



MOR-GRAN-SOU
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Serving Morton, Grant and Sioux counties

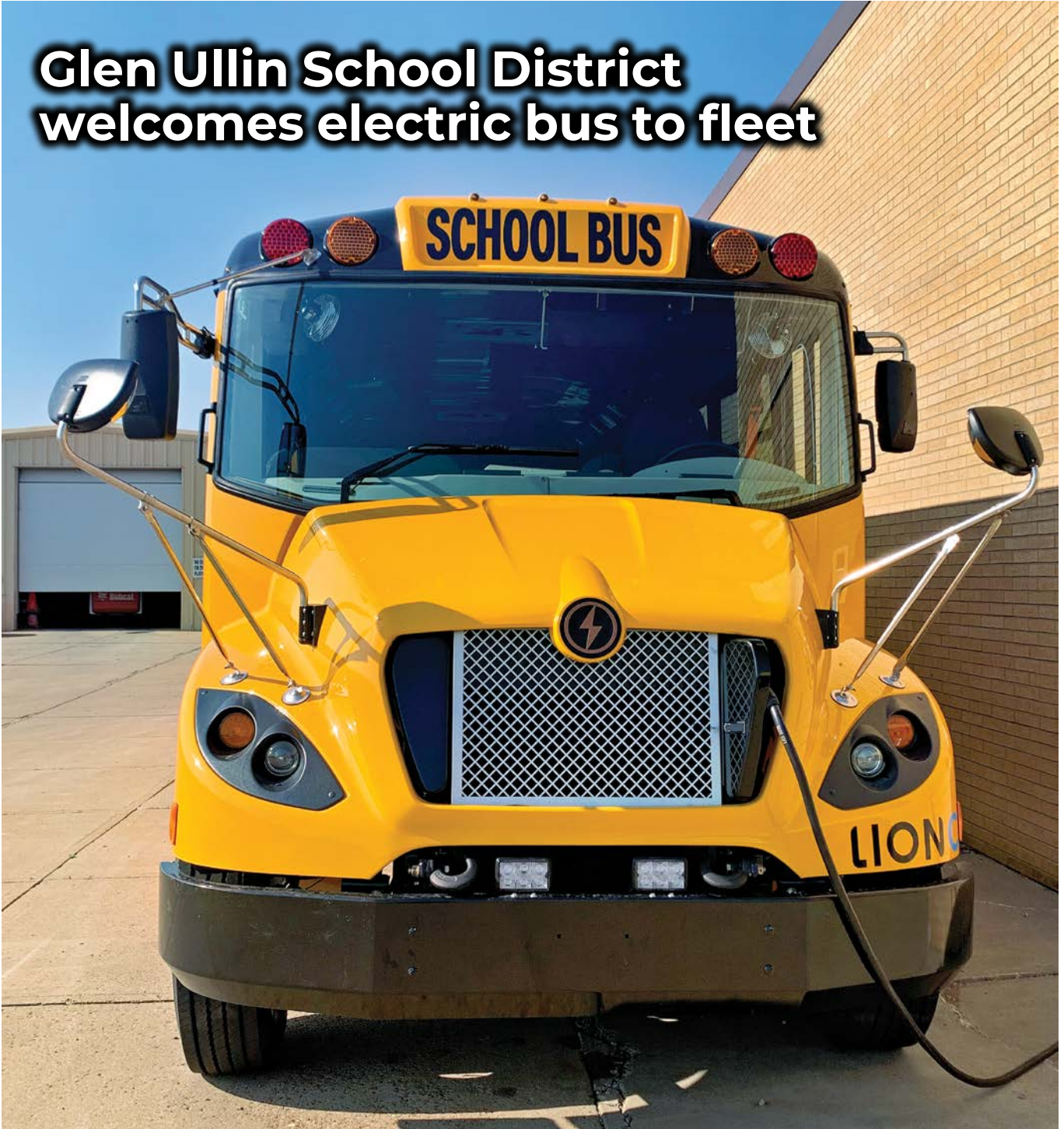
THIS ISSUE:

- Manager's message
- Members gather for annual meeting
- Hunting safely

SEPTEMBER
2023

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Glen Ullin School District welcomes electric bus to fleet





SPARK OF INNOVATION: Glen Ullin School District welcomes electric bus to fleet

by Samantha Vangsness

As the school year begins, there is more than just the excitement of the first days of school in the Glen Ullin School District. This academic season marks a milestone for the district, as it proudly welcomes its newest addition to the bus fleet – an electric school bus. Though maintaining a familiar structural design, this cutting-edge vehicle boasts a handful of fascinating features.

The road to an electrical bus

It all started when Lion Electric, an electric bus company based in Canada, reached out regarding the opportunity for the school to receive a free electric school bus. The new Clean School Bus Program, administrated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), provides \$5 billion over the next five years for schools to receive electric-powered buses across the nation.

Although the program sounded enticing, the grant was not submitted without doing some homework, noted Peter Remboldt, superintendent of the Glen Ullin School District.

“The school board did quite a bit of vetting beforehand,” he says. The local school board visited with Lion Electric, which makes comparable buses and has been providing electric buses for decades in Canada. Remboldt also discussed the application with the West Fargo School District, which has had positive experiences with its electric school bus for nearly five years.

“A concern is how the bus will react to western North Dakota weather and roads,” Remboldt says. “Those are some challenges. We will find out how they withstand as time progresses.”

Not only is the school excited for the new technology hitting the district roads, but they are also interested in the potential cost-savings. Remboldt notes the cost-savings projections will be significant.

“We will be able to save money on diesel fuel throughout the school year. Although we will be paying more in electricity costs, it will still be less than diesel fuel costs,” he says.

Same bus, different whistles

The electric school bus will retain the conventional appearance, but it comes equipped with some unique bells and whistles. One of those features

might literally be “bells and whistles.” Since electric vehicles are so quiet, they are difficult to hear driving down the road. To combat this, the electric bus plays a tune when it is going under 20 miles an hour. This tune is customizable and will help community members know the bus is coming.


Another interesting feature is the bus can be programmed to begin warming up before the bus driver arrives to start picking up children. This will come in handy during those chilly winter mornings, and will help conserve the bus’s energy by warming up before it is unplugged. The school bus will need to be plugged in at the end of the school route each day. The bus will be housed at the school, which has the appropriate infrastructure.

Learning curve

As with everything new, there is a learning curve. The driver of the electric school bus will have to adapt to a different dashboard and how the bus operates, but the bus does some learning of its own, too. The bus gets to know the driver and can regenerate the battery, depending on the driving habits. For example, when the driver slows or brakes going down a hill, the bus will then coast and use the energy it would have been using to restore the battery.

School and community personnel also acquired additional safety training before the school year started, including battery fire training from the Glen Ullin Fire Department.

Going forward

Remboldt is excited to lead the way among western North Dakota schools by adopting an electric bus, and is eager to embark on a learning journey together. As a pioneer in this movement in the western part of the state, he not only aims to enjoy the benefits of the electric bus but also hopes to raise awareness among North Dakota residents about electric vehicles’ practicality. Notably, the electric bus and its program have sparked significant interest, with other schools exploring the potential of the EPA Clean School Bus Program grant. 

MANAGER'S MESSAGE:

Factors that impact electricity prices



Travis Kupper

The daily cost of living seems to have increased across the board throughout our state and country.

Just as inflation has impacted everything, from the price of gasoline to the price of eggs, costs for the fuels required to produce electricity have also risen. This is a timely topic, so I wanted to help explain

some of the factors impacting electricity prices (and energy bills) in this month's message.

While there is no short answer, a few key elements impact electricity prices and rates. Some of these factors Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative can manage, some of them you can impact and other factors are beyond our control. So, let me break it down.

There are two primary parts to your monthly electric bill: a base charge and an energy consumption or kilowatt-hour (kWh) charge. To understand your total energy costs and what impacts your bill, let's unpack one piece at a time.

The first is a fixed monthly base charge, which covers the costs associated with providing electricity to your home. This includes equipment, materials, labor and operating costs necessary to serve each meter in Mor-Gran-Sou Electric's service territory, regardless of the amount of energy used.


To ensure the reliable service you expect and deserve, we must maintain the local system, including power lines, substations and other necessary equipment. Like many other businesses, we've experienced supply chain issues and steep cost increases for some of our basic equipment. For example, the cost for a distribution transformer (which looks like a long metal can at the top of a power pole) increased from \$1,000 in 2021 to \$1,500 this year, and wait times to receive this essential

equipment are up to 20 weeks or longer.

Because we are a not-for-profit cooperative, some of these expenses must be passed on to our members. I should note the base charge is the same for everyone in the rate class and the costs are shared equally across the membership in that rate class.

Another component of your monthly bill is the kWh charge, which covers how much energy you consume. You've likely noticed the amount of energy you use can vary from month to month and is typically impacted by extreme temperatures. When temperatures soar or dip, your cooling or heating equipment operates longer, which increases your home energy use. Regardless, energy consumption is an area you have some control over, and you can lower your monthly bill by actively reducing energy use. Your thermostat is a great place to start, experts suggest to keep it close to 78 degrees during summer months and 68 degrees in the cooler months.

I hope this information sheds light on some of the factors impacting electricity prices. While we can't control the weather or the rising costs of fuels, please know Mor-Gran-Sou Electric is doing everything possible to keep internal costs down.

We're here to help you, too. Contact us if you have questions about your energy bill or for advice on how to save energy at home. 





Members visit the operations booth and learn more about the trip saver.

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative members gather for annual meeting

by Samantha Vangsness

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative members gathered at Prairie Knights Casino and Resort for the cooperative's annual meeting July 21. Prior to the meeting, members enjoyed a complimentary meal. In addition, members could learn about the operations of Mor-Gran-Sou Electric, as a bucket truck was available to view, along with a safety booth.

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Chairman Steve Tomac welcomed and thanked members for attending the annual meeting, which celebrated with the theme, "Power for Generations." This year's theme reflected on previous generations who joined together to provide electric service to local areas no other utility would serve, and how Mor-Gran-Sou Electric has been preparing to serve the future generations.

The membership fulfilled the cooperative

principle, "democratic member control," by voting to fill the board positions held by Casey Wells, Carson, in Grant County; Robert J. Leingang, Mandan, in the Mandan Area; and Rodney Froelich, Selfridge, in Sioux County.

All three incumbents were unanimously reelected to retain their seats on the board. Additionally, an amendment to the bylaws was approved by the membership.

Chief Financial Officer Alex Craigmile presented the financial report to the membership. He noted Brady, Martz & Associates audited the 2022 financial statements of Mor-Gran-Sou Electric and gave the cooperative an unmodified opinion, the highest rating possible.

Members listened to cooperative updates from co-managers, Travis Kupper and Jason Bentz, along with Manager of Operations Gary Fitterer and



Jason Halgeson, a senior engineer technician at Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative, visits with members at the annual meeting.

Member Services Manager Julie Armijo.

Armijo highlighted the charitable giving through Operation Round Up. Operation Round Up is a cooperative program in which Mor-Gran-Sou Electric members may choose to round up their monthly utility bills to the next dollar and donate their pennies. The Operation Round Up board members, who are also Mor-Gran-Sou members, meet and disburse funds in the form of grants. Grants are distributed to worthy nonprofit corporations, organizations and individuals in the Mor-Gran-Sou Electric service area.

Youth recognized and awarded

Annually, Mor-Gran-Sou Electric awards one \$500 scholarship to a graduating senior from each of the high schools within its service area. The following scholarship winners were chosen by faculty members from each respective school:

- **Elgin/New Leipzig Public School** – Anna Schatz plans to attend North Dakota State University (NDSU) in pursuit of a degree in crop and weed science.
- **Flasher Public School** – Jayden Miller plans to attend Bismarck State College (BSC) in pursuit of a degree in nursing.
- **Glen Ullin Public School** – Gabrielle Kuhn plans to attend North Dakota State College of Science (NDSCS) in pursuit of a dental hygiene degree.
- **Mandan Public School** – Kylie Thompson plans to attend BSC in pursuit of a degree in the medical field.
- **New Salem-Almont Public School** – Levi Becker plans to attend the University of Mary in pursuit of an accounting degree.
- **Selfridge Public School** – Mali Morse

plans to attend NDSU in pursuit of an education degree.

- **The homeschool/GED/or school outside of Mor-Gran-Sou Electric territory** – Caitlin Ottmar plans to attend the University of Minnesota Twin Cities in pursuit of a science degree.

No applicants were received from Hebron, Solen or Standing Rock Community/Fort Yates schools.

Also recognized was the recipient of the \$1,000 Basin Electric Power Cooperative scholarship, Anna Bendish, Mandan. Bendish plans to attend the University of Mary in pursuit of a degree in radiological technology.

Two scholarships were available on behalf of West Dakota Utility Services (WDUS) and 3C Construction to applicants who plan to attend a certified vocational or technical school. Luke Maier was awarded a \$500 scholarship from WDUS. Maier plans to attend NDSCS in pursuit of a degree in diesel technology.

This year's Youth Tour recipient, Edyth Hatlestad of Mandan, was also acknowledged. Hatlestad joined delegates from across the state and nation in June to participate in events displaying our nation's rich history, U.S. government, the cooperative business model and rural electrification. Hatlestad shared her Youth Tour experience with the membership before the meeting and presented a slideshow during the meeting.


Additionally, Mor-Gran-Sou Electric awards "luck-of-the-draw" scholarships to students who registered for the meeting and attended with a parent or guardian. The goal of these scholarships is to encourage the younger generation to learn about the cooperative business model and to show how their voices can be heard. Recipients of a \$500 scholarship include Jada Bonogofsky from St. Anthony, Alyssa Dix from Morristown and Joseph Richter from Flasher.

Members recognized for participating

Bentz concluded the evening by stating the importance of the cooperative's members.

"Without you, we would not exist. As we look to the future, we view our role as a catalyst for good. Working together, we can accomplish great things for our members now and be your family's power for generations," he said.

The evening concluded with door prizes, which ranged from bill credits to Medora Musical tickets.

The board of directors, co-general managers and staff at Mor-Gran-Sou Electric wish to thank our members for participating in the annual meeting of the membership and look forward to meeting your electrical needs in the future. 



Lineworkers attend Hotline School

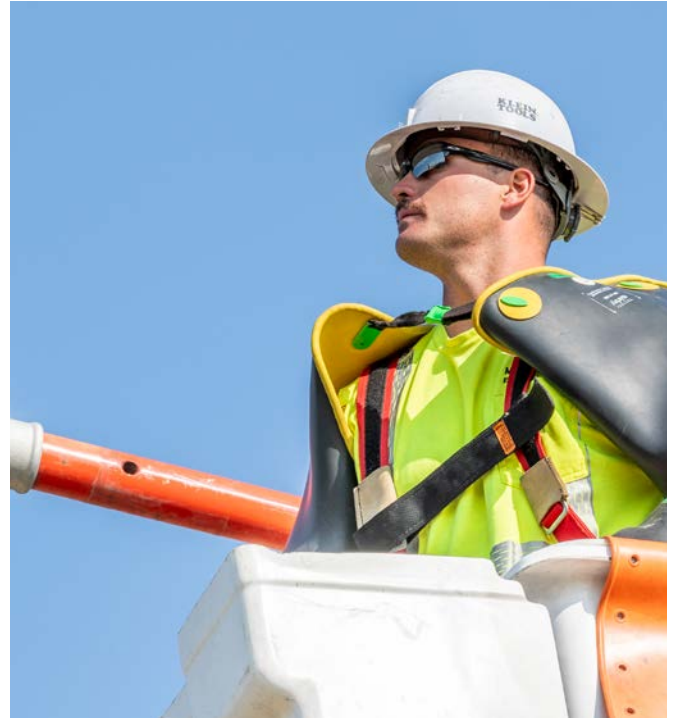
by Samantha Vangsness

Lineworkers from across the state met in Mandan for the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC) Hotline School. Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative sent three apprentice lineworkers this year: Chance Maglike, Layton Kasper and Troy Kuball.


The session was held at the Bismarck State College lineworker program facility in Mandan. The annual field training teaches lineworkers how to safely work on energized lines through hands-on instruction and demonstrations from experienced lineworkers.

“Hotline School allows employees to simulate live line work that employees potentially could do in a normal day’s work,” said Gary Fitterer, operations manager at Mor-Gran-Sou Electric. “It is used as a training tool, so the new employees, who may not get to utilize hot work in their normal everyday work, get a chance to keep their skills up-to-date and help them learn safe ways to keep the power on while working on energized equipment.”

This training prepares lineworkers for situations when deenergizing the lines is not possible and helps keep power flowing during storms or scheduled maintenance, when possible.



Layton Kasper, an apprentice lineworker at Mor-Gran-Sou Electric, attends the NDAREC Hotline School.

“The training is important to train employees on new equipment and keep familiar with industry changes and provide a chance to work with others in the state to learn different ways to get the job done safely and efficiently,” Fitterer said. 



Mor-Gran-Sou apprentice lineworkers attend the NDAREC Hotline School.



Safety Starts with ME: **Safe hunting**

Hunting season is on the horizon, as the weather cools and the days begin to get shorter. Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative encourages members to take some extra precautions to stay safe during hunting season.

“We encourage all members to be aware of electrical equipment and be safe when hunting,” said Brett Fleck, a journeyman lineworker at Mor-Gran-Sou Electric. “Hunting season is an exciting time for many, but safety needs to be front of mind at all times.”

To mitigate accidents, Mor-Gran-Sou Electric encourages you to use the following electrical safety tips for safe hunting.

- Take notice of posted warning signs and keep clear of electrical equipment.
- Do not shoot at or near power lines or insulators.
- Know the location of power lines and equipment on the land where you hunt.
- Be especially careful in wooded areas, where power lines may not be visible.
- Do not place deer stands on utility poles or climb poles. Energized lines and equipment can conduct electricity to anyone who encounters them, causing shock or electrocution.
- Do not place decoys on power lines or other utility equipment. Any non-electrical equipment attached to a pole can pose an obstruction and serious hazard to our line crews.


Safety Starts with ME (and YOU)

Safety doesn't take just two or three members; it takes a collective effort by all.

“By following these safety tips and encouraging



others to do the same, we can create a safer hunting environment for everyone involved,” Fleck said. If you see something that doesn't look right while hunting in Mor-Gran-Sou Electric's service area, call 800-750-8212 as soon as possible.

Hunting season is a time to make memories that will be remembered and talked about for years to come. Don't forget to take these safety tips into consideration while making memories, and encourage others to do the same to ensure a safe hunting environment for all. 



MOR-GRAN-SOU
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

The Operation Round Up application deadline is Sept. 8.

Contact the Mor-Gran-Sou Electric office for more information.



In observance of

LABOR DAY



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Our office will be closed on Sept. 4.

Line crews will be available to respond to emergencies and power outages by calling 800-750-8212, 701-597-3301 and 701-663-0297.



MOR-GRAN-SOU
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

202 6th Ave. W. - PO Box 297
Flasher, ND 58535-0297

Phone: 701- 597-3301 Flasher
701- 663-0297 Mandan

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..... 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

www.morgransou.com

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

