomac called the meeting to order at 9:31 a.m. Connie Hill, executive assistant, was designated as the recording secretary. Quorum was present. Also present were Mor-Gran-Sou Electric's Co-General Managers/CEOs Travis Kupper and Jason Bentz, Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Alex Craigmile, Operations Manager Gary Fitterer, Member Services Manager Julie Armijo and Interim General Counsel Andrew Fergel. The meeting commenced with the Pledge of Allegiance and invocation led by Tomac.

**Consent agenda:** There was an addition to the consent agenda. The agenda was approved as amended. The July 26 meeting minutes were also approved.

**Strategic/action:** Bentz and Kupper presented the co-general managers' report, which included updates from the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives managers meeting, Basin Electric Power Cooperative annual meeting and other topics. The report also included an update from West Dakota Utility Services, 3C Construction and Basin Electric Power Cooperative.


**Action items:** The board reviewed committee assignments and appointed voting delegates for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association director election.

**Department reports:** Craigmile reviewed the July financial reports in the CFO report. Fitterer provided the operations report with details on maintenance activities and new services. Armijo presented the member services report, including

Operation Round Up, Youth Tour and information on the 2024 annual meeting. The board reviewed Chief Information Officer Charlie Dunbar's report. Fergel provided a general counsel report.

Upcoming meetings and events were shared prior to the board entering an executive session.

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

**Next meeting date:** The next meeting date was set for Sept. 27 at the Mandan Service Center in Mandan. 



MOR-GRAN-SOU  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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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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