



MOR-GRAN-SOU
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Serving Morton, Grant and Sioux counties

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OCTOBER
2022

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

BEYOND PUPPY LOVE:
Sheyenne River Retrievers

BY ANNE HANSEN



Jason and Lynette Helgeson believe Labrador retrievers make the best all-around dogs.

It is more than puppy love that prompted Jason and Lynette Helgeson to start a business, Sheyenne River Retrievers, to selectively breed Labrador retrievers.

The Helgesons have been in the business since 2016, but their love for animals started as children and continued to grow into adulthood.

“I have always had a huge passion for hunting, and appreciated hunting dogs,” Jason says. “But, Lynette opened my eyes to how smart they can be.”

“We take pride that our dogs have a great balance of fire in the field, but can hit a switch to be the perfect temperament for in the home as

well,” says Lynette, who previously worked as a vet assistant.

The science behind it

The Helgesons believe Labradors make the best all-around dog.

“Not only are they good looking, but they are suited for all types of hunting, and make great family companions,” Jason says.

The dogs from Sheyenne River Retrievers, located south of Mandan, are not only sought due to their reputation for hunting, but for their intelligence.

“Our dogs have been spread out across the world, serving in many ways. We have one dog that detects for drugs at the Paris, France, airport, we have a few dogs in Switzerland helping a woman who does earthquake and avalanche rescuing, and many drug and rescue dogs here in the United States as well,” Lynette says.

The reputation for quality comes from the pride the Helgesons take when breeding their dogs for a great genetic makeup.

“We put a lot of work into being a breeder of merit, because we want to do it right,” Lynette notes.



Posing are three Sheyenne River Retrievers that earned ribbons from field competitions



“We have a reproductive veterinarian that we use in Stillwater, Minn., that helps us with the genetic makeup. Furthermore, each dog is AKC (American Kennel Club) registered,” Jason says. All Sheyenne River Retrievers dogs are selected for genetic soundness, working ability, intelligence and proper conformation from among the top field trial and hunt test bloodlines available across the country.

The love of their animals runs deep, as Lynette shares she has stayed by the side of their females who are in labor to ensure their well-being and the well-being of their puppies.

“I love the puppies and taking care of them,” Lynette says.

Sheyenne River Retrievers has one to three litters of puppies every year. “My favorite part of this business is seeing the puppies go to great homes,” Lynette notes.

“It is great when we have repeat buyers coming back to us, because their last puppy was the best dog they had ever had,” Jason says.

Competing at a high level

The Helgesons have two male and five female dogs of their own that come from proven generations of great hunters, and even better family dogs.

The Helgesons take part in hunting competitions throughout the year, which has proven to show the genetics of their dogs. The first run Jason ever took was in 2014 at a four-day competition.

“I don’t get very nervous for many things in life,

but this was one of them,” he notes.


Since then, Jason has competed regularly in field competitions in North Dakota, Minnesota, Nebraska and South Dakota.

Jason trains his dogs every day, in preparation for the competitions and for the field.

“During these competitions, our dogs must be prepared for a variety of scenarios,” Jason says.

All the training has shown success, as their dogs participate and compete in AKC hunt tests and win championships. Not only do the Helgesons’ own dogs compete at a high level, so do their line of ancestors and their offspring.

“We have bred dogs that continue to prove themselves as good hunters and have a good drive in the field,” Jason says.

To keep up-to-date with Sheyenne River Retrievers, you can follow them on Facebook or visit www.sheyenneriverretrievers.com. 



The Helgeson family raises Labrador retriever puppies.



Maher places ninth in National High School Finals Rodeo

BY ANNE HANSEN



Maci Maher competes in goat tying.

Rodeo has always been second nature to Maci Maher.

"It has always been a part of my family, and, honestly, I can't remember a time that it wasn't part of my life," said Maci, the daughter of Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative Fort Yates area foreman, Cody, and his wife, Tracy.

Maci has competed since a young age, landing her in the Junior World Finals and the National High School Finals Rodeo competitions. She recently earned a ninth-place position in goat tying during her senior year of high school, while competing for Team North Dakota at the 2022 National High School Finals Rodeo in Gillette, Wyo.

The road to the finals wasn't without twists in the road, as Maci suffered a setback with a



Maci Maher placed ninth at the national goat tying event.

broken ankle during a basketball game her sophomore year of high school. She continued to persevere and work her way back into the arena.

"As a family, we practice nearly every day," Maci said about herself and her three siblings. "After a day of school, volleyball, basketball or track practice, we would drive an hour back home and work on rodeo, before heading into the house, doing homework and calling it a day."


Maci has participated in all the women's competitions, including breakaway, barrel racing, goat tying, team roping and pole bending.

"I enjoy all of the sports, but my favorite has always been goat tying," she said.

Rodeo has taught Maci a lot about life, too.

"Rodeo teaches you the meaning of hard work, while also knowing that sometimes things don't go the way you want them to, but you have to get up, shake it off, and keep going," she said.

Maci currently is a freshman at Dickinson State University, where she is playing college volleyball.

"Rodeo will always be a part of my life, as I plan to rodeo through jackpots and throughout the summer, but I won't always have the opportunity to play volleyball, so that is why I chose that sport to play during college," Maci said. 



MANAGER'S MESSAGE: **It's a matter of (co-op!) principles**



Travis Kupper

ACE Hardware, State Farm, REI, Land O'Lakes and Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative all share something in common: We're all cooperatives.

We may be in different industries, but we all share a passion for serving our members and helping our communities to thrive. In fact,

all cooperatives adhere to the same set of seven principles that reflect our core values of honesty, transparency, equity, inclusiveness and service to the greater community good.

October is National Co-op Month, so this is the perfect time to reflect on these principles that have stood the test of time, but also provide a framework for the future. Let's take a look at the first three cooperative principles.

Voluntary and open membership

Just like all co-ops, Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative was created out of necessity – to meet a need that would have been otherwise unmet in our community. So, a group of neighbors banded together and organized our electric co-op, so everyone in our community could benefit. For a modest membership fee to the co-op, any farmer could get electricity brought to his farm. Neighbors came together to tackle a problem they all had, but couldn't solve alone. They worked together for the benefit of the whole community, and the newly established electric lines helped power economic opportunity in our community.

While this history may be forgotten, key parts of that heritage remain – the focus on our mission and serving the greater good. In this, we include everyone to improve the quality of life and economic opportunity for the entire community. Membership is open to everyone in our service territory, regardless of race, religion, age, disability, gender identity, language, political perspective or socioeconomic status.

Democratic member control

Our co-op is well suited to meet the needs of our members, because we are locally governed. Each member gets a voice and a vote in how the co-op is operated, and each voice and vote are equal. Mor-Gran-Sou Electric's leadership team and employees live right here in the community. Our directors, who help set long-term priorities for the co-op, also live locally on co-op lines. These board members have been elected by neighbors just like you. We know our members have a valuable perspective, and that's why we are continually seeking your input and encourage you to weigh in on important co-op issues and participate in co-op elections.


Our close connection to this community ensures we get a firsthand perspective on members' priorities, enabling us to make more informed decisions on long-term investments.

Members' economic participation

As a utility, our mission is to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy to our members. But as a co-op, we are also motivated by service to the community, rather than profits. Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of Mor-Gran-Sou Electric. At least part of that capital remains the common property of the cooperative. Members allocate surpluses for co-op programs, initiatives, capital investments and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

Because we are guided by seven cooperative principles, it's not just about dollars – it's about opportunity for all and being fair when engaging with our members. The cooperative way is a values-based business model.

Mor-Gran-Sou is a reflection of our local community and its evolving needs. We view our role as a catalyst for good and making our corner of the world a better place.

And by the way, that is a glance at the seventh co-op principle, "concern for community," which I'll elaborate on in next month's column. 

Idle services to be retired

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative continues to retire idle services throughout the co-op's service area. What does Mor-Gran-Sou consider to be an idle electrical service?

It is a service that is not making any payment to the cooperative, but continues to receive regular maintenance. Your cooperative's procedure is to post a detailed list in our communications material to keep members informed of the idle services that will be retired. This is the first notice of this particular group of idle services to be retired.

Prior to this detailed listing, Mor-Gran-Sou personnel have already contacted, or tried to contact, the property owner and affected property owners based on the information available. If someone comes forward and is willing to pay the line retention fee, we no longer consider it an idle service. However, if no one comes forward, the line is then put on a list and

will be retired. The following idle services will be retired at the cooperative's convenience:


Grant County

T133 R87 Section 22 NE 1/4
T133 R90 Section 8 NW 1/4

Morton County

T135 R79 Section 11 NW 1/4
T135 R79 Section 23 NW 1/4
T138 R87 Section 10 SE 1/4

Sioux County

T129 R82 Section 34 SE 1/4
T130 R80 Section 3 NE 1/4
T132 R83 Section 31 NE 1/4
T133 R79 Section 14 NE 1/4
T134 R79 Section 34 SE 1/4
T134 R79 Section 35 SW 1/4 



Focused on YOU.

Electric cooperatives were created to serve their members. Because we're a co-op, we're able to adapt to our community's unique needs. That's the power of co-op membership.

OCTOBER IS NATIONAL CO-OP MONTH



Safety Starts with ME: Julie Armijo

Fraudsters are always on the prowl to see who they can scam out of money and valuable information. A common group of victims they target are consumers of essential day-to-day utilities, such as electricity, water and gas.

“As technology evolves, so do fraudsters’ tactics,” said Julie Armijo, Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative’s member services manager. “It is important to recognize these tactics to prevent yourself from being the next victim of a scam.”

Common types of scams

Imposter scams are the No. 1 type of fraud reported to the Federal Trade Commission. A scammer may claim you are overdue on a bill and threaten to disconnect your service if you do not provide payment information immediately. This type of scam can be via phone call, text, email or even in person.


Another common scam, known as the “refund tactic,” is when an imposter claims you were overcharged on your previous bill and needs your information to “refund you.” They make it sound easy. With just a click of a button, you will be prompted to input financial and personal information. Rather than being refunded, however, the scammer will drain your bank account and use any valuable personal information for identity theft.

“If this happens to you via phone call, simply hang up,” Armijo said. “If a fraudster attempts to reach you via text or email, delete the message immediately before taking any action. And if you feel you are being scammed by a Mor-Gran-Sou imposter, give us a call at 701-597-3301, 701-663-0297 or 800-750-8212.”

If you have any concerns or questions with your bill, you can also check out your account on the SmartHub app. You can download SmartHub on your smartphone or access through our website.



Defend yourself from scams.

- Be wary of texts and calls from unknown numbers.
 - Be wary of unfamiliar or suspicious-looking emails.
 - Be suspicious of an unknown person claiming to be a Mor-Gran-Sou employee who is asking for personal or financial information.
 - Never let anyone into your home, unless you have a scheduled appointment or reported a problem. When in doubt, call 701-597-3301, 701-663-0297 or 800-750-8212 if you have concerns.
- “At Mor-Gran-Sou Electric, we want to provide you with electricity as well as protect your livelihood,” Armijo said. “Please take this information into consideration to avoid being the next victim of a utility scam.” 

Mor-Gran-Sou participates in United Way Day of Caring




Co-op employees stain a playset in Linton.

Each year, individuals across the Bismarck-Mandan and surrounding areas roll up their sleeves in the spirit of helping others.

Through the United Way Day of Caring, Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative member service representatives join with fellow electric cooperative, KEM Electric, to support local communities. Mor-Gran-Sou and KEM Electric are a part of the Innovative Energy Alliance, which shares services.

“The United Way Day of Caring encourages a sense of responsibility for each of us to help care for our neighbors and to stay connected to the important work being done by organizations and individuals within our communities to ensure they continue to thrive,” said Beth Kroh, member service representative II.

The team, consisting of Kroh, Deb Haugen and Patty Kluge, helped stain playground equipment at community parks.

“We had a wonderful, fulfilling day in Linton, working alongside employees from KEM Electric and the community of Linton. It was great to spend time in their community and to see the progress we were able to make in the parks after just a day of work. We were able to stain a children’s playset in the American Legion Memorial Park and repaint benches at Seeman Park. Many hands truly do make light work,” Kroh said. 



Mor-Gran-Sou and KEM Electric employees helped in the community of Linton.



BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Aug. 24

- Approved the July 27 board meeting minutes
- Approved a special equipment capitalization
- Approved capital credit retirement applications to estates
- Reviewed the Mor-Gran-Sou (MGS) Electric Cooperative financial report for July
- Reviewed update on Mandan building remodel costs to date
- Reviewed co-general managers/CEOs update and report on meetings attended
- Reviewed senior staff reports
- Reviewed Basin Electric Power Cooperative board minutes and associated information
- Reviewed updates from 3C Construction and West Daktoa Utility Services
- Heard reports of meetings directors attended
- Results of the 2022 member satisfaction survey were presented
- Reviewed 2022 annual meeting statistics, costs and history comparisons
- Set date and location for 2023 annual meeting
- Approved Rural Utilities Service loan commitment letter
- Approved rate adjustment effective Sept. 1
- Received board committee assignments from chair
- Assigned delegate and alternate for the Cooperative Finance Corporation district meeting, and voted the ballot
- Assigned voting delegate for the Federated Rural Electric Insurance election meeting
- Approved amendment and resolution to Maintenance Solutions Cooperative articles of association

- Confirmed attendance at upcoming trainings and events
- Held two executive sessions

Upcoming regular board meeting dates:

- Oct. 26, 10:30 a.m. CT/9:30 a.m. MT, J&L Building, Bismarck

Members are welcome to attend board meetings. As plans may change, please call the office at 800-750-8212 or 597-3301 to confirm the meeting status if you wish to attend. To place an item on the agenda, please contact Board Chair Steve Tomac or Co-General Managers/CEOs Travis Kupper or 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.

DON'T LET HALLOWEEN BE SCARY!

As you light Halloween night with elaborate decorations, Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative recommends some important safety tips:

- Do not attach cords or lights to metal objects.
- Always unplug lights before going to bed or leaving your home.



MOR-GRAN-SOU
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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 Donald A. Franklund
Co-GM/CEO Travis Kupper

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