



Jeremy and Stefanie Maher with their two sons at their ranch north of Morristown, S.D.

Mahers bring local beef to schools

BY ANNE HANSEN

Along the South Dakota and North Dakota border is a family ranch where the roots run deep. Originally established in 1917 by John Maher, the ranch has been passed down through the generations to Jeremy and Stefanie Maher, along with their two children, James and John.

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative members, Jeremy and Stefanie purchased the ranch in 2006. As their

herd continued to grow, so did their passion for the cattle industry.

An indication of their passion is shown through their volunteerism on state beef boards and hosting livestock judging classes for the local FFA chapter. The Mahers are not only willing to give their time, but their resources as well. Most recently, their gift helped beef up the local school lunchroom.

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In late 2021, the Mahers donated more than 500 pounds of beef from their ranch to the McIntosh Public School's lunch program in South Dakota.

Local beef on the table

The idea to donate the beef began when Jeremy stumbled across an article about the South Dakota Beef in Schools program, which helps get local beef into the schools.

"Right away, we knew this was something we were interested in doing," Jeremy said. After further research, they began the process by speaking with the agricultural teacher, Tia Nehl, at the McIntosh Public School.

"After reviewing the program with Jeremy, we brought it in front of our local school board for approval and also spoke to the school cooks, to ensure they were OK with it as well," Nehl said. "As expected in cattle country, everyone was on board and excited about the opportunity to support local ranchers, while providing nutritional meals to the students."

With approval in hand, the next step was to find a location to have it processed and packaged.

"We were not able to use just any processor," Jeremy said. He noted the processor had to have a U.S.

Department of Agriculture inspector onsite while the beef was being processed, which led the Mahers to Wall Meat Processing.

"We spoke to Wall Meat Processing, which we knew had processed beef for other South Dakota schools participating in this program," Jeremy said. After discussing the opportunity with the processing facility, it donated the processing costs as a way to kickstart the program for the McIntosh Public School.

The Mahers wasted no time getting beef into the local school. Within three weeks of discovering the program, the beef was ready to be picked up. As an opportunity to continue to learn about the beef industry, the McIntosh High School FFA students took a trip to Wall Meat Processing to pick up the donated beef.

"The FFA students were able to take a trip to the processing facility and receive a tour to see how the beef was processed, alongside picking up the meat for our school," Nehl said. "This process has shown our students where their food comes from and teaches them how we can support our local ag industry."

Beef, it's what's for dinner

Tacos were on the menu when the students were first served the donated beef. The Mahers sat in the lunchroom to see the reaction.



Jeremy and **Stefanie Maher** share their passion for the ag industry with their two sons.

“We measured the success of the program with what was left in the garbage,” Jeremy noted. “There wasn’t enough beef in the garbage to make one taco.”

The empty garbage can wasn’t the only sign of success. Nehl noted the many comments she has received from students about the beef used in the lunchroom.

“We have heard feedback that the students feel so much better, knowing that they are eating local beef, and many said that it tasted like the meat that came from home,” she said.

Luckily, the meat will last the remainder of the school year.

“We have estimated that the donated meat is enough to feed the students of McIntosh for an entire year,” Nehl said.

Since the news of the program, many other local ranchers have pledged their willingness to donate beef in the following years, ensuring the program will continue.

A pilot project for North Dakota

In recent months, Jeremy has also helped get a program similar to South Dakota’s in place for North Dakota schools.

As a vocal member of the Independent Beef Association of North Dakota (I-BAND), Jeremy has used the platform to help. Through I-BAND, Jeremy was able to help bring a

pilot program to North Dakota’s schools.

“We modeled the pilot program off of what Jeremy and Stephanie did,” said Kerry Dockter, president of I-BAND.

The North Dakota Beef to School Pilot Program is funded through a generous donation of \$3,000 from the I-BAND organization, in partnership with the N.D. Department of Agriculture and the N.D. Department of Public Instruction’s Child Nutrition and Food Distribution office.

“We were able to work with the South 40 Beef butcher shop, and they were willing to do the processing,” Dockter said. Beef was donated in January to public schools in Richardton, New Salem, Steele, Medina, Valley City, Central Cass, Bismarck, Mandan, Fessenden, Kensal, Maddock and McClusky.

“We have received great feedback from the schools,” Dockter said. “The cooks have noted that they enjoy cooking it, because it smells like real beef, cooks like real beef and yields so much more than processed meat.”

Ultimately, Dockter is hoping this begins a chain reaction for the state of North Dakota.

“We have so many commodities in North Dakota and we hope they can provide the schools with local goods,” he said.

If you are interested, you can learn more about the I-BAND at www.i-band.org. ■



Members receive NDSU Harvest Bowl Award

BY ANNE HANSEN

March is National Agriculture Month, and Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative salutes our farmers and ranchers who make agriculture one of North Dakota's top industries.

North Dakota State University (NDSU) also acknowledges the agricultural impact on the state and recognizes leading agriculturalists through the NDSU Harvest Bowl.

"The Harvest Bowl is a weekend event, where we are able to recognize agriculture and athletics, and the connection between," said Duane Hauck, NDSU Harvest Bowl chair. The Harvest Bowl recognizes dedicated agriculturalists in all of North Dakota's 53 counties and 10

counties in western Minnesota annually with the naming of County Agriculturalist Honorees.

The County Agriculturalist Honorees are selected through the local NDSU Extension offices.

"Each county agent nominates an individual or couple based on active community leaders, people who are innovative and active in promoting the ag industry, and are highly respected individuals," Hauck said.

During this event, three Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative members were recognized. Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative congratulates our members receiving the award.

Spotlight: Nathan and Heather Boehm

Nathan and Heather Boehm received the NDSU Harvest Bowl Award for Morton County. Nathan, a livestock field investigator for the State Board of Animal Health and a Morton County commissioner, is involved in the community and is a promotor of the ag industry.

For years, Nathan and Heather, along with his dad and brother, ran a diversified beef and dairy operation near Mandan, where they milked 125 Holsteins and Jerseys and raised 100 Gelbvieh cow-calf pairs. They also raised durum, spring wheat, corn, oats, barley, flax, alfalfa and sorghum hay, using minimum-tillage farming practices with a rotational grazing livestock program.

Although his family still farms in the area, Nathan transitioned into his field investigator job. In addition, the Boehms are involved in the community by serving as members of the Morton County Crop Improvement Association, North Dakota Holstein Association, Mandan FFA Alumni Association, CHI Mandan Patient Family Advisory Committee and Mandan Moose Lodge. In addition, he serves as secretary/treasurer of the North Dakota Dairy Coalition; president of the Morton County Farm Bureau; secretary/treasurer of the West District Holstein Association; and as a Morton County 4-H leader.

"The award holds a very special spot for us, especially as an NDSU graduate," Nathan said. ■



Nathan and Heather Boehm

Spotlight: Charles and Emesdean Murphy

The Murphys operate a ranch near Selfridge. They have received the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Stewardship Award. Charles has also served as chair of the Standing Rock Tribal Council and is active with the tribal Natural Resources Conservation Service.

"The Murphy family was chosen out of Sioux County because of their commitment to Extension programming and program support," said Sue Isbell, NDSU Extension agent. "They have always been great supporters, especially most recently with the community gardening project."



Spotlight: Pete and Helen Hetle

On a third-generation farm near Elgin, the Hetle family has been continuing the family ranch. For over 45 years, the family has had a cow-calf operation, using rotational grazing and crossbreeding.

In addition to ranching, Pete also served the community as the vo-ag teacher and FFA advisor for Grant County High School for 17 years. During that time, he received the honorary American and state FFA degrees. Pete also serves as a member of the Elgin Fire Protection District board.

Pete's wife, Helen, also served her community in many ways. In addition to working at the local Grant County State Bank, she worked with Carson Women's Life to put on a mini carnival at the Grant County Fair and is the clerk for the silent auction at the Grant County Fair.

The Hetles said they are honored and humbled to receive the award.

"Our efforts were never made for recognition, but for the betterment of our community," Pete said.



Pete and Helen Hetle

Safety Starts with ME

Electricity is a powerful resource and is the backbone of our daily lives. Although it powers our lives, it has become so commonplace that people sometimes forget the importance of using it safely. But no one makes electrical safety more of a priority than your local Touchstone Energy® cooperative, Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative.

"Safety is embraced as a core value at Mor-Gran-Sou Electric," said Gary Fitterer, operations manager. Mor-Gran-Sou's actions and decisions reflect a commitment to safety at all levels of the cooperative and our employees help our members create a safe work environment and system.

Mor-Gran-Sou's employees practice safety and rely on it every day.

"It is important to tap into their knowledge with these tools and tips to reduce preventable accidents and help keep every co-op member safe in and around their homes," Fitterer said.

That is why Mor-Gran-Sou is launching a new safety campaign – Safety Starts with ME – which will help highlight what each of our employees does to keep our members safe.

And how can you help? If you see something that you

think is unsafe, say something and let us know.

Keep informed on safety measures by reading about them monthly in *North Dakota Living*, on Facebook, Instagram or our website. ■





MANAGER'S MESSAGE:

Are you ready to serve?



Travis Kupper

In a notable inaugural speech, John F. Kennedy spoke his famous words, "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." His words urged Americans to take actions that benefited the greater good. In essence, Kennedy was saying our country thrives when we all contribute our talents to the common good.

On a smaller scale, I think the same can be said about our co-op, specifically with regard to our board members. Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative's board members are community-minded individuals with a variety of skillsets. Our board is made up of farmers, ranchers, business owners and much more. We rely on their many talents to help us make informed decisions on long-term priorities and investments. Our directors live right here in the co-op's service area, and we consider them the eyes and ears of the community, because they provide their perspective on important community issues.

What does it mean to serve on the board?

Serving on Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative's board means you're making a difference locally, using your individual talents and perspective to guide big decisions about the co-op that, in turn, benefit the larger community. While day-to-day decisions are made by co-op staff, major decisions are made by the board, whose mission is to look out for the vitality of the co-op and the community it serves. Mor-Gran-Sou Electric board members typically provide input and guidance on:

- Budgets
- Co-op goals and direction
- Co-op's community/charitable contributions
- Capital investments and upgrades in equipment and technology
- Renewable investments and energy mix
- Co-op's role and involvement in economic development

Opportunity to serve

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative's board elections will be held on July 15. If you are interested in becoming a director, call our office or refer to last month's issue of *North Dakota Living*.

While you don't need to be an expert in electricity or business to be a director, you do need to have a passion for the community and a willingness to actively serve and learn. We continue to look for individuals who can represent the full gamut of the members we serve. Our board meets on a regular basis, and we offer specialized training opportunities to help board members make informed decisions. Board members gain a deeper understanding of the electric utility industry, the cooperative business model and local economic development efforts.

Ultimately, our board is the community pulse for the co-op and helps keep us on the right track. We love our community and want to help it thrive. If you share the same commitment and want to contribute to the greater good in a tangible way, I hope you're learning more about our board and how you can contribute.

To learn more about Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative's director election process and 2022 details, please visit www.morgransou.com. ■



Congratulations to Doug Nagel, Mor-Gran-Sou general foreman on his retirement.

On behalf of Mor-Gran-Sou, we wish you the best on your future endeavors and thank you for your 25 years of service!



Mor-Gran-Sou Electric receives safety awards during AT&S Conference



Chance Magilke (center) receives the Certificate of Safety Achievement and the Safety Performance Award on behalf of Mor-Gran-Sou.

The North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC) hosted its 58th annual REC Apprenticeship Training and Safety (AT&S) Conference Jan. 12-14 in Bismarck. The conference is sponsored by the NDAREC AT&S program, with cooperation from the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Apprenticeship.

The conference drew representatives of NDAREC member-cooperatives, Bismarck State College lineworker students and electric industry personnel for classroom sessions, equipment evaluations and award ceremonies. Training topics included N.D. Department of Transportation updates, protective grounding, lineworker safety and tool training, transformers connections, conducting a thorough accident investigation and more.

“Participants increase their knowledge and skills of the trade by attending the AT&S Conference and, in turn, improve the safety, resilience and reliability of the electrical system, which directly impacts the quality of life for our members,” said Christina Roemmich, director of safety services for NDAREC.

Mor-Gran-Sou employees who attended this year’s conference included Cody Graetz, Doug Nagel, Cody Maher, Gary Fitterer, C.J. Pesicka, Jason Helgeson and Chance Magilke.

During the awards banquet, Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative received two safety awards:

- Certificate of Safety Achievement, which is recognition of the participation in the Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program.
- Safety Performance Award, which recognizes any cooperative with zero OSHA recordable injuries for one year.

In addition, the banquet recognized graduating lineworker apprentices. This year, C.J. Pesicka graduated to journeyman status. ■



C.J. Pesicka graduated to journeyman status.



BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Jan. 26

- Approved Dec. 15, 2021, board meeting minutes
- Approved two work order inventories
- Approved capital credit retirement applications for estates and those age 80 and over
- Reviewed Basin Electric Power Cooperative updates
- Approved annual renewal of the mutual aid agreement
- Accepted the annual Red Flag Rule report from chief information officer
- Approved auditor engagement letter
- Reviewed CoBank request for director candidates
- Approved collective bargaining agreement between Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative and IBEW Local 1593
- Directors renewed memberships in REPAC and ACRE
- Approved physical inventory adjustment for 2021
- Consensus to continue research of electronic voting
- Heard report of first Nominating Committee meeting
- Reviewed North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives letter for nominations to charitable foundation board
- Reviewed the monthly directors' financial reports
- Reviewed the Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative unaudited financial report for December

- Reviewed senior staff and general counsel reports
- Reviewed co-general managers/CEOs update and report on meetings attended
- Heard director recaps on meetings/training attended
- Reviewed update on Mandan building remodel
- Heard WDUS holdings and 3C Construction updates
- Held executive session

Upcoming regular board meeting dates:

- March 23, 10:30 a.m. CT/9:30 a.m. MT, J&L Building, 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 or contact the Flasher office to request a copy.



A phone survey may await you!

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative will be completing a random residential telephone member satisfaction survey. Performed by Odney Advertising and Ironwood Insights, this survey will take place in March. If you receive a call from Odney Advertising or Ironwood Insights, on behalf of Mor-Gran-Sou Electric, please take time to answer the questionnaire. The survey will take approximately 10 minutes. By participating in the 2022 member satisfaction survey, Mor-Gran-Sou Electric receives better insight into how we can better serve you, the member-owner.



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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

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