



PHOTO BY CARMEN DENNEY

## Building bridges and celebrating diversity

*These lovely ladies are celebrating their culture and heritage in a new venue: Dakota Zoo in Bismarck. Dakota Zoo partnered with Sacred Pipe Resource Center to build an exhibit of 10 interactive signs representing different animals that teach people about our state's native people and their relationships with animals and the land. In this issue, learn about the 10 new signs — and why these girls and their dancing reflects the importance of their representation in a public place.*

**See pages C6 and C7 for the story.**

## Also in this issue:

- Ask a question at the annual meeting
- Power-supplier reports
- Standing Rock members represented at Dakota Zoo
- KX/Co-op Day at the N.D. State Fair
- Meeting minutes and more



# 2021 Virtual Annual Meeting Friday, July 16, 2021

## IMPORTANT: Annual meeting update



Similar to last year, the Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative board of directors has decided for the safety of our members to schedule the 2021 annual meeting as a virtual meeting only. It will be held Friday, July 16, and televised on BEK TV.

All voting for this year’s annual meeting will take place by mail, as permitted by your cooperative’s bylaws and policies. Members received the mailed ballot packet and annual report in June.

Four Mor-Gran-Sou members are vying for one of three board director positions up for election this year including: one for the At-Large

position, one for the Morton County position, and one for the Sioux County position. The approved list of candidates includes:

### At-Large:

Steve Tomac, St. Anthony

### Morton County:

Kathy Tokach, St. Anthony

### Sioux County:

Chad Harrison, Fort Yates

Lisa Kraft, Selfridge

A biography of each candidate was published in the 2020 annual report.

To ensure that you have the opportunity to ask questions at the annual meeting, please use the form below. Instructions on how to submit are included in the form. ■



## I Have A Question:

Please use the space provided below to ask a question or make a comment to be addressed at the annual meeting. Time is allotted at the end of the virtual meeting to answer questions. If the question is in written form and you want your question answered, please include your name and address. Anonymous questions or questions from non-members will not be answered.

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Please provide your name and address:

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You may submit a question, prior to the annual meeting, by mailing to: Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative, Inc. – P.O. Box 297 – Flasher, ND 58535-0297. You may also call the office at 1-800-750-8212, 1-701-663-0297 or 1-701-597-3301, and ask for Jackie; or log into SmartHub and use Contact Us (annual meeting member question), or email us at [info@morgransou.com](mailto:info@morgransou.com).

Please have all questions submitted by **4:30 p.m. CT, Friday, July 9.**

If all questions are not answered during the meeting, the responses may be put in the *North Dakota Living* magazine local pages or provided individually to a member.



# A message from your power supplier: Basin Electric Power Cooperative

BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER AND GENERAL MANAGER PAUL SUKUT AND BOARD PRESIDENT WAYNE PELTIER

*(Editor's note: Basin Electric Power Cooperative generates the majority of the power purchased by Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative. We asked Wayne Peltier and Paul Sukut to update our members on what is happening at Basin Electric.)*

## Keeping lines of communication open



**Wayne Peltier**

Democratic member control is what sets us apart from investor-owned utilities.

Critical decisions need to be made over the next couple years that will impact Basin Electric for the next 15 to 20 years, and discussion and debate are essential to making the best decisions we can. We believe the way we govern ourselves through democratic member control is

important to these discussions.

Our board of directors met virtually for most of 2020 due to the COVID-19 global pandemic. While it is very important for people to be in the same room as they are making big decisions, this was a necessary precaution that we had to take to keep ourselves and our employees safe.

We chose to add meetings to our calendars in September, when we met in-person in South Dakota. Along with our regular monthly meeting, we held a strategic planning session for Basin Electric board and staff, a roundtable discussion with the District Class A managers, followed by staff holding a member managers meeting for all Class A and Class C managers.

We heard important feedback during those meetings. We know the managers who were involved were listening deeply.

Discussion and communication are important — whether we are meeting in-person or on our computer screens. We will lead our cooperative into the future well, as long as we all keep lines of communication open.

## Building into growth

This cooperative couldn't have gotten through the COVID-19 pandemic without our employees.

Our essential employees have kept operations going on a daily basis through difficult conditions. Quarantines, social distancing, mask mandates, and working extra shifts are a new normal, and our power has been reliable the entire time. Our administrative employees have been successful working from home as well, and I, along with the board, cannot say



**Paul Sukut**

enough how much we appreciate everyone's perseverance and patience.

Commodity prices took a dramatic hit early in the pandemic, and the entire economy was affected. Our members in oil-producing regions are certainly seeing a slowdown, but as a whole, our cooperative is still growing.

As we build into this growth, we try to take more of a look at resources that are low-carbon or no-carbon. We

are responsible for delivering reliable, affordable energy to 3 million members across nine states. Many of our coal-based power plants have a lot of economic value on the books. We're trying to see what is the most efficient and effective way that we can write them off the books and be less reliant upon them. We are not planning shutdowns, because we need this generation for the next 15 to 20 years at least; this transition needs to be done in a responsible, carefully considered manner.

As we started doing some of our strategic planning over the course of the last year, one of the things the board asked us was to talk to our members. We conducted a study that resulted in more than 1,000 pages of data. We learned that reliability and rates are number one and two concerns of our members, and the future of our largest subsidiary, Dakota Gas, is the third.

This knowledge helps us develop our strategy and communication going forward. The support of our board in this venture, and members who were willing to work with us to gather this information and communicate their perspectives and concerns, all that goes a long ways toward our strong alliance. We are in good financial shape with stable rates. We know we have a bright future, and we are excited to see what the future brings. ■

## KX/CO-OP DAY at the N.D. State Fair July 28 in Minot

If you plan to attend the North Dakota State Fair on July 28, you are eligible to receive reduced-price tickets for \$1 off gate admission, \$5 off daily unlimited-ride wristbands for carnival rides, and \$1 off Ranch Rodeo admission and a free ice cream social at 2 p.m. at the KX/co-op tent. Give us a call at the office at 701-663-0297, 701-597-3301 or 1-800-750-8212, and we will hook you up with tickets!



# A message from your power supplier: **Western Area Power Administration (WAPA)**

BY ACTING SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AND UPPER GREAT PLAINS REGIONAL MANAGER DAVE NEUMAYER



**Dave Neumayer**

*(Editor’s note: Western Area Power Administration also generates power purchased by Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative. We asked Dave Neumayer to update our members on what is happening at WAPA)*

## **Achieving balance in a changing world**

**U**ncertainty and upheaval have been constants over the past year, both in our society and industry. Succeeding as an organization in this environment requires strength, agility and perseverance.

That is why we selected “balance” as our theme for this year.

As we adapt and evolve in this energy frontier, one that now includes COVID-19, it will be critical for us to balance strength, resilience, unity and leadership, while also being mindful of our enduring mission, reliability, regional differences and collaborative culture with our customers.

WAPA’s organizational agility has allowed us to continue accomplishing our mission, even during the most challenging times.

Now more than a year into our COVID-19 response, WAPA has helped lead the industry by evolving our operations to maintain the safety and health of our employees, regardless of whether they work in the office or on the front line.

Beginning in March 2020, we quickly maximized telework while sustaining productivity. We authorized home-to-work for craft employee vehicles, reducing the need for craft employees to congregate in offices and other facilities.

WAPA reconfigured operations centers to permit adequate social distancing for our on-site dispatchers; developed and tested sequestration plans to prepare dispatchers to live and work in isolated groups for two-week stretches; and established a Responsible Workplace Re-entry Plan that defines a safe, measured return to the office based on the best science available.

In parallel, we continued to focus on our core



*WAPA’s Upper Great Plains region and the Corps worked together to maximize hydropower output and closely monitor the system. In coordination with WAPA operations and power marketing staff, the Corps boosted hydro production at morning and evening peak hours with up to 740 MW per hour in additional generation.*

business priorities:

- Returning \$272.3 million to the U.S. Department of the Treasury, totaling nearly \$2.6 billion in the past eight years.
- Executing 98 percent of operations and maintenance work and 96 percent of capital projects.
- Keeping costs at just 1.3 cents per kilowatt-hour generated.
- Introducing a workload planning initiative, the culmination of several process improvement efforts.
- Saving and avoiding more than \$113 million in costs through continuous process improvement.

In March, we bade farewell to our longtime Administrator and CEO Mark A. Gabriel, and welcomed Senior Vice President Tracey LeBeau to serve as interim administrator.

Selected by the U.S. Department of Energy, LeBeau brings more than 20 years of executive experience in management, clean energy and infrastructure development, public-private partnerships, utility business operations, and federal program and policy leadership.



LeBeau has served in numerous senior leadership roles at WAPA since 2014, including as senior vice president of the Transmission Infrastructure Program, chief administrative officer and Desert Southwest regional manager. Before joining WAPA, LeBeau was a political appointee at the U.S. Department of Energy, starting up the Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs and serving as its first director.

LeBeau will continue to lead WAPA’s focus on our primary mission and advancement on important business priorities, including cost containment.

We also bade farewell to Jody Sundsted, senior vice president and Upper Great Plains regional manager, who retired in September. The process to fill this position is currently underway and should soon be complete.

### Mission and vision

In January, WAPA unveiled our refreshed mission and vision statements, providing a renewed sense of purpose and setting a clear direction for 2021 and beyond. In collaboration with customers, stakeholders and employees, the renewed mission and vision statements highlight the value WAPA places on relationships with customers and communities.

- **Mission:** Safely provide reliable, cost-based hydropower and transmission to our customers and the communities we serve.
- **Vision:** Empowering communities, securing a resilient energy future.

Safety is at the core of WAPA’s refreshed mission statement. Only by consistent commitment to safety can WAPA and our customers succeed in fulfilling our respective missions.

Our new vision to empower communities with reliable, zero-emissions energy means driving economic development, providing a sense of security and protecting the environment.

### Winter storm Uri

When frigid temperatures hit the country in February, electric grids from Montana to Texas faltered. The Southwest Power Pool rolled blackouts throughout its 14-state power grid to avoid a disastrous outage.

While 21 WAPA customers experienced approximately one-hour outages over the course of two days, WAPA and the Army Corps of Engineers stepped up hydropower production and helped stabilize the grid.

WAPA also tapped our financial reserve strategy and purchased power on the spot market to meet contractual obligations. These critical measures and other takeaways — such as notifying customers immediately and gathering data on customer loads — will inform WAPA’s response to future grid challenges.

### Reliable and resilient

As we strive to attain our vision for WAPA’s future, the demands of reliability and resilience will shape our path ahead. Reliability is the confidence the lights will turn on when we need them.

We operate a reliable system, weathering disruptions such as storms, wildlife interactions, vehicle accidents, routine maintenance and emergency situations. We do this with support from our customers and by concentrating on our reliability-centered maintenance and asset management programs. Our 10-year capital plans anticipate investing \$1.3 billion in our system over the next decade to ensure reliability.

Resilience is the ability to prevent, withstand and recover from disruptive threats and events — an important distinction from reliability as we balance our available personnel and funds.

This has been a difficult period not just with the pandemic, but with a record-breaking wildfire season across much of our territory that affected some of our infrastructure, particularly in Arizona and Colorado. Thanks to integrated vegetation management, we avoided what could have been a devastating year.

In an ideal world, we would invest more in resilience by hardening facilities, increasing redundant services, enhancing black-start capabilities, replacing wood with steel, increasing the movement of energy between the eastern and western grids and integrating artificial intelligence, machine learning and advanced technology solutions into grid operations.

With the support of our customers and communities, we can achieve balance in a changing world and make our way toward a successful and prosperous future. ■



WAPA worked with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Feb. 15 to 18 to increase generation from the Missouri River power plants to support the grid. This graph shows the additional hydropower that the Corps provided during Winter Storm Uri.



Former Standing Rock resident **Dakota Goodhouse** spoke briefly at the grand opening held May 15 to introduce the 10 new animal signs at Dakota Zoo in Bismarck. He noted the signs are interactive exhibits. Once a button is pressed, visitors will hear the name of the animal in the native dialect of the Mandan, Arikara, Hidatsa, Sioux (Dakota and Lakota), and Chippewa. He says the signs are a great way to educate people, and preserve Native American culture and language.

## Partnership between Dakota Zoo and Sacred Pipe Resource Center helps build bridges

BY CARMEN DEVNEY



**Lisa Casarez** and her daughter, **Pheobe**, spent the morning of May 15 at Dakota Zoo to support the new exhibits that teach visitors about the relationships Native Americans have with the animals and the land. Originally from Fort Berthold, Lisa says the zoo exhibits speak of representation — and that means a great deal. "Being able to come through [the exhibits] and hear our languages, and get a sense of how we interacted with the animals in our environment, it's important and very educational," she says. "It's a small step in building bridges and having other people understand our language and culture."

There is a relationship among people, the animals and the land; we are all tied together living in the same ecosystem. When we make decisions, our actions can impact an animal's habitat or leave the land less sustainable.

"Those decisions don't necessarily mesh with business and profit and capitalism," says Cheryl Ann Kary, executive director of Sacred Pipe Resource Center in Mandan. "It can be hard for people to understand that there is a way you can live and make decisions that keep all of that in mind."

To provide more awareness and education, Sacred Pipe Resource Center partnered with Dakota Zoo in Bismarck to create 10 exhibits that explain the relationship between Native Americans and animals, and why protecting our collective ecosystem is important.

A groundbreaking ceremony was held May 15 at Dakota Zoo. Members representing North Dakota's Native American tribes were invited to attend, as well as the general public.

The new signs are spread throughout the zoo and feature cultural information about the 10 animals Kary



After consulting with peers and checking with zoos around the nation, Cheryl Ann Kary says the animal sign exhibit may be the only one-of-a-kind. Kary, the executive director of Sacred Pipe Resource Center that partnered with Dakota Zoo on the exhibits, approached the zoo with her dream in the late 1990s. Zoo Director Terry Lincoln was immediately on board. Not prepared for the resounding 'Yes!' from Lincoln, Kary says it took time to build and bring the dream to life.

says teach us the most: bison, eagle, bear, elk, deer, porcupine, badger, wolf, coyote and fox. They include an interactive button that when pressed, allows the visitor to hear the name of the animal in the native languages of the Nuu'eeta (Mandan), Arikara (Sahnis), Hiraaca (Hidatsa), Sioux (Dakota and Lakota), and Ojibway (Chippewa).

"The behaviors that those 10 animals exhibit in their natural environment, we try to model in our own communities," she explains.

Take, for instance, the wolf. Some farmers and ranchers may consider wolves to be pests. Native Americans consider them to be caretakers that have a complex family system.

"Much of what they do is cooperative. Much like your co-op members, wolves work together for the greater good. They travel in a pack, and keep the sick and older wolves in the middle so they can protect them and bring food to them," she says. "These types of behaviors we, as Native people, want to have for our own communities, so that's why using those animals as a storytelling mechanism to teach our young people is important."

Kary says she often hears people talking about cultural diversity, cultural awareness and cultural understanding; working together is the heart of the matter. The wolf is one example of how two sides can see the same thing differently, and how we can move forward better together.

"This is why the zoo project is so important. It lets every visitor understand our line of thinking. We had a relationship with animals. They taught us things and

continue to teach us things," she says. "Humility is also a big part of our culture. If you think of yourself as dominant and that you have the right to destroy an animal's habitat, you are not operating with humility."

On May 15 following the grand opening of the sign exhibits, Kary says a non-native family approached her and told her, "This is the coolest thing we've ever seen."

With progress in sight, she says she plans to work with Dakota Zoo to add animal signs in the future.

Sacred Pipe Resource Center is also training young storytellers who will share more about native people's relationships with animals and the land. These presentations will be given at Dakota Zoo this summer.

To learn more about Sacred Pipe Resource Center, visit [www.sacredpipe.net](http://www.sacredpipe.net) or call 701-663-3886. To see the event schedule at Dakota Zoo, visit [www.dakotazoo.org](http://www.dakotazoo.org). ■

## Executive Director's experience shape Sacred Pipe Resource Center success

Originally from Cannonball within the Standing Rock reservation, Cheryl Ann Kary grew up as an interracial child. The family moved to Bismarck when she was in high school, and looking more white than Native, she says she often heard negative comments spoken at school and within the community.



**Cheryl Kary**

Not knowing how to handle it, she learned all she could. After high school she became a columnist for the *Bismarck Tribune*, and later took a job with Standing Rock for a couple years.

Interested in educating others about diversity and opportunity, she applied for and received a Bush Foundation Fellowship in 2013. She used it to start Sacred Pipe Resource Center in 2014. It is located across from the Depot in Mandan on Main Street.

Founded to foster community engagement, Sacred Pipe's projects are designed to encourage Native people to serve as advocates on boards and commissions, vote, participate in the census, and create community councils that help advise systems about making improvements and serving people.

"That's tough work to do. We've seen gains over the years in people getting more active and involved. Then COVID threw everyone into survival mode," Kary says. "The upside is it shows people there are cracks in our systems and improvements that need to be made, and people need to speak up about them."

# MOR-GRAN-SOU ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

## board meeting highlights



### Meeting date: May 26, 2021

- Approved the April 28, 2021, board meeting minutes
- Approved a work order inventory and special equipment summary
- Approved capital credit refund applications to estates
- Reviewed the monthly director's financial report
- Reviewed the Mor-Gran-Sou financial report for April
- Reviewed senior staff department reports
- Heard general counsel report
- Approved 2020 capital credit allocation
- Reviewed information for CoBank director candidate search
- Approved resolution for construction manager contractor for remodel
- Approved CFC Cooperative Integrity Fund participation
- Approved donation to N.D. Cowboy Hall of Fame
- Authorized a voting delegate for the CFC 2021 annual meeting
- Authorized a voting delegate for the WRT annual meeting
- Completed the annual Mor-Gran-Sou Director Self-Evaluation
- Set the July 2021 Mor-Gran-Sou board meeting date, time and location
- Heard Co-General Managers/CEOs update and report on meetings attended
- Heard directors' recap on virtual training and meetings attended
- Reviewed West Dakota Utility Services/3C Construction updates
- Heard update on Southwest Power Pool

### Upcoming regular board meeting date:

July 28; 9:30 a.m. CT/8:30 a.m. MT, Bismarck  
 Aug. 25, 9:30 a.m. CT/8:30 a.m. MT, Bismarck

Members may be welcome to attend board meetings. Due to COVID-19, plans can change quickly. Please call the office at 1-800-750-8212 or 597-3301 to confirm the meeting status you wish to attend.

To place an item on the agenda, please contact Co-General Manager/CEO Donald Franklund at 701-597-3301 or Chair Casey Wells 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.



## Explore it ... Adore it ... and Save!

In partnership with the Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation, Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative is once again making excursions to Medora more affordable for families. This summer, our members are eligible for a 15-percent discount off the following reservations:

- Tickets to the Medora Musical
- Pitchfork Steak Fondue
- Bully Pulpit Golf Course

- Lodging at the Badlands Motel, Elkhorn Quarters and Rough Riders Hotel

To make your reservations and claim your savings, call 1-800-MEDORA-1 and provide the discount code **Touch2021**. When visiting the Cowboy Hall of Fame, provide the discount code **Touch2021** at the door. ■



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#### OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

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

#### MANAGEMENT

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

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