



# CURRENT

Serving Morton, Grant and Sioux counties

AUGUST 2021

NEWS

## AVERY ROTH

GRANT COUNTY

## N.D. FFA Vice President

Next month, Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative will feature the N.D. FFA President, Garrett Kuhn from Glen Ullin



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## NORTH DAKOTA FFA

# Donning the blue and gold Grant County FFA members step into top spots

BY LUANN DART



Grant County High School FFA Advisor **Sara Hatlewick**, right, meets with the former chapter president, **Laura Muggli**, and former chapter vice president, **Avery Roth**. The two students will attend college this fall.

There must be some special magic woven into the fabric of that blue corduroy jacket.

Donning that jacket, Avery Roth describes, has been life-changing.

“Definitely, I’ve gained a lot of confidence. I’m the most confident when I’m wearing my FFA jacket or wearing FFA apparel. Public speaking is probably the biggest skill I’ve learned from FFA. Also leadership. Leadership is such a broad term, but you learn that being a leader isn’t being the loudest. Being the leader is doing deeds,” says Roth, who served as vice president of the Grant County High School FFA chapter this past year.

Roth is now serving in a state leadership role after being elected as the 2021-22 North Dakota FFA vice president during the FFA State Convention in June.

Across North Dakota, 6,200 FFA members in 89 chapters regularly wear that blue jacket emblazoned with the FFA emblem. Besides the required attire of blue jackets, FFA members share other commonalities, expressed in the FFA motto:

“Learning to do, doing to learn, earning to live and living to serve.”

FFA students participate in leadership conferences, and a wide range of competitions – from public speaking to livestock judging – along with career development events on the local, state and national level.

“Livestock judging is my favorite CDE. No question. I’ve been doing it since seventh grade in FFA,” Roth says.

“The passion that they have. Oh, my gosh. They love it. I love working with them and setting goals for our teams and seeing their achievements,” says Grant County advisor, Sara Hatlewick, who leads 30 active FFA members.

In 1988, the official name of the





organization changed from Future Farmers of America to the National FFA Organization to reflect the growing diversity of the organization.

It's not just about agriculture anymore.

For example, Laura Muggli, who served as the Grant County FFA chapter president, first competed in creed speaking.

"Which I thought was absolutely crazy, because I am not the public speaker in our class, but then I went on to the demonstration, employment skills and *parli pro*, which is my favorite," says the daughter of Timmy and Andrea Muggli, members of Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative.

"I've gained a lot of communication skills," Laura says. "Through employment skills, I had to learn how to present myself very professionally. Parliamentary procedure has been a big one, where we've had to really learn as a team and work as a team and even give each other constructive criticism to make each other better."

## Leading FFA

"When I was an eighth-grader, I saw the state officers that year and I thought that would be so cool to be a state officer, but I've always had so much self-doubt," says Roth, the son of Clarence Jr. and Nola Roth, members of Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative.

Then, during his sophomore year, Avery was grappling with nerves before giving a competitive speech, when a state officer sat next to him, offering advice and a pep talk. He remembers that moment as pivotal in his FFA story. It inspired him to become a state officer himself. And that goal was attained in June.

State office candidates go through a series of interviews, an impromptu

scenario, a team-building activity and a written test. A screening committee then nominates candidates for each office. As a state officer, Avery spent the summer in training sessions, at the North Dakota State Fair, then will attend the National FFA Convention in October in Indianapolis, Ind.

"It's been a goal for so long. Now that it's actually happened, I'm just so excited," he says.

"It's been so much fun connecting with members," he says. "I'm just excited to help them with anything they need this next year and make sure the younger members stay involved in FFA across the state."

"I'm so impressed by the work that Avery's put in to be a state officer this year," Laura says. "We're so proud of him that he came from our little chapter. He's going to be one of the great leaders of North Dakota."

## Winning baby bison

Three FFA teams from Grant County High School attained state championships during the FFA State Convention in Fargo, and five individual championships came back home, carried by three chapter members – Laura Muggli, Avery Roth and Christy Finck. As the top individual in two career development events, Laura won two "Baby Bison" trophies, which may be an unprecedented achievement.

Grant County FFA teams are state champions in small animal care, farm business management and quiz, qualifying them for national competition. Laura is the top individual in quiz and farm business management. Also qualifying for national competition, Avery won prepared public speaking and he and Christy both qualified for national competition with their proficiency projects. Avery won in small animal production and care, and Christy in

veterinary science placement.

The qualifiers will now compete at the National FFA Convention in October in Indianapolis, Ind., where an individual can only compete in one event, so Hatlewick must figure out those logistics, as several students were on more than one state team.

## More pillars

Competitions are just one aspect of FFA. Another pillar is community service.

"I like doing community service projects in our chapter, because our community is so fantastic. They do so much for our chapter, so we always give back," Laura says. This fall, the FFA chapter held a mask-making day, donating more than 100 masks where needed.

"There are so many businesses that support us, so we want to make sure that we support our community as well," Avery adds.

"Community support is huge and



As a senior this past year, **Laura Muggli** led her FFA chapter as the local president.



we are blessed to have the support we have here,” Hatlewick shares. “We thank everybody for their support and we hope to continue and strive for the best we can.”

### Life skills

Yes, there is something about that blue jacket.

“What’s cool is to see personal growth. Personal growth is one of the missions of FFA,” Avery says.

“It’s a lot about personal growth, premier leadership, life skills for them to be successful from now until whenever,” Hatlewick adds. “Out of FFA, they gain the leadership skills that they can use throughout their life, learning how to set personal goals and grow as a person.”

Both Laura and Avery encourage

others to join FFA.

“Going to each individual contest, I started falling in love with FFA more and more. Everything about it. I love competing. I’m super competitive, but I think FFA is so much more than a competition. You learn life lessons. There’s recordkeeping for SAEs. You can advocate for agriculture,” Avery says.

“Just try it. ... I never realized how much I would love speaking events, but I love all the other contests as well. I love going places and meeting people. So just try something. If you really love it, stick with it. If not, try something else,” Laura shares.

During his FFA career, Avery remembers one valuable lesson offered by his former FFA advisor, Pete Hetle, who said, “Whenever you’re competing, make sure you

stay humble.”

“I’ve always been extremely competitive in FFA. Over the years, I’ve had a lot of success, but I’ve also lost a lot of contests that I really wanted to win, so there’s been a lot of failures along the way that I’ve learned from,” Avery says.

Laura has found her lessons, too.

“FFA has taught me so much. In our leadership events, just having the confidence to speak to other people. Some of these events that we won, we learned how to study and work together as a team. The skills you learn in this organization are so amazing, in addition to all the friendships and experiences you get,” Laura says.

“The memories I’ve made in FFA are truly priceless,” Avery adds. ■

WISH YOU A VERY HAPPY



**Holiday closing:  
Monday, Sept. 6**

In observance of the Labor Day holiday in September, Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative will be closed on Monday, Sept. 6. Line crews will be available to respond to emergencies and power outages by calling 701-663-0297, 701-597-3301 or 1-800-750-8212. Please call any of these numbers to log your specific information with dispatch, and you will receive assistance as quickly and safely as possible.



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





Manager of Member Services **Julie Armijo** shows kids the rubber gloves lineworkers wear to protect themselves while working.

## Energy Education Day filled with fun lessons



Member Services Representative II **Beth Kroh** teaches youth about how electricity works using a Van de Graaff generator. During the demonstration, youth stand on a rubber stool and put their hands on the Van de Graaff generator. They only feel the static electricity if someone touches them, or "grounds" them.

As the Bismarck Larks baseball team swung for the fences, Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative shared some fun lessons about energy outside the stadium during Energy Education Day June 22.

The cooperative participated in the event by sharing lessons about electricity using a Van de Graaff generator and a plasma ball.

"We taught the kids about where electricity comes from, the path it takes from the power plant to their home, and also to be safe around it," said Manager of Member Services Julie Armijo.

Armijo, Member Services Representative II Beth Kroh and Jeremy Woeste, with Basin Electric Power Cooperative, also showed kids the equipment lineworkers wear to keep themselves safe.

"It's a fun event," Armijo said. The cooperative has participated since the Larks launched the event five years ago. Invited businesses and organizations share educational activities during a morning Larks game. Students in attendance included those from Morton, Grant and Sioux counties. ■



Co-General Managers/CEOs **Donald Franklund**, left, and **Travis Kupper**, right, share an update with the members during the televised annual meeting.

## Annual meeting held virtually July 16

**M**or-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative held a virtual annual meeting this year, broadcasting on local BEK TV channels so members could participate.

With the theme, “Together we make a powerful difference,” the annual meeting was similar to last year’s meeting, as the Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative board of directors decided for the safety of cooperative members to schedule the 2021 annual meeting as a virtual event on July 16.

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative continues to follow safety guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and N.D. Department of Health. Without knowing the future impact of COVID-19 and putting safety first, the board of directors determined a virtual meeting would be the safest option.

The meeting opened with an invocation by the Rev. John Amundson, a pastor at the Immanuel Lutheran Church, New Leipzig.

“The Mor-Gran-Sou service area and its members have seen significant challenges and changes throughout the year, but what has not changed is our commitment to you, the member,” said Board Chairman Casey Wells.

Voting for this year’s directors took place by mail, as permitted by the cooperative’s bylaws and policies, with

822 mail-in ballots received. The voting included the election of the board of director positions for at-large, Morton County and Sioux County. Members also voted to approve the 2020 annual meeting minutes.

Steve Tomac, St. Anthony, was elected to the at-large position, replacing Mark Doll, who had reached the term limit. Incumbent Kathy Tokach, St. Anthony, was reelected without opposition to represent Morton County. In the contested Sioux County position, Chad Harrison, Fort Yates, was reelected. Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative thanks Lisa Kraft, Selfridge, for placing her name on the ballot and choosing to be an active and involved cooperative member.

Co-General Managers/CEOs Donald Franklund and Travis Kupper shared an update with the members.

“This past year has been anything but normal, both for your lives and ours at the cooperative,” Kupper said. “By pulling together, we’re able to do things we would not be able to accomplish individually.”

Working together to remain safe is one aspect of the cooperative’s focus.

“Safety has always been paramount here at Mor-Gran-Sou and it continues to be so,” Franklund said. Through the COVID-19 pandemic, the cooperative implemented procedures to keep employees and members safe, and





Mor-Gran-Sou strives to incorporate safety into the entire culture of the cooperative.

“Everybody is involved, including you, the members,” Franklund said, encouraging members to call or email the office at [safety@morgransou.com](mailto:safety@morgransou.com) if they see any equipment that may need attention.

“Our first area of safety is maintenance. We are very serious about the maintenance of the system,” Franklund said. “Reliability is the result of that.”

Ten years ago, Mor-Gran-Sou was impacted by an ice storm which significantly damaged a large portion of the system, and the cooperative has been recovering from that impact.

“We’ve had to make some sacrifices in the past and working forward. Those are now paying off and we’re able to see that in the financial status of the cooperative,” Kupper said.

Chief Financial Officer Alex Craigmile shared financial highlights during the annual meeting, showing \$21.7 million in 2020 operating revenue, compared to \$21.9 million in 2019. The cost of power made up 49 percent of the operating expenses in 2020.

2020 was the first full year Mor-Gran-Sou was a member of the Southwest Power Pool, which has allowed the cooperative to collect a toll when other entities use a portion of its transmission system, which has also positively impacted the cooperative’s finances.

Serving a large membership of farmers and ranches and auxiliary businesses, the cooperative understands the challenges faced by a substantial part of the members, Kupper said.

“We need to be good stewards of your money,” Kupper said. The cooperative will be considering a general retirement of capital credits this fall, with members receiving checks based on the amount of electricity they have used.

The use of technology is another focus of the cooperative. Working in a world more technology-driven, Mor-Gran-Sou has seen more electronics equipment being introduced in the field, Franklund said.

“This past year introduced a new level of technology we’ve never seen before,” Franklund said, pointing to the use of remote meetings. Lineworkers also learned to use their trucks as an office, using more technology.

Members also access technology through the use of SmartHub, an interactive app for members to use to pay a bill, check usage or receive information about the cooperative through their smartphones or other electronic device.

“Technology is changing in so many other areas,” Franklund said. “We are starting to see new technology in the utility world which is going to change the way we

do business forever and it is the renewable technology that we’re seeing.” Members are implementing small solar farms or solar panels, generating their own electricity.

“We as a co-op are committed to the membership and the communities we serve,” Kupper said, such as offering college scholarships to member dependents and utilizing Operation Round Up. One scholarship is awarded each year to a student in every school within Mor-Gran-Sou’s service territory. Zayne Fay and Taylen Thomas were also named winners of the luck-of-the-draw \$500 scholarships drawn during the annual meeting from those who applied prior to the meeting.

“As we continue to see the changes that are taking place in the utility world, as well as within the membership, we think there are some tremendous opportunities out there,” Franklund said.

“As you, the members, adjust to the future, we will also, and that will open opportunities to us we cannot even dream up right now,” Franklund said. “It’s going to be exciting for everyone as we go forward.”

The two thanked the members, staff and board for their continued dedication to the cooperative.

“We want to thank everyone for helping us overcome challenges for the past year and we look forward to the upcoming year,” Franklund said.

All members who cast a mail-in ballot will receive a \$10 bill credit, applied to the bills received in August. For those unable to watch the annual meeting, it has been posted on Mor-Gran-Sou’s website at [www.morgransou.com](http://www.morgransou.com). ■



Chairman **Casey Wells** led the annual meeting.

# MOR-GRAN-SOU ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

## board meeting highlights



### Meeting date: June 23, 2021

- Approved the May 26, 2021, board meeting minutes
- Approved a work order inventory and special equipment summary
- Approved capital credit refund applications to estates
- Reviewed the monthly directors' financial report
- Reviewed the MGS financial report for May
- Reviewed senior staff department reports
- Reviewed general counsel report
- Reviewed co-general managers/CEOs update and report on meetings attended
- Reviewed approved board meeting minutes from Basin Electric and its subsidiaries
- Heard directors' recap on meetings attended
- Reviewed WDUS/3C Construction update
- Reviewed update on Southwest Power Pool
- Heard update on Mandan office remodeling project
- Approved resolution allowing management to review and approve demolition proposal from contractor
- Completed input for the annual co-general managers/CEOs performance appraisal
- Approved quote for repair of Flasher office roof
- Accepted resignation of Mark Doll from IEA and MSC boards
- Elected Pam Geiger to fulfill Mark Doll's remaining IEA and MSC director terms
- Approved the overhead billing percentage for 2021
- Approved and cast vote for RESCO director
- Approved director attendance for NRECA Region 5 & 6 meeting
- Heard notice of annual Mor-Gran-Sou SPP annual meeting
- Reviewed WAPA drought adder rate status letter
- Held executive session

### Upcoming regular board meeting date:

Aug. 25 - 9:30 a.m. CT/8:30 a.m. MT - Bismarck

Members are welcome to attend board meetings. Due to COVID-19, 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 Casey Wells or Co-General Manager/CEO 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](http://www.morgransou.com), or contact the Flasher office to request a copy.



## ATTENTION MEMBERS:

The billing statement you received on or around Aug. 5 contains a line item indicating your 2020 capital credit allocation. The information shown on that billing statement is not the retirement, but the allocation. This is the only statement you will receive concerning your 2020 capital credit allocation. Please retain the August billing statement as a permanent record of your 2020 allocation.

### What is a capital credit allocation?

This information is provided each year as an official record of your capital credits. Since Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative is a member-owned cooperative, at the end of each year we allocate all our profits (the money left over after all expenses are paid) to you, our member-owners, based on how much energy you bought during the year. These allocations are called capital credits.

Allocation means we assign your share of the margins to a holding account in your name. Capital credits are used by your cooperative for operating funds, and at some later date, paid back to members, as the financial condition of the cooperative permits. These amounts are not payable at this time and do not represent cash, but rather your equity in your cooperative. ■



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#### OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

Chair ..... Casey Wells  
Vice Chair ..... Chad Harrison  
Secretary-Treasurer ..... Pam Geiger  
Directors ..... Vernard Frederick,  
Rodney Froelich, Jay Larson,  
Bob J. Leingang, Kathy Tokach, Steve Tomac

#### MANAGEMENT

Co-GM/CEO ..... Donald A. Franklund  
Co-GM/CEO ..... Travis Kupper

[www.morgransou.com](http://www.morgransou.com)

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