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APRIL 2015

NEWS



*Ready for the real world —
and a trip to Washington, D.C.*

*In this month's local pages, meet **Andrew Schafer**, the student who will represent Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative on this summer's Youth Tour, and learn why he encourages other students to get involved with their family's electric cooperative.*

PHOTO BY CARMEN DEVNEY

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- **Meeting minutes and more!**



At the NDAREC Apprenticeship Training and Safety conference, Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative was given the Outstanding Safety Performance Award for having zero OSHA-recordable injuries for five years. Some Mor-Gran-Sou employees and the safety services team at NDAREC gathered to commemorate the milestone including, back row from left: Journeyman Lineman **Joseph Michael**, NDAREC Safety Instructor **Jeff Tweten**, NDAREC Director of Safety Services **Christina Roemmich**, General Foreman **Doug Nagel** and NDAREC Safety Instructor **Jason Smith**; and front row from left: Leadman **Jason Jahner**, Journeyman Lineman **Cody Graetz**, Senior Engineering Technician **Jason Helgeson**, and NDAREC Safety Instructor **Jerry Nielsen**.

‘STRONG CULTURE OF SAFETY’ Mor-Gran-Sou meets major milestone in safety

BY CARMEN DEVNEY

The mission of OSHA, or the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, is to assure safe and healthful working conditions for working men and women by setting and enforcing standards and by providing training, outreach, education and assistance. The agency is also charged with enforcing a variety of whistleblower statutes and regulations. OSHA is an agency of the U.S. Department of Labor.

Out of the 16 electric distribution cooperatives that serve member-owners across North Dakota, Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative is the only one to reach a major milestone in safety: The co-op has not had a lost-time case accident for five consecutive years.

The North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC) recognized Mor-Gran-

Sou’s accomplishment at its 51st-annual Apprenticeship Training and Safety (AT&S) Conference held in January in Bismarck. Five cooperatives including Mor-Gran-Sou were recognized for having zero OSHA-recordable injuries for one year, between the dates of Dec. 1, 2013, to Nov. 30, 2014. Mor-Gran-Sou was the only cooperative to be recognized for having zero OSHA-recordable injuries for five years. As



a result, the co-op earned NDAREC's Outstanding Safety Performance Award.

Christina Roemmich, director of safety services for NDAREC, says it is commendable for any cooperative to go without a lost-time injury in a 12-month period, and to go five consecutive years is remarkable.

"Mor-Gran-Sou, in particular, has had some serious trials in their service area over the past five years, thanks to Mother Nature doling out three major ice and snow storms that downed more than 14,000 poles. Their employees logged just under 300,000 hours on the job restoring outages and meeting the needs of their members, while following safety protocols and preventing injuries. Their achievement represents their strong culture of safety."

Clint Begger, leadman for Mor-Gran-Sou, agreed that the storms posed a variety of challenges — for the Mor-Gran-Sou linemen, the linemen from neighboring cooperatives, and contractors who helped restore the outages. "You have to look out for everyone else, for sure, and you have to look out for yourself. We didn't know some of the guys we worked with. If they said a piece of line was dead, we needed to verify it for ourselves and use our own protective grounds," he describes.

Joseph Michael, journeyman lineman for Mor-Gran-Sou, said it's critical for linemen to always be in control and not take shortcuts when it comes to

'If you cut corners with the small things, that's where it starts. It might be something that isn't that dangerous, but if you allow yourself not to be disciplined and cut corners, that's when it might start happening with bigger things.'

— Joseph Michael, journeyman lineman

safety. "If you cut corners with the small things, that's where it starts. It might be something that isn't that dangerous, but if you allow yourself not to be disciplined and cut corners, that's when it might start happening with bigger things," he says.

Jesse Kuhn, engineering technician for Mor-Gran-Sou, says a commitment to safety starts in the board room and extends to the managers and employees. He and Begger noted that Co-General Managers Don Franklund and Chris Baumgartner are advocates of safety and provide valuable leadership to the employees, and Manager of Operations Randy Ressler makes sure they have the necessary personal protective equipment and line equipment. Through his years of experience, Ressler plays an important role in mentoring employees and providing guidance.

If a co-worker isn't aware of a safety hazard or misses a safety step, Kuhn says they all feel comfortable giving each other simple reminders.

"We're all human. It doesn't matter

if you're a foreman, journeyman or apprentice. If we see someone missing something, we say, 'Put on your hard hat. Grab your safety glasses.' If we see something wrong, we fix it. It's as simple as that," he says.

Jerry Nielsen, safety instructor with NDAREC, says having zero OSHA-recordable injuries can only be achieved when every employee is involved. "When it comes to line work, we are our brother's keeper. We're constantly watching out for each other; we're constantly reminding each other," he says. In addition, planning a job — and being able to change or adapt depending on the conditions at the job site, keeps employees in the know and safe.

Nielsen says there are various levels of safety infractions. Coming into contact with a high-voltage power line would be potentially deadly, in comparison to hitting a thumb with a hammer or slipping off a ladder. But all accidents, even minor ones can cause time away from work. From the field to the office,

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SAFETY@MORGRANSOU.COM

Mor-Gran-Sou is an advocate of working safely. In fact, it is our way of life; the culture of your cooperative. We look out for the safety of ourselves and others — before, during and after work.

Did you know that members also play a key role in keeping our system safe? At times, you are our eyes in the sky and on the ground. Should you see a power line issue that may need Mor-Gran-Sou's attention, please call the office or send us an email at safety@morgransou.com with your concern. This correspondence should include the description of the location, your name and complete contact information, and a photo if possible. Working together helps ensure the safety of all!



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where slips, trips and falls can trigger trips to the doctor, higher insurance costs and days away from work, he says it takes every employee's commitment to steady a ladder or roll a rug flat.

Jolene Jochim, account/bookkeeper for Mor-Gran-Sou, says the office staff contributes to the co-op's safety record by keeping their work stations neat and free from clutter, and cords secure to avoid tripping hazards.

Working in a safe environment where everyone "has your back" means something to Lineman Michael, who has a wife and son. "Knowing you're going to make it back to your family every night, that's a big deal," he says. "It only works when everyone is on the same page. One careless person can put everybody in danger."

Begger agrees and concludes, "It makes you appreciate all the people within our co-op that we work with. Everyone is on the same page." ■

SAFETY: Keeping it fresh

Safety is an every day, all-day priority for every employee at Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative. Here are two of the many ways we stay mindful and up-to-date on hazard recognition and the actions we need to take, so we can send our employees home to their families every night:

SAFETY COMMITTEE: Mor-Gran-Sou has a Safety Committee that meets every month to identify and discuss possible hazards at the co-op's offices in Flasher, Mandan and Fort Yates. Employees serve on the committee for one year on a rotational basis.

SAFETY TRAININGS: Mor-Gran-Sou partners with the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC) to hold 10 safety trainings a year. Instructors from NDAREC visit the co-op and hold meetings on a variety of topics including pole top and bucket truck rescue, defensive driving, OSHA updates, substation safety, chainsaw safety and tree felling, hazard recognition (slips, trips and falls), field observations for site-specific training, CPR and AED training, and much more.

Jason Smith, one of the safety instructors with NDAREC, says these scheduled trainings are important because they give reminders and start conversations. "At these meetings, we review a lot of information that most employees already know; they are trained individuals. But it gives us the opportunity to do a thorough review, and talk about any hazards they might have seen in the office or out in the field. Bringing it up and talking about it while it's fresh in their minds makes a big difference," he says.



PHOTO BY NDAREC/JOHN KARY

Tony Stegmiller, facility technician, practices chest compressions during a recent CPR safety training.

Watch for hazards in the field this spring

Many farmers are busy preparing tillage equipment, sprayers and planters for spring fieldwork. Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative urges farmers to look for electric hazards around the farm as they prepare for planting.

The most common cause of contact with overhead power lines is operating machinery such as large tractors with front loaders, portable grain augers, fold-up cultivators, grain elevators and any equipment with an antenna. Handling long items such as irrigation pipe, ladders and rods also poses the risk of contact with power lines.

Overhead power lines are necessary to deliver electricity to farmsteads and rural homes, but the electricity can be deadly if wires are touched by large equipment. Farmers should be aware of power lines while using large equipment for spring tillage.

Farmers and their equipment should always be 10 feet away from power lines on all sides. Practice extreme caution and use a spotter to make sure you stay far away from power lines when you use tall equipment.

According to the National Electrical Safety Code, the minimum height of a primary distribution power line, neutral conductor (bottom wire) to the ground, needs to be 18.5 feet over cultivated areas. High-profile vehicles, including augers, crop sprayer booms, etc., are a concern



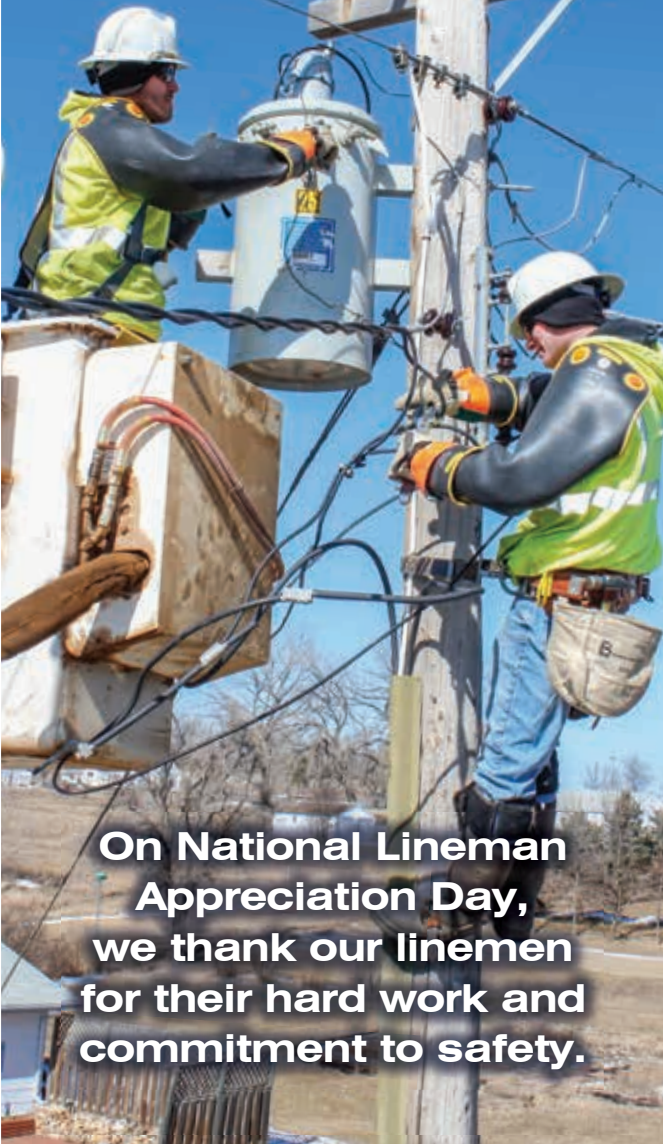
to Mor-Gran-Sou as they pass under the cooperative's primary power lines. If you have farm equipment higher than 14 feet, please contact our line department at 701-597-3301, 701-663-0297 or 800-750-8212 so the co-op can ensure there is adequate clearance.

Overhead power lines are not the only electric hazard on the farm. Pole guy wires, used to stabilize utility poles, are grounded. However, when one of the guy wires is broken it can become charged with electricity. If you break a guy wire, call the cooperative. ■



SAFETY CULTURE

Thank a lineman
4/13/15



**On National Lineman
Appreciation Day,
we thank our linemen
for their hard work and
commitment to safety.**

Left: Journeyman Lineman Joseph Michael
Right: Journeyman Lineman Wayde Eckroth



SAVE THE DATE!

WHAT:

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative's annual meeting

WHEN:

Friday, July 17, 2015

WHERE:

Prairie Knights Casino and Resort, Fort Yates

WHY:

To learn about co-op issues; to cast your vote and elect three members to serve on the board of directors; and to enjoy a hearty meal.

Mor-Gran-Sou teaches electric utility basics at Real Life Fair



Julie Armijo

Member Services Clerk Julie Armijo and Chief of Staff/Manager of Member Services Jackie Miller had the privilege of speaking to students at this year's Real Life Fair held at the North Dakota Youth Correctional Center in Mandan. This year's annual event, which was held March 5, addressed topics on living independently. Armijo and Miller focused on the subject of electricity: how critical it is and the responsibility it entails. The highlights of their presentation included:

- What is a kilowatt hour;
- How to set up an account with a utility;
- How to understand a utility bill; and
- What the monthly responsibilities are of having an account with a utility.

Armijo and Miller shared that in this fast-paced world of electronic communication, it was great to share Mor-Gran-Sou's story and our real-world experiences face-to-face with the students and field questions this conversation sparked. ■



'Get familiar with the real world'

Andrew Schafer earns Youth Tour trip

BY CARMEN DEVNEY

Why should students take an interest in the cooperative that provides electric service to their family? After all, kids don't have to worry about power outages and kilowatt hours. As long as there is electricity for lights, heat, food, and most importantly electronic devices, everything is good — right?

It's true: Electric cooperatives exist to serve their member-owners by providing affordable, reliable and safe electric service. They do so following the Touchstone Energy® core values of integrity, accountability, innovation and commitment to community. And to show that commitment, they are supporting youth: by teaching electrical safety; by developing leaders through scholarships; by sponsoring students on the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour.

That's why students should care. From bringing the Story Behind the Switch electrical safety presentation to schools in the co-op's service area to sponsoring trips to our nation's Capitol, Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative offers many opportunities to today's youth. They are the next generation of member-owners who will one day serve as a board director or member of the Nominating Committee, or they will vote for board directors at their co-op's annual meeting.

Andrew Schafer recently gave the topic of students and electric cooperatives a great deal of thought. A junior at Flasher Public School who is starting to make plans for his

future, Andrew knows that in the near future he will be paying bills and signing legal documents.

Traveling this summer without family will be a first major step in feeling what it's like to be independent. From June 13 to 19, Andrew will tour Washington, D.C. with 1,500 peers from across the state and nation who are representing their family's electric cooperative on the 2015 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour.

The son of Mor-Gran-Sou members Mark and Nola Schafer, Andrew entered the co-op's essay writing contest and answered this question: "If you were asked to influence other students your age to become more actively involved in their electric cooperative — including attendance at the electric cooperative annual meeting — what would you tell them and why?"

Andrew wrote a thoughtful essay, encouraging other students to discover what electric cooperatives do for their families and communities — and what they can do to help.

"You can't be a kid forever, so take some initiative and start getting involved," he wrote. "It is a co-op, after all; you are a part of it, and have the right to know what decisions are being made and what's being done. There's no homework to do and there's no pop quiz at the next meeting. There is just you getting familiar with the real world. Find out what Mor-Gran-Sou does. Find out what decisions they make and if they affect you. See if you can make a



PHOTO BY CARMEN DEVNEY

A junior at Flasher Public School, Andrew Schafer likes to read and excels in math. He also likes welding, playing football, and helping his mom and dad on the farm.

positive difference in your community by taking part in something. Attending annual meetings is a good way to start."

Andrew's essay was chosen as the winner, earning him an all-expense-paid trip courtesy of the Mor-Gran-Sou membership. On the tour, he will see the grand architecture, meaningful monuments and fast-paced people. In addition to touring attractions including the U.S. Capitol, Arlington Cemetery, Mount Vernon, and the Smithsonian museum and research complex, Andrew will learn about the cooperative business model, U.S. history and American government. The North Dakota students also meet



our state's congressional delegation.

Andrew is ready for this "real world" experience, and is looking forward to learning about the nation's history firsthand. While he says politics aren't of much interest to him, if he has the chance to ask our congressional delegation one question, it would be about gun control. Growing up on a farm in between New Salem and Flasher, and learning to shoot targets and hunt deer at an early age, he feels strongly that

guns should remain in the hands of responsible users.

After he graduates from high school, Andrew plans to enlist in the Marine Corps. He likes that branch of service because of its work ethic and discipline, and has already visited with a recruiter to listen and learn.

Andrew is an honest, straightforward young man who will represent Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative well while on the Youth Tour. He says he always tries to be

respectful and "help everybody out; treat everybody the way you want to be treated."

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative congratulates Andrew for writing an encouraging essay about why students should become involved in their family's electric cooperative, and for earning the opportunity to go on the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour trip. After he returns from Washington, D.C., we'll visit with him again and learn the trip's highlights. ■

Plan, then plant

PHOTO BY SAFELECTRICITY.ORG



Trees can filter the sunlight to help cool your home, and break cold winds to lower your heating costs. But before you plant that tree, look up. Is there a power line

overhead or nearby? If so, you may need to change your landscaping plans.

Always consider the mature height of the trees and shrubs you plant. Ask professionals how tall your sapling will be when it's mature. If it is expected to reach within 25 feet of a power line, plant it somewhere else. Also find out how sprawling the tree's branches will be at maturity. A tree planted 25 feet away from a power line could still interfere with the wires. ■

When danger looms

Sprawling tree limbs look beautiful when covered with leaves, but what's hiding among those branches? If it's a power line, call a professional to trim that tree before it causes a hazard for you or leaves you without power.

When a tree touches an overhead power line, danger looms. Children climbing that tree can get shocked or killed; branches can break or fall onto the wire, causing an outage; or the wind can whip a limb into the line and cause an outage. But remember: When power lines are involved, always leave the trimming to professionals. ■

The landscape of reliability

Vegetation management programs keep power flowing safely to homes

Trees may seem harmless on a calm, sunny day. But add a bit of wind or ice on a stormy night and those towering pillars may threaten your home's electric supply.

Storm outages are sometimes related to trees contacting power lines, so regular trimming of trees and brush along power lines helps cut down on the number of outages as well as annoying blinks.

Electricity interruptions can occur when branches break and fall across power lines, or when trees tumble onto power lines. When strong winds blow, limbs growing too close to power lines may sway and touch wires. These momentary power disruptions (commonly called "blinks" or "blips") aren't just mild annoyances – they can damage computers and other sensitive electronic equipment and leave digital clocks flashing. And then there's arcing – when electricity uses a nearby tree as a path to the ground. That action poses hazards to anyone in the vicinity and could spark a fire.

To fight these potential problems,

electric cooperatives clear growth away from power lines as a way of reducing potential outages and safety risks.

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative is committed to providing safe, reliable and affordable power, and a tree-trimming program is key to fulfilling that promise.

Crews look for foliage growing under lines, overhanging branches, leaning or other types of dangerous trees that could pull down a power line if they fall. As a rule of thumb, 25 feet of ground-to-sky clearance should be available on each side of utility poles to give power lines plenty of space. ■

MOR-GRAN-SOU ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

board meeting highlights



Meeting date: Feb. 18, 2015

- Approved the Jan. 28, 2015 regular Board meeting minutes
- Approved a work order inventory and a special equipment inventory
- Approved applications for refund of capital credits to estates and those age 80 and over
- Heard Co-General Managers'/Chief Executive Officers' update and reports from events attended
- Heard update on Innovative Energy Alliance, LLC (IEA)
- Recapped the IEA Strategic Planning session and IEA Board meeting
- Heard updates on all entities of WDUS Holdings, LLC
- Accepted financial report from Chief Financial Officer
- Heard senior staff department updates
- Recapped the Mor-Gran-Sou Strategic Planning session
- Approved language update revision to Policy 08, O&M of Transmission & Distribution - Power Supply
- Heard update on proposed self-funded health insurance program
- Heard report of second Nominating Committee meeting
- Heard reports and held discussion on meetings attended
- Held Executive Session

Upcoming regular board meeting date:

April 29 in the Mor-Gran-Sou board room in Flasher at 9 a.m. CT

Members are welcome to attend the board meetings at any time. Please contact Mor-Gran-Sou at cternes@morgransou.com, or call 1-800-750-8212 or 597-3301, to confirm the meeting date and location if you wish to attend.

To place an item on the agenda, please contact Board Chair Judge Barth or Co-General Manager/Chief Executive Officer Donald Franklund 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 call the office for a copy.

Ag trade show largest one to date

The 38th-annual KFJR Radio Agri-International was held Feb. 10 and 11 at the Bismarck Event Center. According to www.kfjr.com, this year's ag trade show was the largest to date, featuring a toy show and variety of educational and informational seminars in the newly remodeled and expanded event center.

Several Touchstone Energy® cooperatives sponsored the Living Ag Classroom including Mor-Gran-Sou, Capital, KEM, McLean, Roughrider, Basin Electric Power Cooperative and the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives. The Living Ag Classroom is a series of presentations that teach participating fourth-grade

students about the variety of crops and animals being raised and produced in North Dakota. It also teaches them about the process of getting food from "farm to fork." Because agriculture in North Dakota is vital to our state and nation, electric cooperatives sponsor the Agri-International to show their support of member-owners who work tirelessly to create an abundant, safe and healthy food supply.

Co-op employees took turns working the Touchstone Energy booth. They met with consumers to discuss energy-saving ideas about electric heat products, services and lighting, and gave children flashlights and magnets with safety messages. ■

Home Show sees increase in spectators

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative once again joined area Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives to answer questions about electric heat products and services at the 38th-annual Bismarck-Mandan Home Builders Association Home Show March 13 to 15 at the newly expanded Bismarck Event Center.

More than 200 vendors including home builders, subcontractors, suppliers, interior decorators, retail products and more participated in the event.

This year's show welcomed 13 percent

more spectators; attendance grew by 836 people from 2014 to 2015.

Julie Armijo, member services clerk, represented Mor-Gran-Sou at the show. She had the opportunity to visit with many co-op member-owners and answer questions on energy efficiency. She thanks the folks who attended and stopped by the booth. Mor-Gran-Sou also thanks the Bismarck-Mandan Home Builders Association for giving us the opportunity to meet members and strengthen relationships through the "power of the human connections." ■



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Secretary-Treasurer..... Pam Geiger

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Vernard Frederick, Lance Froelich,

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